

High Commission of India
Colombo

Press Release

Inauguration of Jaffna International Airport and Commencement of short-haul flights between Chennai and Jaffna operated by Alliance Air

India-Sri Lanka relation touches the sky!

President of Sri Lanka, H.E. Maithripala Sirisena inaugurated the Jaffna International Airport today. Prime Minister of Sri Lanka Hon. Ranil Wickremesinghe was also present. The inaugural flight with Indian dignitaries landed in Jaffna airport from Chennai to mark the historic occasion. The ATR72-600 short-haul flight was operated by Alliance Air, a subsidiary of Air India. This is Alliance Air's first international flight.

2. Minister of Transport and Civil Aviation of Sri Lanka, Hon. Arjuna Ranatunga, several other Ministers and Members of Parliament, Governor, Northern Province, Hon. Dr. Suren Raghavan, High Commissioner of India to Sri Lanka, H.E. Taranjit Singh Sandhu, CMD, Air India, Mr. Ashwani Lohani, CEO, Alliance Air, Mr. C. S. Subbiah, Consul General of India in Jaffna, Mr. S. Balachandran, members of Tri-Forces of Sri Lanka, several officials from Government of Sri Lanka and Government of India participated in the inaugural event.

3. High Commissioner, in his address, noted that the bilateral relations between India and Sri Lanka have now truly touched the sky! He added that the inaugural flight was yet another example of India's commitment to continue with people-oriented development projects in Sri Lanka. It was also a reflection of the shared commitment to further strengthen people-to-people ties between India and Sri Lanka, which lies at the heart of the bilateral relationship. High Commissioner recalled the words of Prime Minister Hon. Narendra Modi, during his visit to Sri Lanka in 2015, in which he had said that, "*The future I dream for India is also a future that I want for our neighbours*".

4. It may be recalled that Government of India had earlier extended grant assistance for the rehabilitation of runway and basic infrastructure at the Palaly Airfield under the MoU concluded in November 2005 with Government of Sri Lanka. Both sides have also been working towards operationalization of regional commercial passenger flights from Jaffna.

5. The recent expansion of the airport along with setting up of ancillary facilities has been done by Government of Sri Lanka.

* * * * *

Colombo
17 October 2019