

Sri Lanka Independence Day

Renewed areas of cooperation further enhance bilateral bonds

Dammika Ganganath
Disanayake
AMBASSADOR OF SRI LANKA

On the special occasion of 69th Anniversary of Independence of Sri Lanka, I am deeply honored to convey my sincere and warm greetings from the people and the government of Sri Lanka to their Imperial Majesties Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko, the people and the government of Japan. I also wish to convey my warm sentiments to all the Sri Lankan expatriates living in Japan on this auspicious occasion.

The close and cordial diplomatic relations between Sri Lanka and Japan date back to long years of history, espe-

cially because of the common links with Buddhism based on trust, confidence, friendship, mutual understanding and commitment to shared values. The teachings of Lord Buddha and the philosophy of Buddhism has influenced and shaped the outlook and perception of our people.

Our bilateral relations have been further strengthened and reached a level of excellence in recent years. In 2017 Sri Lanka and Japan will be commemorating the 65th anniversary of establishing diplomatic ties between our two countries.

The year 2016 was also unique for both the countries as H.E. President of Sri Lanka Maithripala Sirisena visited Japan on the invitation of H.E. Prime Minister Shinzo Abe as an participant country to attend the G-7 summit outreach sessions in Ise-Shi-

ma. This enhanced existing relations into new vistas of multifaceted cooperation, benefitting both countries and people.

Today, Japan is one of the largest donors of Sri Lanka and has always stood by Sri Lanka in both good times and testing times. Furthermore, overseas development assistance from Japan to Sri Lanka has been significant and continues to make a positive contribution to the economic and social developments of the country. Sri Lanka is currently one of the safest places in the world, with permanent peace, stability and harmony.

Sri Lanka entered a new era, a new decade and a new chapter in her economic and political landscape by enjoying peace and stability with increasing unprecedented economic, investment trading and tourist opportunities

never before seen. Under the leadership of the President and Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe, the government of Sri Lanka will compete for global investment and is keen to engage Japan in all spheres in her path to economic prosperity.

Today, Japan is among the highest tourist-generating countries of Sri Lanka in the East Asian region. In addition, large Japanese corporations have expressed interest in committing investments and engaging in commercial activities with Sri Lanka, since Sri Lanka has emerged as a strategic hub in South Asia.

I eagerly look forward with confidence to the enduring friendship between Sri Lanka and Japan being further enhanced in the coming years and strengthening and deepening relations in all spheres between our two countries.



The President of Sri Lanka H.E. Maithripala Sirisena poses with other world leaders at the outreach meeting held at the G-7 summit in Ise-Shima, Mie Prefecture, in May. EMBASSY OF SRI LANKA

United on a path to secure a better future

Ranil Wickremesinghe
PRIME MINISTER OF SRI LANKA

As Sri Lanka celebrates the 69th Independence Day, I believe that we are also celebrating the 2nd anniversary of the election of Good Governance Government.

In order to make the spirit of freedom more meaningful to us all, the Government must take steps that reaffirm the liberties of the people with regard to their economic, social and spiritual well being.

During the last two years,

we have been able to achieve many steps in the right direction; restore democratic values, rebuild relationships with friendly nations and affirm mutual trust while focusing on revitalizing the economy towards laying the foundation for a nation that has overcome various differences and is firmly anchored on principles of freedom and human values.

Only a path that unites all can pave the way for a stronger Sri Lanka, a path that calls for what each of us can give of ourselves to our nation, to our common future and to a better tomorrow.

May we as Sri Lankans possess the courage and the determination to choose that path this Independence Day.

Together for a bright future

Mangala Samaraweera
MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF SRI LANKA



On the 69th anniversary of Sri Lanka's Independence, I extend warm greetings to all Sri Lankans and persons of Sri Lankan origin who live and work across the world in different capacities.

Our Nation's journey since the 4th of February 1948 has been mixed with achievements that we can be proud of, as well as challenges fraught with pain and anguish.

Following the decisive step taken under the leadership of President Maithripala Sirisena and Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe, to form a National Unity Government, we proceed on the path of formulating national policies required to ensure our nation's progress as a strong democracy, where good governance, the rule of law, individual rights, justice, freedom, and the dignity of all are upheld; the multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, and multi-religious nature of our country is cherished and celebrated; where all forms of discrimination are denounced; and we build a strong nation with equitable economic development, that would be at peace with itself and with the world, working together with the international community for the benefit of all.

The path we have chosen for ourselves is a challenging one. The task of nation-building is one that requires dedication and commitment of all Sri Lankans living both in Sri Lanka and overseas.

As we approach the 70th year of our Independence, I urge all of you to seize this historic moment in our nation's history to contribute your strengths, your goodwill, your energy, skills and wisdom, to build an inclusive and prosperous nation that is reconciled and at peace so that we march forward as the brothers and sisters of one family, with respect towards all, to ensure the non-recurrence of conflict and build the Sri Lanka of our dreams as proud citizens.

Continuous prosperity through peace and compassion

Maithripala Sirisena
PRESIDENT OF SRI LANKA

Many freedom struggles of humankind have aggrandized the story of human progress. We Sri Lankans too have inherited a long history of such struggles, that brings forth memories of grief and glory, from the times of our Kings to that of modern democracy. The nation is indebted to our forebears, whose selfless sacrifice of sweat and blood have brought about the freedom, in which we breathe today.

It is at a challenging and decisive moment, that we celebrate the 69th Inde-



pendence anniversary this year. The responsibility of strengthening the recently secured democratic freedom, as well as ensuring that, enriched by indigenous wisdom, so that all communities could live with dignity, lies on our shoulders. We have been able to overcome a dark era and reillumine our unsurmountable aspirations for democracy, freedom, and human dignity. However, the realization of the true meaning of freedom and in-

dependence lies in our potential to free ourselves from the shackles of all kinds and forms of poverty, ill-health, and confines of divisive identities of race, religion and caste, and enrich ourselves, as a society that values equity and rights of all.

We are a nation that deserves to live a prosperous life in a country where peace and justice and equality prevail.

It is my sincere wish that we continue to prosper by vanquishing ignorance by knowledge, untruth by truth, hatred by compassion and violence by nonviolence and become a compassionate nation.



The President of Sri Lanka H.E. Maithripala Sirisena shakes hands with Prime Minister H.E. Shinzo Abe at the outreach meeting during the G-7 summit in Ise-Shima, Mie Prefecture, in May. EMBASSY OF SRI LANKA

Long ties built on respect

Masahiko Komura
PRESIDENT, JAPAN-SRI LANKA PARLIAMENTARY FRIENDSHIP LEAGUE

I am pleased to express my heartfelt congratulations on the occasion of the 69th Independence Day Anniversary of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka.

The relationship between Japan and Sri Lanka dates back to the San Francisco Peace Conference in 1951, where Sri Lanka paved the way for Japan's return to international society following the devastation the country suffered during World War II. Since diplomatic relations were established the following year, Japan and Sri Lanka have maintained unwavering bonds as friends helping each other in difficult times.

Commemorating the 65th year of diplomatic relations between Japan and Sri Lanka in 2017, I am extremely delighted to see the bilateral ties being reinforced through close exchanges at various levels involving parliamentarians and cooperation in a wide range of areas such as maritime, economic, cultural and human exchanges.

I trust that the rapid economic growth in Sri Lanka in recent years will provide an opportunity for our two countries to deepen our cooperative relationship. As the president of the Japan-Sri Lanka Parliamentary Friendship League, I am more than willing to extend my fullest support to the further strengthening of the friendly relations and goodwill between our two countries.



More tourists drawn to 'splendid island'

Yasuo Fukuda
HONORARY PRESIDENT, JAPAN-SRI LANKA ASSOCIATION

I would like to convey my sincere congratulations on the occasion of the 69th Independence Day of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka.

Sri Lanka is a treasure trove of World Heritage sites and is also known as "the splendid island." Since the country established a domestic reconciliation, Sri Lanka has achieved steady economic growth and has seen a rapid increase in the annual number of tourists from all over the world.

Sri Lanka's profound and historical cultures have attracted



growing interest from the people of Japan, and the friendly relations between our two countries have become more stable over the

last 65 years since the establishment of diplomatic ties in 1952.

The Japan-Sri Lanka Association will maintain the bonds between the two countries and make every effort toward assisting the country on its way to new phases of development and promoting and invigorating cooperative relations between Japan and Sri Lanka.

Congratulations
to the People of Sri Lanka
on the 69th Anniversary
of Independence

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Best Wishes to the Government and the people of
Sri Lanka on the occasion of the
69th Anniversary of Independence

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The Embassy of Sri Lanka Personal Assistant **Samangani Bandara**

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The Sri Lanka Business Council of Japan (SLBCJ) was established in line with the policy directions given by the Overseas Business Promotion Program launched by the Ministry of Commerce & Consumer Affairs of Sri Lanka. Its mandate is to expand, develop and encourage bilateral trade between Sri Lanka and Japan while also promoting Japanese investment in Sri Lanka. Its membership is open to Japanese and Sri Lankan business entrepreneurs.