
Rajapaksa summons all-party meet

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B. Muralidhar Reddy Initiative includes pro-LTTE Tamil National Alliance COLOMBO: Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapaksa has summoned a meeting of all political parties, including the pro-LTTE Tamil National Alliance (TNA), on March 26 for an interaction "on the prevailing political situation".

The initiative is the first of its kind by the government involving any pro-LTTE grouping since abrogation of the Norwegian-brokered 2002 Cease Fire Agreement (CFA) in January 2008. The meeting assumes importance as the military campaign against the LTTE has reached a decisive phase and all eyes are on the government to revive the political process for resolution of the ethnic conflict. According to informed sources in the government, at the moment the President does not have any concrete proposals or package in mind to offer the all-party meet. "The President would be interested in knowing the views of the political parties before considering any set of proposals," said a senior official. Mr. Rajapaksa is committed to implementing the interim report of the All Parties Representative Conference (APRC) constituted by him to help find a political solution to the ethnic conflict. Among other things, the committee has called for full and faithful implementation of the 13th Amendment to the Constitution, made after the Indo-Sri Lanka 1987 Accord, dealing with issues related to devolution of powers to the provinces. Earlier at a function held at the Presidential Palace to announce resumption of a train service to the war-torn Northern Province, Mr. Rajapaksa said he had asked the Minister of Transport to run the Yal Devi train at least five more kilometres beyond Vavuniya by April 23. "It would show our resolve for co-existence. What we are attempting now is to breathe new life into the heart of the nation; to start the journey that would unite the entire nation after 19 years," he said. He called upon India, China, Pakistan, Japan and other countries that helped in the fight against terrorism to come forward and assist in reconstruction so that terrorism would not be able to raise its head again. "I have decided to rebuild the Jaffna station employing the people of my own village, Hambantota. Engineers, masons, carpenters etc. from Hambantota would go and rebuild the Jaffna station. Likewise people from other districts should contribute and participate to build the other stations," he said. Courtesy: Hindu.com