

NEWS

Common ground on human rights with 'tested friend' China

SRI LANKAN President Mahinda Rajapakse told a visiting Chinese communist party delegation that the two countries are tested friends and China will always have Sri Lanka's unwavering support on the One-China policy.

Rajapakse made the remarks on Friday, September 4, at a meeting with the visiting delegation of the Communist Party of China (CPC), led by a member of the CPC Central Committee Political Bureau and Party chief of China's Tianjin municipality Zhang Gaoli. The delegation was in Sri Lanka on a two-day good will visit at the invitation of Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) headed by Rajapakse.

Rajapakse expressed his country's gratitude to China for assistance provided towards the economic and social development of the island and declared the friendly relationship between the two countries has stood long test and the two countries are tested friends.

Gaoli congratulated the massive achievement made by the Sri Lankan government on national reconciliation and the development of the country and thanked the Sri Lankan government for its firm support for the Chinese government's stance on the issues

related to Taiwan, Tibet, Xinjiang and human rights.

China's diplomatic support helped Sri Lanka block a Human Rights Council resolution at the United Nations in May this year deploring the gross human rights abuses committed by the Sri Lanka security forces against Tamils.

Gaoli also reaffirmed the Chinese government's support for Rajapakse's efforts to defend Sri Lanka's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Meanwhile, a former Australian diplomat warned that western inaction over Sri Lanka's intransigence in adhering to international humanitarian norms and shift towards China could be detrimental to Indian and western interests.

Speaking at an event held at The University of Sydney last week, to launch of the Sri Lankan Human Rights project, a joint initiative between the Centre for Peace And Conflict Studies (CPACS) and the Australian Centre for Independent Journalism (ACIJ) with the support of Amnesty International, Bruce Haigh warned that Sri Lanka may become "a vassal state of China.. not averse to carrying out acts of terror and in the future that may be directed towards India in ways to be determined by the Chinese".

Pakistan destroyer on goodwill visit

A PAKISTANI navy ship arrived in Sri Lanka on a goodwill visit aimed at strengthening existing ties and the level of cooperation between the two countries, according to navy sources in Sri Lanka. PNS 'Zulfiquar', Pakistan's destroyer class ship arrived in Colombo harbour on Saturday, September 5 and was ceremonially welcomed by the Sri Lanka Navy in the presence of Pakistan Defence Adviser Colonel Syed Khurram Hassnain Alam. "This will provide an opportunity for close interaction between both friendly navies", a spokesperson for Pakistan high commission in Sri Lanka said.

"Such relationships have picked up momentum in the last few years owing to growing interdependence at state level in facing emerging challenges and to enhance security and defence of vital national interests though such visits to regional countries are a regular feature" he added.

PNS "Zulfiquar" is 123 meters long, 13.2 meters wide and 30.7 meters in height with a displacement of 3143.9 tonnes and a crew of 14 officers and 188 sailors, the SLN told media in Colombo. The Ship's Commanding Officer Captain Zahid Ilyas called on Sri Lankan Navy Commander Vice Admiral Thisara Samarasinghe.



Sri Lanka is revelling in its 'tested' friendship with China, promising to always support its new pal

Sri Lanka floats LTTE revival stories, continues to keep Tamils incarcerated

SRI LANKA'S defence secretary has warned the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) are being revived at local and international levels and would attempt to challenge the government again.

Gotabhaya Rajapakse, who is also the brother of President Mahinda Rajapakse, cautioned that the LTTE would make a fresh attempt to resume arms smuggling and train cadres overseas and bring them in boats, reported the Island newspaper.

The LTTE would also try to open sea routes for their leaders to move in and out as they did some time ago, the paper further reported Rajapakse as saying during an address to navy cadre at Trincomalee base on Friday, August 28.

Negligence and shortcomings on Sri Lankan navy's part would be catastrophic, the paper quoted him as adding.

"Urging the navy to be vigilant of the impending challenge, he said that the LTTE should not be allowed to raise its head again," the paper reported.

"He said the battle-field victory achieved at a very heavy price should not be allowed to be reversed. But that would entirely depend on the continuation of existing security arrangements, he said, reminding the navy that it would have a significant role to play in meeting the looming threat," the newspaper reported.

Rajapakse was further quoted as saying that the navy would have to thwart LTTE plans by setting up bases along the coast and maintaining constant surveil-

lance.

In recent weeks numbers of Sri Lankan ministers and officials have come out with warnings of a LTTE revival, whilst the military continues to claim regular discoveries of arms caches in Vanni and arrests of LTTE leaders in the camps in Colombo.

Political analysts say the Sri Lankan government, which announced that the LTTE has been crushed and, even few weeks ago, declared that the organisation will never be able to raise its head again, is floating these stories to allow it to keep Tamils incarcerated in camps citing security concerns.

One of the reasons given by the Sri Lankan government for refusing to release the nearly 300,000 civilians interred in camps in Vavuniya is that they are still 'weeding out former Tigers'.

As Sri Lanka increasingly comes under pressure from the international community to free the Tamils held in barbed wired camps, the frequency of LTTE leaders' arrests and arms cache finds have also risen.

In the space of a week Sri Lankan police have claimed the arrest of two 'prominent' LTTE leaders and a major weapons haul.

In one of the latest incidents, acting on civilian information, a LTTE leader, who led a 40-cadre group at Wellamullivaikkal area in the final battle, was arrested from a tourist hotel in Mount Lavinia on Tuesday, September 9, according to Sri Lankan police.

In a separate incident, a LTTE intelligence wing leader named Arulmozhi was arrested by Sri Lankan security forces inside the Manik Farm camp, Sri Lankan police claimed.

On the arms cache front, Sri Lankan police claimed that a large stock of arms and ammunition was unearthed from Vellaimullivaikkal on Wednesday September 10, based on information provided by LTTE cadres.

Military Spokesman Brigadier Udaya Nanayakkara said Task Force VIII launched a substantial search operation in Puthukudiyiruppu and Sugandipuram areas and recovered a haul of arms.

"Police uncovered 18 T56 assault rifles, three dismantled T56 rifles, 8,000 T56 ammunition, three T56 magazines, four 0.22 weapons, a T81 rifle, three snipers, two 97 type weapons, a female suicide kit, a claymore mine weighing 15kg, six claymore stands, seven hand grenades produced by the LTTE, a part of a 12.7mm barrel, an MPMG body group, 5,000 of 5.56mm ammunition, 4,600 MPMG ammunition, 425 12.7mm ammunition, 140 17.5mm ammunition, 32 9mm pistol ammunition and a 40mm grenade launcher bullet. Troops uncovered 200 GPMG ammunition, an FNC weapon, 134 FNC ammunition, two FNC magazines, 83 AP mines, an MPMG body part, 34 of 29.5 MT gas cylinder, 150 of 12.5 MT gas cylinder and five of 2.5 MT gas cylinder," reported the government run Daily News newspaper.