

□ Official Visit of External Affairs Minister Prof. G. L. Peiris to India, 15-17 May 2011 □



External Affairs Minister Prof. G. L. Peiris called on the Prime Minister of India, Dr. Manmohan Singh, on 17 May 2011.



External Affairs Minister Prof. G. L. Peiris had discussions on current issues of mutual concern with the External Affairs Minister, S.M. Krishna, on 16 May 2011.



External Affairs Minister Prof. G. L. Peiris had discussions on current issues with the Finance Minister of India, Pranab Mukherjee, on 16 May 2011.

Joint Press Statement

The Minister of External Affairs of the Government of Sri Lanka, Prof. G L Peiris visited India from 15-17 May, 2011.

2. During his visit, the External Affairs Minister of Sri Lanka called on Dr Manmohan Singh, Prime Minister of India and met with Shri Pranab Mukherjee, Finance Minister, Shri S M Krishna, External Affairs Minister and Shri Shivshankar Menon, National Security Advisor. Smt Nirupama Rao, Foreign Secretary, called on the visiting dignitary. 3. Delegation-level talks, led by the two External Affairs Ministers, were held on May 16, 2011. The two sides reviewed the entire gamut of bilateral relations. They assessed the developments that had taken place

since the visit of the President of Sri Lanka to India in June, 2010 and the bilateral Joint Commission meeting at the level of the Ministers of External Affairs held in Colombo in November, 2010. Issues relating to regional and international issues of common concern were also discussed.

4. Both sides agreed that the end of armed conflict in Sri Lanka created a historic opportunity to address all outstanding issues in a spirit of understanding and mutual accommodation imbued with political vision to work towards genuine national reconciliation. In this context, the External Affairs Minister of Sri Lanka affirmed his Government's commitment to ensuring expeditious and concrete progress in the ongoing dialogue between the Government of Sri Lanka and representatives of Tamil parties. A devolution package, building upon the 13th Amendment, would contribute towards creating the necessary conditions for such reconciliation.

5. The Minister of External Affairs of Sri Lanka reiterated the commitment of his Government to continue to address issues related to resettlement and reconciliation in a focused and progressive manner. In this regard the Minister of External Affairs of Sri Lanka referred to the work of the Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Commission (LLRC) and set out the steps taken by the Inter-Agency Advisory Committee (IAAC) chaired by the Attorney General in implementing the Interim Recommendations of the LLRC in relation to detention, law and order, administration and language issues and socio-economic and livelihood issues. In response, The External Affairs Minister of India urged the expeditious implementation of measures by the Government of Sri Lanka, to ensure resettlement and genuine reconciliation, including early return of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) to their respective homes, early withdrawal of emergency regulations, investigations into allegations of human rights violations, restoration of normalcy in affected areas and redress of humanitarian concerns of affected families.

6. The External Affairs Minister of Sri Lanka expressed appreciation of the humanitarian and other assistance including demining and livelihood support measures extended by the Government of India for early relief and resettlement of IDPs. In this context, both sides noted that forward movement had taken place towards construction of houses for IDPs and other infrastructure development projects, including rehabilitation of Kankesanthurai harbour, rehabilitation of Palaly Airport, repair and construction of hospital and schools, setting up of Vocational Training Centres, construction of the Cultural Centre in Jaffna, restoration of railway lines and restoration of the Duraipappah stadium in Jaffna.

7. Expressing satisfaction at the progress of work on various railway projects in Sri Lanka undertaken with India's assistance, both sides agreed to facilitate the work for their timely completion. In keeping with the understanding contained in the Joint Declaration of June 9, 2010, both sides agreed to the early conclusion of Agreements related to the Joint Venture Thermal Power Project between NTPC and CEB at Sampur, Trincomalee; finalisation of remaining agreements including reconstruction of the Palali-KKS railway line, establishment of a new signalling and telecommunication system and procurement of rolling stock from India; and to continue ongoing dialogue for early finalisation of a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA). Progress on the feasibility study for the interconnection of India Sri Lanka electricity grids was reviewed. It was also agreed to enhance cooperation in the energy sector

and to promote dialogue on security and defence issues of relevance to the bilateral relationship.

8. Reviewing the outcome of the Joint Working Group meeting on Fisheries held in New Delhi on 28-29 March, 2011, both sides agreed that the use of force could not be justified under any circumstances and that all fishermen should be treated in a humane manner. The Indian side conveyed that the incidents of continued violence against Indian fishermen in the vicinity of Sri Lanka were of serious concern. In this context, both sides noted that the Joint Statement on Fishing Arrangements of 26th October 2008 had led to a decrease in violent incidents. Furthermore, the two sides emphasised the importance of an early conclusion of the draft Memorandum of Understanding on Development and Cooperation in the field of Fisheries between India and Sri Lanka.

9. Both sides reiterated their commitment to promote cultural and people-to-people contacts and enhance connectivity including through early operationalisation of the ferry services between Tuticorin and Colombo and Rameswaram and Talaimannar. The two sides also agreed to encourage two-way flow of investments including in the development of ports and ports related services in Sri Lanka.

10. Both countries agreed on the need for reform of the UN Security Council.

11. Sri Lanka reiterated its strong support for India's legitimate claim for permanent membership in an expanded UN Security Council.

New Delhi
May 17, 2011