

## Candidate Profile: P. Ariyanethiran

- **Full Name:** Pakkiaselvam Ariyanethiran
  - **Election Symbol:** Conch Shell
  - **Running as:** Candidate supported by Tamil political coalitions (ITAK, EPRLF)
  - **Election Year:** 2024
  - **Party Affiliation:** Endorsed by Tamil political parties, including Ilankai Tamil Arasu Kachchi (ITAK) and Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front (EPRLF).
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## Background

P. Ariyanethiran is a seasoned Tamil politician from Sri Lanka, having served as a Member of Parliament (MP) representing the Batticaloa District. His political journey began as part of the Tamil National Alliance (TNA), a coalition formed to represent Tamil interests in the post-war Sri Lankan political landscape. Ariyanethiran's experience as an MP and his continued advocacy for Tamil rights have made him a significant figure in the Tamil political scene.

Ariyanethiran was particularly active during the 2010 parliamentary elections but failed to secure re-election in 2015. Despite this setback, he remains a vital voice for the Tamil minority, focusing on the ongoing struggles faced by the Tamil population, especially in the North and East of Sri Lanka, following the end of the civil war in 2009.

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## Political Campaign and Promises (2024)

In the 2024 presidential race, Ariyanethiran is championing the rights of the Tamil population and is expected to focus on key issues that have shaped Tamil political discourse over the years. His campaign platform includes the following promises:

- **Tamil Autonomy and Self-Determination:** Advocating for greater autonomy for the Tamil-majority regions (Northern and Eastern Provinces) through a federalist model. He supports a referendum to allow Tamils to decide their future, which could include demands for self-governance under international supervision.
- **Land Rights:** A significant part of his platform centers on resolving land disputes in the Northern and Eastern provinces. These disputes primarily revolve around the military's control of large swathes of Tamil land following the end of the war.
- **Human Rights and Accountability:** Ariyanethiran emphasizes justice for war crimes and human rights violations that occurred during the Sri Lankan Civil War. His

campaign calls for international accountability mechanisms to ensure justice for Tamil victims.

- **Federalism:** Pushing for decentralized governance, Ariyanethiran's campaign seeks to establish a system where Tamil provinces have more control over local affairs, particularly in areas like education, law enforcement, and resource management.
  - **Economic Development:** Ariyanethiran also highlights the need for economic development in Tamil regions, which were heavily affected by the war. He is expected to propose policies aimed at rebuilding infrastructure, fostering investment, and providing more opportunities for the youth in these areas.
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### **Election Symbol: Conch Shell**

The Conch Shell symbol holds significant cultural and spiritual meaning in South Asian contexts, symbolizing purity, truth, and victory. In the political arena, the symbol may also represent clarity and a call for justice, resonating with Ariyanethiran's demands for accountability and autonomy for the Tamil population.

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### **Challenges and Opportunities**

While P. Ariyanethiran has a dedicated base of support among Tamil political groups, his candidacy faces several challenges:

- **National Reach:** As a candidate primarily representing Tamil interests, he may find it difficult to appeal to voters outside the Northern and Eastern provinces, where the Tamil population is concentrated.
- **Limited Electoral Influence:** Tamil parties have struggled to exert significant influence in national elections, often due to the demographic composition of the electorate and the dominance of Sinhalese-majority parties.
- **Symbolic Candidacy:** Some analysts believe that Ariyanethiran's candidacy is more symbolic, aimed at drawing attention to Tamil issues rather than securing a realistic path to victory. His campaign provides a platform for Tamil grievances, but his chances of winning the presidency are considered slim.

On the other hand, his candidacy is an important step toward ensuring that Tamil political aspirations continue to be part of the national dialogue in Sri Lanka.

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### **Personal and Political Vision**

**Ariyanethiran's political journey has been deeply rooted in his commitment to Tamil political rights. His previous work as an MP and his advocacy for self-determination are key to understanding his broader vision for Sri Lanka. He seeks to address the long-standing marginalization of the Tamil population through structural changes in governance, ensuring greater political representation and economic equity.**

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## **Conclusion**

**P. Ariyanethiran is a strong advocate for the Tamil cause, running in the 2024 presidential election to amplify the voices of Sri Lanka's Tamil population. While his campaign faces challenges, his candidacy remains an important symbol of the Tamil community's ongoing struggle for justice and political autonomy in the post-war context. His platform focuses on core issues like self-determination, human rights, and federalism, which continue to resonate with many in the Northern and Eastern provinces.**