

Remarks by Minister S.M. Krishna at Inauguration of the Reconstruction of Northern Railway Lines

Written by Administrator

Tuesday, 30 November 2010 10:38

November 27, 2010

**Hon'ble Basil Rajapaksa, Minister of Economic Development,
Hon'ble G. L. Peiris, Minister of External Affairs,
Hon'ble Kumar Welgama, Minister of Transport,
Hon'ble Rohan Dissanayake, Deputy Minister of Transport,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen.**

It gives me immense pleasure to participate in today's event of the formal inauguration of works for the reconstruction of the Northern Railway lines. We are deeply honoured by the presence of senior Ministers of the Government of Sri Lanka. Let me take this opportunity to reiterate at the outset that we are committed to working with the Government of Sri Lanka towards the consolidation of peace, prosperity and development in Sri Lanka and for the further enrichment of our bilateral ties.

Following the end of armed conflict in Sri Lanka last year, the development partnership between India and Sri Lanka has expanded significantly. Much of our initial assistance was for relief and rehabilitation as the Government of Sri Lanka addressed the challenges involved in resettling the nearly three lakh Internally Displaced Persons. As the task of resettlement proceeds, our assistance is moving into the areas of reconstruction in Northern and Eastern Sri Lanka where we aim to complement the efforts of the Government of Sri Lanka.

As part of our effort to provide for the reconstruction of Northern Sri Lanka, the Government of India has pledged a line of credit of US\$ 800 million at significantly concessional rates for various aspects of the Northern Railway project, including reconstruction of railway lines, installation of signalling and telecom systems and the procurement of rolling stock.

Today's ceremony marks the launch of works on the Medawachchiya-Madhu line by IRCON International Ltd., which is a leading Indian company in railway infrastructure and is already working on the rehabilitation of the Southern Railway, which is also being financed through an Indian line of credit. I understand that the work on Phase 1 of the project in the Galle-Matara Section is progressing well and is likely to be completed by December 2010. IRCON has assured us that in the north too, this work undertaken by them would be completed within schedule. Work will also begin simultaneously on the Madhu-Talaimannar and Omanthai-Pallai railway lines. In this context, I would also like to recognize the efforts put in by the demining teams from India to clear the project area of mines.

Remarks by Minister S.M. Krishna at Inauguration of the Reconstruction of Northern Railway Lines

Written by Administrator

Tuesday, 30 November 2010 10:38

As a part of these works, a new pier at Talaimannar will also be built. In order to enable resumption of ferry services between Talaimannar and Rameswaram at an early date, IRCON will also build a temporary jetty at Talaimannar. The resumption of this ferry service will re-establish old ties and the linkages that have existed historically between our two countries.

I believe that both our countries should continue to work together in the spirit of partnership, as our destinies are interlinked. The reconstruction of transport-related infrastructure would restore normal life, generate and support livelihood-related activities and also assist in restoring connectivity, not only within the Northern Province, but also with the rest of the country, thus promoting integration and reconciliation.

Before I conclude, I would like to place on record my deep appreciation for the cooperation extended by various agencies of the Government of Sri Lanka, including the Ministry of Transport and Sri Lanka Railways, in developing the railways projects. Continued cooperation between our agencies will be crucial for the timely completion of these projects. This cooperation is testimony to the strength of our cooperation and the enduring friendship that exists between our two countries and peoples.

Thank you.

Medawachchiya
November 27, 2010