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Highlights of LLRC findings and recommendations

By Shamindra Ferdinando

(Island.lk) - The Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Commission (LLRC) has, in its final report, said that no state should be asked to suspend military operations aimed at rescuing civilians forcibly held by a heavily armed terrorist group. The failure on the part of a state to proceed with such operations will only allow terrorists to go on the rampage, the presidential commission has said. The LLRC is of the view that the International Humanitarian Law (IHL) prohibits the deliberate targeting of civilians but it does not frown on combat operations undertaken by a government to rescue hostages. The withdrawal or suspension of combat operations will only aggravate such a crisis. The eight-member Presidential Commission has made these observations in response to various accusations by a section of the international community, mainly the one that civilians were targeted during the final phase of the ground offensive in the Vanni in 2009. Former Attorney General C. R. de Silva who chaired the Commission on Sunday night (Nov. 20) handed over to President Mahinda Rajapaksa its 388-page report and another comprising a range of data, including technical reports and maps.

The LLRC also comprised former Foreign Secretary, H.M.G.S. Palihakkara, former legal advisor to the External Affairs Ministry, Dr. Rohan Perera, senior attorney at law - M. T. M. Bafiq, Former Deputy Secretary to the Treasury - Chandirapal Chanmugam, Professor at the Department of Criminal Justice, University of Nevada, Las Vegas - Karunaratne Hangawatte, former High Court Judge - Maxwell Parakrama Paranagama and former Deputy Legal Draftsman Manohari Ramanathan. After receiving the report, President Rajapaksa said he would release it to the public through Parliament. Former UN under Secretary Jayantha Dhanapala in his submissions before the LLRC launched a scathing attack on successive governments for their failure to implement recommendations by various presidential commissions. "The recent history of Presidential Commissions has been a dismal and uninspiring one. We have the Udalagama Commission which was aborted and we have a number of Commission Reports which have not been implemented. Nevertheless, the personal stature of all of you as Commissioners and the integrity that is widely respected of yourselves encourages me to appear

before you and speak in order that our country can enjoy a future of peace and reconciliation," Dhanapala said in his opening statement. External Affairs Minister Prof. G. L. Peiris recently assured Canadian High Commissioner in Colombo, Bruce Levy of Sri Lanka's commitment to make the LLRC findings public. He said this in answer to a question at the External Affairs Ministry briefing. The Commission has devoted one whole chapter to its observations and recommendations. Commenting on the issue of accountability, the LLRC has stressed the need for thoroughly investigating allegations of disappearances. This recommendation has been made in response to accusations by some of those who appeared before the LLRC, particularly in the northern and eastern provinces. The LLRC asserts that the government should not ignore eyewitness accounts that their loved ones taken into



LLRC report handed over to President : The final report of the Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Commission (LLRC) was handed over to President Mahinda Rajapaksa yesterday evening at Temple Trees by the chairman of the Commission C R De Silva. The other members of the LLRC Dr Rohan Perera, Professor Karunaratna Hangawatta, C Shanmugam, HMGs Palihakkara, Manohari Ramanathan, MP Paranagama, MTM Bafiq and the Acting Secretary of the Commission LA Dasanayake also participated in this event. Picture by Sudath Silva

custody by security forces have gone missing. The Commission has ruled out the involvement of the state in the civilian disappearances. **SEE P15**

Celebrations to mark the opening of Expressway



People took the opportunity to walk along the southern express way at the weekend prior to its opening by President Mahinda Rajapaksa on Nov.27. They celebrated the event in a grand way. Several civil society organizations organized national games and colourful processions with gaily decorated elephants parading along the expressway. A large crowd participated in the celebrations at the Gelanigama entrance organized by Madurawala Lion Club in Horana. Pix by Buddika Kumarasiri **SEE P14**

SL gives exchange rate guidance to banks - CB Governor

Sri Lanka has given guidance to state banks to buy U.S. dollars at 113.50 rupees and sell at 113.90 rupees to depreciate the local currency by 3 percent, stated Central Bank Governor, Ajith Nivard Cabraal in an interview with Bloomberg. "People can do their own trading at any place," he said. Sri Lanka's economy may grow at a record pace next year and inflation will probably stay at the 'mid-single digit' level, stated the Central Bank before the budget announcement before 21st November. Gross domestic product may increase 8.5 percent to 9 percent in 2012, from an estimated 8.3 percent this year, according to Central Bank data. A 9 percent growth rate would be the fastest since 1950, when the monetary authority started collating data for GDP, Bloomberg said. "Low inflation and high economic growth achieved by the Sri Lankan economy need to **SEE P6**

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