

President Mahinda Rajapaksa, in a letter dated 30 November addressed to the Prime Minister of India, Dr Manmohan Singh, condoled the passing away of former Prime Minister of India, Shri I.K. Gujral.

The text of the President's Letter to the Prime Minister of India, Dr. Manmohan Singh, is as follows:

H.E. Dr. Manmohan Singh

Prime Minister of the Republic of India

Excellency,

On hearing the demise of former Prime Minister of India, Shri I.K. Gujral, I, on behalf of the Government and the people of Sri Lanka, convey our deepest sympathies to the Government and people of India and the family and friends of this distinguished son of India.

Shri I.K. Gujral served his country with deep commitment and worked for the wellbeing of the people of India and the South Asian region in different capacities for long years. A distinguished leader and an outstanding public figure, Shri Gujral was ahead of his times in a rapidly globalising world. His visionary approach on foreign policy stands as a model for strengthening South Asia's regional relations.

Sri Lanka will always remember with gratitude, Shri I.K. Gujral's contribution towards strengthening India-Sri Lanka relations and regional cooperation.

Undoubtedly, the people of India and the South Asian region have lost a wise and erudite leader whose empathy with the people of South Asia made him a much loved leader of the region.

Our thoughts and prayers are with Shri Gujral's family and friends as well as the people of India at this time. I wish them strength and fortitude to face this loss.

Please accept Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Mahinda Rajapaksa