

SRI LANKA SEEKS ENHANCED MILITARY TRAINING FROM INDIA

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Sri Lanka has sought enhanced military training from India, according to President Maithripala Sirisena's office.

Visiting Indian Defence Secretary Sanjay Mitra called on Mr. Sirisena on Monday, and wide-ranging matters, including bilateral defence cooperation between the neighbouring countries and regional security, were discussed, officials said.

"India and Sri Lanka agreed to increase cooperation in security and defence spheres in several areas, including regional security, curbing drug smuggling and human trafficking and training of members of the security forces," a statement from the presidential media unit said.

Thanking India for its partnership, Mr. Sirisena requested to increase the number of personnel trained by India. The Indian Defence Secretary agreed to look into the possibility of enhancing training facilities, the statement further said.

Currently, over 60% of Sri Lanka's military personnel pursue their young officers' course, junior and senior command courses in India, according to defence sources in Colombo.

Meanwhile, 'Exercise Mitra Shakti', the sixth edition of the joint military training exercise between the Indian Army and the Sri Lankan Army, concluded in Badulla district, in Sri Lanka's Central Province, on Monday.

Contingents from the two countries jointly planned and executed a series of "well-coordinated tactical operations based on scenarios that are likely to be encountered in rural and urban environment", a press release from the Indian Ministry of Defence said. The two-week programme is part of an initiative that began in 2013 as part of military diplomacy between India and Sri Lanka.

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