

High Commission of India
Colombo

PRESS RELEASE

India launches Restoration work for Northern Railway Line in Sri Lanka under Grant Assistance

High Commissioner of India H.E. Santosh Jha, and Hon. Bimal Rathnayake, Minister of Transport, Highways and Urban Development, jointly launched the restoration works of Sri Lanka's Northern Railway Line under an Indian grant of USD 5 million. The event was also attended by Hon. Namal Karunaratne, Deputy Minister of Agriculture and Livestock, Hon. Tissa Kumarasiri Warnasuriya, Governor of the North Western Province and Hon. Geetha Herath, Member of Parliament. The project forms part of the Indian reconstruction and rehabilitation package of USD 450 million announced during the visit of External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar to Sri Lanka.

2. The scale and severity of the damage caused by Cyclone *Ditwah* necessitated urgent restoration of critical connectivity infrastructure, particularly railways, which remain vital for passenger movement, essential services, and logistics in the affected regions. In this context, the Government of India announced grant assistance for the reconstruction and rehabilitation of the Northern Railway Line, which was originally built with Indian assistance.
3. The restoration works are being undertaken by IRCON International Limited, an Indian Public Sector Undertaking with extensive experience in railway construction and rehabilitation. The works cover three severely affected sections of the Northern Railway Line Maho-Omanthai, Omanthai-Jaffna, and Medawachchiya-Mannar which suffered extensive damage leading to major disruptions in rail connectivity across the Northern and North Central regions.
4. The commencement of restoration works yesterday (11), within less than three weeks of the announcement of assistance, reflects the priority accorded by India to time-bound delivery of development cooperation. It is planned to restore regular train services to pre-Ditwah frequencies within three months, by April 2026, ahead of the Sinhala and Tamil New Year, with the remaining works targeted for completion by May 2026. The accelerated timeline will involve large-scale deployment of manpower and specialised machinery. IRCON International Limited will also complete pending ancillary works on the Maho-Omanthai railway line, for which India has recently continued its existing Line of Credit.
5. Railways remain a cornerstone of India-Sri Lanka development cooperation. India's cumulative financial assistance to Sri Lanka's railway sector stands at approximately USD 1.2 billion. This includes construction and

rehabilitation of nearly 500 kilometres of railway track, provision of signalling systems across around 400 kilometres, and supply of rolling stock, significantly strengthening the operational capacity of Sri Lanka Railways and enhancing seamless rail connectivity.

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