

Sri Lanka needs to do more on devolution, says India

India has told Sri Lanka that it needs to do more on power sharing to end its dragging ethnic conflict, a senior official said Thursday.

The official said while Colombo needed to be patted for deciding to implement the 13th amendment of the constitution that heralded the provincial system, it was not enough.

The 13th amendment came about in the wake of the India-Sri Lanka accord of 1987 that sought to end Tamil separatism.

The official said there were 'other things' Sri Lanka could do, but he did not elaborate.

'We have said, we welcome it (13th amendment) as the first step. But more needs to be done, within a united Sri Lanka (and to the satisfaction of) all communities.'

The official said this was the message a high-level Indian delegation led by National Security Adviser M.K. Narayanan conveyed to Sri Lankan leaders over the weekend.

Neither Sri Lanka nor India had until now said what transpired in the meetings Narayanan and Foreign Secretary Shivshankar Menon had with President Mahinda Rajapaksa. The other member of the Indian team was Defence Secretary Vijay Singh.

IANS had, however, reported Monday that India was pushing hard for a broader devolution process in Sri Lanka and that Colombo needed to go beyond the 13th amendment to the constitution.

India's message to Colombo is that while there can never be a military solution to the ethnic conflict, [New Delhi](#) would assist it wholeheartedly if it forges ahead with a genuine and broader devolution process.

The official explained Thursday that the 13th amendment of the constitution was written 'at a time when life was much easier for Tamils. But the conflict has made things more difficult. It's a more complicated thing'.

But the official clarified that any devolution process in Sri Lanka had to encompass all communities in the war-torn island nation.

The official admitted that Sri Lanka had considerably weakened the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) but 'it is still a very difficult situation... The problem remains.'

The official said the Indian delegation also discussed with Sri Lankan leaders issues sensitive to the two countries as well as the coming South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation summit in Colombo in August.

Sri Lanka conveyed to the Indian officials the election of a new provincial council in the island's east, which the military captured from the LTTE last year.

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