

## **Sri Lankan military to be modernized with Indian help: PM Ranil Wickremesinghe**

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**Colombo:** Sri Lanka's military is set to be modernized with assistance from militarily advanced nations such as India, Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe said on Sunday.

Wickremesinghe was addressing a military passing out parade in the central town of Diyathalawa. "In Asia only the armies of India and Japan are older than our Army," Wickremesinghe said.

"It is important to maintain defence ties with militarily advanced nations such as the US and Britain. India, China and Pakistan are also important," he said.

He said the Sri Lankan Army needs to be educated on future warfare to become a modernized army by 2025.

"The army fought a war for over 30 years and they deserve all the credit," Wickremesinghe said adding that politicians must not try to build their images through military victories, a reference to former president Mahinda Rajapaksa.

Rajapaksa, under whom Sri Lanka defeated the LTTE after a 30-year civil war, was criticised for using the military victory for his personal political gains.

Wickremesinghe's comments came as Britain announced last month an assistance package for Sri Lankan military reform.

- PTI