

# The Common Man of The Peaceful Revolution



Story of Sri Lankan President  
Maithripala Sirisena



“The destiny of a nation rests on the  
courage and humility of it’s leader”

5806



# The Common Man of The Peaceful Revolution

'The Lasting Legacy of Sri Lanka's  
6 th President'

**Maithripala Sirisena**

PRESIDENTIAL SECRETARIAT  
LIBRARY

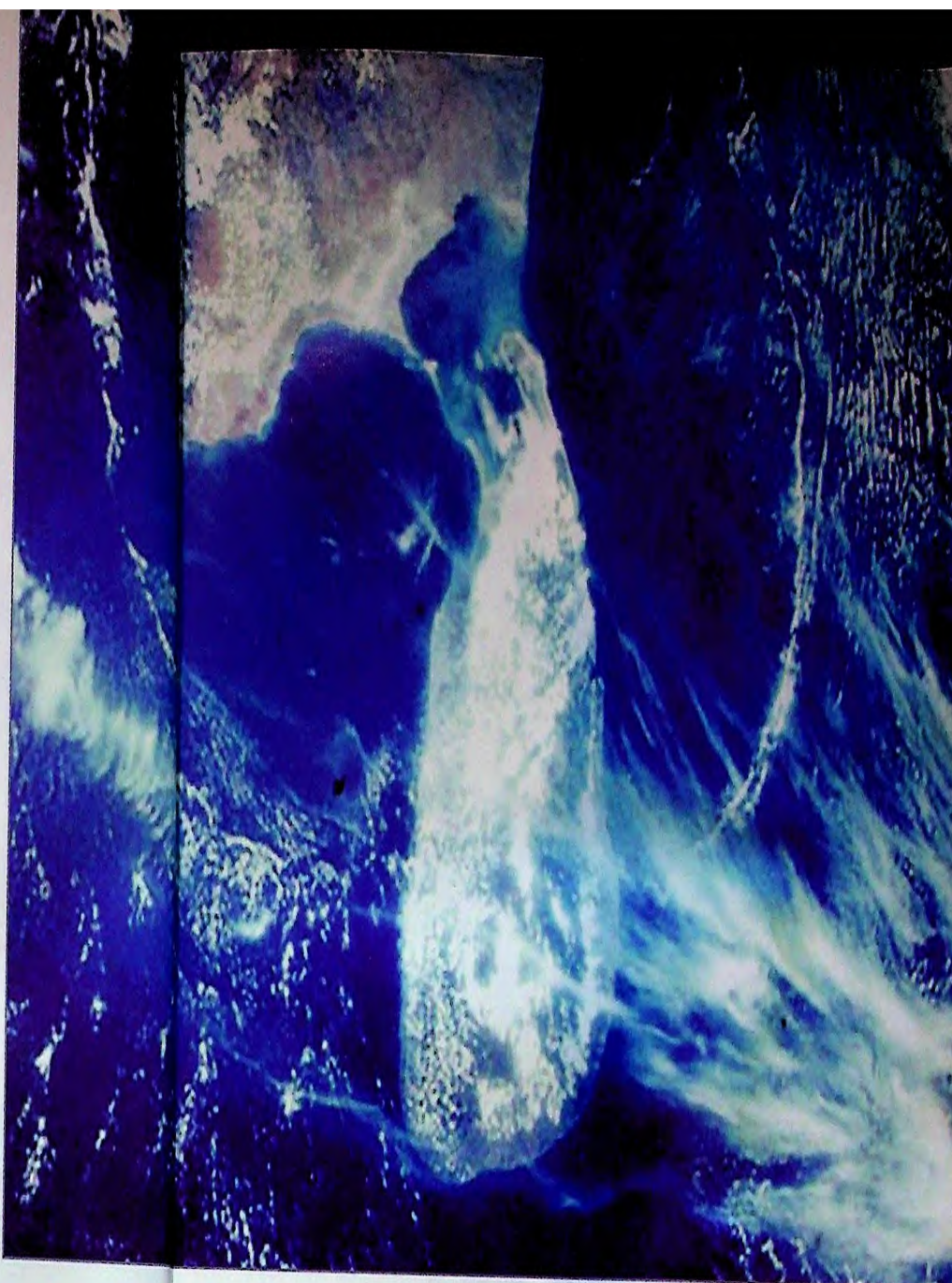
ප්‍ර. කොටස 5806  
 වෙන අංකය 920

පරි. අංක	5806
වර්ග අංකය	920
දිනය	2019.10.18

# In Perspective

Sri Lanka is an island nation with a storied natural splendour and a cultural history dating back over three thousand years. Early European travellers took to referring to the island as the 'Pearl of the Indian Ocean'. Venetian explorer Marco Polo went so far as to call the country "the best island of its size in the world".

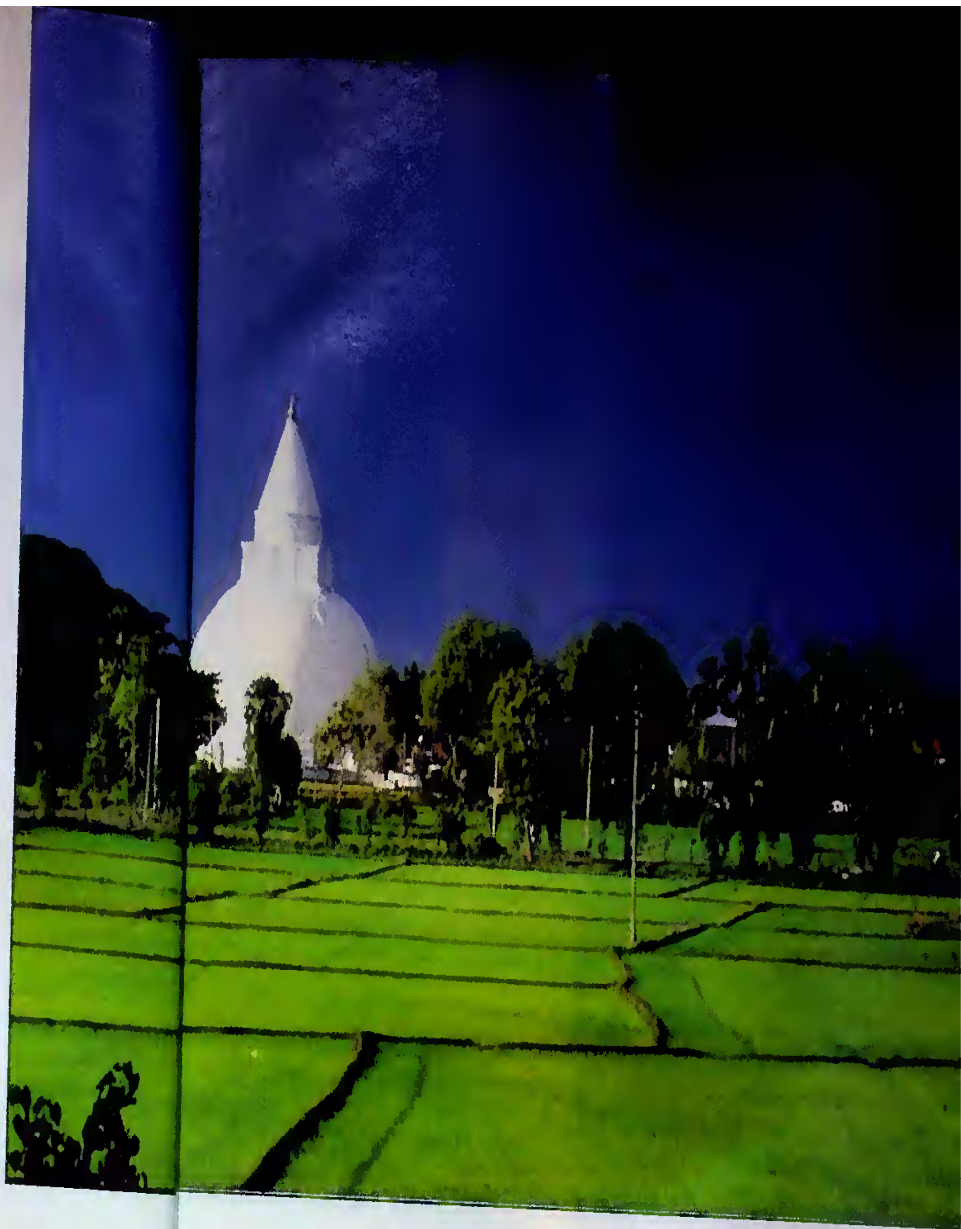
Situated along the ancient maritime silk trade route that has bridged Asian and European civilizations for centuries, the country was also known as 'Serendib' - the land of illumination, and the root of the English word 'serendipity' - by the Persian empire. After four centuries of colonial administration under the Portuguese, Dutch and the British, Sri Lanka gained independence from Britain in 1948.



Known as the 'Pearl of the Indian Ocean', Sri Lanka is in an enviable location where the busy East-West shipping route passes just six to ten nautical miles south of the island. More than 60,000 ships ply this route annually, carrying two-thirds of the worlds oil and half of all container shipments.

It since remained within the Commonwealth of Nations, under a democratic system of governance with a strong foundation of social safety net programs for its citizens. Today, Sri Lanka is home to four major religions - Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam and Christianity. Sri Lankans of all faiths are united by their pride in a diverse and inclusive culture and breath-taking biodiversity within the 65,000 sq. km of golden coastlines, tropical rainforests and rolling mountains.

From 1956, Sri Lanka operated under a mixed economic system that combined the virtues of capitalism on a bedrock of social security programs, under the framework of a Non-Aligned foreign policy. In 1972, Sri Lanka became an independent republic. In 1978, Sri Lankans voted to adopt a new constitution that introduced an Executive Presidency, drawing on the French and American presidential systems, in tandem with a British-inspired parliament. The same year, the country led its South Asian neighbours and was the first among its peers to depart from a mixed economic system and fully adopt free market policies, while safeguarding the rights of all Sri Lankans to universal education and healthcare, and robust social security programs.



Sri Lanka has a rich agricultural history dating back more than '2500 years' Its culture is a mixture of modern elements with traditional aspects and is known for its regional diversity.

## Political Challenges

Sri Lanka's democratic political and policy evolution was not entirely peaceful. The early 1970s and 1980s saw two civic uprisings that threatened the survival of liberal democracy in the country. Beginning in the 1970s, a violent uprising of left wing youth sought to overthrow the government and institute radical socialist changes. This revolution was quickly and peacefully resolved.

The late 1970s saw the rise of fascist terrorist groups that sought to carve out a separate state in the North and East of the island, purportedly on behalf of the country's Tamil citizenry who they repressed mercilessly. These militant groups sparked a civil war that engulfed the entire country, conscripting child soldiers and suicide bombers to commit atrocities against their countrymen for decades until they were finally defeated by the Sri Lankan armed forces in 2009, at the cost of devastating damage to the country's citizenry, economy and cultural unity.



The ancient citadel of Yapahuwa was one of the ephemeral capitals of medieval Sri Lanka in the 13th Century.



Colombo is the commercial capital and the largest city in Sri Lanka.



"The best island of its size in the world" - Marco Polo

It is widely accepted that these outbreaks of violence were sparked at least in part by the restriction of economic development to urban areas of the country, which led to rural youth to feel ostracized and left behind as the country's urban denizens reaped the rewards of economic prosperity. Additionally, many felt that the early instability in the adoption of democracy had the sectarian effect of sparking tensions between the majority Sinhalese and the minority Tamil community.

It was hoped that the Executive Presidency introduced in 1978 would catalyse economic progress within the safeguards of democracy. While the country has seen great progress since the introduction of this system, the presidency also aggravated communal tensions further by promoting a divisive political culture, reducing the transparency and accountability of government.

The concentration of power in a central government and indeed in a single elected official led to a series of increasingly authoritarian presidential regimes, each elected democratically. As successive regimes worked to enhance the statutory and practical power of the Presidency, Sri Lanka grew ever more vulnerable to a potential backslide from democracy to autocracy.

Every President and political party elected since 1994 came to power on platform promises to abolish the Executive Presidency, which was widely seen as too powerful a threat to democracy. Once elected, those promises were forgotten as those in office embraced that same power that they campaigned against.



Eventually, these fears came true. The government elected in 2005 ended the separatist war in the North and East within four years. This historic victory, made possible by the exceptional talent and bravery of the men and women who made up Sri Lanka's armed forces, led to unfettered popular support of for the governing party, culminating in the regime's re-election in 2010.

After this election, the government rapidly transformed into a 'sultanist', or monarchical system in practice, as the vast majority of constitutional power gravitated towards a single family.

As a first step, the incumbent president jailed the defeated opposition presidential candidate, General Sarath Fonseka. The ruling regime then wooed opposition lawmakers into its ranks to secure two-thirds majority control of the legislature. Predictably, they exploited this power to enact a constitutional amendment to remove the few meaningful checks and balances that reined in the executive presidency including the removal of a two-term limit on the election of any individual to the presidency. This amendment stood in stark contrast to the regime's election promise to divest power away from the central government.

In addition, the constitutional amendment enacted by that government stripped provisions that protected the independence of the judiciary, police and public service. Oversight of these organs of the state was usurped from independent commissions appointed by the legislature and placed under the direct control of the presidency. Several other



Maithripala Sirisena waves to supporters in Colombo on November 21, 2014, shortly after defecting from the ruling party and declaring himself as the common opposition candidate

powers vested in parliament were also shifted to the presidency.

In effect, the ruling regime effected an anti-democratic constitutional coup rooted in the sacrifice of thousands of soldiers, sailors and pilots of the armed forces who laid down their lives to defeat terrorism and safeguard that very same democracy. This transformation was further enabled by the stifling of the independent media, as dozens of journalists who spoke out against the regime were killed and many more abducted, assaulted and driven into exile between 2005 and 2015.

This led to the powers of the presidency being exercised in a manner that effectively rendered Sri Lanka into an “elected” dictatorship. The majoritarian politics and high-handed governance that followed led to a fear-psychosis that cowed any semblance of dissent among the populace. Judges who ruled against the presidential family including the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court faced impeachment, and others who crossed their path turned up dead under suspicious circumstances.

As in so many other junctures in the history of republican government since the Roman Senate crowned Julius Caesar as their emperor, it was the popularity that stemmed from a military victory that gave way to the election of an

autocracy. What followed was a familiar playbook. Widespread surveillance, extra-judicial killings and rampant human rights violations paralyzed free speech and dissent around the country. Fiscal mismanagement and large-scale corruption gave way to a growing economic crisis and skyrocketing cost of living while the regime shunned the international community and grew increasingly insular and isolationist in its foreign policy.

The government attempted to divert the attention of the citizenry away from its abuses by encouraging xenophobia and violence against minority communities, embracing conspiracy theories to cast the blame for its own foibles on the rest of the world. Sri Lankans writ large resented the slide into autocracy, but had resigned themselves to the fact they had no credible force to rally behind and challenge their rulers. The risk was too great. Sri Lankans watched helplessly as the ruling regime stripped the remaining vestiges of independence from the public sector, pilfered the national coffers and cemented their grip on power.



## A Glimmer of Hope

**D**espite widespread discontent among the pro-democratic majority of civil society, the country remained in crisis. There was no mechanism to mount a credible challenge against a government that had tightened its grip on every cog and lever that made up the machinery of the state.

In the international arena, the Sri Lankan government faced mounting pressure to carry out its obligations to reconcile its war-torn citizenry, ensure transitional justice, forge a lasting peace for all, and restore the rule of law within the country. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Navi Pillay, after visiting the country in 2013, warned that Sri Lanka was moving in an "increasingly authoritarian direction". As 2014 dawned, the nation's crisis became not just political but also fiscal. Unchecked and systematic graft and nepotism led the cost of living for ordinary citizens to skyrocket. Sri Lankans were losing both their physical and economic security.

It was against this seemingly hopeless backdrop that in 2014 the courageous Buddhist monk Ven. Maduluwawe Sobitha Thero assembled a cadre of democratic and civil society activists, united by a refusal to give in to the futility of Sri Lanka's plight. Under Sobitha Thero's leadership, the forces of discontent scattered across Sri Lankan society coalesced into a single movement to create a National Movement for a Just Society. Even the incumbent regime, famous for its culture of making critics disappear in the dead of night in its dreaded "white vans", was not yet so bold as to risk causing the "disappearance" of a venerated Buddhist prelate. Thus, the increasing popularity of this movement





among political parties, rights activists, civil society groups, trade unions and other citizens led to a nationwide craving for a political leader who could take up their platform and challenge the incumbent president. They sought a common candidate immune to the temptations of corruption, committed to the fundamentals of justice and dedicated pluralism and good governance.



Maithripala Sirisena was sworn in as the 6th Executive President of Sri Lanka - 9th January 2015



## Answering the Call of Duty

**A**s the surveillance state struggled to keep up with the sudden rise of a united political and civil society opposition to the regime, cracks began to appear in the inner-workings of the police-state, as democratic sympathisers at every level of government secretly lent support to the fledgling political opposition. Fearful of their plummeting popularity, the government in November 2014 called for a snap presidential election two years ahead of schedule, hoping to take the opposition off-guard and secure another six years in power before the opposition grew insurmountable.

The ruling family had faith in their grip on power and their autocratic apparatus. Even if the opposition were to find a credible presidential candidate acceptable to all parties, control of the police and armed forces meant that no outside force could successfully challenge them. Indeed, no outside force did.



Instead, the unthinkable happened. On 21 November 2014, the General Secretary of the ruling party and sitting cabinet minister for Health, Maithripala Sirisena, held an impromptu press conference at which he announced that he and a handful of his cabinet colleagues were breaking away from the government, and that he would contest the presidency against the incumbent, even if it cost him his life. A survivor of several failed assassination attempts by terrorist suicide bombers, Sirisena rose to the call of duty, and put the fate of future generations of his countrymen over any consideration of his own safety.

Rallying behind Candidate Sirisena were the main opposition United National Party and its leader Ranil Wickramasinghe, and all political parties representing minority ethnic and religious groups in parliament. Ven Sobitha Thero and his National Movement for a Just Society led the campaign along with support from a host of trade unions and civil society groups.

Sri Lankans from all walks of society, thirsting for a return to democracy and clean governance found in Maithripala Sirisena the candidate who represented their shared aspirations. A seasoned politician without a shred of parochial ambition, Sirisena's inspirational and unity-centric vision for Sri Lanka's future resonated across the country. However, his chances of success were decidedly slim.

Ever since the inception of the executive presidency in 1978, no challenger to the office had ever defeated an incumbent president, each having lost by a margin of between 8.42% to 25.36% of the popular vote. This was the case even in the heyday of Sri Lankan democracy. In the eyes of the world, challenging a regime so soaked in the blood of its opponents was considered to be almost suicidal. The government took no chances, and left no stone unturned in its efforts to leave that winning streak intact. The ruling party did away with all appearances of republican governance, and flagrantly employed the state machinery in furtherance of their political campaign.

And so, it was against all odds that after six weeks of fierce campaigning, on 8 January 2015, Maithripala Sirisena made history by defeating incumbent President Mahinda Rajapaksa by a margin of 3.7% and being elected as the sixth President of Sri Lanka.

President Sirisena arrives in the Parliament  
with the Speaker of the Parliament,  
Karu Jayasuriya.

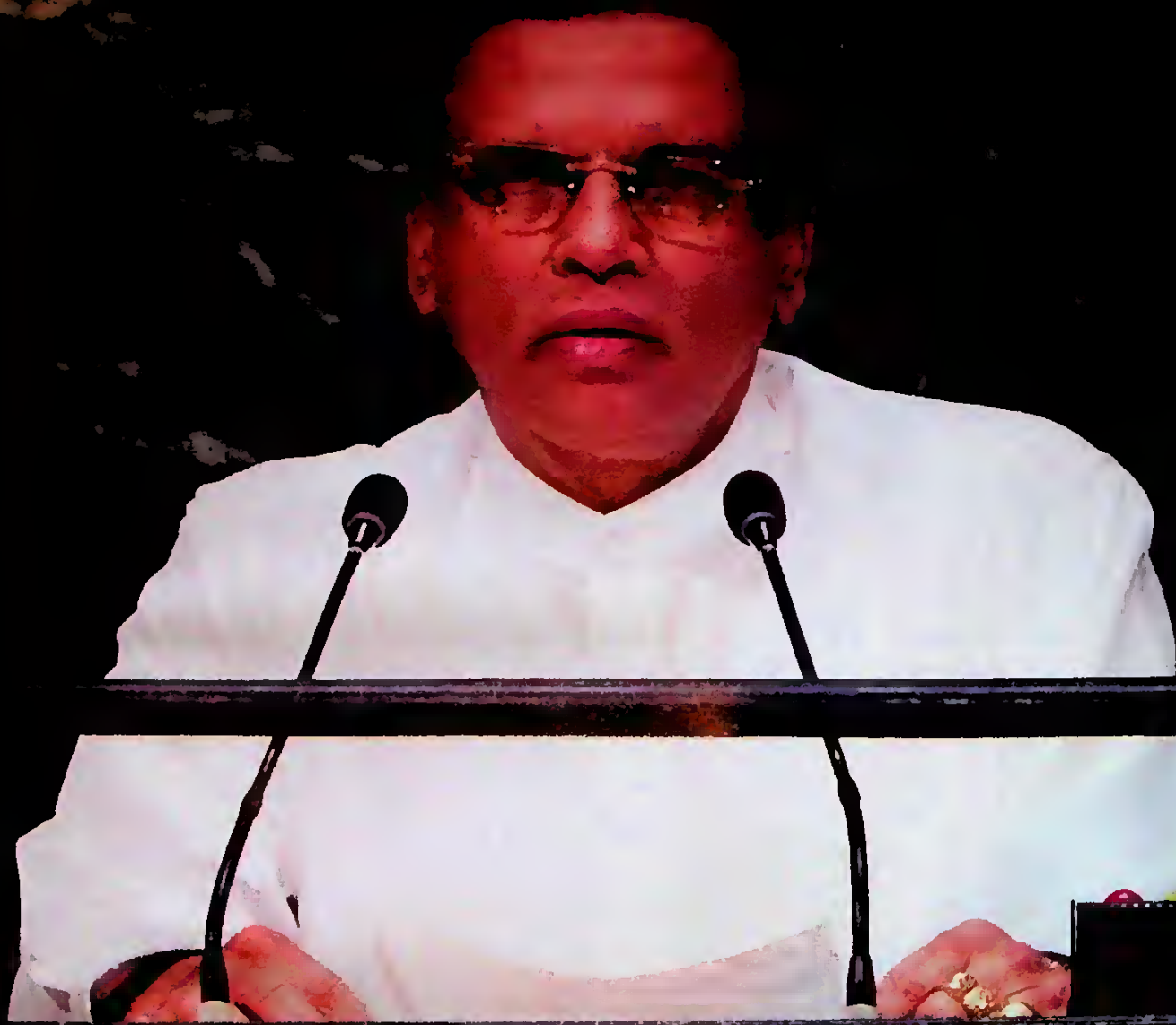


President Sirisena with his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin.



At the Joint Press Briefing with German Chancellor Angela Merkel during President Sirisena's official visit to Germany in 2016.





**"The edifice of sustainable development should therefore be built upon the foundation of self-discipline and equity. If this could be practised at a personal, community, national and global level, it would mark a giant leap forward for human kind."**

President Sirisena's  
address to the UN General  
Assembly 2015



President Maithripala Sirisena and the President of China Xi Jinping during President Sirisena's state visit to China.



Renewing cordial relations with India,  
President Maithripala Sirisena visited India in February 2015.



**"The new President of Sri Lanka,  
Hon. Maithripala Sirisena is a leader who has won the  
trust of the entire world."**

**Ban Ki-Moon,  
Secretary General of United Nations**



With the Prime Minister of Japan Shinzo Abe.



## How the common man became the common candidate

**M**aithripala Sirisena was born on 3 September 1951 to a lower-middle-class family of farmers in the Polonnaruwa region, home to one of the country's most prominent archaeological relic cities. His father was a veteran of the Second World War and his mother was a school teacher. Sirisena began his career as a provincial correspondent writing for Sri Lanka's most widely circulated Sinhala language newspaper. A political activist throughout his youth, he joined mainstream politics in 1989, seeking election to Parliament in his home district of Pollonaruwa from the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP). He was the only candidate from his party who was elected from the Pollonaruwa District that year and one of only a few dozen candidates from the SLFP to be elected in that cycle.

He was re-elected in 1994 and served as Deputy Minister for Irrigation until 2000, when he was re-elected to Parliament and sat with the opposition.

**President Sirisena attends  
CHOGM 2015 in Malta.**



In April 2004 Sirisena was re-elected and served as Cabinet Minister of River Basin Development. Later that year, he was also appointed Leader of the House of Parliament, and his cabinet portfolio expanded to include Irrigation.

In November 2005 his portfolio was again expanded to include the subjects of Agriculture and Environment. In January 2007 Sirisena was appointed Minister of Agricultural Development and Agrarian Services Development.

Throughout his career, Maithripala Sirisena demonstrated a strong affinity for agriculture, dating back to his upbringing on his family farm. He has been at the forefront of political issues relevant to farmers from ensuring the supply of fertilizer, combating privatization of regulatory bodies, ensuring fair crop prices and spearheading far-reaching irrigation development projects.

After being re-elected to Parliament in 2010, Maithripala Sirisena assumed the cabinet portfolio of Minister for Health. In this role, he led the charge against tobacco consumption and spawned public health programs to combat the epidemic of alcoholism. He introduced the country's first ever National Drug Policy and went toe-to-toe with the international tobacco lobby to introduce legislation that mandate



pictorial warnings on cigarette packages. His dedication was acknowledged by the World Health Organization's 'World No Tobacco Day Award 2013'. After four years of campaigning against smoking and excessive alcohol consumption, in May 2014, Sirisena was elected as Vice President of the decision making body of the World Health Organisation (WHO), the World Health Assembly.

When Sirisena left the Government to run for the presidency in November 2014, he was the incumbent and longest-serving General-Secretary of his party, the Sri Lanka Freedom Party. With a rare and impeccable record of honesty and commitment to political principles, Sirisena stood tall among other aspirants to the highest office in the land.



**"Today, we are living in a globalized new world. In that context, every country in the world is important to us. There are many things we can learn from them and they can learn from us. As a result of that, openness and friendship with all will remain as the foundation of our foreign policy. I have also previously mentioned that we have entered into the Century of Asia. Accordingly, I will state that my Government will pay more attention towards an Asia-centric middle-path foreign policy."**

- excerpt from the Policy Statement delivered by President Maithripala Sirisena addressing the 8th Parliament of Sri Lanka on September 1, 2015



# Yielding Power to Safeguard the Future

**B**y the time President Sirisena was elected on 8 January 2015, the existential dangers of the executive presidency had been the rallying cry of political slogans in Sri Lanka for over two decades. Successive governments came to power on platforms of abolishing the presidency, only to forget those promises after assuming office. Sirisena too owed his election to his own opposition to the executive presidency.

After forming his cabinet, Sirisena's first order of business was to commission the drafting of a Constitutional amendment that would radically curtail the powers of the office to which he had just been elected. The amendment would restore a two-term limit on elected presidents, reduce the length of a presidential term from six years to five, and divest the powers to appoint and promote judges, prosecutors, police officers and key civil servants away from the presidency and into independent commissions.

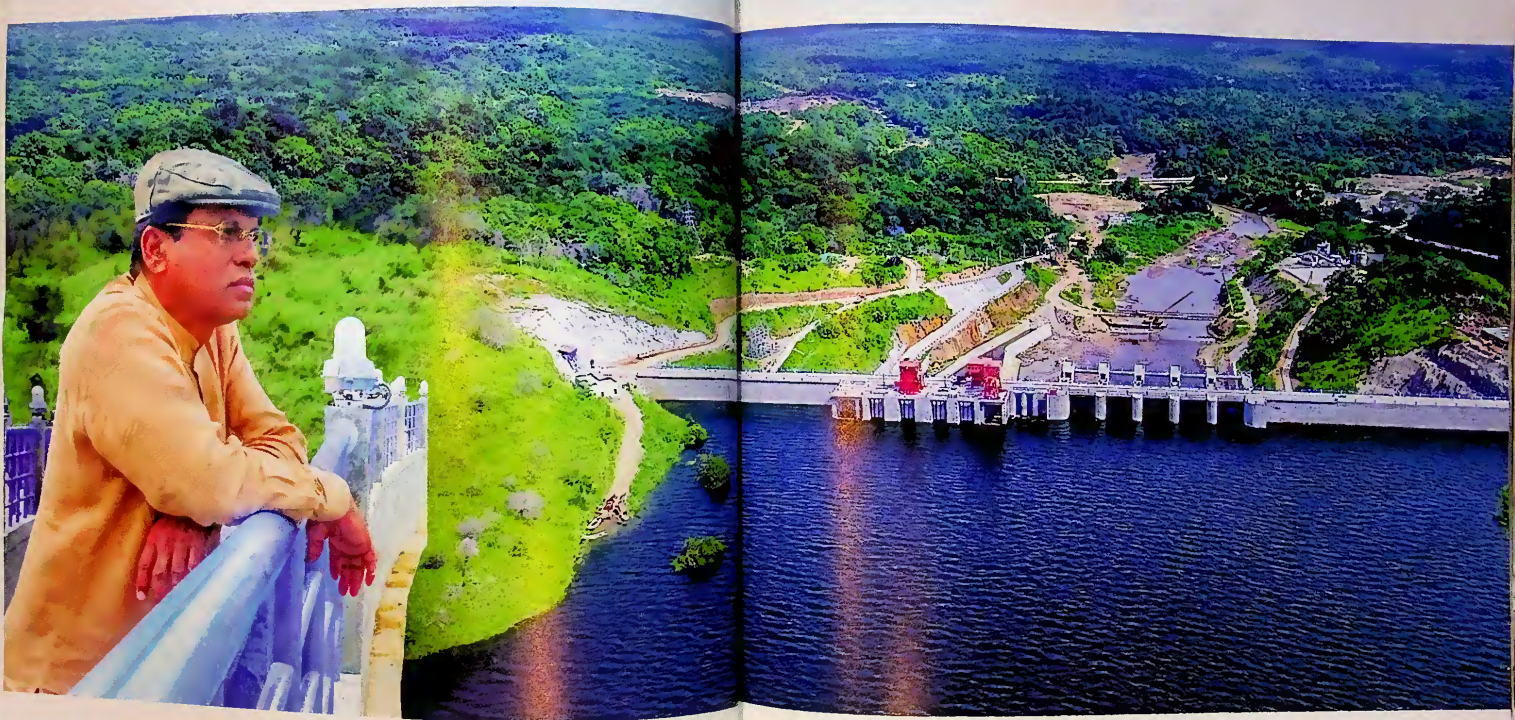
Sirisena's proposed amendment also removed the power of the president to

dissolve Parliament at any time after one year from its first sitting. The amendment stipulated that Parliament cannot be dissolved by the President for at least four years. Many of the other executive powers vested in the Presidency were to be handed over to a Constitutional Council whose membership was to be largely dictated by Parliament.

The proposed 19th Amendment to the Constitution was to be Sri Lanka's most radical political reform in decades, a gateway for the country to enter the community of nations that valued transparent, secular, liberal democracy, equality under the law and universal human rights.

After vigorous debate, President Maithripala Sirisena secured the support of 213 members of the 225 member Parliament. On 28 April 2015, the 19th Amendment to the Constitution of Sri Lanka became law. Less than four months after taking his oath to defend the Constitution of Sri Lanka, President Sirisena had presided over the most sweeping and consequential reform ever to be made to that Constitution, and in doing so delivered on his most critical campaign promise. His success was hailed worldwide as the mark of a statesman who reversed the damage done by his predecessor, prioritizing this oath to the people over the trappings of his office.

**A dream come true for President Maithripala Sirisena: Moragahakanda-Kaluganga reservoirs together will benefit the farming communities in the North-Central, North-Western, Central, Eastern, and Northern Provinces.**





**Maithripala Sirisena, with his strong association and knowledge of agriculture, is an ardent advocate of agricultural modernisation.**



With the leader of "National Movement for a Just Society",  
Ven. Maduluwawe Sobitha Thero.



President Sirisena greets His Holiness Pope Francis, who arrived in Sri Lanka in January 2015.





President Maithripala Sirisena takes part in the prayers at a Hindu Temple in Colombo.



Islamic religious leaders call on President.



# A New Era in Foreign Policy

President Sirisena reversed the foreign policy trend of the previous decade and sought an end to Sri Lanka's marginalisation and isolation provoked by his predecessor. His government opened their doors to our traditional allies and did away with the isolationist antagonistic doctrine they inherited. An era of cooperative international relations followed.

President Sirisena was among a handful of world leaders invited to participate in the 42nd Summit of the G7 nations. The international community recognized Sri Lanka's efforts to strengthen democracy and human rights in the shadow of thirty years of civil war against separatist terrorists. A progressive and transparent regulatory and governing regime gave way to an increase in foreign investment, and Sri Lanka saw international trade levels boom.

At the 2018 Leaders Summit of the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) held in Kathmandu, the heads of state called on President Maithripala Sirisena to serve as the chair of BIMSTEC. President Sirisena accepted this responsibility and has declared that he will use his leadership of the Initiative to promote technology-sharing, combat the international narcotics trade and to foster closer diplomatic and economic ties between the member states.



## Healing the Nation

President Sirisena has continued to support the initiatives he spearheaded during his tenure as the Minister of Health. Barely a month after he took office, his government in February 2015 instituted a program to drive down the costs of pharmaceuticals and prescription medications. This program led to price reductions of up

President shares a light moment with the youth visitors to the Nilaweli beach in the Eastern coast of Sri Lanka.



to 85% for dozens of medications used in the treatment of serious conditions such as diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure, high cholesterol and infectious disease.

Chronic Kidney Disease of unknown aetiology (CKDu) has been a widespread ailment that has affected the lives and the livelihood of Sri Lankan agricultural community. President Sirisena directed officials to provide safe drinking water to farmer communities, provide social and medical care to the affected families, and also to build the largest Nephrology-focused hospital in Asia.

President Maithripala Sirisena has continued to combat alcohol and tobacco abuse. His government has launched an ambitious Anti-Narcotics drive and is taking steps to enforce plain packaging for tobacco products.

In appreciation of his steady commitment and leadership on public health issues, the World Health Organisation (WHO) bestowed on Sirisena the Award for Excellence in Public Health in 2016. This annual Award has been established to recognize outstanding leadership and exceptional achievements in public health by individuals. President Sirisena serves alongside President Sauli Niinistö of Finland and President Tabaré Vázquez of Uruguay as a Co-Chair of the WHO's Independent High-Level Commission on Non-Communicable Diseases.

# A Focus on Sustainability

Addressing the 70th Session of the United Nations General Assembly in 2015, President Sirisena declared Sri Lanka's commitment to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals within fifteen years, by 2030. In December 2015, he signed the Paris Agreement on Climate Change.

The President's vision for Sri Lanka is one of 'balanced inclusive green growth', enshrining the importance of social, environmental and economic sustainability.

President Maithripala Sirisena is Sri Lanka's first head of state to retain the cabinet portfolio of Environment. As Environment Minister, he has announced an ambitious initiative to increase Sri Lanka's forest cover to 32% of the country's total land area. Other projects are now underway to plant 10 million trees in urban and domestic centres to increase foliage in populated areas. His policies are aimed towards environmental protection and ultimately reaching a carbon-neutral economy.

# Healing and Uniting a Nation

**I**n the domestic policy arena, one of President Sirisena's highest priorities has been the national reconciliation process of healing the wounds of war across the nation. Under his leadership, several critical steps have been taken to unite Sri Lankans. His vision is of a country where people of all origins, ethnicities, religions and walks of life can live together in harmony, under a secular government with equal justice for all.

A demilitarisation program has resulted in over 99% of the land that had been occupied by the military during the civil war being returned to its rightful owners.

Sri Lanka has signed and ratified the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearances and passed enabling legislation through Parliament. An independent Office of Missing Persons (OMP) has been established to investigate pending cases. The first report of the OMP was presented to the government in August 2018 and released to the public.

In order to ensure that development projects benefit all regions of the country,

President Sirisena established a Special Task Force under his chairmanship, together with the Prime Minister, Leader of the Opposition, Provincial Governors, and relevant governmental agencies to review, coordinate, conduct and monitor development programmes in the Northern and Eastern Provinces. His target is to substantially increase the contribution of the Northern and Eastern Provinces to the Gross Domestic Product of Sri Lanka by attracting infrastructure development and investment in sectors ranging from agriculture to tourism.

A Right to Information Act, one of the most robust of its kind in the world, enshrines the accountability of all government institutions and public bodies to produce information to citizens.

President Sirisena and Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau during the G7 Summit in Japan.



British Prime Minister Theresa May welcome President Sirisena during the CHOGM summit in 2017.





# People-Centred Development

**H**is 2030 target for reaching the sustainable development goals in mind, President Sirisena declared the year 2016 as the national year of Poverty Alleviation, and instituted programs across government to alleviate poverty. For example, a grassroots program was launched nationwide to empower the local community leaders to organise their communities to fight poverty in their own backyards, engaging businesses, non-governmental organisations and political leaders at a local level.

Building on Sri Lanka's proud and long-standing tradition of excellence in water management, President Sirisena fast-tracked and completed the development of the Moragahakanda-Kaluganga dam, completing the fifth and final major reservoir envisaged under the Accelerated Mahaweli Scheme instituted in 1977. The other four dams had been completed in the 1980s.

By the end of 2018, President Sirisena's "100 Billion Rupee" project will have irrigated over 87,000 hectares of arable land across the country and had provided potable water to 350,000 citizens in

the Northern Province. It will add 25 megawatts to the national electricity grid and inland fishing output is expected to rise by 4,500 metric tons.

This has been one of President Sirisena's most cherished personal accomplishments. Having participated in the early planning of the project as Deputy Irrigation Minister in 1994, he was able to literally preside over the its completion nearly a quarter century thereafter.

The project will benefit the farming communities in the North-Central, North-Western, Central, Eastern, and Northern Provinces. In anticipation of potential water-scarcity resulting from global climate change, President Sirisena has ordered the restoration of 2,400 decrepit agricultural water tanks across the country.

The Sri Lankan government is working closely with International Donor Agencies such as the World Bank (WB), International Monetary Fund (IMF), Asian Development Bank (ADB), and the United Nations as well as other International governmental and non-governmental organizations with renewed confidence and warmth, in a bid to accelerate socio-economic and human development throughout the country.



LEADERS' SUMMIT  
ON PEACEKEEPING  
SEPTEMBER 28, 2015



# The Way Forward

Sri Lanka has inspired many other states struggling with the adverse realities of post-conflict governance. The government is open to sharing best-practices and lessons learned alike with these nations across the globe.

With its stature rising in the international marketplace under the Sirisena government, Sri Lanka has signed three Free Trade Agreements, with India, Pakistan and Singapore. Negotiations are ongoing to enter into similar agreements with our China, Bangladesh, Thailand, Malaysia and other Asian neighbours.

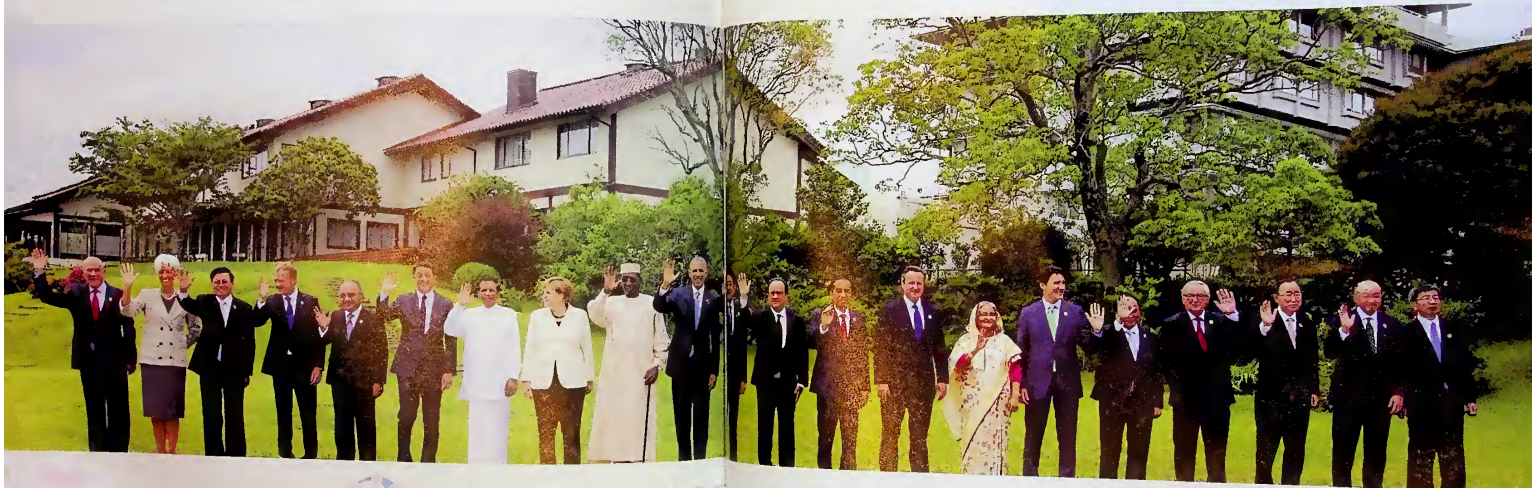
With the restoration of rule of law, tourism in Sri Lanka has seen a marked increase. The paradise island nation saw its fair share of tourists even during the height of its thirty year-long civil war, however the restoration of peace and demilitarization of society has led to a welcoming atmosphere that has inspired more travellers from around the world to visit the country, leading to the development of boutique and five-star hotels as well as youth hostels across the island.

One of President Sirisena's role models, India's first Prime Minister Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, once wrote in a letter to his thirteen-year-old daughter that "the desire to hide anything means that you are afraid, and fear is a bad thing and unworthy of you." "Be brave," he wrote, "and all the rest follows."

By giving up the trappings of a senior cabinet ministry, overcoming his fear and bravely redeeming democracy in Sri Lanka. What followed was that Maithripala Sirisena became a symbol of democracy and good governance. What remains to be done is for President Sirisena to complete his reform agenda, strengthen democracy, fortify the independence of public institutions and cement legislative and cultural barriers against a future risk of autocracy.

The government has succeeded in creating the path for viable development environment and for reconciliation. Elaborating on the steps undertaken by the Government to ensure Democracy, Good Governance and the Rule of Law, The Government has entered a development driver that would yield the real benefits to all the people in the country.

President Maithripala Sirisena Speaking at the summit



G7 2016 ISESHIMA SUMMIT

President Sirisena meets future Malaysian Prime Minister  
Dr. Mahathir bin Mohamad during his visit to Malaysia in 2016



Britain's Queen Elizabeth II of the United Kingdom greets Sri Lanka's President Maithripala Sirisena in March 2015







President Maithripala Sirisena of Sri Lanka is the leader of the fight against corruption."

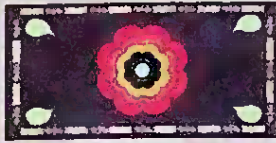
Juan Manuel Santos, President of Columbia, At the Anti-Corruption Summit in London on May 02<sup>nd</sup>, 2016.





REFERENCE

PRESIDENTIAL SECRETARIAT  
LIBRARY



*"The edifice of sustainable development should therefore be built upon the foundation of self-discipline and equity. If this could be practised at a personal, community, national and global level, it would mark a giant leap forward for human kind."*

President Sirisena's  
address to the  
UN General  
Assembly 2015