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Tensions escalate within coalition, President crosses red line?

(Island.lk) - President Maithripala Sirisena may have crossed a red line in shutting down the TNL network owned by Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe's brother in a worsening power struggle that undermines the government.

The Telecommunications Regulatory Commission (TRC) which is directly under Sirisena had obtained an order from the Polgahawela magistrate to seal a TNL transmitter alleging it was broadcasting illegally.

Whatever the legal implications, the political fallout of the TRC action is causing serious damage to Sirisena whose credibility is increasingly undermined by his own recent public statements.

The TRC in a statement issued a day after the shutting down claimed that it had no "undue ambition" and that TNL had illegally used two VHF (very high frequency) channels "from time to time" without permission.

"The TRCSL emphasizes that there is no any (sic) other undue ambition behind this action," the regulator said. However, the damage was done, and even close aides of Sirisena said the timing was unfortunate.

The run up to the incident suggests that the President was well aware of the impending crackdown.

The action against the TNL network followed a ferocious attack that the station launched against Sirisena over his controversial remarks at the birth commemoration of

had become the only president in history to allow Rajapaksa a helicopter ride home after his shock defeat.

The TNL in a brief report juxtaposed videos of Sirisena's claims with his previous statements which contradicted the President's latest position.

through innuendo that it was a reference to Sirisena pointing out the minor faults of others when he himself was at fault.

-Opposition unity-

The crackdown on TNL saw rare unity between the UNP and opposition firebrand Wimal Weerawansa and several others. They condemned the TRC action and wanted the station restored.

Weerawansa accused the president of seeking revenge from the Prime Minister's family in a worsening power struggle between the two leaders. Neither the UNP nor Sirisena loyalists responded to Weerawansa's analysis of the events.

Official sources said the TRC attempted to involve the CID in the raid against the TNL, but failed. The CID appears to have resisted pressure as the matter was outside the scope of their work and could be dealt under the

TRC act without police involvement. The UNP-led government has been powerless to reverse another media ban slapped by Sirisena in November last year. Despite appeals from the UNP, the Sirisena-led TRC has refused to lift a blockade of the Lanka E news portal.



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Telecommunications Regulatory Commission of Sri Lanka

Venerable Maduluwawe Sobitha thera. Sirisena had disowned the "100-day program" that launched his bid for the January 2015 election. He also suggested that it was Wickremesinghe who authorised two helicopters to ferry defeated Mahinda Rajapaksa to Tangalle soon after Sirisena won elections. Sirisena himself had told his party that he

Unconfirmed reports say the President was also angered by an unrelated statement of the Inspector General Pujith Jayasundara broadcast by TNL. In that video, Jayasundara speaks of a person submerged in a cesspool ridiculing a drop of urine on pure white clothes of another passer-by. TNL showed this clip of the IGP soon after the scathing attack on Sirisena suggesting

Royal do it again

(Sundayobserver.lk) - St. Peter's College produced 25 minutes of stunning rugby in a 35-minute first half to lead Royal College in the stakes, but gifted the home team two vital tries in nine minutes as the defending champions successfully retained the League title with a 32-13 win last Saturday.

The Peterites smashed down every Royal

move in the first half to almost have the session in the bag with a 3-0 lead while even stalling a rolling maul. But a high tackle unleashed on a Royal College player was all that changed the course of the game as the home side forcing a line-out off the penalty close to the try-line succeeded in their second attempt with a rolling maul for hooker Ifahan Fareed to

score and Dulan Gunawardena to convert making the scores 7-3.

It did not take long for Royal to cross the line once more when the Peterites did not even bother to collect a high-ball kick and the end result was a second try scored by scrum half Mubeen Faleel for a 12-3 half time finish.

The Peterites were not supposed to win

the match but were expected to go down with honour at a match befitting a title-decider and if the first half was given to Royal with a neglected defence, the second session was presented virtually on a platter.

This time the ball-handling errors on the part of the Peterites were all howlers shocking for their fans to witness and the wide open spaces they left in their defences had Royal's players frolicking to score two more tries through centre Sabith Feroze and winger Pasindu Fernando with relative ease that made the ultimate difference between the two sides.

A few minutes earlier, Peterite full-back Shehan Liyanapathirana failed miserably in a clearance kick and Royal were given a launching pad to open their try-scoring in the second half when off an ensuing rolling maul Ifahan Fareed went over for his second try to make the scores 17-10.

Only once did the Peterites show some of their character in the second half when their forwards out-played the Royal pack for Faiz Abdulla to score and Liyanapathirana to make an easy conversion.

Eventually Royal marked one of their finest seasons as they picked up their fourth bilateral trophy, the BC Anghie prize, and when they had their hands on the League title it capped a dream year of five trophies.



The champion Royal College rugby team celebrate with the Singer inter-school League title after beating St. Peter's College 32-13

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