

SRI LANKA TO DRAFT NEW CONSTITUTION

Relevant for: International Relations | Topic: Effect of policies and politics of developed & developing countries on India's interests

Power-up: Gotabaya Rajapaksa in Parliament in Colombo. APEranga Jayawardena

Sri Lanka will draft a new Constitution, jettisoning the 19th Amendment passed in 2015 that imposed curbs on presidential powers and strengthened Parliament, President Gotabaya Rajapaksa has said.

Addressing the inaugural session of Parliament following the August 5 general election on Thursday, President Rajapaksa said: "As the people have given us the mandate we wanted for a constitutional amendment, our first task will be to remove the 19th Amendment to the Constitution. After that, all of us will get together to formulate a new Constitution suitable for the country." The new Constitution, he said, would prioritise the concept of "one country, one law for all the people."

Poll promise

The Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna (SLPP, or People's Front), along with its allies, secured an impressive two-thirds majority in the recent general election, making possible swift passage of new legislation. The ruling party's poll campaign sought such a majority from the electorate, promising to abolish the 19th Amendment.

The statute, passed in 2015 during the former President Maithripala Sirisena-Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe's term, sought not only to clip the President's executive powers, but also to strengthen independent commissions. It brought back the two-term limit on Presidency. It was hailed by many, including members of civil society, as a progressive legislation in contemporary Sri Lankan history, even as its critics found it falling short in some respects. The Rajapaksa camp viewed the 19th Amendment's clauses as primarily intending to prevent its leaders' return to power.

Outlining his plans further, President Rajapaksa told Parliament that it was "essential to make changes to the current electoral system" while drafting a new Constitution, retaining elements of the proportional representation system currently followed. On the government's task of reviving the country's economy, he called for "out-of-the-box thinking" to overcome local and global challenges.

Foreign Minister Dinesh Gunawardena assumed charge as Leader of the House, while Samagi Jana Balawegaya (SJB) (United People's Front), who broke away from the United National Party (UNP), was named Leader of Opposition.

The SJB secured 54 seats in the general election while the presence of the UNP, which led the former government, diminished to 1.

Subscribe to The Hindu digital to get unlimited access to Today's paper

Already have an account ? [Sign in](#)

Start your 14 days free trial. [Sign Up](#)

Find mobile-friendly version of articles from the day's newspaper in one easy-to-read list.

Enjoy reading as many articles as you wish without any limitations.

A select list of articles that match your interests and tastes.

Move smoothly between articles as our pages load instantly.

A one-stop-shop for seeing the latest updates, and managing your preferences.

We brief you on the latest and most important developments, three times a day.

*Our Digital Subscription plans do not currently include the e-paper ,crossword, iPhone, iPad mobile applications and print. Our plans enhance your reading experience.

You can support quality journalism by turning off ad blocker or purchase a subscription for unlimited access to The Hindu.

[Sign up for a 30 day free trial.](#)

END

Downloaded from **crackIAS.com**

© **Zuccess App** by crackIAS.com

CrackIAS