

Sri Lanka Independence Day

Strong ties across range of areas

DAMMIKA GANGANATH DISANAYAKE
AMBASSADOR OF SRI LANKA



It is with great pleasure I extend my warm wishes and greetings on this significant occasion of Sri Lanka's 70th Independence Day celebrations from His Excellency President Maithripala Sirisena, president of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe and the people of Sri Lanka to their Imperial Majesties Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and his government, as well as the people of Japan for their continued support and friendship to the people and government of Sri Lanka. I also wish to convey my warm greetings to the Sri Lankan community in Japan on

this auspicious occasion. The celebration of Independence Day this year assumes great significance since we have gained new momentum in our nation building process.

Sri Lanka has enjoyed many years of friendship with Japan. The great speech by J.R. Jayawardene, the then-minister of finance, at the San Francisco Conference where the Treaty of Peace was signed, ushered in a new era of Japan and Sri Lanka's relationship. Following the speech and the subsequent developments in the global political arena, bilateral relations between Sri Lanka and Japan have been strengthened like never before.

Since Sri Lanka's independence, our two nations forged a stronger bond that currently encompasses multifaceted areas, including trade, investment, maritime cooperation, science, technology and innovation, as well as substantial development assistance over the years, that have contributed toward Sri Lanka's success today as a middle-income nation. We celebrate this occasion just weeks

after several felicitous events. The Hon. Taro Kono, minister of foreign affairs, visited Sri Lanka, as did 100 delegates from the Japanese Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Japan-Sri Lanka Parliamentary Friendship League. During his visit, the foreign minister said that development cooperation with Sri Lanka will continue and that the government of Japan will extend assistance for infrastructure development in Sri Lanka. The recent high-level visits from Sri Lanka to Japan, including our president and prime minister in May 2016 and April 2017 respectively, further enhances bilateral cooperation between our two maritime nations.

As we celebrate this occasion, the government and people of Sri Lanka look forward to strengthening the bonds of friendship and cooperation with the government and people of Japan on the basis of our shared values, our commitment for democracy and international peace and security.



Sri Lankan Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe and Prime Minister Shinzo Abe shake hands in Tokyo on April 12. MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF JAPAN

Future success lies in working to achieve long-term goals

MAITHRIPALA SIRISENA
PRESIDENT OF SRI LANKA



If one is to truly fathom the value of independence, it is essential to understand the pain of being oppressed and subservient in the face of a foreign power. This is why we are grateful to all our heroes who sacrificed their lives to restore and sustain our nation's independence. On a day like today, when the value of freedom is commemorated, the nation pays tribute to its true patriots whose contribution to our motherland is invaluable.

As Sri Lanka celebrates seven decades of independence, it is appropriate to reflect on how far we have come as a nation. In terms of achieving human development, as well as the various social, economic and political challenges we were faced with, the progress we have achieved over this period is laudable.

I believe that as a nation with a unique identity, we have what it takes to overcome any challenge. We have proven it throughout our history. Today, we must show once

again that Sri Lanka is a nation that can rise within a short span of time. We have to undertake many a mission, including achieving inclusive green growth, national reconciliation and uplifting the quality and competitiveness of our human capital on a global scale.

We must also remember that true freedom does not comprise only political freedom. Our independence is not complete until economic freedom and cultural freedom are achieved. In our journey toward these, this year is a crucial one.

As a country, our future successes lie in our commitment to achieve long-term goals with firm determination, as we have done in the past. Completion of the Moragahakanda Reservoir as the last major step in the Mahaweli Development Programme is a testimony to our perseverance and commitment to meet such long-term goals. This year has been declared the National Food Production Year, with the hope of reaching the goal of food security, a dream that our nation has had since independence.

On this occasion that we celebrate seven decades of independence, I pledge to fulfill all my duties to Mother Lanka, and I emphasize that our true strength is in our unity and determination.

Respect for spiritual liberty and human dignity lead to freedom

RANIL WICKREMESINGHE
PRIME MINISTER OF SRI LANKA



This year, we celebrate 70 years of independence from colonial rule. It is an occasion for us to remember that we were only able to achieve independence with the participation of all communities coming together toward a common goal.

It is our responsibility to keep in mind that true independence is only possible when we can unite as one nation, rising above political, religious and ethnic differences. Only then is independence truly

significant and meaningful to all.

Freedom is fulfilled when human dignity and spiritual liberty are attained — in addition to social, political and economic freedom.

Since being elected, our government has consistently focused on creating the right social and political climate needed to build a society that is indeed free and stable.

Under a theme of one nation, the 70th Anniversary of Independence Day celebrations that are held today reflect our legacy as a free nation. My hope is to see all of Sri Lanka unite as one to sustain freedom for all.

Let's strive to be a people truly committed to our nation's progress on this Independence Day.

Bilateral cooperation seen in wide-ranging array of fields

WATARU TAKESHITA
PRESIDENT, JAPAN-SRI LANKA
PARLIAMENTARY FRIENDSHIP LEAGUE



I would like to express my warm congratulations on the occasion of the 70th Anniversary of Independence of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka.

The Japanese people continue to commemorate the words of the late J.R. Jayawardene, former minister of finance and former president of Sri Lanka, at the San Francisco Conference held in 1951.

The cordial relationship between Japan and Sri Lanka began with this benevolent speech and Sri Lanka has achieved numerous developments throughout its long history after the country gained independence. Japan always stands with Sri Lanka and works

together in the fields of maritime security, economy, culture and people-to-people exchanges.

It is the role of the Japan-Sri Lanka Parliamentary Friendship League to further progress

and reinforce these interactions between the two countries.

With Sri Lanka developing further, Japan would like to walk together with Sri Lanka in the years to come. To accomplish this vision, as the president of the Japan-Sri Lanka Parliamentary Friendship League, I will commit myself to strengthening the relations between our two countries.

Honoring those who fought for country's independence

TILAK MARAPANA
MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF
SRI LANKA



Today, as Sri Lanka celebrates her 70th Anniversary of Independence, I wish to convey my warm greetings to all Sri Lankans residing in the country, as well as in various parts of the world. On this solemn occasion, I would like to pay homage not only to those who fought hard to gain independence, but also to the thousands who subsequently sacrificed their lives to safeguard this independence.

Each anniversary of independence is an important milestone in our journey to reflect on our achievements during the past and evaluate the challenges lying ahead. Sri Lanka, as a nation, can be proud of its performance in the past and its commitment to democratic

traditions, including the rule of law, achievements made in important areas such as education and health, as well as the talented human capital of the country — the country's most valuable asset. However, unfortunately, our progress had been hindered and marred by conflict.

With the traumatic past behind us, all Sri Lankans should now work together, shedding their differences, to create a better future for the generations to come and compensate for lost opportunities. We must endeavor to create a new Sri Lanka, where reconciliation and sustainable peace would reign along with economic prosperity. This is the firm resolve that we, as Sri Lankans, must make when we celebrate the 70th anniversary of our independence. In this context, the government is committed to redoubling its efforts to meaningfully develop the country with the goal of increasing productivity and connectivity, while creating a firm foundation for all Sri Lankans to emerge as a strong nation in the region and the world.

'Splendid island' boasts many world heritage sites

YASUO FUKUDA
HONORARY PRESIDENT,
JAPAN-SRI LANKA ASSOCIATION



I am pleased to express my heartfelt congratulations on the occasion of the 70th Anniversary of the Independence of Sri Lanka.

Sri Lanka, a treasure trove of world heritage sites, is also known as "the splendid island" in the Indian Ocean. Since establishing domestic tranquility, Sri Lanka has advanced its economic development steadily and has relished an increase in the annual number of tourists from across the globe.

Sri Lanka's rich cultural diversity and historical heritage have continued to attract a

number of tourists, including Japanese. The friendly relations between our two countries are long-standing since establishing diplomatic ties 66 years ago in 1952, and I am blessed indeed to see the alliance grow in strength and stability.

The Japan-Sri Lanka Association will uphold the bonds between our two countries and assist the country on its way to a new phase of developments and further promote and invigorate cooperative relations between Japan and Sri Lanka.



Sri Lankan State Defense Minister Ruwan Wijewardene and State Minister of Foreign Affairs Kazuyuki Nakane during their visit to Tokyo on Nov. 2. EMBASSY OF SRI LANKA

Congratulations and Best Wishes to the People of Sri Lanka on the 70th Anniversary of Their Independence



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Best Wishes to the Government and the People of Sri Lanka on the occasion of the 70th Anniversary of Independence



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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.