Reconciliation in Sri Lanka

Why in news?

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Recently the UN released a report on the **progress of reconciliation efforts** by the Sri Lankan government.

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What did the report say?

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- The UN warned that a range of serious abuses, including torture, still appear to remain widespread in Sri Lanka.
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- The report said the prevailing **culture of impunity** for perpetrating torture has undoubtedly contributed to this situation.
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- It acknowledged that the govt had made positive advances on constitutional and legal reforms, land restitution and symbolic gestures towards reconciliation.
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- But it cautioned that the **measures taken so far had been inadequate,** lacked coordination and a sense of urgency.
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- It urged the govt and people of Sri Lanka to prioritise justice alongside reconciliation to ensure that the horrors of the past are firmly dealt with and never to recur again.
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- Report also made recommendations including urging the govt to prioritise the return of private land that has been occupied by the military, adopt laws allowing the **creation of a hybrid court** and invite the UN rights office to establish a presence in the country.
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Where did the present regime failed to act?

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- In 2015, when **Sri Lanka agreed to a host of measures at the UNHRC,** including a judicial process to look into the war crimes, hopes were high.
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- The present govt also came to power on a promise that he would restore the rule of law, end the country's international isolation and take steps towards reconciliation with the Tamil ethnic minority.
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- But, key issues such as establishing a hybrid judicial mechanism and returning the military-occupied lands to Tamil civilians in the north and east still has made no tangible progress.
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- Issues such as continuing use of excessive force and arbitrary arrests suggest that the government is either not serious in changing its way or is simply incapable of doing so.
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- The delay in providing relief is alienating the govt's allies, **eroding the faith of the public** and also giving more time to the opposition to regroup itself.
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- Thus, its time, the present govt seize the moment and swiftly start addressing the core issues.
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Source: The Hindu

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