Expansion Of Emergency Ambulance Service In Sri Lanka



There was an Exchange of Letters for the grant of 15.02 million US dollars by India for the expansion of ‘1990 Suwaseriya’.

Speech by Taranjit Singh Sandhu, Indian HIgh Commissioner to Sri Lanka

It is the beginning of a new year and I am delighted that we are starting our developmental journey in 2018 with a joint project, which is one of the most shining examples of the India-Sri Lanka friendship, the expansion of 1990 Emergency Ambulance Service nation-wide in Sri Lanka, under an Indian grant assistance of 15.02 million US dollars. This was announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi during his landmark visit to Sri Lanka in May last year, as the Chief Guest of the UN Vesak Day celebrations. Today, we see the fulfilment of a dream, a commitment transformed into reality, one of the most notable illustrations of success of a public-private partnership model. There is nothing more noble than saving human life; it is most satisfying to note that we are able to assist our dear Sri Lankan brothers and

sisters in this endeavour. This project is unique in many ways; I want to underline six main aspects.

Firstly, it is purely a grant project. We launched the Emergency Ambulance Service more than a year ago, in July 2016 to be precise, in the Western and Southern provinces of Sri Lanka under an Indian grant of around 7.56 million US dollars. Today, we have reached an understanding for a further Indian grant assistance of 15.02 million US dollars for extending the service to all other seven provinces of Sri Lanka.

Secondly, as Prime Minister Narendra Modi mentioned in his video message during the launch of the service in July 2016, this is an example of how India joins hands with its dear and near partner, Sri Lanka, to cooperate on projects, based on Sri Lanka's own choices and priorities for development. We are meeting your aspirations. We are here to help you achieve your goals.

Thirdly, the project is not just about purchase of ambulances and their usage. It is about the use of technology for transforming lives around us. Through this project we are bringing new technology and best practices to Sri Lanka. GVK is here today, and they have demonstrated their ability to replicate success stories of India in Sri Lanka. I take this opportunity to wish them the very best in their continued efforts.

India Has Only One Agenda In Sri Lanka, That Is To Cooperate And Collaborate With Sri Lanka On Issues Of Mutual Interest.

Fourthly, I would like to highlight the fact that Indian development partnership stories are written without caveats and riders. The project has created several hundreds of local jobs and will continue to create many more. The classic features of any development story are job creation, technology transfer and innovation. This project is a comprehensive mix of both.

Fifthly, we are extremely pleased with the commitment from the Government of Sri

Lanka and its leadership to ensure sustainability of the project. Excellencies, you have put in mechanisms in place so that this project ‘survives’, and is thereby able to ensure ‘survival’ of precious lives of Sri Lankan citizens. Your nourishment of the project is critical in future, which you have already so well demonstrated in the Western and Southern provinces.

Lastly, I want to underline the aspect of the importance of looking objectively at issues. The future of our two great nations is built by leaders, who look ahead; it is built by leaders who are passionate about their goals. If we are determined to achieve success, nothing can stop us from reaching our goal. All we need is the determination to grow together. Let me say it loud and clear, India has only one agenda in Sri Lanka; that is, to cooperate and collaborate with Sri Lanka on issues of mutual interest. For us, bilateral cooperation is all about sharing and caring.

It is gratifying to note that our cooperation in health sector has strengthened in recent years. Excellencies, you would recall the inauguration of a new District Base Hospital in Dickoya in May last year, built under Indian grant assistance, in presence of Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi, President of Sri Lanka H E Maithripala Sirisena and Prime Minister of Sri Lanka Hon Ranil Wickremesinghe. We have also gifted the construction of a hospital in Vavuniya; and provided medical equipment to hospitals in Jaffna, Kilinochchi and Mullaitivu. These are important milestones in our bilateral relations.

It was Lord Buddha who said, “Thousands of candles can be lighted from a single candle and the life of the candle will not be shortened. Happiness only increases by being shared”. Let us be the light for each other, let us together light the world.




ISLAND WIDE EXPANSION OF
1990 SUWASERIYA