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Reconciliation will ensure permanent peace – Prez tells UNGA

By Saman Indrajith in New York (Island.lk) - President Maithripala Sirisena declared at the UNGA on Thursday that the on-going reconciliation process would guarantee that Sri Lanka wouldn't have to face war and terrorism again. The President called for international collaboration and blessings for the on-going Sri Lankan effort.

The President was addressing the 71st session of the UNGA, New York. Commenting on post-January 2015 presidential polls, the President said: "My government has taken effective measures to strengthen democracy, rule of law and good governance in the country paving the way for a positive change to ensure that there will be no more wars on the soils of my country, Sri Lanka. The reconciliation process that is underway today has learnt from the bitter experience of a brutal war of three decades. It will guarantee that my country will not see the cruelty of war and terrorism again and that all communities will live peacefully in a rational and a free-thinking Sri Lanka. For this noble purpose, Sri Lanka welcomes the collaboration and the blessings of the world." The following is the full text of the President's

statement: "I am extremely happy to take part in this 71st Session of the United Nations General Assembly. I wish to bring to the notice of Your Excellencies the current situation in my country. For the last twenty months, I have given the leadership to usher a new era of social, political and economic transformations in my country. Before I came to power, people in my country were living in fear and suspicion. I could end that period and lay the foundation for strengthening rule of law and restoring democratic rights for the people of Sri Lanka to live happily in a free and democratic society.

My government's intention is to make the people of Sri Lanka one of the happiest among the world communities. For that purpose, the government is committed to strengthening freedom and democracy, while achieving economic prosperity. The government is committed to make the people of Sri Lanka a developed nation.

Poverty is a global challenge. I am determined to alleviate poverty in my country. I declared 2017 as the Year of 'Alleviation of Poverty' in Sri Lanka. I have given lead to creating the basic platform for the people to free themselves poverty in a country that prioritizes economic progress.



Mr Chairman, Excellencies, Sustainable Development Agenda is upheld as the guiding principles for all nations and institutions lead by United Nations in bringing about economic, social and environmental transformations to make a world a better place. In that, we have identified that economic development plays a key role, while environmental sustainability, specially the Paris Agreement, which, the Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon initiated, will remain a main pillar in our endeavour to bring about the necessary changes in the country. With the educated younger generations in mind, that national development strategy of Sri Lanka will give prominence to build a 'green' and an

innovation-based economy through progressive reforms and planning. As an Island-Nation, Sri Lanka wishes to make maximum use of the ocean with new light on ocean research, tourism, fisheries and marine resources. The government wants to further improve the free healthcare system and the free education system while bringing in more technology into agriculture and domestic industries in order to ensure that our people live better lives. In many parts of the world, we see the unfortunate proliferation of anger, hatred, and brutality. I would call that the contemporary society is experiencing a crisis of morality. I believe that all states should pay heed to the cry for moral values. I believe that every society must dedicate itself to raise its share of positive moral values. Sri Lanka is a Buddhist country, where Theravada Buddhism is practised. The teachings of the Buddha help us find solutions to many of the burning issues of the contemporary world. Similarly, I am sure the wisdom offered by the great world religions such as Christianity, Hinduism, Islam and others can help us today. As such, I am of the view that we, as states, can strengthen and foster those religions and **SEE P10**

Master Blaster back to school



St. Servatius College, Matara celebrated the 'Back to School' day opening the gates for old boys of the College. Founded by the Belgian Jesuit priests in 1897 and named after a 4th century Belgian missionary, St. Servatius has produced several leading figures in the society. Former Test captain Sanath Jayasuriya is one of them.

More than 10,000 people in Jaffna demo

By Chris Kamalendran (Sundaytimes.lk) - More than 10,000 people led by Northern Province Chief Minister C.V. Wigneswaran took to the streets of Jaffna to protest against what they see as the Tamil National Alliance's failure to fulfil pledges given during the election campaign. In support of the protest, shops were closed in Jaffna and in certain other areas in the northern province. The protest was organised by former parliamentarian Gajendra Kumar Ponnambalam.

Following the three-hour protest, supporters held a meeting at the Open air theater at Pannai in Jaffna. Mr. Wigneswaran said the protest was not against the people of the South, but against the TNA and the Government for failing to keep their promises. "The TNA during the election campaign said it would discuss with the Government and find a speedy solution to the ethnic issue. The TNA has said it will support the proposed Constitution, but we have doubts whether it will help the

minority Tamils," he said. The Chief Minister said the Northern people feared that those from outside would be settled in the North in a manner that would change the ethnic ration. The protest was supported by two of the 16 TNA members in parliament. They were Dharmalingam Siddarthan and Siva Shakthi Anandan. Former TULF leader V. Anandasangaree and EPDP members made an attempt to join the protest, but they were not welcomed.



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