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Ranil defeats No Confidence Motion brought against him

By Saman Indrajith, Rathindra Kuruwita and Revata S Silva

(Island.lk) - The no-confidence motion against Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe, for his alleged involvement in treasury bond scams and failure to act promptly to contain ethnic violence in Ampara and Kandy, was defeated in Parliament last Wednesday(4th) with a majority of 46 votes. At the end of a full day debate from 10 am to 9.30 pm Speaker Karu Jayasuriya moved the House for a vote.

The motion against Prime Minister Wickremesinghe received 76 votes in favour and 122 votes against while 26 MPs were absent at the division taken by name. Secretary General of Parliament Dhammika Dassanayake read out the names of 224 MPs (Speaker Jayasuriya not included), and each of them present was asked to state 'Yes' or 'No'. Voting started at 9.30 pm and ended around 10 pm.

The UNF en bloc voted against the motion. But, UNF MP Ven. Rathana Thera was absent. Dissident UNF MP Wijayadasa Rajapaksa voted against the no-faith motion. The minority parties led by Ministers Rauf Hakeem (SLMC), Rishad Bathiudeen (ACMC), Mano Ganesan and P Digambaram (TPA), and the TNA voted against the motion.

The six members of the JVP voted in favour of the motion along with the Joint Opposition MPs.

Former President Mahinda Rajapaksa and his son Namal voted for the motion. The former President did not enter the main chamber of Parliament during the entire debate.

CWC leader Arumugam Thondaman was also a notable absentee.

Government rank SLFP members absent were Mahinda Amaraweera, Sarath

Amunugama, Nimal Siripala De Silva, Duminda Dissanayake, Faizer Mustapha, Ranjith Siyambalapitiya, Wijith Wijyamuni Zoysa, Piyasasena Gamage, Mohan Lal Grero, Sriyani Wijewickrama, MALM Hisbullah, AHM Fowzie, Lasantha Alagiyawanna, Manusha Nanayakkara, Nishantha

Mutuhettigama, Indika Bandaranayake and Weerakumara Dissanayake. The UPFA MPs, representing the SLFP, who voted in favour of the motion, were Susil Premajayantha, Dayasiri Jayasekara, Dilan Perera, John Seneviratne, Lakshman Wasantha Perera, Dr Sudarshani Fernandopulle, Tharanath Basnayake, Susantha PUNCHINILAME, Anura Yapa, S B Dissanayake, Lakshman Yapa Abeywardena, Chandima Weerakkody, Anuradha Jayaratne, T. B. Ekanayake and Sumedha Jayasena.

SLFP Ministers who voted against Prime Minister Wickremesinghe told a press conference yesterday evening that the head of the government was President Sirisena and, therefore they would remain in the government. "It is the President who would

decide whether we should hold ministerial posts or not. Not the UNP," Minister SB Dissanayake told the media at the Parliament complex, while the debate on the motion was

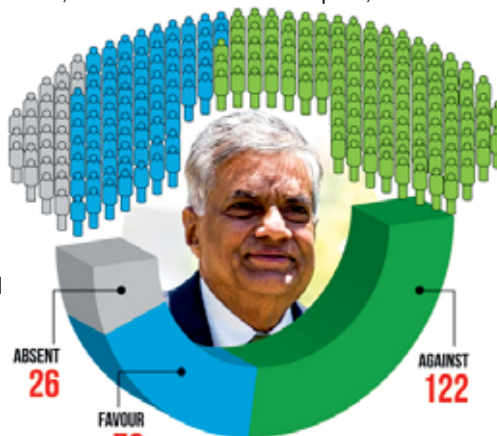
in progress. Ministers SB Dissanayake, Dayasiri Jayasekera, John Seneviratne, Lakshman Wasantha Perera, Sudarshani Fernandopulle, Tharanath Basnayake, Dilan Perera, Susantha PUNCHINILAME, Anura Priyadarshana Yapa, Susil Premajayantha, Lakshman Yapa Abeywardena, Chanmdima

Weerakkody, Sumedha G Jayasena and Anuradha Jayaratne were present at the media briefing.

Opposition Leader R Sampanthan, participating in the debate, on the motion said: "With regard to the Central Bank bond scam, consequent to investigations two persons are in custody and a warrant has been issued against a third person and investigations are in progress. The investigations should be completed as soon as possible and the rule of law should be implemented irrespective of who they are. "The motion of no confidence seeks to implicate the prime minister with the bond scam. Statements of actions of a general nature are thought to be used in an attempt to implicate the prime minister with the bond

scam. The wording of the motion and the timing of the motion are indicative of a pursuit of a political agenda through the motion rather than fixing responsibility with regard to the bond scam. The question must be raised as to why the wording is so weak and lacking in any specific charge against the prime minister pertaining to the bond scam per se. Why should this motion be brought now? "The wording of the motion is too loose and too general in nature. It could be that the Prime Minister is facing this situation because of the confidence he placed in someone who betrayed him. Where is the evidence or charge against the Prime Minister of involvement in the bond scam per say? Is the wording of the NCM so loose and so general because of the lack of specific material against the Prime Minister in regard to the bond scam? If that is so, in my submission the motion lacks credibility.

"With regard to the timing of the motion, this bond scam occurred three years ago and it has been the subject of public focus for a long time and why has this motion brought against the PM only now? This is a plan to bring down, totally and completely, the present government." Chief Opposition Whip JVP leader ... **SEE P8**



NewsLanka would like to wish everyone A Happy & Prosperous New Year

My utmost responsibility is to the country and people – President

(Pmdnews.lk) - President Maithripala Sirisena said he would continue to work to strengthen the government with the support of all the parliamentarian extending cooperation to the government for the benefit of the country and the people. He said that he extends an invitation to all the 225 MPs to join the efforts of the government, irrespective of party differences.

The President made the above statement addressing the heads of media institutions today (April 6) at the President's House in Colombo. Replying to a question he said that future of the current cabinet ministers and the proposed reshuffle would be discussed at the Central SLFP Committee meeting scheduled to be held on Monday (April 9) and the reshuffle will be studied by a joint committee of the two parties and it would be done in a scientific manner. He said that he had discussed regarding this with the Prime Minister

Ranil Wickremesinghe yesterday. President Sirisena, referring to the alleged corrupt practices at the election of chairpersons of local government institutions, said that the legislation pertaining to local government bodies must be amended. He pointed out that the election of over 8,000 members to local government bodies was an unnecessary burden on the government and proposed that the number of members must be reduced to 4,000 at the next election. He said that the increase of members has led to unethical practices and corruption as evident from the incidents happened during the election of chairpersons. Legislation pertaining to local government authorities had led to a situation where the people's mandate is not being accepted, he further said. The President remarked that the political parties that have won elections merging with opposition parties do not add any

value to the people's mandate. Answering a question on UNHRC meeting in Geneva, President Sirisena said that Sri Lanka's position was well explained by the Ministers Tilak Marapana, Dr Sarath Amunugama and Faizer Mustapha. He said that the government will not agree to appoint any foreign judges. Referring to the demands of the TNA, President Sirisena revealed that TNA leader R Sampanthan told him that whatever the solution, it will have to be implemented with the consensus of the majority Sinhalese. He said that the proposed new constitution is a matter for the Parliament and the Parliamentary Committee

appointed for this purpose is working to find a consensus agreeable to all the parties concerned.



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