INTRODUCTION
The first Sinhalese arrived in Sri Lanka late in the 6th century B.C., probably from northern India. The island was ceded to the British in 1796, became a crown colony in 1802, and was formally united under British rule by 1815. As Ceylon, it became independent in 1948; its name was changed to Sri Lanka in 1972.

GOVERNMENT
Chief of State
President Gotabaya RAJAPAKSA
Head of Government
President Gotabaya RAJAPAKSA
Government Type
presidential republic
Capital
Colombo
Legislature
unicameral Parliament (225 seats)

GEOGRAPHY
Area
Total: 65,610 sq km
Land: 64,630 sq km
Water: 980 sq km
Climate
tropical monsoon; northeast monsoon (December to March); southwest monsoon (June to October)
Natural Resources
limestone, graphite, mineral sands, gems, phosphates, clay, hydropower, arable land

ECONOMY
Economic Overview
lower middle-income South Asian island economy; extremely high, domestically-sourced public debts due to COVID-19; central bank pursued quantitative easing; improved trade; significant remittances; known garment and commodities exporter
GDP (Purchasing Power Parity) $2.748 billion (2020 est.)
GDP per capita (Purchasing Power Parity) $12,500 (2020 est.)
Industries
- processing of rubber, tea, coconuts, tobacco and other agricultural commodities, telecommunications, insurance, banking, tourism, shipping, clothing, textiles, cement, petroleum refining, information technology services, construction
Agricultural products
- rice, coconuts, sugarcane, plantains, milk, tea, cassava, maize, poultry, coir
Exports $16.32 billion (2019 est.)
clothing, apparel, tea, used tires, rubber products, precious stones, cinnamon (2019)
partners: US 24%, India 8%, UK 7%, Germany 7% (2019)
Imports $24.98 billion (2019 est.)
refined petroleum, textiles, gold, cars, broadcasting equipment (2019)
partners: India 24%, China 23%, Singapore 7%, UAE 6%, Malaysia 5% (2019)

PEOPLE & SOCIETY
Population
23.0 million (July 2021 est.)
Population Growth
0.63% (2021 est.)
Ethnicity
Sinhalese 74.9%, Sri Lankan Tamil 11.2%, Sri Lankan Moors 9.2%, Indian Tamil 4.2%, other 0.5% (2012 est.)
Language
Sinhala (official and national language) 87%, Tamil (official and national language) 28.5%, English 23.8% (2012 est.)
Religion
Buddhist (official) 70.2%, Hindu 12.6%, Muslim 9.7%, Roman Catholic 6.1%, other Christian 1.3%, other 0.05% (2012 est.)
as of October 2021