



Ayubowan! Namaste!

I am very pleased to be here in New Delhi, undertaking my first official visit abroad since assuming office as the Prime Minister.

Prime Minister Modi and I discussed several important issues this morning. Our discussions were premised on the outcome of the discussions that Prime Minister Modi held with President Gotabaya Rajapaksa during his very successful State Visit to India in November of last year.

I want to thank Prime Minister Modi for his Government's "Neighborhood First" policy and the priority that he attaches to relations with Sri Lanka. We agreed that our cooperation is multi-faceted, with priority given to a number of areas, including security, economic, cultural and

social sectors.

A part of our discussions centered on co-operation in regard to the security of our two countries. 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.

I would like to reiterate what President Gotabaya Rajapaksa said during his State Visit that since our recent experience in April last year, we have had to re-think our national security strategies and assistance from India in this regard would be much appreciated. I thanked Prime Minister Modi for visiting Sri Lanka in the aftermath of the Easter Sunday terrorist attacks. That visit provided us with immense strength to come to terms with the tragedy.

I also appreciate Prime Minister Modi's offers of 400 million dollars as a credit line to enhance the economy of Sri Lanka and another 50-million-dollar credit line for our efforts in combating terrorism. We discussed how to follow-up on these offers that were made during President Rajapaksa's visit in November.

Another topic of our discussion was the progress of ongoing projects that are being implemented in Sri Lanka with Indian assistance, including housing and community-related projects. I requested Prime Minister Modi to consider further assistance to expand the housing project to all parts of the island. Doing so will provide significant benefits to many Sri Lankans living in rural parts of the country.

Prime Minister Modi and I also discussed how Sri Lanka and India could work together in economically important matters. As India emerges to be among the 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 requested for India's assistance in skills development and capacity building of the civil services.

Before I conclude, I would like to reiterate our invitation to Prime Minister Modi to visit Sri Lanka in the near future. We in Sri Lanka are looking forward to that visit.

I am indeed happy to be here because India is our closest neighbor as well as our long-standing friend. The links of history, religion and culture between Sri Lanka and India, which date back more than two millennia, provide a solid foundation for our partnership.

Finally, I want to express my deepest appreciation to Prime Minister Modi and the Government of India for the outstanding arrangements and gracious hospitality accorded to me and my delegation during this State Visit.

Thank you.



