

# Indian Diplomacy At Work

**'SINGALATHEEVUKKINOR  
PAALAM  
AMEIPPOM'**



**WE SHALL CONSTRUCT A BRIDGE  
TO SRI LANKA**

SINGALATHEEVUKKINOR PAALAM AMEIPPOM :  
*WE SHALL CONSTRUCT A BRIDGE*  
*TO SRI LANKA*



*“ I have come with the hope of building this bridge  
– a bridge that rests on strong pillars  
of our shared inheritance; of shared values and vision;  
of mutual support and solidarity; of friendly exchanges and  
productive cooperation; and, above all,  
belief in each other and our shared destiny.” \*\**

*– Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi’ s address  
to Parliament of Sri Lanka, 13 Mar 2015*

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi visited Sri Lanka from 13 to 14 Mar 2015. It was the first stand-alone Prime Ministerial visit to Sri Lanka since 1987. It was also the second Summit in a month’ s time since the visit of President Maithripala Sirisena to India last month and fourth such visit in this year 2015.

\*\* verse from a Tamil song composed by the Indian poet Subramania Bharati

*India and Sri Lanka don't have a land boundary, but we are the closest neighbours in every sense”*

While trade between the two countries saw impressive growth over the past decade it stood at \$ 5.2 billion in 2014, with India's exports at 4.6, million dollars and imports at \$ 600 million. Measures are on to allow greater Sri Lankan imports of apparel, of processed meats and of some categories of fruits.

In terms of connectivity between the two countries, there are 118 weekly flights, with India being the largest source of tourists to Sri Lanka wherein about 16 per cent of Sri Lanka tourism comes from Indians which is about 200,000 people. About 260,000 Sri Lankans visit India every year.

Sri Lanka is one of the major recipients of development assistance given by the Government of India. Under a line of credit of \$167.4 million, the tsunami-damaged Kalutara-Galle-Matara rail link has been repaired and upgraded. Another line of credit of India has given a line of credit of \$ 800 million to Sri Lanka, for track laying and supply of rolling stock to support construction of Medawachchiya to Madhu, Madhu to Talaimannar, Omathai to Pallai, Pallai to Kankesanthurai railway lines and setting up of signaling and telecommunications systems in the Northern Railway line.

India has also been involved in projects - Runway Rehabilitation of the Palaly Airport, reconstruction of Kankesanthurai (KKS) Harbour, construction of hospitals in Dickoya (Central Province) and Vavuniya (Northern Province), restoration of the Thiruketheeswaram Temple in Mannar, the Duraiappa Stadium in Jaffna etc.

India committed to build 50,000 houses in Sri Lanka - 42,000 in the Northern Province, 4,000 in the Eastern Province, and 4,000 in the Central and Uva Provinces. This is the largest ever housing project undertaken by India anywhere in the world. So far 27,000 houses have been built.

Further, India is also committed to construct the Jaffna Cultural Centre (unveiling of the foundation stone was done by PM) and the Faculties of Engineering and Agriculture at Killinochchi. In addition, India is also extending a Line of Credit of US\$ 200 m to build the 500 MW Sampur Coal Power Project.

India also continues to assist a large number of smaller development projects in areas like education, health, transport connectivity, small and medium enterprise development and training in many parts of the country through its grant funding.

The visit witnessed the following outcomes :

*“India's full commitment to development partnership with Sri Lanka. We see this as a responsibility of a friend and neighbour.....  
India is privileged to be a development partner for Sri Lanka.”*

➤India has committed 1.6 billion U.S. dollars in development assistance. A fresh Line of Credit of 318 US million dollars for the projects in the Railway Sector was announced.

➤India stands ready to help Trincomalee become a regional petroleum hub. Lanka IOC and Ceylon Petroleum Corporation have agreed to jointly develop the Upper Tank Farm of the China Bay Installation in Trincomalee on mutually agreed terms.

➤Extension of facility of "Tourist Visa on Arrival - Electronic Travel Authorization" Scheme to Sri Lankan citizens from the Sinhala and Tamil New Year on 14 April 2015.

➤Cooperation in developing a Ramayana Trail in Sri Lanka and a Buddhist Circuit in India.

➤Introduction of direct flight service by Air India from Delhi to Colombo during its summer schedule.

➤Agreement between Reserve Bank of India and the Central Bank of Sri Lanka to enter into a Currency Swap Agreement of US\$ 1.5 billion aimed at keeping the Sri Lankan rupee stable.

The following agreements were also signed during the visit :

1. Agreement on Customs Cooperation
2. Agreement on waiver of visa requirements for holders of diplomatic and official passports
3. MoU on Auditorium in Ruhuna University in Matara
4. MoU on Youth Affairs

India is committed to further strengthening Indo- Sri Lankan partnership in advancing peace and prosperity in the region, including its common maritime neighbourhood.

\*\*\*\*\*