

Press Release

Meeting of Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu with H.E. Mr. Daniel Carmon, Ambassador of Israel

His Excellency Mr. Daniel Carmon, Ambassador of Israel called on the Hon'ble Chief Minister Thiru O. Panneerselvam today, 8th April 2015, in his office in the Secretariat, Chennai. The Hon'ble Minister for Housing, Urban Development & Agriculture Thiru R. Vaithilingam was present during the meeting.

Hon'ble Chief Minister welcomed the Israeli Ambassador and his delegation to Tamil Nadu and recalled that India and Israel established full diplomatic relations in 1992. Since then the relations between the two countries have grown. Defence and agriculture are the two pillars of the bilateral cooperation between India and Israel. The future vision should be to build a strong partnership in high tech areas. This would benefit both economies.

The Hon'ble Chief Minister mentioned that civilian bilateral trade has grown to about 6 billion US Dollars per year with trade in diamonds constituting about half of the bilateral trade which is a clear case for further diversification. Possible areas of diversification include pharmaceuticals, agriculture, IT and telecom, and security related products. The proposed Free Trade Agreement could provide a big boost to bilateral trade.

The Hon'ble Chief Minister mentioned that Tamil Nadu is one of the States covered in the Indo-Israel bilateral agreement for cooperation in agriculture. India-Israel Centres of Excellence for cooperation in agriculture are being set up including two centres

in Tamil Nadu at Reddiarchatram in Dindigul district and Thally in Krishnagiri district.

Tamil Nadu has also benefited from Israeli expertise and technology in the area of horticulture mechanization, protected cultivation, orchard and canopy management, nursery management, micro-irrigation and post-harvest management. Israeli drip irrigation technologies and products are now widely used in the State. Co-operation is growing in the dairy sector as well.

India has been a favourite tourist destination, especially for Israeli youth. At present, about 40,000 to 50,000 Israeli tourists visit India. Tamil Nadu is now India's most favourite state for foreign tourists and would gladly welcome more Israeli tourists.

Israeli companies have invested in India in energy, renewable energy, telecom, real estate, water technologies, and are also setting up R&D centres or production units in India.

The Hon'ble Chief Minister highlighted that within India, Tamil Nadu is one of the best performing states which has already attracted over US Dollars 16 billion of foreign investment. Under the dynamic Leadership of Puratchi Thalaivi AMMA, Tamil Nadu has emerged as one of the largest manufacturing hubs in India. Tamil Nadu is a leader in the production of automobiles and auto components, electronic hardware, engineering, textiles, and leather. Tamil Nadu is one of the Top 10 automobile hubs globally with a production capacity of 1.4 million passenger cars per year.

Tamil Nadu offers a number of competitive advantages for investors. The State's biggest asset is our rich human resource

endowment. Abundance of skilled human resource and harmonious and peaceful industrial relations make Tamil Nadu a preferred investment destination. Today, Tamil Nadu is the most "technically powerful knowledge State" in the country.

The Hon'ble Chief Minister mentioned that at present, Tamil Nadu is the Second largest State economy in India and to reach the top position, the visionary Leader Puratchi Thalaivi AMMA had unveiled "Vision Tamil Nadu 2023" which aims to place Tamil Nadu in the league of Upper Middle Income countries with a per capita income of US dollar 10,000 by 2023. The Vision Document envisages very large investments in infrastructure. 217 projects and programmes have been identified and profiled.

The Israeli Ambassador thanked the Hon'ble Chief Minister for the warm reception accorded to him. He highlighted that they were keen to extend partnership with other parts of the country, especially in the South. He said the India and Israel shared many commonalities having gained independence at about the same time from the British and building nations as democracies. Israel was and is a "development laboratory" which shares many of the same challenges, values and interests as India and in particular, a State like Tamil Nadu. He mentioned that his visit to the Centre at the Thally in Krishnagiri district for the cut flower cultivation was very fruitful and the State could be proud of the manner in which the Centre was developing. He also mentioned that he visited the Nemmeli Desalination Plant where an Israeli company had provided the technology. He highlighted that water was a sector in which much greater co-operation was possible. To develop tourism, it is important to increase the number of direct flights from India to Israel. He emphasized the importance

of encouraging greater people to people relations including through tourism and through academic interactions.

The Hon'ble Chief Minister mentioned that the State Government was organising a Global Investors Meet on 23rd and 24th May, 2015 in Chennai to showcase investment opportunities. Israel has already been invited to be a Partner Nation for this event and expressed the hope that Israel would accept our invitation and offer its support.

The Ambassador of the Israel was accompanied by His Excellency Mr. Menaham Kanafi, Consul General of Israel in Bengaluru and Mr. Ziv Shalvi, Deputy Chief of Mission and Head of Administration and Consular, Consulate General of Israel in Bengaluru.

Thiru K.Gnanadesikan I.A.S., Chief Secretary to Government, Tmt Sheela Balakrishnan, I.A.S (Retd.) Adviser to Government, Thiru K.Ramanujam, I.P.S.,(Retd.) Adviser to Government, Thiru K.Shanmugam I.A.S., Principal Secretary to Government, Finance Department, Thiru S.Krishnan, I.A.S, Principal Secretary to Government, Planning, Development & Special Initiatives Department and Thiru Rajesh Lakhoni, I.A.S., Secretary to Government, Agriculture Department were present.

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