

Indo-Sri Lankan Accord

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In News

The India-Sri Lanka agreement is popularly referred to as the Rajiv-Jayewardene Accord, after its architects **Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and President J.R. Jayewardene**. Unfortunately, the event is today remembered for its unpleasant fallout after India got entangled in a counter-insurgency war with the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) from 1987 to 1990.

Provisions of the Accord

- It sought to **collectively address all the three contentious** issues between India and Sri Lanka: **strategic interests, people of Indian origin in Sri Lanka and Tamil minority rights in Sri Lanka**.
- The accord was expected to resolve the Sri Lankan Civil War by **enabling the thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution of Sri Lanka and the Provincial Councils Act of 1987**.
- The Government of Sri Lanka proposed to **permit adjoining provinces to join to form one administrative unit** and also **by a referendum to separate** as may be permitted to the Northern and Eastern Provinces.
- **All persons who have been displaced** due to ethnic violence or other reasons, will have the **right to vote in such a referendum**. Necessary conditions to enable them to return to areas from where they were displaced will be created.
- The Referendum, when held, will be **monitored by a committee headed by the Chief Justice**, a member appointed by the President, nominated by the Government of Sri Lanka, and a **member appointed by the president, nominated by the representatives of the Tamil speaking people** of the Eastern Province.

- The Government of Sri Lanka will utilise for the purpose of law enforcement and maintenance of security in the Northern and Eastern Provinces the **same organisations and mechanisms of Government as are used in the rest of the country.**
- The President of Sri Lanka will **grant a general amnesty to political and other prisoners held in custody under The Prevention of Terrorism Act and other emergency laws**, and to combatants, as well as to those persons accused under these laws. The Government of Sri Lanka will make special efforts to rehabilitate militant youth with a view to bringing them back into the mainstream of national life. India will cooperate in the process.
- India will take all necessary steps to **ensure that Indian territory is not used for activities prejudicial to the unity, integrity and security of Sri Lanka**
- The Indian **navy/ coast guard will cooperate** with the Sri Lankan navy in preventing Tamil militant activities from affecting Sri Lanka.
- The Government of India will cooperate by giving to the Government of Sri Lanka **such military assistance** as and when requested.
- The official language of Sri Lanka shall be **Sinhala. Tamil and English will also be official languages.**
- The President of Sri Lanka and the Prime Minister of India agreed that the **Tamil militants shall surrender their arms** to authorities agreed upon to be designated by the President of Sri Lanka. The surrender shall take place in the presence of one senior representative each of the Sri Lanka Red Cross and the Indian Red Cross.
- The President, in his discretion shall **absorb such paramilitary forces, which came into being due to ethnic violence**, into the regular security forces of Sri Lanka.