

# Ranil hands over India-built houses

## Relief for 400 families of Malayaha Tamils working on Sri Lanka's tea estates

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Over 400 families living on the famed tea estates in Sri Lanka on Sunday took possession of their new houses built with Indian assistance.

The construction of the homes is part of India's commitment to build 4,000 homes in the island's central highlands that is home to Malayaha Tamils.

During his visit to the island last year, Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced an additional 10,000 homes in the area.

A bilateral agreement formalising the project was signed at a special ceremony in Nuwara Eliya district on Sunday.



Sri Lankan PM Ranil Wickremesinghe handing over papers of a house to a beneficiary on Sunday. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

The nearly million-strong hill country, or Malayaha, Tamil community, distinct from those living in the war-affected north and east, comprises descendants of labourers that the British

brought down from South India to work on the estates.

Sri Lankan Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe, who handed over the houses on Sunday, appreciated India's commitment in partnering

Sri Lanka in development projects, a press release said. Mr. Modi, joining the event through a video conferencing link, said: "Sri Lanka has been and will remain special for India," reiterating the commitment of the government and people of India, "to be with the people of Sri Lanka in their journey towards greater peace and prosperity."

India is supporting the construction of 60,000 houses across the island. As many as 46,000 in the north and east, being built for war-displaced persons, are already complete and 14,000 are now being built in the central and southern parts of the island.