



* Sri Lanka can count on China for development cooperation

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July 12, Beijing: In its pursuit of development, Sri Lanka can count on China as its most sincere and reliable partner for cooperation, the government of China assured following the successful conclusion of China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi's three-day visit to the island nation.

The Chinese Foreign Minister visited Sri Lanka from July 8 to 10 at the invitation of Sri Lanka's Foreign Affairs Minister Mangala Samaraweera.

The Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Lu Kang said at the media briefing Monday, during the Foreign Minister's visit, China and Sri Lanka, time-tested and close friends, agreed to carry forward traditional friendship, consolidate political mutual trust, and promote practical cooperation.

He noted that next year marks the 60th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties between the two countries and the 65th anniversary of the signing of the Agreement on Rice for Rubber.

When asked whether China will invest more in Sri Lanka, the Spokesperson said the two countries should act upon the important opportunity, follow the direction of jointly building the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road, drive the economic development and infrastructure building of Sri Lanka's near-port areas by implementing flagship projects including the Colombo Port City project and the Hambantota project to enhance Sri Lanka's capability for independent development and realize common development.

He said the two sides will make positive efforts to realize leaders' mutual visits next year which will inject more impetus to the growth of bilateral relationship.

"I want to stress here that in its pursuit of development, Sri Lanka can count on China as its most sincere and reliable partner for cooperation," he added.

In the past two years, the two-way trade volume between the two countries has been growing by a double-digit rate against the sluggish background.

As more Chinese choose Sri Lanka as their travel destination, China now has become Sri Lanka's 2nd largest source of tourists, the spokesperson pointed out.

"Regardless of the changing international situation, China-Sri Lanka strategic partnership for cooperation will continue to move forward," he said.

In an interview during his visit in Colombo, the Chinese Minister Wang Yi said the relations between the two countries were affected due to government transition in Sri Lanka but with joint efforts of both countries, the transition period has come to an end and this page has been turned over. Currently, China-Sri Lanka relations have returned to the track of sound and stable development, he said.

Wang Yi said that his visit to Sri Lanka this time aimed at accelerating the implementation of the important consensus reached by the leaders of the two countries, comprehensively combing through China-Sri Lanka cooperation in all fields and facilitating new achievements of China-Sri Lanka strategic cooperative partnership.

Wang Yi pointed out that Sri Lanka is fully capable of becoming an important cooperative partner in jointly building the "21st Century Maritime Silk Road" by giving play to its location advantages of connecting both the Asian and the African continents and reaching the South Asian subcontinent.

"Through joint construction of the Maritime Silk Road, China is willing to help Sri Lanka to realize its national development vision and become the future shipping, logistics and even the financial center in the Indian Ocean so that this pearl in the Indian Ocean can glow with new radiance in this era," Minister Wang Yi said.

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