The first Sinhalese arrived in Sri Lanka late in the 6th century B.C., probably from northern India. Buddhism was introduced in about the mid-third century B.C., and a great civilization developed at the cities of Anuradhapura (kingdom from circa 200 B.C. to circa A.D. 1000), and Polonnaruwa (from about 1070 to 1200). In the 14th century, a south Indian dynasty established a Tamil kingdom in northern Sri Lanka. The coastal areas of the island were controlled by the Portuguese in the 16th century and by the Dutch in the 17th century. The island was ceded to the British in 1796, became a crown colony in 1802, and was united under British rule by 1815. As Ceylon, it became independent in 1948; its name was changed to Sri Lanka in 1972. Slightly larger than Virginia, the lowest point is the Indian Ocean (0 m), and the highest point is Pidurutalagala (2,524 m).

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"The Geodetic Horizontal Control Network, Sri Lanka Ministry of Land, 2009). Curiously, the GRS80/WGS84 ellipsoid is eschewed for the antiquated Everest 1830 without explanation.

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