

# Sri Lanka Independence Day Special

## High hopes for nation's independent growth Progress across fields

**MAITHRIPALA SIRISENA**  
PRESIDENT OF SRI LANKA



Sri Lanka, which had been under British rule for 133 years, gained independence on Feb. 4, 1948. Each year, this day is celebrated with glory. Our prime objective should be to collectively commit ourselves to achieve the true meaning of the freedom we obtained, with a new vision and renewed vigor.

Having gained independence from imperialist rulers, as a nation we expected a political, socioeconomic and cultural forward march with a unique national identity. To entrust the future of the nation to minds enslaved by imperialism for more than a century is more

dangerous than being under the colonial rule. Hence, for future progress, we need people with spirits invigorated by our nation's customs, values and culture.

We could accomplish colossal tasks, similar to those past gigantic achievements of other great civilizations of the world, by being independent. We are a people who established our own national identity from the beginning. Therefore, on this auspicious occasion, I would like to emphasize that the time has come to build the economy of our country on the foundation of agriculture.

The common enemies of the progress of national revival are poverty and corruption. We must resolve to eradicate these evils completely.

All those who sacrificed their lives for the sake of independence of the nation since the colonial era are commemorated on this occasion with honor and dignity. Additionally, those dedicated to safeguarding the freedom



President Maithripala Sirisena and Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in Tokyo in March. EMBASSY OF SRI LANKA

and independence of the nation today are also remembered with gratitude.

It is my wish on this occasion that with all

political parties, we will be able to march forward with courage and peace toward accomplishing the ultimate goal of independence.

**TILAK MARAPANA**  
MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF SRI LANKA



Today, all Sri Lankans come together to commemorate the 71st anniversary of our Independence Day. This is an ideal occasion to take stock of the progress Sri Lanka has made as a nation since gaining independence; to remind ourselves of the sacrifices made by our fallen heroes in safeguarding the sovereignty and the territorial integrity of our country and also to reflect on our past mistakes.

During the last 71 years, Sri Lanka has seen much progress in many fields, includ-

ing education, health care, eradication of poverty and employment generation. Our government, for the past four years, has made substantive efforts to further improve the lives of all Sri Lankans and ensure that benefits of development trickled down to all strata of society.

While we can be proud of the progress made, many challenges that affect our development and social harmony still remain. Comprehensive reconciliation in our multicultural and multiethnic society is an essential prerequisite for progress. The strengthening of democracy and the rule of law is also imperative for Sri Lanka to march forward.

On this happy occasion, let us make a firm resolve to build a better future for our country. I invite all Sri Lankans, both residing in the country and overseas, to join hands with the government in this endeavor.

## 67 years of diplomatic bonds In pursuit of true freedom

**DAMMIKA GANGANATH DISANAYAKE**  
AMBASSADOR OF SRI LANKA



It is with great pleasure I extend my warm wishes on this significant occasion of Sri Lanka's 71st Independence Day anniversary celebrations from His Excellency 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 longstanding friendship extended to the people of Sri Lanka.

We have seen yet again noticeable developments in the already close relationship following the state visit of our president to Japan in March. The visit provided an excellent opportunity to enhance partnership between the two countries and to further consolidate our relations in a myriad of sectors.

In 2019, Sri Lanka and Japan will be commemorating the 67th anniversary of establishing diplomatic ties. As we celebrate this occasion, the people of Sri Lanka look forward to strengthening the bonds of friendship with the people of Japan on the basis of our shared values, our commitment for democracy and international peace and security.

While celebrating our country's liberation from long years of foreign rule, Independence Day is the ideal opportunity to inspire public discourse and social activism

**RANIL WICKREMESINGHE**  
PRIME MINISTER OF SRI LANKA



Celebrating "independence" does not necessarily mean it has been entirely achieved. Its true meaning is realized only when all human beings in a nation achieve a state of environ-

mental, economic, political, social and spiritual coexistence. This demands an organized program and collective sacrifice.

While celebrating our country's liberation from long years of foreign rule, Independence Day is the ideal opportunity to inspire public discourse and social activism

for a more broad-based national independence that transcends ethnic and religious biases.

Since being propelled into power by the people, the Yahapalana government has overcome countless challenges and obstacles to establish a refreshingly new social and political culture, while taking significant steps to strengthen democracy. We are savoring the positive results of these collective efforts, as this transformed society has already proven its resolve to defeat anti-democratic, extremist forces.

On our 71st Independence Day anniversary, I invite each and every one of you to join me in building a robust economy, stable government and a prosperous nation, so that all our citizens can enjoy the true freedom of living in a socially and politically developed society.

**WATARU TAKESHITA**  
PRESIDENT, JAPAN-SRI LANKA PARLIAMENTARY FRIENDSHIP LEAGUE



I would like to express my warm congratulations on the occasion of the 71st anniversary of the Independence Day of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka.

The Japanese people never forget the words of J. R. Jayawardene, the then-minister of finance, and the late former president of Sri Lanka, delivered at the San Francisco Conference in 1951. The cordial relationship between Japan and Sri Lanka

began with the benevolent speech and Sri Lanka has achieved recent developments through its long history after the country's achieving 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 our role in the Japan-Sri Lanka Parliamentary Friendship League to further progress and reinforce these interactions between our 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 nations.

## Cultivating even stronger ties

**Congratulations to the People of SRI LANKA on the 71st Anniversary of Independence**

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**Congratulations and Best Wishes to the People of Sri Lanka on the 71st Anniversary of Their Independence**

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**Happy National Day!**

From the four corners of the island, to all corners of the world  
From our loved ones, to those in faraway lands  
This is your pride that we carry high at 30,000 feet  
This is your journey that we have been marching forward for 71 years  
Hands entwined, hearts beating together  
You have given us twenty two million reasons to celebrate  
all that is contained within 65,610 km<sup>2</sup> of land mass.

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**Inbound tourism on the upswing**

**YASUO FUKUDA**  
HONORARY PRESIDENT, JAPAN-SRI LANKA ASSOCIATION

I am pleased to express my congratulations on the 71st anniversary of Sri Lanka's Independence Day. Sri Lanka, a treasure trove of UNESCO World Heritage sites, is also known as "the splendid island" in the Indian Ocean. Since experiencing domestic tranquility, Sri Lanka has advanced economically and relished an annual increase in international tourists, including Japanese visitors.

The friendly relations between our countries have been fruitful since the establishment of ties in 1952.

The Japan-Sri Lanka Association will uphold these bonds and assist Sri Lanka on its way to a new phase of development and further promoting and invigorating relations between Japan and Sri Lanka.

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

**Best Wishes to the Government and the People of Sri Lanka on the occasion of the 71st Anniversary of Independence**

**SRI LANKA BUSINESS COUNCIL OF JAPAN**  
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The Embassy of Sri Lanka Personal Assistant **S.M. Wijesinghe** SriLankan Airlines Manager **Fawzan Fareid**

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.

**Congratulations to the People of Sri Lanka on the 71st Anniversary of Independence**

**TADASHI OGURA**  
Honorary Consul of Sri Lanka in Nagoya  
(Chairman, NORITAKE CO., LIMITED)

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