

Sri Lanka: India and JVP have 'good discussion' in Delhi

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In what is considered a significant change in India's foreign policy towards Sri Lanka, the leader of the People's Liberation Front-Janata Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) has been invited to New Delhi for talks.

A delegation led by the National People's Power (NPP) and JVP leader Anura Kumara Disanayake (AKD) met India's foreign minister Dr.S. Jaishankar on Monday (5) and held talks.

Taking to social media platform X Dr Jaishankar said he was pleased to meet the NPP & JVP leader Anura Disanayaka.

"A good discussion on our bilateral relationship and the mutual benefits from its further deepening. Also spoke about Sri Lanka's economic challenges and the path ahead."

However, it is not clear if the JVP delegation discussed power sharing with the Tamils as envisaged in the 13th amendment to the Sri Lankan constitution which was brought in as a result of the Indo-Lanka accord, which was opposed tooth and nail by the JVP then calling it "Indian expansionism"

JVP has been opposing the India backed amendment consistently. Exactly a year ago, in February 2023, its MP Sunil Handunnetti in an interview to a local daily said his party is not in agreement with the 13th amendment to the constitution.

In the same interview Handunnetti added "the National People's Power does not accept the amendment to any extent.

The JVP delegation is in India for a five days' visit during which time they are likely to meet political and business leaders among others.

Writing in a Sri Lankan online portal, Shanta Jayarathne, Member, NPP Policy Development Team welcomed the first every diplomatic outreach to the party which is unprecedented.

"This unprecedented move not only strengthens bilateral relations but also underscores the NPP's growing international influence and strategic vision particularly in navigating relations between the two economic power houses, China and India."

The party says the visit of AKD comes at a crucial time, just ahead of impending elections in Sri Lanka.

"The visit not only strengthens economic ties but also sends a clear signal to Sri Lanka's political landscape, suggesting that India recognizes the NPP as a pivotal player in shaping the nation's future.

Political analysts say the invitation by India and the NPP delegation visit is significant in the wake of the increasing popularity of AKD in Sri Lanka after the Argalaya movement which resulted in the war crimes accused former president Gotabaya Rajapaksa being ousted from office.

AKD is likely to contest the ensuing Presidential election and surveys put him in the lead of the other potential candidates-incumbent President Ranil Wickremesinghe and leader of the Samagi Jana Balawegaya Sajit Premadasa.

The visiting NPP delegation is scheduled to visit Ahmedabad the capital of Gujarat the home state of the Indian PM Narendra Modi and the Tiruvananthapuram the capital of the South Indian state of Kerala ruled by the left front government.

In an interview with to the Indian newspaper 'The Hindu' in December 2023 AKD said "We do know that India, who is our closest neighbour, has become a major political and economic centre. So, when we take economic and political decisions, we will always care about how it will impact India."

The JVP delegation to India comprises of Dr Nihal Jeyasinge secretary of the NPP, Vijitha Herath MP and Prof Anil Jayatha, economist.

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