

Sri Lanka Independence Day Special

One of the world's top travel destinations

SANJIV GUNASEKARA
AMBASSADOR OF SRI LANKA



I am privileged to convey warm greetings from his excellency the president, the government and people of Sri Lanka to their majesties the emperor and empress as well as the govern-

ment and the friendly people of Japan on this 74th anniversary of the independence of Sri Lanka. I also take this opportunity to extend my warmest greetings to all Sri Lankans and persons of Sri Lankan origin residing in Japan.

This year also marks another significant milestone: 70 years of diplomatic relations between Japan and Sri Lanka. It is documented that the Japanese Embassy in Sri

Lanka was opened in February 1952. This was only few months after the September 1951 San Francisco Peace Conference, when Sri Lanka, then called Ceylon, stood up for Japan and represented the views of Asia during the speech given by then-Finance Minister J.R. Jayawardena.

The Ceylon Mission was one of the first Japanese embassies to open in the Asian region. The Sri Lanka-Japan relationship goes back a few centuries, with the oldest recorded contact being in 1856, when a Japanese boat from Kyushu stopped in Galle on its way to England.

A significant gift from Sri Lanka arrived when Anagarika Dharmapala, with Col. Henry Steel Olcott (a Christian American who converted to Buddhism and became a strong Buddhist activist), first visited Japan and landed in Kobe. He is credited for bringing Theravada Buddhism from Ceylon in 1889.

Sri Lanka has no quarantine limits in

place and is open to fully vaccinated tourists who have negative pre-departure PCR reports. As of January, Sri Lanka was ranked the third-most-vaccinated country in the world, with 72% of the populace vaccinated, including 93% of those over 20. Being an island nation, Sri Lanka has been recommended and highlighted as one of the best destinations to travel globally, not only for its beautiful beaches, mountains, wildlife, ayurveda treatments and spas, but also for its over 2,000 years of culture and Buddhist heritage, which is shared with its visitors with the warmth and hospitality that Sri Lankans are known for around the world.

The time-tested relationship between Sri Lanka and Japan has withstood obstacles. Its roots are deep, bilateral relations are as strong as ever before, and the trade and people-to-people contact between the two countries has only grown stronger year by year.

Independence does not end with victory

MAHINDA RAJAPAKSA
PRIME MINISTER OF SRI LANKA



This year, we celebrate Sri Lanka's 74th Independence Day amid many great challenges. The challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, which has plagued the world for two years, are

not insignificant.

While historically, the people of this country had lost their freedom due to foreign invasions and separatist terrorism, today

we have lost our freedoms due to a coronavirus pandemic that has deprived us of the opportunity to develop the country for two years. The economy, education and people's livelihoods were completely overturned. However, as a nation that has sacrificed for freedom, we cannot allow this frustration to overcome us.

Although the world faced massive setbacks, we have also used all the positive steps taken globally to recover from the pandemic. We have already taken steps necessary to provide the population with three vaccinations as a solution to the pandemic. It is this approach that has enabled us to recover from the pandemic to a great extent and return public life to a sense of normalcy.

Freedom is not something that ends with victory. It is something that should be won day by day, and it is this fact that we must highlight on each Independence Day. However, I firmly believe that a nation inspired by hundreds of years of relentless struggle for freedom, is fully capable of remaining undaunted and facing up to this challenge as well. As a nation accustomed to unceasingly fighting for independence, on this Independence Day, let us resolve to overcome these challenges.

This content was compiled in collaboration with the embassy. The views expressed here do not necessarily reflect those of the newspaper.

United in overcoming pandemic-related difficulties

GAMINI LAKSHMAN PEIRIS
FOREIGN MINISTER OF SRI LANKA

On the happy occasion of the Independence Day of Sri Lanka, marking our country's 74th anniversary of independence from 4 1/2 centuries of foreign colonial rule, it is with immense pride and pleasure that I extend my warm felicitations and sincere greetings to fellow citizens, both in Sri Lanka and across the world.

Today, we are at a critical juncture in



particular, the pandemic has severely and disproportionately affected developing

our transformation where all Sri Lankans should rededicate themselves to striving hard to overcome the adverse impact of the COVID-19 pandemic that has plagued us all. In

countries, including Sri Lanka, and the lives of the lower income groups. Therefore, I believe, it is vital that all Sri Lankans unite and support the efforts of the government to defeat the pandemic and revive the economy.

In celebrating our independence, we aim to fulfill the pledges of President Gotabaya Rajapaksa under the Vistas of Prosperity and Splendour policy, and build a peaceful and prosperous nation, maintaining friendly relations with all countries.

Congratulations to the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka

on the occasion of
Their Independence Day

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to the People of Sri Lanka
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TADASHI OGURA
Honorary Consul of Sri Lanka in Nagoya
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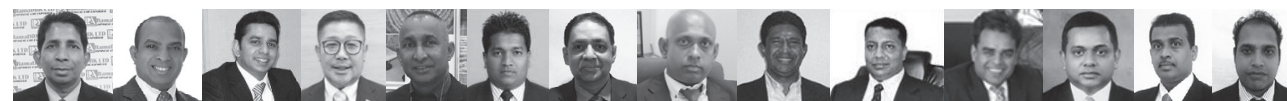
Best Wishes to the Government and the People of Sri Lanka on the occasion of their Independence Day



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Congratulations to the People of Sri Lanka on Their Anniversary of Independence

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