

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO-391
ANSWERED ON- 25/07/2024

HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO SRI LANKA

391. SHRI C. Ve. SHANMUGAM

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :-

- (a) whether it is a fact that India supplies food and other articles to Sri Lanka on humanitarian grounds;
- (b) if so, the details of food supplies and the other humanitarian assistance provided to the people of Sri Lanka during the last three years, year-wise;
- (c) whether it is a fact that despite generous aid on all fronts, Sri Lanka is said to be leaning towards China on some issues; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof along with the steps taken by Government in this regard?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
(SHRI KIRTI VARDHAN SINGH)

(a & b) Under its 'Neighbourhood First' policy, Government is committed to developing friendly and mutually beneficial relations with all its neighbouring countries. In line with this, India continues to support Sri Lanka in all possible ways to overcome challenges during difficult times including during COVID 19 pandemic and the economic crisis of 2022.

During COVID 19 pandemic, India supplied more than 25 tons of medicines on a special aircraft to Sri Lanka in May 2020. In addition, India has gifted 5,00,000 doses of a made in India Covid vaccine, Covishield, to Sri Lanka in January 2021. In August 2021 India assisted in transportation of Liquid Medical Oxygen (140 MT) commercially procured by Sri Lanka. Indian Naval Ship Gharial was deployed for expeditious delivery of humanitarian supplies of medicine and kerosene to Sri Lanka. Indian Air Force airlifted nano nitrogen fertilizers to meet Sri Lanka's urgent requirement in November 2021. India gifted 1 lakh Rapid Antigen Test kits to Sri Lanka in February 2022.

As a response to economic crisis in Sri Lanka, in February 2022, a new Line of Credit (LoC) of US\$ 500 million was extended to Sri Lanka for purchase of petroleum products from India. A USD 1 billion Credit Facility for supply of essential items including food items, medicines, fuel etc. was extended to

Government of Sri Lanka in March 2022 for a period of one year and it was extended till March 2024 on the request of the Government of Sri Lanka. An LoC for urea fertilizer was extended to Government of Sri Lanka in June 2022. 65,000 MT urea had been delivered. In January 2022, India extended a US\$ 400 million currency swap to Sri Lanka under the SAARC Framework and agreed to deferral of Asian Clearing Union (A.C.U.) settlements of US\$ 2 billion. More than 26 tons of drugs and other medical supplies were provided to Peradeniya University Hospital, Jaffna Teaching Hospital, Hambantota General Hospital and Ambulance Service '1990' in April-May 2022 to meet the acute shortage of medicines at a cost of INR 6 crore. In addition, a consignment of kerosene was delivered for the use of fishermen in Northern Province of Sri Lanka to enable their livelihoods. In order to cater to the daily needs of recipient families, GoI distributed custom made dry rations among fishermen communities in four districts of Northern Province as well as economically vulnerable sections in other parts of Sri Lanka such as Eastern, Southern and Western Provinces.

(c & d) Government attaches high priority to its relationship with its neighbouring countries. India's relations with its neighbours stand on their own footing and are independent of the relations of those countries with third countries. India is confident about the strength and enduring nature of its bilateral ties with Sri Lanka, which are deep rooted and multidimensional.
