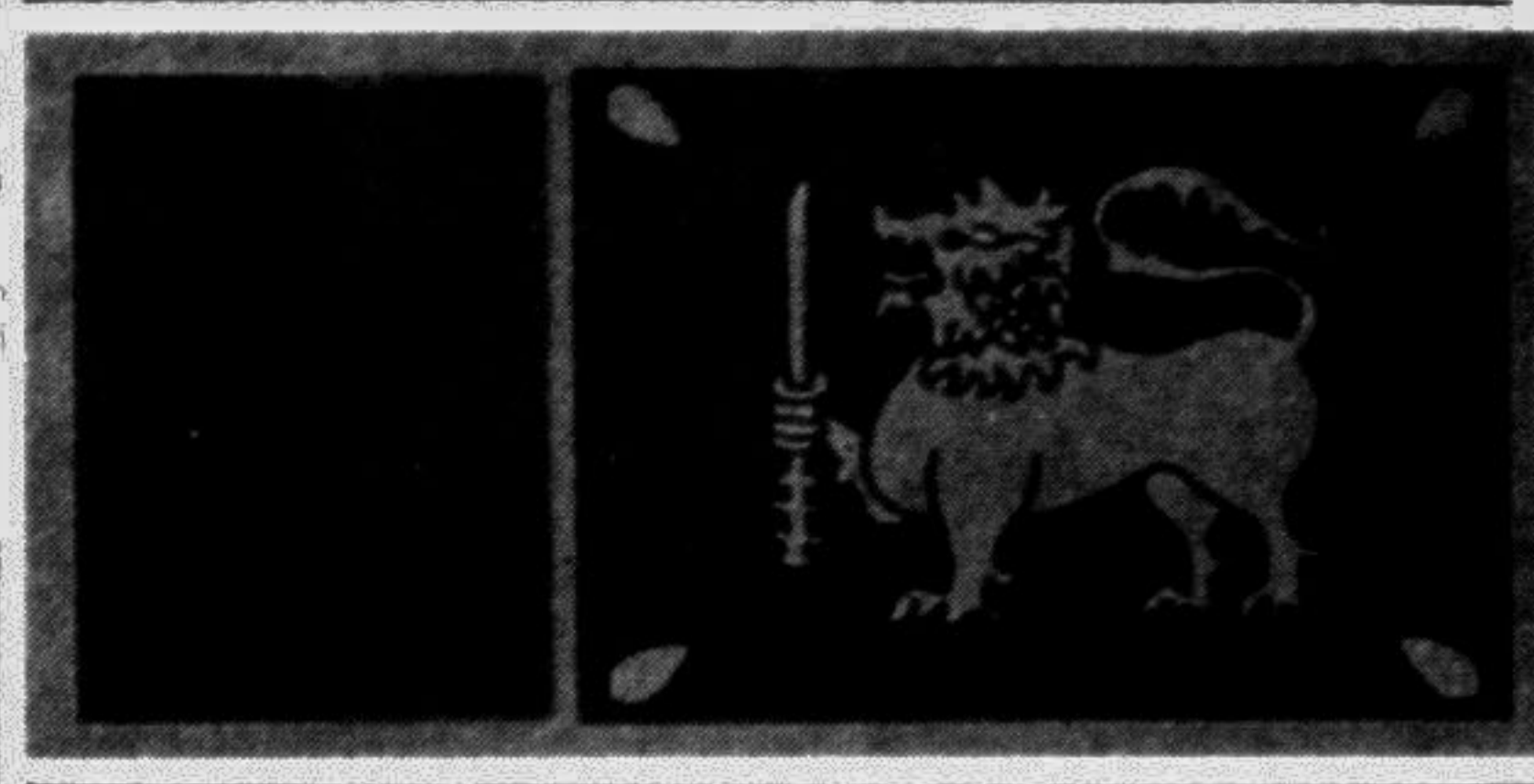




# NATIONAL DAY OF SHRI LANKA



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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Exactly 45 years ago Sri Lanka re-emerged as a Free and Independent nation. This event signified a reunion with our proud and glorious past. On that occasion we looked forward to a promising future.

Since independence, we have achieved much. We have had a few set backs too. This is the time to take stock of our gains and losses.

Our achievements in the field of social progress are considerable. The quality of life of our people is unparalleled in the developing world at least. In the past few years we have strived hard to restore equity and social justice to all alike. Above all, we have restored a greater sense of security to the large majority of our people.

In the past few years we have sustained a significant rate of economic growth. We are now on the threshold of a break-through in economic development. We have re-structured our economy. Our economic policies are pragmatic and liberal. They are aimed at economic expansion.

In recent times we have launched a direct attack on poverty. Our people are our greatest asset. Through Janasaviya we have invested in them. Janasaviya is rich in experience. It has shown that the poor are not a write-off. Indeed, we can proudly say that the poor are rich.

Last year, we took two giant steps in decentralization. The first is the establishment of 200 Divisional Secretariats. This important step has taken administration to the very door-steps of the people. The other great stride is the establishment of 200 garment factories. They have provided employment for over one hundred thousand young men and women.

Sometimes, we have allowed sectarian thoughts and prejudices to divide us. Sri Lanka belongs to every citizen who inhabits this country. We are indeed proud of our rich cultural diversity. We must achieve unity amidst diversity. In unity lies our strength.

We cannot afford to dissipate our energies on petty issues. Problems which seem insurmountable can be resolved with understanding and goodwill. The real task before us is to ensure a decent life to our people. We have to eliminate poverty. We have to bring about a just and righteous society. We have to take our place in the forefront of the world community. All this can be achieved, provided, there is peace and harmony in the country.

Let this be our goal. Let us strive unremittingly towards it. Let us unitedly take up that challenge. In conclusion, let me invoke the blessings of the Noble Triple Gem on all Sri Lankans here and abroad.

**Ranasinghe Premadasa**

President  
Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka

## Taking the Administration to the People

THE concept of taking administration to the people, as envisioned by President Premadasa necessitated the establishment of Divisional Secretariats, and thus paved the way for a remarkable change in the management of public affairs in Sri Lanka. There had to be a change in the Sri Lanka administrative framework and principles to take the administration to the people. This was a new challenge as there were no existing models to follow or emulate. Neither were there any documented experiences from which the Sri Lankan administration could have benefited.

The colonialists in Sri Lanka created a paternalistic, condescending, authoritarian and highly centralized system. It was a system where the emphasis was on maintenance of law and order. The administrator was all supreme. The colonialists believed that the citizen existed to serve the state and not the reverse. The colonialists cannot be blamed for what we are today. We had more than 40 years to divest ourselves of unwanted patterns. Even 44 years after independence, we have not

by Festus Perera  
Minister of Public Administration, Provincial Councils and Home Affairs, Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka

been to involve a system of administration that could be truly called Sri Lankan. President Ranasinghe Premadasa very clearly understood the suffering of the people due to this unsuitable system of administration. This is the cardinal reason why this massive change is being brought about.

The engine of growth of Sri Lanka's economy, societal values and prosperity is in her people. Sri Lankan administration therefore should be people oriented and not official centred. Life and meaning has to be given to the adage, "People are our masters and we, their servants". The establishment of Divisional Secretariats in Sri Lanka is a positive step towards the creation of this environment.

The issues surrounding the creation of Divisional Secretariats open a new era of public administration in Sri Lanka. There are four reasons why such a re-organisation is necessary. Firstly, it is because

the administration is becoming simpler and losing its mystique. It is no longer the privilege of a few to understand what administration is and benefit from it. But, the right of all Sri Lankan people to be active partners of this administration. Secondly, the government is very close to the people in carrying out its administrative responsibilities. People do not have to travel to distant and alien places to receive public services, but may commute short distances and get things attended to, in their own living environment, so well known to them. No longer will they be treated as strangers by the government. They will be treated humanely and justly. Thirdly, public administration is becoming client conscious. The government officialdom, hitherto non-caring and self-centred is now client conscious, consumer oriented, developing a caring for the public and above all having a marketing approach to satisfy client.

Fourthly, no longer do we have public administrators but we have managers. The question then arises as to what constitutes the difference between

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## PRIME MINISTER'S MESSAGE

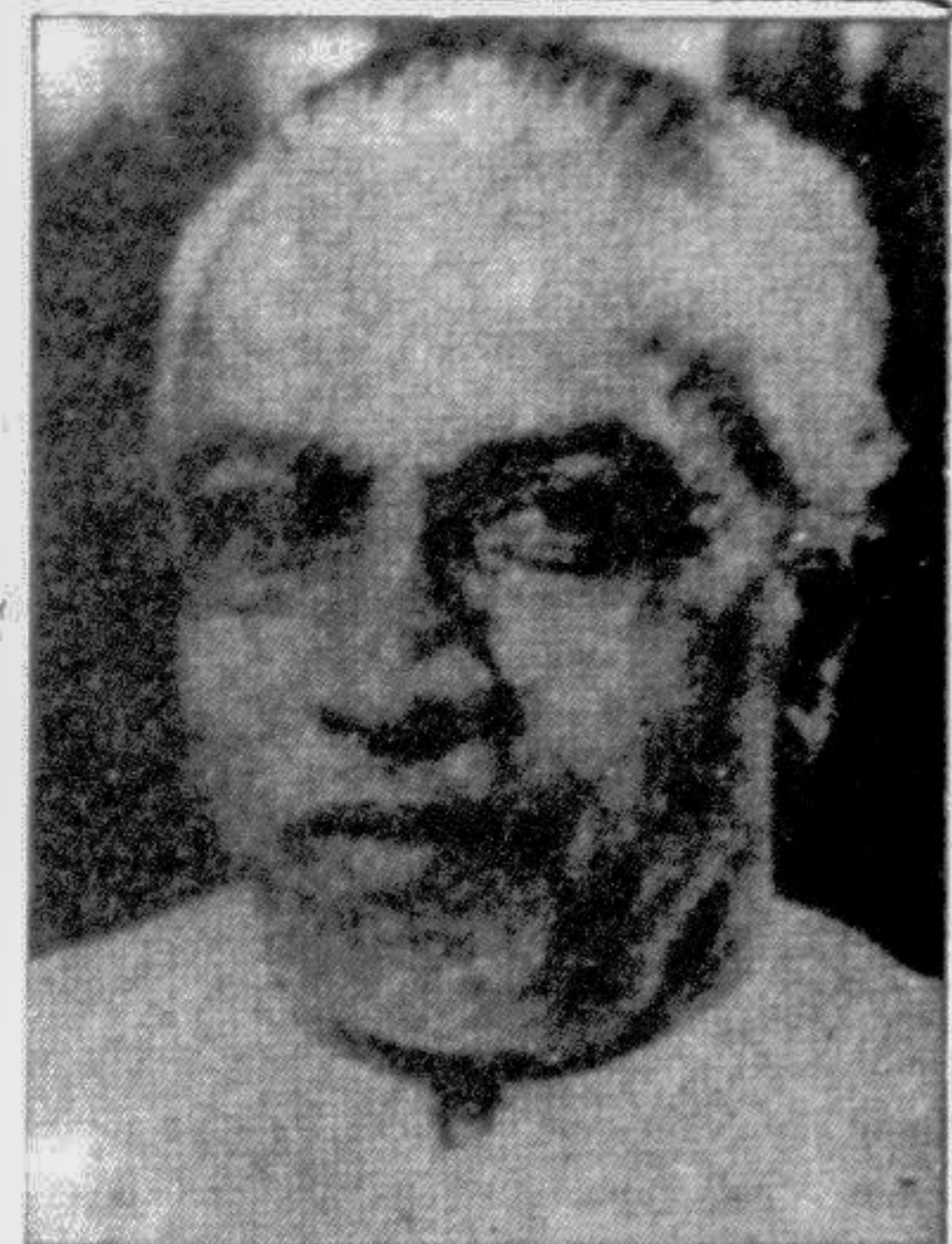
February 4th is our National Day. The 45th Anniversary of our National Independence also falls on this day. We have become a free and sovereign nation 45 years ago. Since then Sri Lanka has come a long way in achieving great heights in the political, economic, social and cultural fields. We have yet to achieve much more and we can definitely achieve our goal by working hard with a sense of purpose, harmony, dedication and unity. Our national flag signifies our unity and brotherhood. It is the symbol of our independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity.

The national flag binds all communities in Sri Lanka into one family of Sri Lankans. I therefore appeal to all Sri Lankan residents both here and abroad to fly the national flag of Sri Lanka from 1st to 5th February 1993 in your homes, offices, work places, buildings and all vehicles. I also appeal to you to decorate these buildings and places and where possible to illuminate them during this period.

The Government under the able guidance and inspiring leadership of His Excellency Ranasinghe Premadasa, President of Sri Lanka has given priority to programmes that bring about welfare and happiness to our people and specially to the poorest of the poor. The Janasaviya programme initiated by His Excellency the President has received worldwide acclaim and recognition. I wish to appeal to all Sri Lankans to help the needy to the best of their ability on this day of great significance. Let us, resolve on this historic day to make them the partners of our national development efforts. I also request you to act with greater commitment in social welfare activities. The setting up of 200 garment factories in the rural Sri Lanka, decentralization of administration through 200 Divisional Secretariats, continuation of the 1.5 million houses programme, provision of free mid-day meal, free text books and free uniforms to school children have been helpful to ease the burden of our people to a great extent. The Government has also concentrated on industrial growth and export promotion. Greater Colombo Economic Commission (GCEC) which was set up in 1978 to promote foreign investment in certain specific areas has now been extended to cover the entire island and the name has been changed to the Board of Investment of Sri Lanka (BOISL).

The Year 1992 had been declared as the Year of Exports. It is also the 'first year of the decade of exports.' Expo '92, an International Exhibition held from 18th to 25th November, 1992 in Colombo, attracted over 3,500 buyers from over 55 countries.

Sri Lanka would have noticed a bigger gross domestic product growth percentage if not for the bad weather conditions and the continued war in the North and East. We have no control over the weather. The war could



definitely be brought to an end. The Government is determined to find an acceptable political solution that will meet the aspirations of the Sinhalese, Tamils and Muslims. His Excellency the President has stated that he considered achieving peace in the North and East a better victory than a victory at the next Presidential Election at the end of 1994.

On this historic day we should look back and see what our performance was during the past. There are certain duties and obligations cast on us as citizens of Sri Lanka. We have to be mindful of same and be responsive to the rights of others in society in order to ensure that unity is preserved in diversity. We can circumvent our problems and meet the future challenges. Together we have to strive hard with dedication, devotion and determination.

Let us remember on this day with deep gratitude the noble service rendered by our distinguished national leaders. Let us also accord our nation's salute to the heroic sons of Lanka in the armed forces and the police who have sacrificed their lives to save and protect our motherland.

I wish to thank the many thousands of Sri Lankans now living abroad who have contributed generously to the welfare and progress of our country. I also acknowledge with gratitude the goodwill and cooperation extended to us by our friendly countries.

I wish peace, prosperity and good luck to all our Sri Lankans both here and abroad.

**D. B. Wijetunga**

Prime Minister  
Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka

## The Plantation Industry



Tea remains the country's highest net earner of foreign exchange.

ECONOMIC growth in Sri Lanka depends largely upon an agricultural performance in which tree crops play a major role. About 75 per cent of the population live in rural areas and agriculture accounts directly for about 50 per cent of employment.

In the plantation sector tree crops, mostly tea, rubber and coconut, occupy almost 900,000 hectares of 41 per cent of cropped land. Tree crops continue to be the main source of foreign exchange earnings and employ about one sixth of the total labour force. The sector's dominant role in Sri Lanka's economy is therefore unquestioned.

After the conquest of Sri Lanka, the British set about the economic exploitation of the country. First came coffee and

large plantations were set up. However a coffee blight destroyed totally the coffee plantations in Sri Lanka.

Then came tea. It was found that the climate, topography and the soils of the country were ideal for tea. The slopes of the highest hills situated above four thousand feet provided high grade tea accepted as the finest in the world. The medium grown and low grown teas also are of good quality and are ideal for providing bulk in blending. The labour for these estates was obtained from South India.

Thus tea became the leading commercial crop of Sri Lanka followed by rubber which was another tree crop imported to Sri Lanka. Coconut also began to be planted in estates both large and medium sized and in

home garden plots.

Thus the Sri Lanka economy became an open, export-oriented economy obtaining foreign exchange earnings mainly from Tea, Rubber and Coconut. Despite many vicissitudes such as Land Reform, nationalisation, mismanagement, fluctuations in World Prices tea remains one of them main sources of foreign exchange earnings for Sri Lanka. In fact, tea is the 2nd largest foreign exchange earner.

Prior to the State take over, the plantations were run efficiently and profitably by the private sector. They were a significant contributor to the economy and to the Government by way of taxes. In contrast, during nearly two decades of State ownership and management, the perfor-

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## Foreign Minister's Message

On the occasion of the 45th Anniversary of our Independence which is our National Day, I take great pleasure in sending my greetings and good wishes to all Sri Lankans and well wishers of Sri Lanka abroad.

We celebrate our National Day this year on a note of happiness, hope and optimism. This is on account of our achievements both in the domestic sphere and in our external relations. At the same time we are mindful of the tasks that lie ahead to which we re-dedicate ourselves.

In the sphere of our foreign relations, the recent period has marked a consolidation of our relations with many countries in the world, particularly our immediate neighbours.

Since the Vth SAARC Summit in Colombo, there has been continuing contact at the highest levels among our countries to put into practical shape the programme of action decided upon at the Summit. The Summit marked a turning point in the history of SAARC and our President, His Excellency Ranasinghe Premadasa, the current Chairman, is directing with utmost vigour the implementation of these proposals to make SAARC meaningful to the teeming millions in our region.

The visits undertaken by the President to the SAARC countries last year have resulted in the strengthening of our ties and practical measures are being worked out to improve and enhance cooperation between our countries.

The Prime Minister led our delegation to the Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement held in Jakarta in September, 1992. There, we reiterated our firm support to the Movement and our conviction that the Movement has an important role to play in a post cold war world.

Sri Lanka has played its role at the United Nations and other international fora with commitment and responsibility. The esteem shown to Sri Lanka by the international community can be measured by the fact that we are members of five UN organs and two of our nationals are holding key positions in prestigious international bodies. We look forward to working



**"The recent period marks consolidation of ties with many countries."**

closely with the new US administration of President Clinton. Our relations with the West are marked by close trade and economic ties. Our exports, particularly the export of garments have a large market in Europe and the US and we expect these markets to expand to absorb increased production from the 200 garment factories opened in Sri Lanka recently. The inflow of tourists from the West, particularly from Europe, has increased and we hope that this trend will continue. Last year we opened a resident Diplomatic Mission in the Netherlands to emphasise our ties with that country.

In Asia, both in South East Asia and East Asia, we have excellent relations with the countries concerned. Japan is the main source of development assistance to Sri Lanka and at present there is close cooperation between Sri Lanka and Japan in a number of fields. Our relations with China has been traditionally close and our relations with South Korea are based on active cooperation in the fields of investment and trade. We have very close ties with Australia and New Zealand under the Commonwealth Umbrella.

In the Middle East, the close relations we have with the countries of the region are marked by the presence of large Sri Lankan communities in those countries. In the domestic sphere we have reasons to be happy about our economic performances

despite the difficulties we have been facing due to the conflict in the North and East. Our growth rate reached 6.7 in 1990, 4.8 in 1991 and the estimated growth for 1992 is 4.5%. The inflation rate has come down since His Excellency Ranasinghe Premadasa assumed office as President. The budget deficit has been reduced and some government enterprises have been re-peopled. These have now become profit making ventures with active private sector participation. Our exports have increased to 84.3 billion as compared to 56 billion in 1988 in SDR terms. It is heartening to note that industrial exports have increased in this dramatic manner. Tourism is another success story and we reached the figure of almost 400,000 arrivals in 1992, which is the highest on record since 1982.

These statistics show that the efforts made by the Government to develop the country have borne fruit. People have benefited substantially from Janasaviya, the 200 garment factory project, the decentralisation of administration and the creation of the Divisional Secretariat system. Due to this improvement in the economy the Government was able to give a 30% salary increase to public servants this year.

There is however the vexatious problem of the North and East which has yet to be resolved. As stated by HE the President in his address to the nation on 2nd January, the urgent need of the hour is a specific solution to the North-East crisis and in this regard we are eagerly awaiting the final recommendation of the Parliamentary Select Committee. With the commitment of the Government to find a lasting solution and the support it is getting from the peace loving people in Sri Lanka and abroad, we could look forward with confidence to the settling of this problem before long.

Let me conclude this Message by conveying my warm good wishes to our Sri Lankans and other friends abroad for their happiness, prosperity and well-being.

**Harold Herat**  
Foreign Minister  
Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka

## "Bangladesh and Sri Lanka enjoy excellent relations"

Sri Lankan nationals rejoice today as we commemorate the 45th Anniversary of our country's attainment of independence. It is an occasion for celebration as we look back with pride and satisfaction at what Sri Lanka has been able to achieve during the past year. It is also an occasion to rekindle fresh hopes for a future of greater well being and prosperity for the people of our country.

### History and Culture

On an occasion such as this, it is natural for us to look back briefly on our past. The history and culture of Sri Lanka have been subject to strong currents of influence from the Indian subcontinent to the north as well as those brought through the sea routes. Being an island surrounded by the Indian Ocean, Sri Lanka had been visited by the early maritime nations in the world. Arab Coasters, Greek and Roman galleys and Persian merchantmen often met the Far Eastern traders at the ancient ports of Sri Lanka. In more recent history, the newer maritime powers such as the Portuguese, the Dutch and the British have dominated the history of the island from the 16th century

onwards. Given its physical proximity to India, developments in the subcontinent whether political, cultural or religious exerted a profound influence on the island.

The history of Sri Lanka is deeply couched in legend. The Mahawansa, the ancient chronicle of Sri Lanka, dates the settlement of the Sinhala people to 543 BC — the date on which Prince Vijaya from Vangadesa landed in Sri Lanka. The people of Sri Lanka can trace their links with the people of Bangladesh to this early period. The story of Prince Vijaya, whether fact or fiction, largely symbolises the consolidation of a wave of Aryan migrations from North-East India which was following the existing trade routes. This migration probably explains why the people of Sri Lanka and Bangladesh have such common features and characteristics including the languages they speak. It is a field for serious study for anthropologists and historians.

The more documented history of Sri Lanka dates back to Devanampiya Tissa, a contemporary of Emperor Asoka of India, in the 3rd century BC. It was during the time of these two rulers that Buddhism was introduced to the island.

### High Commissioner's Message



**Alfred K David**  
High Commissioner for Sri Lanka in Bangladesh

Thereafter, all rulers protected Buddhism as the State religion. The introduction of Buddhism to Sri Lanka by Arahant Mahinda, the son of Emperor Asoka, was the most significant single political and socio-cultural event in Sri Lanka's early recorded history. This year the 2300th anniversary of the visit of Arahant Mahinda will be celebrated in Sri Lanka. Along with Buddhism, Sri Lanka also re-

ceived from India a vast cultural heritage which laid the foundation for all subsequent developments. The Brahmi script brought by the Aryan settlers evolved in to the modern Sinhalese script. Sri Lanka had an unbroken succession of monarchs for over 2,000 years. After a period of colonial rule since the 16th century, Sri Lanka became independent on 4th February 1948 through peaceful negotiations and constitutional evolution. The democratic form of government in Sri Lanka has a long history and her people have enjoyed adult franchise for over six decades.

### Performance of the Government

While we are proud of our history as an old and distinguished nation, we can also be equally proud of our achievements since independence. The people of Sri Lanka were able to exercise their right to adult franchise since 1931. The system of free education from the kindergarten to the university was introduced in 1943. Therefore today the people of Sri Lanka can boast that their quality of life is unparalleled anywhere else in the developing world. There has been a parallel effort to restore

equity and social justice to all sections of Sri Lanka's people. Sri Lanka which has a current population of 17 million people enjoys a 90 per cent literacy rate and social indicators which are the envy of other developing nations.

The Sri Lankan government under the able and benign leadership of President Ranasinghe Premadasa has given priority to activities that are geared to bring about the welfare and happiness of the people and especially the poorest of the poor. Special mention must be made of the Janasaviya (people's strength) programme which has received world-wide recognition and acclaim. The Janasaviya programme has restored a greater sense of security to the large majority of the people of Sri Lanka. Prime Minister Hon. D B Wijetunga in his national day message has urged "let us resolve on this historic day to make them the partners of our national development efforts".

The people of Sri Lanka have reasons to be happy about our economic performances in recent years despite the problems faced due to the conflict in the North and East of the

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