



Independence Day of Sri Lanka



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Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga
President of Sri Lanka

MESSAGE

Our motherland celebrates the 53rd anniversary of her Independence today marking yet another milestone in Sri Lanka's history.

I am happy to make use of this occasion to remember with respect and to pay homage to the innumerable numbers of courageous leaders who have laid down their lives for the independence and liberation of our land. I also pledge on this momentous day on behalf of my government to safeguard the identity and integrity of this country for which they have sacrificed their lives.

The independence which we have won can only become meaningful in a country where all communities can live in peace and amity. Every moment in which peace and amity prevails among our people will contribute in its own way to consolidating the economic, social and political independence of our country. It is only through such means that our people will be able to think freely and live freely attending to their day-to-day needs.

My Government since assuming office in 1994 has done much to end the dark days of terror. We shall be able to renew and guarantee our freedoms only if we ensure that the conditions are not created for going back to those brutish times.

While we should not surrender to any force which seeks to work against peace, it is also important that we should not lose hope before the challenges posed by their cowardly terrorist acts. I wish to reiterate on this occasion that we will not permit any inimical force to suppress the integrity of our nation which has been safeguarded through many years with great determination against considerable odds. It is only through determination and commitment coupled with courage, patience and vigilance that we shall be able to overcome the challenges before us.

On this occasion of the 53rd anniversary of our independence, we should be able to marshal the strength and the resolve to achieve the noble aim of putting an end to the cruel and protracted war which has proved to be an immense burden to our people for several decades. The time has come for the people of the North and the South to join hands setting aside all differences to attain this noble and most needed goal.

MESSAGE

Since 1948, we have been enjoying independence for more than half a century. It is well known that our national leaders fought for the independence irrespective of caste, creed or religion. The difficult task of winning independence was facilitated because our leaders acted with the firm conviction that they all belonged to one Sri Lankan nation.

It is necessary to remember on this occasion that the independence we gained in 1948 became more and more meaningful after our country was declared a sovereign independent republic in 1972 under the leadership of the late Mrs. Sirimavo R.D. Bandaranaike.

It is obvious that there are certain obstacles today which prevent us from enjoying such a meaningful independence we had achieved. It is our primary responsibility to overcome these obstacles and continue to protect our independence. As a Government, we are dedicated to fulfil this great responsibility. On this day, we should renew our determination to achieve this objective, shedding all our differences. Through such commitment, we will soon be able to overcome all obstacles confronting us and rise as one Sri Lankan nation to enjoy our independence.

By pursuing this objective with commitment, let us proclaim with pride to the whole world that we all belong to the Sri Lankan nation.



Ratnasiri Wickramanayaka
Prime Minister of Sri Lanka

MESSAGE

Fifty-three years ago, this day, Sri Lanka regained its independence from centuries of colonial rule. Imbued with a deep sense of patriotism, our national leaders belonging to different communities came together to usher in the era of independence. Let us, on this occasion, remember them and pay tribute to their self-less service. Let us also acknowledge our deep debt of gratitude to all those who have contributed to the progress and development of our nation since independence.

During the past year, the Sri Lankan armed forces successfully defended, with courage and determination, our country's territorial integrity and sovereignty in the face of a determined terrorist challenge. The nation pays homage to the memory of all those who have paid the ultimate price in defence of the country.

On this occasion, I should like to express once again our sincere gratitude to the many friendly countries that rallied to our support in our hour of need. It is encouraging to note that our efforts to combat terrorism are continuing to receive wide support from the international community. There is an urgent need for all Sri Lankans to shed their differences and unite to eliminate the menace of terrorism from the country.

While continuing to respond to the terrorist challenge, the government of Sri Lanka has unequivocally declared its readiness to enter into unconditional negotiations on the basis of a concrete political agenda, within a definite time frame, to achieve lasting peace in our country.

I take this opportunity to express my sincere thanks and profound gratitude to all expatriate Sri Lankans who have contributed immensely to protect Sri Lankan interests abroad. They have generously given of their time and energy towards creating a favourable image of our country abroad. I look forward to their continuing support as we pursue the dual challenges of ending terrorist violence and reaching a durable peace.



Lakshman Kadigamar
Minister of Foreign Affairs of Sri Lanka

MESSAGE

Today is a day of great significance for all the Sri Lankans, both at home and abroad, as it marks the re-emergence of Sri Lanka as a free and independent nation, after almost four centuries of foreign rule.

Today is the 53rd anniversary of our independence. On this very happy and auspicious occasion, it gives me great pleasure to greet the friendly and hospitable people of Bangladesh and convey the best wishes of the people and the Government of Sri Lanka for the progress and prosperity of Bangladesh.

Sri Lanka and Bangladesh enjoy very close and cordial ties. They are steeped in the common bonds of history, culture and heritage. This historical identity has cemented the cordial and cooperative relationship and deepened the mutual goodwill since the birth of Bangladesh as an independent and sovereign nation in the year 1971.

It is significant to note that a new phase of cooperation has commenced specially in the fields of trade and investment, since the establishment of a direct air link between Colombo and Dhaka and the resumption of Sri Lankan airlines flights in July 2000. Needless to add that several Sri Lankan entrepreneurs have set up direct and joint venture operations in Bangladesh during recent

years, most notable of which are the Pfeiffer Group, Vanik Investment Bank, Ceylinc Insurance Ltd. and Royal Park Residence.

Both Sri Lanka and Bangladesh have taken significant steps to enhance regional cooperation with a view to achieving speedy economic development on a collective basis. The fact that both countries are committed to enhancing regional peace and security has provided an added impetus to bilateral relations. These relations have been complemented by people to people interactions specially in the educational, cultural and professional fields.

I am confident that the bedrock of warm friendship between Sri Lanka and Bangladesh provides the ideal foundation to build a mutually beneficial environment and an economic relationship.

The Sri Lankan expatriate community in Bangladesh makes its own contribution to further deepen and consolidate the excellent bilateral relations, particularly by its social interaction with the people of Bangladesh.

I think it would be appropriate for me to conclude this brief message with my best wishes for the success of all fruitful and productive endeavours of the people of Bangladesh as well as the Sri Lankans resident in Bangladesh.



E. G. Dayananda
High Commissioner of Sri Lanka to Bangladesh

Our heartiest felicitations and best wishes on the auspicious

occasion of

THE 53RD ANNIVERSARY OF THE INDEPENDENCE DAY

OF

SRI LANKA



20 Kemal Ataturk Avenue
Safura Tower (11th Floor)
Banani, Dhaka - 1213, Bangladesh
Phone : 880-2-9883701
Fax : 880-2-8810998
E-mail : vanik@bangla.net

Exports recover

EXPORT earnings of Sri Lanka recorded a 29.86 per cent growth during the first ten months of 2000 compared with the 3.84 per cent growth in the previous year. The country continues to be on its steady path to the major objective of achieving structural changes in the export sector. The non-traditional exports, which were 43.20 per cent of exports in 1980, reached 51.52 per cent of total exports in 1985. There was a further increase of this share to 66.69% of total exports by 1990 and to 83% by 1999. The corresponding decline in the share of traditional exports in total exports was 56.8 per cent in 1980, 48.5 per cent in 1985, 32.81 per cent in 1990 and finally to 20 per cent in 1999.

The heavy dependence on traditional exports which had limited market opportunities was a major concern for Sri Lankan authorities, which established the Sri Lanka Export Development Board-EDB in 1976 with the exclusive responsibility of promoting non-traditional exports. Several measures were taken by the EDB, setting its sights on the needs of the new millennium. To keep in line with the developments of the information age, steps were taken to popularize the use of electronic trade information among the exporters. Opening of the Cyber Trader-the E-Commerce Centre at the Export Development Board premises was a major event.

Cyber trader services are designed to cater to the needs of both large and small medium companies. Total membership of the Cyber by year end was 700. Among the multitude of services are provision of trade information on prices, products, and markets through electronic means and EDB having obtained access to major data bases in the international trade centres. The website tradenets.lk which has two mirror sites in the USA contains details of the Sri Lankan exporters, products and company profiles.

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