

Moragoda explains decision on 'Yuan Wang 5'



Moragoda

Sri Lanka's High Commissioner to India, Milinda Moragoda, on Monday (19), extended gratitude to India for providing a 'strong lifeline' during the economic crisis here and hoped that it will play a crucial role in the economic revival of his country, the *Hindustan Times* reported.

"We are very grateful, it was at a time when nobody stepped up. India provided a strong lifeline for Sri Lanka. Going forward, we can work together on economic revival," he said, while interacting with the media at the Indian Women's Press Corps (IWPC), in Delhi.

On the matter of the docking of the Chinese research ship at the island's southern port last month, the Lankan envoy said his country was working on a framework for cooperation with India to avoid issues.

Moragoda said the decision to allow the docking of the Chinese

ship, 'Yuan Wang 5,' was taken at the level of "officials" in the chaotic time when former president Gotabaya Rajapaksa was leaving the country.

"Approval for this docking was granted when we were in a state of chaos on the ground," news agency PTI quoted the High Commissioner as saying. He also dismissed any political involvement in the decision.

"I think the lesson we have learnt is that we need to have very close cooperation and coordination with India and we also need to have a framework of cooperation and we are discussing that," Moragoda said.

He said India was the anchor for security in the region.

"China is a very close friend. But India is our brother and sister; I quote this by former Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa..." news agency ANI quoted him as saying.

(With ANI, PTI inputs)