

Strategic Significance of Indo - Sri Lanka Civil Nuclear Agreement

Priyanshu Gupta

Research Scholar, University of Allahabad, Uttar Pradesh, India

ABSTRACT

The civil nuclear agreement between Indian Government and the Government of Sri Lanka signed on the first month of **February 2015** perceived as a first breakthrough of the Sirisena government. The agreement consists of 14 articles, definitions and other legal terms of agreement. India will help Sri Lanka build its nuclear energy infrastructure for peaceful use, including training of personnel. It has far reaching implications for Sri Lanka especially radioactive isotopes for health care including nuclear medicine, nuclear safety, radiation safety, nuclear and radiological disaster mitigation and environment protection, nuclear security and too Sri Lanka wants to establish 600 MW of nuclear capacity by 2030.

Keywords: Nuclear Reactor, Science and Technology, Kudankulam, Emergency, IAEA, Nuclear Security

I. INTRODUCTION

The Government of **Sri Lanka** and the Government of **India** signed a bilateral agreement on cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy in New Delhi on **16th February 2015**, during the state visit of President Maithreepala Sirisena to India. The deliberation on drafting this agreement has begun in way back in 2012 and three bilateral consultation meetings between India and Sri Lanka were held on October 2012, May 2014 and October 2014.¹

India's recent understanding with the US in peaceful uses of nuclear energy paved the way for the deal with Sri Lanka.* Sri Lanka's readiness to sign the nuclear agreement is being seen as a breakthrough because its former president Mahinda Rajapaksa had repeatedly expressed concern over the likely impact of radiation from India's nuclear reactors located at Kudankulam in Tamil Nadu. The high commissioner of India will has to make sure that the government of Sri Lanka strictly follow the safety features of these Russia-supplied reactors.

The agreement resulting from this turnaround is nothing short of a diplomatic tour de force for Modi and his foreign policy team led by foreign secretary S Jaishankar, coming as it does in just over a month of the new government taking charge in Colombo.

In his media statement, Modi said the destinies of India and Sri Lanka are inter-linked and their security and prosperity indivisible. He welcomed progress in maritime security cooperation with Sri Lanka, including in the trilateral format with Maldives.

In September 2010, the Sri Lankan government commissioned its Atomic Energy Authority and Ceylon Electricity Board to conduct a pre-feasibility study of using nuclear energy for power generation from about 2025. It is revising its Atomic Energy Authority Act accordingly. In 2011, Sri Lanka announced that it would establish an Atomic Energy Regulatory Council to allow for the introduction of nuclear power generation technology in the country, and also to address concerns over the security of

radioactive sources and to deal with radiation emergencies.²

II. THE AGREEMENT

The signed bilateral agreement has been focused more on peaceful uses of nuclear energy, and Multilateral Conventions signed by both India and Sri Lanka on nuclear and radiological emergency notification & assistance, have made provisions for notifications & assistance to affected States in case of an emergency.

Table 1

Articles	Specifications
1	Definitions
2	Objectives
3	Joint committee
4	Area of cooperation
5	Forms of cooperation
6	Specific projects
7	Intellectual property rights
8	Protection of information
9	Peaceful use
10	IAEA safeguards
11	Physical Protection
12	Amendment
13	Settlement of disputes
14	Entry into force or Termination

Source: Original text of Agreement between India and Sri Lanka COOPERATION IN THE Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy.

Forms of cooperation under this agreement will be education and training of Sri Lankan scientists and engineers, exchange of experts, consultations on scientific and technological issues, joint studies and research, supply of radioactive material, equipment

and services and transfer and exchange of scientific & technical knowledge and expertise.

It is envisaged to transfer and exchange of knowledge, expertise, sharing of resources, capacity building, sharing of experience and training of personnel, in relation to the following area.³

- Basic and applied research in the peaceful uses of nuclear technology.
- Production and utilization of radioactive isotopes for use in industry, agriculture and water management.
- Use of radioactive isotopes for health care including nuclear medicine.
- Nuclear safety, radiation safety, nuclear and radiological disaster mitigation and environment protection
- Nuclear security.
- Treatment and management of radioactive wastes.

However, management of radioactive wastes does not authorize India to unload radioactive wastes produced in Indian Nuclear Power plants in Sri Lankan territory. It is ensured that all activities implemented in terms of this agreement is protected in compliance with standards and guidelines set by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) from time to time and the 1980 Convention on Physical Protection of Nuclear Material as applicable and both parties maintain respective Safeguards Agreements with IAEA.

- Education and training of scientific and technical personnel;
- Exchange of experts, scientists, technicians and lecturers;
- Consultations on Scientific and technological issues;
- Joint studies and research;
- Supply and transport of nuclear and radioactive material, equipment and services;

- f. Transfer annual exchange of scientific and technical knowledge and expertise;
- g. Other methods of cooperation determined by the Parties"

The agreement strictly underlined that The parties under this agreement shall ensure that "nuclear and radiological material, equipment and technology exchanged under this Agreement as well as nuclear material and technologies produced through the use of such material, equipment such technologies shall not be used for the manufacture of nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices or for any military purposes"⁵

III. CONCLUSION

The agreement has the potential to shape India's strategic relationship with Sri Lanka. The Supply and transport of nuclear and radioactive material, equipment and services to Sri Lanka will enable her to unfolding their potential in power sector. Providing expertise to the island nation through transfer of annual exchange of scientific and technical knowledge and information will help to establish milestone between them. Initiatives' such as CNA provides a platform where the information rich country transfers its knowledge to needy the one. It will also cajole the other neighbors of India to shake hand with India thereby peace and security could be ensured. Generally, It will also project Indian foreign policy as pro-soft and aims of Neighborhood First policy would be successful particularly. Sri Lanka as a sovereign country has the right to decide considers possibilities of signing bilateral agreements on cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy with other countries as well. An MOU in this regard has been already signed with ROSATOM, a Russian State owned Atomic Energy Company. Another MOU is ready to sign with Pakistan to establish cooperation for the development of nuclear applications.⁶ "I don't think the nuclear pact will impact Sri Lanka-China relations much," Jabin T. Jacob, Assistant Director at the

Delhibased Institute of Chinese Studies, told *The Diplomat*. "If anything, it might open up Sri Lanka to the attentions of Chinese nuclear power equipment suppliers," he warned, stressing that China's presence in Sri Lanka "will only continue to rise in the coming years."⁷

IV. REFERENCES

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