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GeoEconomic  
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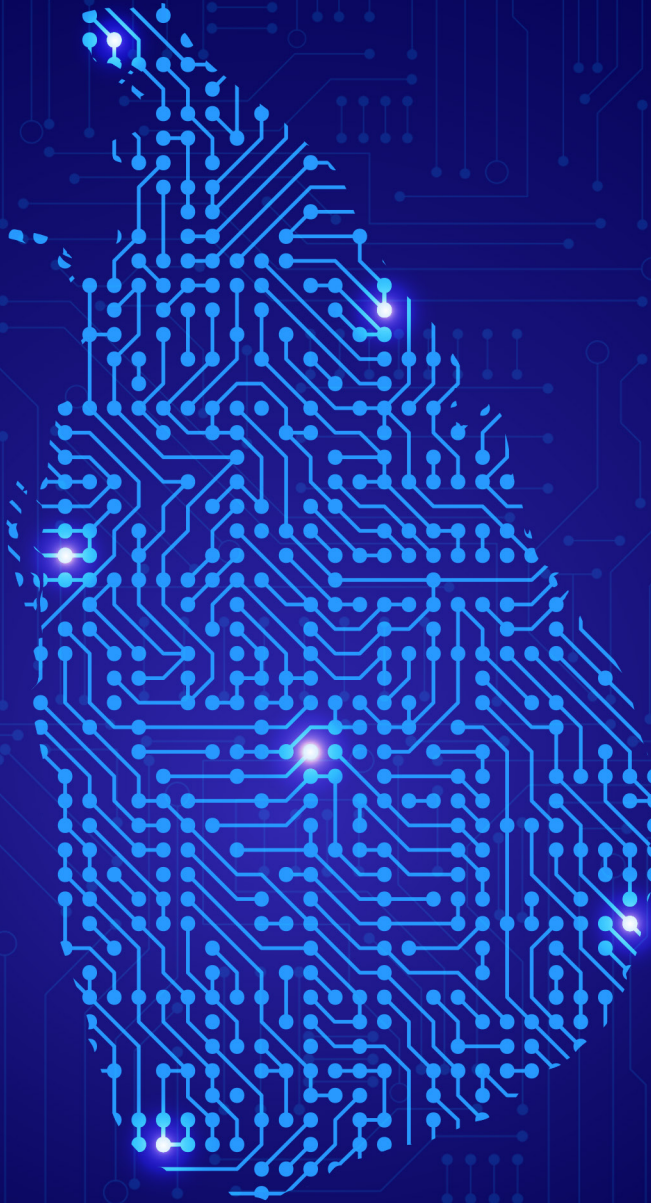
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High Commission of India  
Colombo, Sri Lanka



Council for  
International Economic  
Understanding



# India–Sri Lanka Innovation Forum, 2025

Strengthening the Digital Bridge



December 5, 2025



08:30 AM – 05:30 PM



ITC Ratnadipa, Colombo

## Context

South Asia is entering a defining phase in its economic and technological evolution. The convergence of digital transformation, geopolitical recalibration, and youth-driven entrepreneurship presents a generational opportunity for regional integration. At the heart of this convergence lies the India–Sri Lanka partnership, uniquely positioned to redefine how neighbours can co-create digital futures based on shared geography, complementary strengths, and mutual strategic interests.

India has emerged as a global model for Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI). Platforms like Aadhaar, UPI, DigiLocker, and CoWIN have not only transformed governance and service delivery but have also demonstrated how a democratic society can leverage digital tools for empowerment at scale. These innovations have created replicable frameworks for interoperability, consent-based data sharing, and inclusive financial access, particularly for underserved populations.

Sri Lanka, while at a different stage of digital transformation, is poised for a strategic leap. The country's emphasis on modernising public services, enhancing digital literacy, and supporting its nascent but high-potential startup ecosystem signals a shift toward long-term resilience. Institutions like the Information and Communication Technology Agency (ICTA) are driving cross-sector digital adoption, from agriculture to health and education.

What unites both nations is a clear realisation: digital development is not just a sectoral goal, but a national imperative. Both economies are recovering from recent macroeconomic pressures and reimagining their growth trajectories through technology-led inclusion. The alignment in ambition—from India's DPI export strategy to Sri Lanka's digitisation

roadmap—offers fertile ground for collaboration. Moreover, the two countries face shared development challenges that demand collective solutions. Financial inclusion, rural digital connectivity, youth employment, MSME competitiveness, and climate-adaptive agriculture are areas where technology can be a powerful equaliser. These are not isolated challenges—they are systemic. And they require systemic responses anchored in co-development rather than one-way transfer.

The India–Sri Lanka Innovation Forum, convened under the banner of *The GeoEconomic Hub @ CIEU*, is a response to this moment. It is conceived as a first-of-its-kind, multi-stakeholder, cross-sectoral platform dedicated to accelerating Indo–Sri Lankan collaboration in building a resilient digital economy.

Unlike traditional summits, the Innovation Forum is rooted in pragmatism and policy architecture. It seeks to embed outcomes into bilateral cooperation frameworks and institutionalise new working groups around emerging areas such as DPI interoperability, fintech regulation, AgriTech exchange, startup co-incubation, and cross-border investment protocols. By doing so, it hopes to lay the intellectual and institutional foundation for a long-term, rules-based digital partnership in the Indian Ocean region.

The event will feature ministerial and central bank-level participation from both sides, alongside prominent Indian tech founders, venture capital leaders, Sri Lankan entrepreneurs, digital public goods practitioners, and policy think tanks. More than a ceremonial gathering, it will function as a convergence point for bilateral ideas, capital, institutions, and infrastructure.

From co-developing identity systems to linking

payment rails, from sharing DPI blueprints to nurturing frontier startups, from regulatory dialogue to knowledge exchange—the Conclave aims to be a launchpad for action. Its emphasis is clear: move from ideas to implementation, from pilots to platforms, and from summits to sustained strategic tracks.

In doing so, the India-Sri Lanka Innovation Forum, also aims to reframe the India-Sri Lanka narrative—from aid and asymmetry to alignment and innovation. By foregrounding co-creation, it opens the door for more equitable, agile, and scalable collaborations—where both countries are architects of regional transformation, not just participants.

As South Asia braces for technological shifts—from AI and blockchain to climate tech and digital currencies—the choices made today will determine the region’s resilience tomorrow. The Innovation Forum is a call to action: for policymakers to design forward-compatible institutions, for technologists to build across borders, and for investors to back ideas with impact.

This is not just about connectivity; it is about trust. Not just infrastructure, but intent. And not merely dialogue, but design. The India-Sri Lanka Innovation Forum, is where South Asia’s digital decade begins—not in theory, but in practice.

## About the Organisers

The **Council for International Economic Understanding (CIEU)** is a New Delhi-based independent think tank committed to advancing geo-economic foresight, strategic diplomacy, and innovation-led growth. Through dialogue platforms, research initiatives, and international convenings, CIEU enables India to serve as a connector between Global South aspirations and global economic institutions.

Its flagship initiative, **The GeoEconomic Hub**, brings together policymakers, entrepreneurs,

investors, and thought leaders from across Asia, Africa, the Middle East, and Europe to shape collaborative responses to global challenges. With a focus on emerging technologies, climate transition, inclusive finance, and resilient supply chains, the Hub has built a reputation for enabling action-driven conversations rooted in regional leadership and cross-sector alignment.

For the Innovation Forum, CIEU will serve as the knowledge partner, institutional convenor, and facilitator of sustained Indo-Sri Lankan collaboration on digital cooperation.

## Strategic Objectives

### ► **Bilateral Digital Infrastructure Alignment**

Develop a roadmap for interoperability between India Stack and Sri Lanka’s emerging digital architecture. Promote joint protocols for identity, payments, authentication, and consent-based data sharing.

### ► **Strengthen Startup and Innovation Corridors**

Facilitate investment, mentorship, and collaborative ventures between Indian and Sri Lankan startups across fintech, agritech, healthtech, and mobility. Anchor this corridor through ecosystem partnerships, joint incubation, and cross-border capital flows.

### ► **Promote Financial Resilience Through Fintech**

Build shared models for inclusive digital finance, particularly for rural and underserved segments. Foster knowledge exchange between central banks and fintech regulators to support last-mile innovation.

### ► **Institutionalise AgriTech & Rural Digitalisation**

Enable FPO-level tech adoption in India and AgriHub-led transformation in Sri Lanka. Develop public-private partnerships to digitise supply chains, weather intelligence, agri-credit, and logistics.

## » Catalyse Regional Stability via Digital Economy

Frame digital infrastructure as a stabilising force in the Indian Ocean region. Develop regulatory coherence for cross-border payments, cyber standards, and digital trade norms.

## Structure & Format

The Conclave will be organised as a high-level, full-day convening featuring:

- » **Inaugural Session** with keynote addresses from the President of Sri Lanka, Union Ministers from India, and digital economy architects
- » **Thematic Panels** on DPI, Fintech, AgriTech, startup ecosystems, and digital regulation
- » **Fireside Chats** with ecosystem leaders on innovation, inclusion, and sovereignty
- » **Founders' Forum** featuring cross-border mentorship and entrepreneurial storytelling
- » **Investor Roundtable** exploring growth capital for frontier startups
- » **Innovation Showcase** of curated Indian and Sri Lankan startups in key sectors
- » **Valedictory Address** on South Asia's Digital Decade and forward pathways
- » Think tanks, policy institutes, and digital rights groups
- » Business chambers, export councils, and academic incubators

## Expected Outcomes

- » **India - Sri Lanka Digital Charter** outlining a shared commitment to interoperable infrastructure, digital inclusion, and joint innovation frameworks
- » **Launch of the Indo-Sri Lanka Startup Corridor**, a formalised platform for startup exchange, co-investment, and regional mentorship
- » **Regulatory Dialogue Track** under the GeoEconomic Hub to align cross-border digital finance, data governance, and platform regulation
- » **Bilateral DPI Roadmap** endorsed by MeitY and ICTA, including knowledge-sharing and sandbox collaborations
- » **White Paper on India-Sri Lanka Digital Cooperation** to feed into multilateral platforms such as BIMSTEC, IORA, and G20 engagement groups

## Target Stakeholders

- » Cabinet-level policymakers from India and Sri Lanka
- » Senior officials from MeitY, NPCI, ICTA, CBSL, RBI, and development ministries
- » Founders and CXOs from unicorns and high-growth startups in both countries
- » Regional venture capitalists, angel investors, and DFIs
- » Public sector banks and digital payment infrastructure leaders

## Conclusion

The India-Sri Lanka Innovation Forum, 2025 is not just a convening, but a strategic commitment. It marks a shift from transactional bilateralism to collaborative digital diplomacy. By positioning India and Sri Lanka as co-creators of regional innovation architecture, the conclave seeks to lay the foundation for a resilient, inclusive, and future-facing South Asian digital order. Through sustained engagement, actionable outcomes, and shared ambition, the e-Lanka platform will become a cornerstone for economic transformation—powered not just by technology, but by trust and regional leadership.

## Organising Team

### Convenor



**Dr. Ashwani Mahajan**

Member, Board of Governors,  
Council for International Economic Understanding (CIEU) & National  
Co-Convenor, Swadeshi Jagran Manch (SJM)

### Organising Team



**Sanjeev Bikhchandani**  
Co-Founder, Info Edge



**Vijay Shekhar Sharma**  
Founder and CEO, Paytm



**Rajan Anandan**  
Managing Director, Peak XV



**Sridhar Vembu**  
CEO Zoho Corp



**Ashish Dhawan**  
Founder at ISDM



**Gopal Srinivasan**  
Chairman - TVS Capital Funds



**Sachin Chaturvedi**  
Chairman, ReBIT & Director  
General, RIS



## Council for International Economic Understanding

*Council for International Economic Understanding (CIEU) is an independent research oriented think-tank based out of New Delhi. We look forward to encouraging in-depth research, exchange dialogues, curate ideas leading to resolving the issues of the last man standing*

**COUNCIL FOR INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC UNDERSTANDING**

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