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UPFA 205 out of 234 councils, ITAK second, UNP third, JVP nowhere

## UPFA sweeps polls

By Shamindra Ferdinando

(Island.lk) - The SLFP-led UPFA emerged victorious at Thursday's LG polls winning 205 of the 234 local government authorities.

The ruling coalition polled 3,338,401 votes (55.65%), while the ITAK, aka TNA, obtained 70,171 votes (1.17%) to secure 12 LG bodies. The UNP, which recently predicted that the government would have to face an Egyptian type popular revolt before long, had a rude shock. It came a distant third winning only nine local authorities in spite of a major propaganda campaign spearheaded by UNP leader Ranil Wickremesinghe and his bete noire Sajith Premadasa, MP. The UNP won 31 LG bodies in 2006.

The UNP obtained 2,032,891 votes (33.89%), while its erstwhile partner, the SLMC polled 88,592 votes (1.48%) to take control of four LG bodies.

The SLMC contested in some areas on its own, while throwing its weight behind the UPFA in others. In spite of contesting the last parliamentary polls in April 2010 on the UNP ticket, the eight-member SLMC group switched its allegiance to President Mahinda Rajapaksa last September.

The remaining local government authorities were shared by the National Congress (2), IND. Group (1) and Up-Country People's Front (1).

The JVP failed to retain the Tissamaharama PS, which it won in 2006. The JVP polled 181,270 votes (3.02 per cent).

SLFP General Secretary Maithripala Sirisena, MP, told The Island that in spite of an aggressive Opposition campaign targeting the government, the electorate had endorsed the 'Mahinda Chintanaya' again. Sirisena said that those elected to newly constituted LG bodies should throw their full weight behind the post-war development drive launched by the government. He warned new members that their victory at Thursday's poll shouldn't be a reason for them to lose their heads.

Elections to 64 LG bodies could not be held due to legal action against rejection of nominations. Mine clearing operations resulted in a postponement of elections to Puthukudirippu PS and Muhudubadapaththu PS in the Mullaitivu District.

Independent Group I won the Pallepola Pradeshiya Sabha in the Matale District. It was the only LG body secured by an Independent Group.

Political sources told The Island that the UPFA backed the Independent Group after the Election Secretariat rejected its nominations for Pallepola. Sources said that the Independent Group and the UPFA had reached a pre-poll understanding to hand over the PS to the UPFA after the poll.

The Up-Country People's Front comfortably won the Nuwara Eliya Pradeshiya Sabha in the absence of the UPFA, which had its nominations rejected. A spokesperson for the Up-Country People's Front told The Island that the

government's support had enabled them to win the Nuwara Eliya PS. President Rajapaksa accommodated Shathinidevi, the wife of the

late P. Chandrasekaran in the group on the advice of his advisors.

Dr. A. R. A. Hafeez told The Island that the SLMC won four PSs at Addalachenai, Pottuvil, Ninthavur and Irrakkamam in the Digamadula electoral district on its own. Responding to a query, He said that those SLMC nominees, who contested the March 17 poll on the UPFA ticket, too, had been returned.

The National Congress led by Minister A.L.M. Athaula secured Akkaraipattu MC and Akkaraipattu PS. The National Congress is a constituent party of the ruling UPFA.

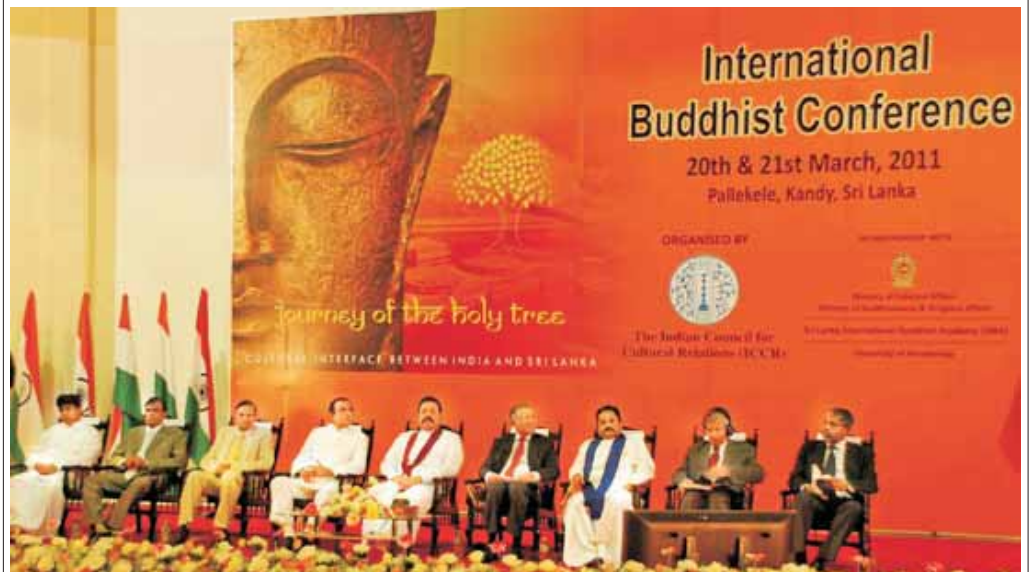
UPFA General Secretary Minister Susil Premjayantha told The Island that people had reiterated their support to the Mahinda Chintanaya.

UNP spokesman, WPC member A. J. M. Muzammil told The Island that the UNP had increased its support base in spite of contesting the polls on its own. Muzammil pointed out that the SLMC, which contested the last parliamentary election on the UNP ticket, had switched its allegiance to President Rajapaksa along with P. Digambaram, Sri Ranga and Prabha Ganeshan.

The UNP said that seven UNP members, too, had crossed over to government ranks last year. Muzammil said that the UNP had increased its vote percentage to almost 34 per cent from 27 per cent at the last parliamentary poll.

**The Island**  
Online

## International Buddhist Conference Inaugurated



International Buddhist Conference: President Mahinda Rajapaksa participates at the International Buddhist Conference in Pallepola, Kandy yesterday. Among others in the picture are Prime Minister D M Jayaratne, External Affairs Minister Prof G L Peiris, Indian High Commissioner to Sri Lanka Ashok K Kantha, Central Province Governor Tikiri Kobbekaduwa, Diyawadana Nilame Nilanga Dela Bandara and Peradeniya University Vice Chancellor Prof SBS Abayakoon. Picture by Sudath Malaweera

## University of Hertfordshire to link up with a Sri Lankan University



A meeting was held at the Sri Lanka High Commission in London recently to discuss possible linkages/collaborations between the University of Hertfordshire and a Sri Lankan University at the initiation of Lord Sheikh of the British House of Lords who recently visited Sri Lanka as a member of Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Delegation. Prof Barry Hunt, Pro Vice Chancellor, International Affairs of University of Hertfordshire, Dr Aziz Boussofiane, Head of UH Global of the Hertfordshire University, Lord Sheikh, Mr. P. M. Amza, Acting High Commissioner of Sri Lanka and Mr. Saman Ekanayake, Minister (Cultural & Education) took part in the discussion. (Pics by Mr. Himal Kusumsiri)

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