

(Press Release)

March 18, 2026
Japan Ministry of Defense

Meeting with the Deputy Minister of Defence of Sri Lanka

On March 18, 2026, from 4:50 p.m. for approximately 40 minutes, Defense Minister Koizumi held a meeting with Hon. Major General Aruna Jayasekara (Retd.), Deputy Minister of Defence, Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka in Tokyo. The overview of the meeting is as follows.

(1) At the outset, Minister Koizumi stated that, as the international community faces a new era of crises, the importance of strengthening defense cooperation between Japan and Sri Lanka is growing toward the realization of a “Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP).” In response, Deputy Minister Jayasekara stated that Sri Lanka’s geographical location is of critical importance, and that the country bears significant responsibility—particularly in the field of maritime security—for a “Free and Open Indo-Pacific.” He further expressed his intention to deepen bilateral cooperation between the two countries, including in the defense domain.

(2) Minister Koizumi and Deputy Minister Jayasekara exchanged views on regional issues, including the recent situation in the Middle East, and welcomed the steady progress in bilateral defense cooperation and exchanges, including the port call of the JMSDF destroyer Onami to Colombo Port this month and the conduct of a goodwill exercise with the Sri Lanka Navy.

(3) Based on these discussions, Minister Koizumi and Deputy Minister Jayasekara agreed to move forward with strengthening defense cooperation between the two countries with a sense of urgency. Specifically, they concurred on the following points:

- To further enhance cooperation in the field of maritime security through measures such as goodwill exercises between the two navies and the invitation of observers to ship-riding cooperation programs;
- To advance capacity-building efforts aimed at enhancing capabilities in areas of shared challenges, including humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HA/DR), as well as through the invitation of observers to seminars in the aerospace domain;
- Furthermore, taking into account that participation by Sri Lankan officer cadets in a short-term exchange program at the National Defense Academy of Japan was realized last year, they agreed to continue discussions toward further deepening personnel exchanges.