

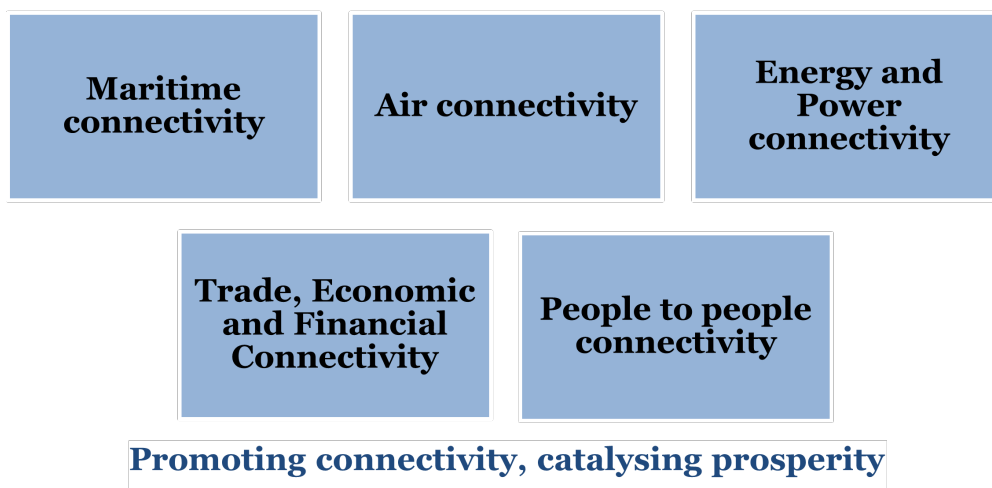
## India-Sri Lanka Ties: Promoting Connectivity, Catalysing Prosperity

### Why in news?

Amidst the Chinese influence and Sri Lankan financial crisis, Sri Lankan President Ranil Wickremesinghe visited India recently.

### What are the outcomes of the visit?

- **Joint Statement** - During the visit, Indian PM and the Sri Lankan PM jointly released the statement on economic cooperation titled “*Promoting Connectivity, Catalysing Prosperity: India-Sri Lanka Economic Partnership Vision.*”
- The document lays out the vision in five areas: maritime, air, energy, trade and people-to-people initiatives.



- **Maritime connectivity** - To cooperate in development of ports and logistics infrastructure at *Colombo, Trincomalee and Kankesanthurai* .
- **Passenger ferry services** - The ferry services will be resumed between Nagapattinam in India and Kankesanthurai in Sri Lanka and work towards early resumption of Rameshwaram-Talaimannar link.
- **Air connectivity** - To resume flights between Jaffna and Chennai that would enhance people-to-people ties.
- **Investment** - To encourage and strengthen the cooperation in civil aviation including augmentation of *airport infrastructure at Palaly*.
- **Energy and power security**- A MoU signed to develop Sri Lanka’s significant renewable energy potential, including offshore wind and solar energy.
- Explore cooperation in *green hydrogen and green ammonia*.
- To cooperate for construction of a *multi-product petroleum pipeline* from Southern part of India to Sri Lanka.

- To undertake mutually agreed joint exploration and production of hydrocarbons in Sri Lanka's offshore basins.



- **Trade, Economic and Financial connectivity** - To undertake discussions on Economic and Technology Cooperation Agreement with an aim to comprehensively enhance bilateral trade.
- A MoU was signed to operationalise *UPI digital payments in Sri Lanka* and to designate the Indian Rupee as currency for trade.
- To leverage India's *Digital Public Infrastructure* in accordance with Sri Lanka's requirements and priorities towards effective and efficient delivery of citizen-centric services.
- **People to people connectivity** - To explore ways of enhancing tourism and cultural and religious travel, and educational collaboration.
- To promote *awareness* and popularize India's Buddhist circuit, and Ramayana trail as well as ancient places of Buddhist, Hindu and other religious worship in Sri Lanka for enhancing tourism.
- To explore cooperation between *educational institutions* on both sides through establishment of new higher education and skilling campuses in Sri Lanka.
- To expand cooperation between *research and academic institutes* in areas of mutual interests such as agriculture, IT etc.,

- To establish *land connectivity* for developing land access to the ports of Trincomalee and Colombo, and to consolidate millennia old relationship between the two countries.

### What are the few misses of the visit?

- **Sri Lankan Tamil Issue** - None of the provisions in the document acknowledged the previous commitments by Sri Lanka on honouring the 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment for devolution of powers to the North and Eastern provinces.
- **Indian Tamil Fisherman Issue** - There is no plan either to resolve the long-pending issues over arrest of Indian fishers.
- Any vision for the future that does not include an amicable resolution of these issues will be considered incomplete.

### What lies ahead for both countries?

- **Neighbourhood First policy** - India will be uplifted as South Asia's regional attractiveness, so that it will help to keep Sri Lanka away from China.
- **Consolidate aid programme** - India need to consolidate its fragmented aid programme with the potential single development bank like Japan Bank for International Cooperation.
- **Foster supply chains** - As India becomes a destination for manufacturing and services, it can foster supply chains in South Asia.
- Significant Indian private companies' investment can be made in renewable energy, infrastructure and tourism.
- **Digitalisation** - India's UPI is being rapidly adopted worldwide but it has not been exposed to its own South Asian neighbourhood.
- Sri Lanka should take steps to make use of India's digital public infrastructure.
- **Engagement with the Central bank** - Frequent meetings and an early warning system for economic crises are key to regional stability.
- Example- ASEAN's approach in the Asian Financial Crisis of 1997.
- **Security** - China's cumulative investments and military presence in Hambantota Port is a strategic threat to both countries, they should work with Indian Ocean countries to keep the threat of China at bay.

### References

1. [The Hindu | India Sri Lanka ties and vision](#)
2. [Indian Express | Five things to do](#)
3. [Ministry of External Affairs | Promoting connectivity](#)