Let's collectively advance the 13th Amendment to the Constitution for the future betterment of the nation - President tells Parliament

Date : 09-08-2023

- **Pending parliamentary approval, the amendment to the Provincial Council Polling Act is prepared for implementation**
- **An advisory council will provide guidance to provincial governors until the provincial councils become functional**
- **Within a thriving provincial council system, there exists the potential for a significant transformation in the overall system**

Following the revision of laws pertaining to Provincial Councils and the implementation of new legislation, should the Parliament endorse the amending the Provincial Council Voting Act, which includes voting based on the District Proportional System and allows Members of Parliament the right to contest in Provincial Councils, with a minimum of 25% female representation, President Ranil Wickremesinghe noted that once discussions have been held and consensus reached regarding the proposed increase in the number of provincial councils, measures will be undertaken to conduct provincial council elections.

The President made this declaration today (Aug. 09) during a special statement in the Parliament, wherein he presented his suggestions and forthcoming actions concerning the 13th amendment of the Constitution and the delineation of powers. He confirmed that the establishment of a committee, headed by the Prime Minister, will be pursued to re-evaluate the powers assigned to the central government, the functions assigned to provincial councils, and the shared responsibilities stipulated in the constitution. The resulting amendments will be proposed, garnering the support of all parliamentary factions.

Furthermore, President Ranil Wickremesinghe highlighted the intent to establish an advisory council to offer guidance to provincial governors until the operationalization of the provincial councils. Noting the entrenched role of Provincial Councils within the governance structure and political landscape of the country, the President emphasized the opportunity to effect a substantial transformation in constructing an effective, transparent, and corruption-free Provincial Council system that commands public trust and addresses citizen concerns.

President Ranil Wickremesinghe acknowledged the challenges in reaching consensus, particularly with sensitive matters like police powers during the devolution of authority to Provincial Councils under the 13th Amendment. He underscored the importance of unity in executing these initiatives.

Full Speech