
Appreciate Russia's support especially at crucial times : Minister Bogollagama

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Russia's support at extremely crucial times was very important for Sri Lanka to face and overcome the challenges in meeting the threat of terrorism, and now Sri Lanka is in a position to turn the challenges into opportunities emphasised Foreign Minister Rohitha Bogollagama during his meeting with the Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Alexey Borodavkin on 16th October 2009. Minister Bogollagama was meeting the Russian Deputy Minister who was in Colombo to attend the 8th Ministerial Meeting of the Asian Cooperation Dialogue (ACD).

During the meeting Minister Bogollagama thanked Russia for supporting and assisting Sri Lanka as the Chair of the ACD. The Minister said that he was looking forward to continued cooperation, support and guidance to make Sri Lanka's tenure as Chairman of the Grouping a success with a vision to take Asia to greater heights. He welcomed Russia's involvement in Asia and noted that in the last decade various other global factors superseded focus on Asia. The Russian Minister stated that three fourth of Russia is situated in Asia and it wished to be identified with the Asian region. Therefore, Russia is paying more attention to the region and is also a fully fledged Asian country. The two Ministers recalled the traditionally warm and close bonds of friendship shared by the two countries and agreed that existing relations should be expanded to new vistas of cooperation, and structured relations. Minister Bogollagam invited Russian investors to visit Sri Lanka and initiate projects, as many new opportunities have arisen due to the defeat of terrorism. Areas identified by the Minister included service sectors, fisheries, tourism, tea and infrastructure development. Minister Borodavkin agreed with the Sri Lankan Minister and referred to a visit to Sri Lanka shortly by a Russian business delegation to identify and explore feasible areas for investment. He also mentioned that a Russian company has become involved in the KKS cement factory rehabilitation project. The visiting Minister pledged Russia's continued support for Sri Lanka to create conditions for political and economic sustainability. Minister Bogollagama said that Sri Lanka was looking forward to the visit of the Russian Foreign Minister to Colombo at the end of this month. The two Ministers agreed that this visit will further strengthen the bonds of friendship between the two countries and will act as precursor to visits at the highest level. During the interaction the two Ministers discussed Sri Lanka becoming a dialogue partner in the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation and on the ways and means of increasing engagement with that organisation.

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