

# Sri Lanka independence day

## Bilateral relations show further strengthening

Esala Weerakoon  
CHARGE D'AFFAIRES OF THE EMBASSY OF  
SRI LANKA

On the auspicious occasion of the 63rd Anniversary of Independence of Sri Lanka, I have the honor to convey warm greetings and best wishes from the government and the people of Sri Lanka to Their Imperial Majesties Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko, as well as to the friendly people and the government of Japan. I am also privileged to extend my warm, good wishes to all Sri Lankan nationals living in Japan on this auspicious occasion of our National Day.

A year has passed since the presidential elections of January 2010 in which H.E. Mahinda Rajapaksa won an outstanding victory. This provides a further opportunity for the people of Sri Lanka and friends abroad to note the political stability that the country now enjoys, the successful consolidation of peace throughout the country that has been achieved and the balanced, equitable and rapid progress in all spheres, which has been the consequence of peace. Clearly the most significant result has been the strengthening of our national unity. After decades of divisive and terroristic conflict our country is once again normal, stable and at peace.

In this context, I recall with gratitude the government of Japan's continued and steadfast support to Sri Lanka, not only through the several years when conflict affected our country, but today, when we are poised to become one of the dynamic

economies of Asia. Japan's generous development assistance and technical cooperation has covered many areas. The contribution made by Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers is commendable. Our infrastructural base in transportation, telecommunications, irrigation, agriculture, fisheries and power and energy have all benefited much. In recent years, our relations have shown a marked strengthening as a result of growing collaboration over a wide spectrum of innovative activities, notably in travel and tourism, investment, trade, educational exchanges as well as inter-parliamentary collaboration.

Sri Lanka is a long-standing friend of Japan. Our island nations enjoy civilizational affinities and shared

democratic values. Culturally, our two countries have been influenced by our shared Buddhist traditions, which have shaped the way of life of our peoples. These bonds provide the basis for mutual good will among our peoples. Our close and cordial relations have expanded over the years not only at the level of government but also as regards people-to-people exchanges, student mobility and academic exchanges.

The official visit last July of the Hon. G.L. Peiris, minister of external affairs, and the Hon. Basil Rajapaksa, minister of economic development, has contributed to the further strengthening of bilateral relations.

The formation of the Democratic Party of Japan's Japan-Sri Lanka Parliamentary

Friendship League was yet another step to enhancing and expanding relations.

I express my very deep appreciation to all the individuals and institutions connected with Sri Lanka who have played an important role in furthering our friendly relations.

We can take pride in the fact that our countries are locked together in a warm and cordial relationship of friendship and trust.

Sri Lanka stands today at a significant moment of immense opportunity. We have begun a new phase in nation-building following the end of terrorism. The desire of all our communities to live in peace and harmony as one nation have now reached fruition. As peace and prosperity beckon, I take this opportu-

nity to invite our Japanese friends to visit Sri Lanka and see for themselves the progress we are making. New harbors and international airports are now under construction. This spurt in economic activity signals the beginning of a new era for Sri Lanka.

It is our fervent hope that Japan's business leaders would avail themselves of the attractive investment and trading opportunities on offer in Sri Lanka.

I am confident that the coming year will see the further enhancement of the enduring friendship between Sri Lanka and Japan. We look forward to continuing friendly collaboration and dialogue to our mutual benefit with the government and people of Japan.

## Returning to the path to freedom

Mahinda Rajapaksa  
PRESIDENT OF SRI LANKA

All Sri Lankans now have the opportunity to celebrate the 63rd Anniversary of Independence with much glory. The unlimited sacrifices for the freedom and independence of Sri Lanka make today's Independence Day celebration one of great honor.

The aspiration of the nation is to make more meaningful the freedom won with much sacrifice. Upon taking over the nation, the first Prime Minister of the independent Sri Lanka, the Rt. Hon. D. S. Senanayake, said that freedom had been obtained to relieve the pain and increase the contentment of the people regardless of ethnic, political or religious differences. This is the



worthy aim of any nation that seeks freedom.

It is of paramount importance to accelerate the work on nation-building to fulfill this aim. The march toward making Sri Lanka the Wonder

of Asia should speed up, as each step taken for development is a step toward freedom.

We must set right the errors of both past and present in this march toward greater freedom. There is no victory we have won through divisions, which leads to the loss of freedom for us all. Therefore, building a united Sri Lanka is the best means by which freedom can be secured and given more meaning. We must have the same commitment to building a united nation as we had in defending our country.

We are a nation with a heritage of glory. It is filled with heroes who made great sacrifices for freedom.

I take this opportunity to honor all those patriots.

## Stability reigns in the country

D.M. Jayaratne  
PRIME MINISTER OF SRI LANKA

Sri Lanka celebrates the 63rd anniversary of its independence today with high expectations of a bright future for the country.

After defeating terrorism that disrupted the lives of the people and slowed down the pace of development of the country for nearly three decades, we have now brought peace and stability to the country.

The government has established normalcy in the north and east of the country by resettling almost all the displaced persons, rebuilding their houses, rehabilitating their villages and restoring

their livelihoods. Many infrastructure projects in these districts have been completed and there are many projects which are under way. These efforts will bring speedy growth and development to these areas.

The south of the country, too, witnesses unprecedented economic growth and development through the implementation of many mega-projects. Some are already completed and some are under way. The country can now boast of an annual average gross domestic product (GDP) growth rate of 8 percent and per capita income of \$2,053. These indicators of growth are higher than those of some of our neighbors.

We are hopeful that the country will progress further with the full implementation of the pragmatic policies

spelled out in the Mahinda Chinthana manifesto.

The temporary setbacks the country may face on account of natural disasters such as floods, landslides and drought, etc., can be easily overcome through the cooperative efforts, unity and resilience of our people.

The peace and stability that is now well-established in the country should be further strengthened to achieve the speedy social and economic advancement of our people. For full realization of this objective, the people of our different communities should be united and work together as one nation.

On this happy occasion of our Independence Day, may we Sri Lankans all firmly resolve to work together with unity, peace and harmony to build a happy and prosperous nation."

Prof. G. L. Peiris  
MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

Today we celebrate Sri Lanka's 63rd anniversary of independence with renewed hope and vigor.

In the past years, Sri Lanka was able to sustain its economic growth, even under trying circumstances. Despite encountering many challenges, our foreign reserves grew and our foreign exchange increased.

With the advent of a durable peace after the successful elimination of terrorism in Sri Lanka, our principal focus has been on steering the nation on the right course to achieve accelerated social and economic development across the nation,

which would benefit people from all parts of the country.

Earnings from exports increased significantly by 36 percent, year-on-year, to \$834 million in November 2010. This is the highest monthly increase since October 2004. Earnings from exports increased by 7 percent to \$760 million in August 2010, recording the highest monthly value thus far in 2010. Cumulative earnings from exports during the first eight months of 2010 increased by 11 percent to \$5.04 billion compared to the corresponding period of 2009. This data amply demonstrates that the economic growth in Sri Lanka has remained robust and broad-based.

The government of Sri Lanka, under the exemplary and resolute leadership of H.E. President Mahinda Rajapaksa, was able to move forward in

many areas of development across the country, by building new roads, airports and seaports among other infrastructure developments, which have contributed toward enhancing Sri Lanka's existing infrastructure facilities, thereby providing a highly favorable economic climate that now prevails in the country. This environment has presented the people with opportunities that were not available to them during the past three decades due to the scourge of terrorism. The government is determined to ensure that the opportunities we now have should not be missed and the fruits of these developments and their prospects should be equitably distributed among all the people in Sri Lanka, in order to ensure that all sections and communities benefit and can live in dignity.

Small- and medium-scale industries, international hotel chains and other commercial ventures are no longer confined to cities and townships but now encompass the villages as well. This has provided the people with more avenues for employment. In order to reap the benefits of these opportunities, we have also placed an emphasis on technology and information technology skills to ensure that the people are adequately equipped to derive maximum benefit of these opportunities that are now available across the country.

The government of Sri Lanka has placed great importance to achieve equity with regard to the distribution of income and wealth in the country. The government, being mindful of the welfare of the people, continued its efforts by launching new

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People of Sri Lanka on the Occasion of the  
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## Rich economic ties grow deeper

Sumitaka Fujita  
CHAIRMAN, JAPAN-SRI LANKA BUSINESS  
COOPERATION COMMITTEE

On behalf of the Japan-Sri Lanka Business Cooperation Committee (JSLBCC), I would like to congratulate the people of Sri Lanka on this very special occasion of the 63rd anniversary of Sri Lankan independence.



The JSLBCC was established in August 1979 with the objective of deepening commercial relations between Japan and Sri Lanka. Over the years, great strides have been made in expanding our two countries' bilateral ties in the areas of trade, investment, tourism and other business areas.

The JSLBCC has been very active in promoting these goals and has served as an im-

portant forum for cooperation and dialogue among Japanese and Sri Lankan government and business leaders.

A recent highlight was a discussion forum held in Tokyo last July that was organized by the JSLBCC and the Embassy of Sri Lanka. The Hon. professor G.L. Peiris, minister of external affairs, and the Hon. Basil Rajapaksa, minister of economic development, were among the esteemed representatives of the Sri Lankan government who participated. Discussion focused extensively on Sri Lanka's plans for land development, reconstruction of the northeast, and the investment environment in the country. For the numerous representatives of Japanese companies who attended the forum, the dialogue underscored the bright economic future that lies ahead for Sri Lanka and offered a valuable opportunity to develop and discuss new ideas for business

between our two countries.

Japan and Sri Lanka have a very long and rich historical relationship. This extends from our deep economic ties to our close cultural affinity, including our shared Buddhist traditions. In Japan, there is great admiration for the Sri Lankan national character, including the strong Sri Lankan work ethic and the tremendous generosity and personal warmth of the Sri Lankan people. This admiration has been continually strengthened through the extensive interaction of our peoples from our growing commercial relationships.

In closing, we trust that Sri Lanka's continuing policy of welcoming companies from overseas will sustain and enhance its remarkable progress. Going forward, the JSLBCC will continue to actively promote ever closer commercial ties between Japan and Sri Lanka.



Cultural exchange: Dancers perform at the Seventh Sri Lanka Festival held at Yoyogi Park in Tokyo last September. SRI LANKA EMBASSY

## Providing maximum benefit

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

welfare plans while further enhancing and improving the existing plans for the benefit of the public.

On this occasion of celebrating our independence, I would also like to invite the diaspora in the western world and elsewhere to seize this opportunity and play a dynamic role without distancing themselves from the exciting developments that are taking place in Sri Lanka today. We recognize the importance of the diaspora

that can play a pivotal role in improving and building infrastructure in the north and east of the country, as well as in other parts of Sri Lanka.

Sri Lanka is now on the threshold of reaping the dividends of peace and the prevailing climate in Sri Lanka is conducive to enhanced socio-economic development. We are optimistic that we will be able to continue our development drive and take Sri Lanka forward, toward greater prosperity.

## Congratulations

to the People of Sri Lanka  
on the 63rd Anniversary of  
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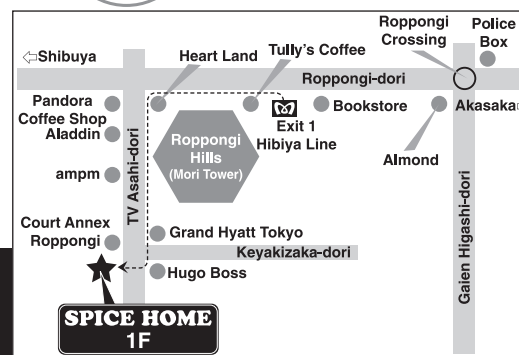
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