

Viewpoint: Here's the backstory behind Sri Lanka's synthetic pesticide ban and organic only decree

For most folks, "Sri Lanka" is likely to evoke a number of thoughts: tropical paradise with swaying palms and cerulean waters; excellent "Ceylon" tea; incendiary cuisine.

Political turmoil will also likely come to mind for news nerds, but the terms "economic collapse" and "organic farming" would not. But recent headlines introduce a new storyline.

[First](#): "How Sri Lanka's overnight flip to total organic farming has led to an economic disaster."

[Then](#): "Sri Lanka declares economic emergency to contain food prices as forex crisis worsens."

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Digging deeper quickly clarifies: Sri Lankan President [Gotabaya Rajapaksa](#), a military man apparently unburdened by understanding of biology or agriculture, succumbed to the siren call of conspiracy theories from a well-known and [persistent myth-monger](#) from neighboring India, [Vandana Shiva](#).

Following her advice, Rajapaksa has banned imports of fertilizers and pesticides. His stated aim is to transform the agricultural economy of Sri Lanka into a purely organic enterprise.

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The realities of substantially reduced yields and limited markets seem not to have entered into his calculations, and actual stakeholders in the agricultural economy are warning of [cataclysmic consequences](#), starting with halving the \$1.5 billion export market for Sri Lankan tea.

[Editor's note: [Read the GLP profile on Vandana Shiva here.](#)]

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