
Sri Lanka and Iranian Ministers discuss Roadmap for Extended Economic Co-operation

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Professor G.L. Peiris, Minister of External Affairs and Dr. Mehdi Ghazanfari, Minister of Commerce of the Islamic Republic of Iran, had detailed consultations in Tehran on Monday with regard to significantly expanded economic co-operation between the two countries. Prof. Peiris expressed appreciation for the generous assistance given by the Government of Iran for socio-economic development in Sri Lanka following the visit by President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad to Sri Lanka in April 2008. He said that the Uma Oya and the Rural Electrification Projects are now in progress. Ministers Peiris and Ghazanfari followed up at length the discussions at the Ninth Session of the Iran & Sri Lanka Joint Economic Commission in Colombo in September this year, with regard to expediting implementation of the Sapugaskanda Oil Refinery Expansion Project. Among the other matters discussed at the meeting were the modalities for obtaining LNG from Iran on a Government to Government basis. The Ministers discussed the steps to be taken in the immediate future to achieve an appreciable increase in the volumes of tea exported into Iran from Sri Lanka. They agreed on measures to be adopted for the rapid implementation of the Preferential Trade Agreement between Sri Lanka and Iran. Iran's Minister of Commerce appreciated the briefing by Prof. Peiris on current initiatives in Sri Lanka in respect of rehabilitation and reconstruction, and said that he looked forward to Iranian companies contributing their expertise in the field of construction, to the building of infrastructure in Sri Lanka. Prof. Peiris said that a delegation from the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce would visit Tehran shortly. The two Ministers considered it useful to give priority to initiatives to stimulate tourism, especially in light of the characterization of 2011 as Tourism Year by Sri Lanka. Ministry of External Affairs Colombo 10th November 2010