
Sri Lanka-Bulgaria to strengthen cooperation

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President of the Republic of Bulgaria Georgi Parvanov called on President Mahinda Rajapaksa on November 1 during a one-day visit to Colombo. During the meeting it was acknowledged that there are possibilities for further developing bilateral political dialogue and cooperation in the economic, cultural and other spheres of mutual interest. It was pointed out that both sides enjoy excellent cooperation in the framework of the UN and other international organizations. The Bulgarian President praised the efforts of President Mahinda Rajapaksa to rebuild the country after the defeat of terrorism. An agreement was also signed to improve bilateral trade. The Bulgarian President was informed by the Sri Lankan President about the efforts of the Sri Lankan Government in the process of post-conflict rehabilitation of the country, following the defeat of the LTTE and the progress achieved towards that end. The Bulgarian side expressed its expectation that this process will be successfully completed on the basis of substantive participation of all ethno-religious communities, while preserving the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Sri Lanka, in accordance with the principles of democracy and the respect for human rights, including the return of the IDPs to their places of habitat. In this regard President Mahinda Rajapaksa observed that the number of IDPs remaining is 160,000 from the original number of 280 thousand, the process of their return is continuing and the target for its completion is end of January, 2010. The two Presidents were unanimous in their stance that the development of EU-Sri Lanka relations contributes to the country's prosperity. They noted the mutual willingness for continuing the constructive dialogue for enhanced economic, trade and investment cooperation. They pointed out the important contribution of existing arrangements and commitments towards this end. Courtesy: Daily News Courtesy: defence.lk