

New Train to Polonnaruwa under Indian funding flagged off

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President of Sri Lanka, H.E. Maithripala Sirisena, Minister of Transport and Civil Aviation of Sri Lanka Hon. Arjuna Ranatunga and High Commissioner of India to Sri Lanka H.E. Mr. Taranjit Singh Sandhu jointly flagged off a new train, *Pulathisi Express*, from Fort Station in Colombo to Polonnaruwa on 11 September 2019. The ceremony was also attended by other dignitaries including Secretary, Ministry of Transport and Civil Aviation, Mr. L.P. Jayampathy, General Manager, Sri Lanka Railways, Mr. M.J. D. Fernando, and Director (Technical), RITES Ltd. Mr. Mukesh Rathore,

The train is supplied to Sri Lanka Railways by M/s RITES Ltd. under Indian Line of Credit. The train has best-in-class passenger amenities with fully rotating seats in the Air-Conditioned Chair Cars, on-board entertainment system and modular interiors.

In the last ten months, India has supplied 5 trains (Diesel Multiple Units-DMUs), 4 locomotives and 15 wagons to Sri Lanka Railways. One additional train, 6 more locomotives and 35 more wagons will be supplied by India to Sri Lanka within the next 3 months under concessional financing.

In March 2017, a contract worth around US\$ 100 million for supply of 6 DMUs and 10 locomotives was signed between M/s RITES Ltd., India and Sri Lanka Railways. The first DMU arrived in Sri Lanka in December 2018 ahead of schedule. 5 DMUs and 4 locomotives have already been delivered to Sri Lanka Railways so far.

In addition, 50 wagons are also being supplied to Sri Lanka Railways. 15 wagons have been delivered so far.

In June 2017, India signed a Line of Credit Agreement for US \$ 318 million for the development of railway sector in Sri Lanka. Under this Line of Credit, various projects are underway including procurement of 160 passenger coaches (*contract for around US\$ 83 million was signed in September 2018 between RITES Ltd. and Sri Lanka Railways*); upgradation of around 130 km. railway track from Maho to Omathai (*contract for around US\$ 91 million was signed in mid July 2019 between IRCON Ltd. and Sri Lanka Railways*); upgradation of signal & telecommunication system from Maho to Anuradhapura; and setting up of a Railway Workshop in Rathmalana etc.

India has so far committed Lines of Credit worth around US\$ 1.3 billion for development of railway sector in Sri Lanka. The restoration of arterial railway lines, connecting the North and the South after decades of conflict; and the renovation of the tsunami-affected Southern Railway line were undertaken under Indian Line of Credit. India has also supplied rolling stock to Sri Lanka and contributed to capacity building of Sri Lankan railway personnel.

India remains committed to undertaking people-oriented connectivity projects in Sri Lanka as per Sri Lanka's own developmental priorities.

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