

**High Commission of India  
Colombo**

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**Press Release**

**High Commissioner's meetings with political leaders of Northern and Eastern Provinces**

High Commissioner H.E. Shri Gopal Baglay held a series of meetings with leaders of various political parties in Jaffna and Trincomalee on 13 March 2021, the third day of his visit to the Northern and Eastern Provinces.

In the first of these meetings, Eelam People's Democratic Party (EPDP) MP Hon'ble Kulasingam Dhileeban thanked India for its consistent position on the implementation of 13th Amendment, and requested more Indian assistance projects in Wanni electoral district.

A 15-member TNA delegation led by the President of ITAK Hon Mavai Senathiraja, Members of Parliament Hon'ble Selvam Adaikalanathan (TELO), Hon'ble Sidhthathan (PLOTE), Hon'ble Sumanthiran, Hon'ble Sriitharan, Hon'ble Charles Nirmalanathan and several young council leaders from the Northern Province apprised the High Commissioner of development requirements of the people of the Province. Several practical suggestions were made for deeper engagement in the fields of water, sanitation, education, skill development, health, agriculture, connectivity and fishing.

An 8-member Tamil parties' delegation led by Tamil Makkal Thesiya Kootani leader Hon'ble CV Wigneswaran, and comprising Mr. Suresh Premachandran (EPRLF), Mr. N.Srikantha, Mr. Shivajilingham (Tamil National Party), Mrs. Ananthi Sasitharan (ETSK), Mr. Venthan, Mr. Kathir (Jananayaga Poralikal) and Mr. Ainkaranesan (Pasumai Thayagam) briefed the High Commissioner on current economic and political priorities. High Commissioner appreciated in particular the suggestions for cooperation in the fields of waste management and skills development.

Members of Parliament Hon'ble Gajendrakumar Ponnambalam and Hon'ble Selvakumar Kajendran of the Tamil National People's Front (TNPf) mentioned to the High Commissioner the priorities of TNPf for the North and the East.

The High Commissioner interacted with political leaders of TNA from the Eastern Province, including Member of Parliament Hon'ble R Shanakkiyan and President of Trincomalee district Mr. Kuhadasan in Trincomalee. A number of practical suggestions were made to the High Commissioner, inter alia, for infrastructure development, skill development, water and irrigation, women empowerment and investment in energy and Information Technology. The High Commissioner assured India's continued engagement in development of the Eastern Province.

In all these meetings, Tamil leaders sought further assistance for infrastructural development, more economic investment and additional projects under grant assistance for development cooperation from India in the Province. The High Commissioner assured his interlocutors of continued cooperation from India in these spheres. He highlighted India's long-standing cooperation and commitment to the development of the Northern and Eastern Provinces in accordance with the requirements of the people and priorities set by their elected representatives.

He recalled commitments of the Government of Sri Lanka relating to the legitimate aspirations of the Tamil community for equality, justice, peace and dignity, and maintained that achieving

them through meaningful devolution within a united Sri Lanka will also contribute to peace, reconciliation, inclusive progress and strength of the country.

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**Colombo**  
**14 March 2021**