



Ayubowan, Namaste,

I am very happy to be here just eleven days after assuming office as the President of Sri Lanka. In fact, this is my first official visit abroad.

Prime Minister Modi and I discussed several important issues this morning. The discussions were extremely cordial and reassuring. Among these, co-operation in regard to security of our two countries took priority. India has always assisted Sri Lanka to enhance our capabilities in intelligence, and counter-terrorism, and we look forward to continued support in this regard.

Since our recent experience in April this year, we have had to re-think our national security strategies and assistance from India in this regard would be most appreciated. Prime Minister Modi's assurances are most encouraging.

Whilst with India, our cooperation is multi-faceted, with priority given to security related matters, with other countries, initiatives for co-operation are by and large economic and commercial.

We will continue to work closely with India to ensure that Indian Ocean remains as a zone of peace.

We also discussed how Sri Lanka and India could work together in economically important matters. As India emerges to be among world's growing economies, I discussed with the Prime Minister, how Sri Lanka could benefit out of certain economic sectors where India is strongly positioned.

I thank Prime Minister Modi for his positive responses to many of the initiatives I proposed, to enhance Sri Lanka's economy, particularly in offering USD 400 Mln as a credit line.

We also discussed the fishermen issue and I assured the Prime Minister that we will take steps to release the boats belonging to Indian fishermen in our custody.

Prime Minister Modi and I also discussed how India could assist us in trade between our two countries.

Since my election as the President of Sri Lanka, the first official invitation was from Prime Minister Modi and the Government of India. I am certainly very happy to be here because India is our closest neighbour as well as our long-standing friend.

I would avail of this opportunity to invite Prime Minister Modi to visit us as the first head of government to visit Sri Lanka, since my election as the President of Sri Lanka.

Thank you.