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TODAY'S ANALYSIS

(19 December 2024)

TOPICS TO BE COVERED

- EXERCISE SLINEX
- SL PRESIDENT'S VISIT TO INDIA
- MCQs



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EXERCISE SLINEX

Introduction

- The **SLINEX-24** (Sri Lanka–India Exercise) is a **bilateral naval exercise** that will be conducted from **17 to 20 December 2024** at **Visakhapatnam**, under the aegis of the **Eastern Naval Command** of the Indian Navy.
- The exercise is a key component of the longstanding **maritime cooperation** between India and Sri Lanka and has been an annual event since its inception in 2005.

OBJECTIVES OF THE EXERCISE

The primary aim of SLINEX-24 is to **enhance bilateral maritime cooperation** and **interoperability** between the navies of India and Sri Lanka. The exercise seeks to:

- Strengthen the **maritime ties** between both nations.
- Promote a **safe, secure, and rules-based maritime environment**.
- Improve the operational coordination of the **Indian Navy** and **Sri Lankan Navy** through joint exercises.
- Share **best practices** and **professional exchanges** to improve both navies' capabilities.

PHASES OF THE EXERCISE

SLINEX-24 will be conducted in two distinct phases:

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- **Harbour Phase (17–18 December 2024):**

- This phase will take place at the harbor in **Visakhapatnam**.
- Participants will engage in **professional and social exchanges**, aimed at enhancing mutual understanding and fostering goodwill between the Indian and Sri Lankan naval personnel.
- **Objective:** Strengthen **interpersonal relationships** and **professional interaction** between the two navies.

- **Sea Phase (19–20 December 2024):**

- This phase will be conducted at sea, where the focus will shift to practical joint exercises.
- **Activities Include:**
 - **Special Forces operations:** Joint operations involving elite personnel.
 - **Gun firings:** Training in live-fire exercises for naval personnel.
 - **Communication drills:** Improving communication protocols between the two navies.
 - **Seamanship practices:** Enhancing the sailing and operational capabilities of both forces.
 - **Navigation evolutions:** Conducting advanced navigation and maneuvering drills.

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- **Helicopter operations:** Joint operations involving naval helicopters.

PARTICIPATING UNITS

- **India:**

- **Indian Naval Ship (INS) Sumitra:** A **Naval Offshore Patrol Vessel (NOPV)**, part of the **Eastern Fleet** of the Indian Navy, equipped with modern surveillance and defense systems.
- **Special Forces team:** Personnel from the **Indian Navy's Special Forces (Marine Commandos or MARCOS)** will also participate in joint operations.

- **Sri Lanka:**

- **SLNS Sayura:** An **Offshore Patrol Vessel** of the **Sri Lanka Navy**, designed for coastal and **exclusive economic zone (EEZ) patrols**.
- **Special Forces team:** A contingent from the **Sri Lanka Navy's Special Forces** will also participate in specialized operations alongside Indian forces.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

- **Inception:** SLINEX was **initiated in 2005** to foster closer defense and maritime cooperation between India and Sri Lanka.
- The exercise has since evolved into an important platform for enhancing **naval interoperability** and **professional exchanges** between the two countries.

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- **Expanding Scope:** Over the years, SLINEX has **expanded in scope**, growing from a simple **training exercise** into a comprehensive bilateral naval cooperation event that now includes:

- Complex **special forces drills**
- **Advanced naval tactics**
- **Helicopter operations**
- **Live fire drills**
- **Search and rescue operations**

2024 EDITION FOCUS

- SLINEX-24 aims to further reinforce the already strong **maritime ties** between India and Sri Lanka.
- The **sea phase** will specifically enhance **interoperability** between the two navies, which is essential for maintaining a **safe, secure, and rules-based maritime environment**.
- The growing scope of the exercise reflects both nations' commitment to working together to address emerging maritime security challenges in the **Indian Ocean Region (IOR)**.

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SL PRESIDENT'S VISIT TO INDIA



- **Date:** 16 December 2024
- **Location:** New Delhi, India
- **Leaders Involved:**
 - **Prime Minister of India:** Narendra Modi
 - **President of Sri Lanka:** Anura Kumara Dissanayake
- **Anura Kumara Dissanayake's** visit to India, his **first overseas trip** as Sri Lanka's president, has come at a pivotal moment for the relationship between the two countries.
- The visit could be a **turning point** in strengthening **economic and strategic ties** between **India and Sri Lanka**, given Dissanayake's strong political mandate.

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DISSANAYAKE'S POLITICAL MANDATE

- Dissanayake, from the **National People's Power (NPP)** party, won a **decisive victory** in the **2024 presidential** and **2024 parliamentary elections**, giving him a broad mandate to **strengthen foreign relations**, particularly with India.
- The previous **fragmented governments** in Sri Lanka made it difficult for Sri Lanka to follow through on commitments, but with Dissanayake's stable leadership, the **potential for deeper cooperation** is now greater.

KEY OUTCOMES

Bilateral Partnership and Mutual Commitment

- **Cultural and Civilizational Ties:**

- The leaders reaffirmed the historical and enduring **cultural, civilizational, and geographical ties between the two nations.**
- They highlighted the importance of people-to-people connectivity at the core of the relationship.

- **Sri Lanka's Economic Crisis Support:**

- President Disanayaka expressed deep gratitude for **India's unwavering support during Sri Lanka's 2022 economic crisis**, noting India's critical role in stabilizing Sri Lanka's economy.

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- **Prime Minister Modi's Assurance:**

- Modi reiterated India's **commitment to supporting Sri Lanka's economic recovery**, highlighting Sri Lanka's importance in India's **Neighbourhood First Policy** and the **SAGAR (Security and Growth for All in the Region)** vision.

Political and Diplomatic Engagement

- **Strengthening Political Ties:**

- The leaders acknowledged the increased political exchanges over the past decade and agreed to intensify political engagement at the highest levels, including leadership and ministerial exchanges.

- **Parliamentary Exchanges:**

- Both leaders emphasized the importance of regular parliamentary exchanges, encouraging shared expertise in governance and strengthening democratic practices.

Development Cooperation

- **India's Assistance to Sri Lanka's Socioeconomic Growth:**

- Both leaders recognized the significant role India played in supporting Sri Lanka's socioeconomic **development, particularly during the 2022 economic crisis.**

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- **Support During Debt Restructuring:**

- President Disanayaka thanked India for its decision to provide grant assistance for projects originally financed through **Lines of Credit (LoC)**, significantly reducing **Sri Lanka's debt burden**.

- **Shift from Debt-Driven Models:**

- Agreement was reached on transitioning from debt-driven financial models to **sustainable investment-led partnerships for economic recovery, particularly in renewable energy**, infrastructure, and social welfare.

Specific Development Projects and Cooperation

- **Ongoing Critical Projects:**

- **Indian Housing Project (Phases III & IV)**
 - **Three Islands Hybrid Renewable Energy Project**
 - **High Impact Community Development Projects** across Sri Lanka
 - **Solar Electrification of Religious Places** in Sri Lanka
 - Projects aimed at the **Indian Origin Tamil Community** in Sri Lanka's Eastern Province
- Both sides agreed to fast-track the completion of these projects and explore new areas of cooperation based on Sri Lanka's needs.

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Training and Capacity Building

- **Training for Civil Servants:**

- India and Sri Lanka agreed to train **1,500 Sri Lankan civil servants across multiple ministries** over the next five years, utilizing India's **National Centre for Good Governance**.

- **Expanded Training Programs:**

- Discussions included expanding training efforts in civil administration, defense, and legal sectors to enhance Sri Lanka's institutional capacity.

Debt Restructuring and Economic Support

- **Financial Assistance During Crisis:**

- President Dissanayake expressed gratitude for India's **USD 4 billion** support, which included emergency financing and foreign exchange assistance to stabilize Sri Lanka's economy.

- **India's Role in Debt Restructuring:**

- India's leadership role as a co-chair in the **Official Creditors' Committee (OCC)** played a key role in resolving debt restructuring discussions swiftly.

- **Grant Assistance:**

- India extended **USD 20.66 million** to help Sri Lanka settle payments for completed projects under **Lines of Credit (LoC)**, reducing the overall debt burden.

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- **Investment-led Recovery:**

- Both sides agreed on moving towards **investment-driven recovery**, particularly in sectors like renewable energy, infrastructure, and sustainable social welfare.

Building Connectivity

- **Importance of Connectivity:**

- Enhanced connectivity was identified as key to boosting economic growth, with a focus on the complementarities between India and Sri Lanka's economies.

- **Passenger Ferry Services:**

- The leaders expressed satisfaction at the resumption of ferry services between **Nagapattinam (India)** and **Kankesanthurai (Sri Lanka)**.
- They agreed to work towards restarting ferry services between **Rameswaram (India)** and **Talaimannar (Sri Lanka)** to enhance people-to-people connectivity and tourism.

- **Port Rehabilitation Project:**

- Discussions were held on the rehabilitation of **Kankesanthurai Port** with Indian assistance to enhance maritime trade and connectivity.

Energy Development

- **Energy Security Cooperation:**

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- The leaders acknowledged the importance of **reliable energy access for economic growth and agreed to strengthen cooperation** in the energy sector, especially renewable energy.
- **Solar Power Project in Sampur:**
 - Agreement was reached to expedite the implementation of the solar power project in **Sampur**, expanding its capacity based on Sri Lanka's energy requirements.
- **LNG and Power Grid Interconnection:**
 - Both countries agreed to explore the supply of **Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG)** from India to Sri Lanka and develop a **high-capacity power grid interconnection**.
- **Trincomalee Tank Farms Development:**
 - Both leaders reaffirmed their support for the ongoing development of **Trincomalee Tank Farms**, which aims to transform it into a regional energy and industrial hub, utilizing its strategic location.

People-Centric Digitization

- **India's Digital Governance Experience:**
 - President Disanayaka expressed interest in replicating India's successful **people-centric digital governance initiatives**, such as **Aadhaar**, **GeM portal**, and **Unified Payments Interface (UPI)** in Sri Lanka.

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- **Sri Lanka Unique Digital Identity (SLUDI):**

- Both sides agreed to expedite the **SLUDI project** to improve government service delivery and digital inclusion in Sri Lanka.

- **Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI):**

- Discussions included collaboration on **Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI)**, leveraging India's established systems like **DigiLocker**, and facilitating cross-border payments using **UPI**.

Education and Technology Cooperation

- **Human-Resource Development:**

- Both leaders agreed to enhance cooperation in **research and development (R&D)**, technology, and educational collaboration to support Sri Lanka's growth.

- **Joint R&D Initiatives:**

- Key areas for joint research include **agriculture, aquaculture, healthcare**, and the **digital economy**.

- **Educational Cooperation:**

- Promotion of collaboration between educational institutions in India and Sri Lanka, focusing on knowledge exchange, joint research, and capacity-building.

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Trade and Investment Cooperation

- **India-Sri Lanka Free Trade Agreement (ISFTA):**

- The leaders emphasized the progress under the ISFTA and committed to further enhancing trade relations, particularly focusing on increasing trade volume and leveraging India's growing economy.

- **INR-LKR Trade Settlements:**

- Discussions included expanding trade in **Indian Rupees (INR)** and **Sri Lankan Rupees (LKR)** to facilitate smoother transactions.

- **Social Security Agreement:**

- Both sides agreed to continue discussions on finalizing a **Bilateral Social Security Agreement** to protect the rights of workers and enhance social welfare coordination.

Agriculture and Animal Husbandry

- **Dairy Sector Cooperation:**

- The ongoing cooperation aimed at developing **Sri Lanka's dairy sector was highlighted**, with the goal of achieving self-sufficiency and improving nutritional security.

- **Agricultural Modernization:**

- Both leaders agreed to form a **Joint Working Group** to explore strategies for modernizing Sri Lanka's agriculture, focusing on sustainable farming and agro-tech solutions.

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Strategic and Defence Cooperation

- **Shared Security Interests:**

- Both leaders reaffirmed the importance of mutual trust and transparency in addressing common security challenges in the **Indian Ocean Region (IOR)**.

- **Maritime Security Cooperation:**

- India provided vital support to **Sri Lanka, including Dornier Aircraft** for maritime surveillance and **Maritime Rescue and Coordination Centre** assistance.

- **Defense Cooperation:**

- Ongoing cooperation was strengthened through **defense training programs, joint naval exercises, and defense assistance** to enhance Sri Lanka's maritime capabilities.

- **Joint Exercises and Maritime Surveillance:**

- Both sides agreed to continue joint maritime operations, with a focus on narcotics trafficking and other security concerns. **Cultural and Tourism Development**

- **Strengthening Cultural Ties:**

- The leaders stressed the importance of their shared cultural and geographical ties, agreeing to enhance cultural exchanges, especially between religious institutions.

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- **Tourism Development:**

- Both nations agreed to work on joint initiatives to boost **tourism infrastructure**, with India offering investment in Sri Lanka's **tourism** sector.

- **New Air Routes:**

- Discussions were held on increasing air connectivity between **Chennai** and **Jaffna**, as well as other tourist destinations.

Fisheries Issues

- **Addressing Fisheries Disputes:**

- The leaders acknowledged the ongoing fisheries disputes between Indian and Sri Lankan fishermen.
- They committed to finding humanitarian solutions through dialogue and cooperation under the **6th Joint Working Group on Fisheries**.

Regional and Multilateral Cooperation

- **Shared Maritime Security Interests:**

- Both sides reaffirmed their commitment to a **free, open, and secure Indian Ocean** and agreed to work closely within regional frameworks like the **Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA)** and the **Colombo Security Conclave**.

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- **Support for BRICS Membership:**

- Sri Lanka formally requested India's support in its bid for membership in the BRICS bloc.

- **UNSC Candidature:**

- Sri Lanka assured India of its full support for India's **2028-29** non-permanent seat bid on the **United Nations Security Council (UNSC)**.



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MCQs

1. Consider the following statements and mark the correct one:

1. SLINEX Bilateral exercise is being conducted between India & SL only since 2005.
2. SLINEX 2024 was conducted under the aegis of Eastern Command of Indian Navy.

- (A) Only 1
- (B) Only 2
- (C) Both 1 & 2
- (D) Neither 1 nor 2



Ans. (C)

2. Which Indian Naval Ship (INS) participated in the SLINEX 2024 edition?

- (A) INS Talwar
- (B) INS Delhi
- (C) INS Godavari
- (D) INS Sumitra

Ans. (D)

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3. SL is centric to which of the following foreign policies of India?

1. Act East Policy
2. Neighbourhood First Policy
3. SAGAR Policy

- (A) Only 2
- (B) Only 2 & 3
- (C) Only 1 & 2
- (D) All of the above



Ans. (B)

4. Which of the following places are connected through ferry services between India & SL?

- (A) Nagapattinam (India) and Kankesanthurai (Sri Lanka).
- (B) Rameswaram (India) and Talaimannar (Sri Lanka)
- (C) Chennai (India) and Jaffna (Sri Lanka)
- (D) None of the above

Ans. (A)

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5. Which of these multilateral organisations do not have India & SL as its members?
- (A) IORA
 - (B) BIMSTEC
 - (C) Colombo Security Conclave
 - (D) Mekong Ganga Cooperation

Ans. (D)



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