

INDEPENDENCE DAY OF SRI LANKA



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SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT

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MESSAGE



Mahinda Rajapaksa
President of Sri Lanka

WE celebrate this 59th anniversary of Independence with great pride. On that historic occasion in 1948, the late Rt Hon DS Senanayake said Independence was obtained to reduce suffering and increase happiness among people without any discrimination on grounds of race, political affiliation,

religion or any such differences. Accordingly, we celebrate this 59th anniversary of Independence at a time when we take pride in our ability to come together, irrespective of political differences. History has shown us that we can rise up as a country and nation when we are united.

All of us who celebrate this 59th anniversary of Independence should remember that in the great struggle for freedom all our communities -- Sinhalese, Tamils, Muslims and all others -- were committed as one to the cause of Freedom. Therefore, Freedom was won, not for any single community but for all, which includes the Sinhalese, Tamils, Muslims, Burghers, Malays and all others who comprise the Sri Lankan nation.

Freedom is our right to decide our own destinies without being subservient to any external forces. Having thus taken charge of our destinies, we are faced with a great responsibility.

As we mark this 59th anniversary of Independence, our responsibilities appear to be daunting. We

are today faced with the challenges bequeathed to us in the post independence decades, which include the defeat of terrorism, overcoming the destruction of the tsunami and achieving economic development.

On this important day, it is our pledge to defeat terrorism both nationally and internationally, thus paving the way for our people to live freely and work according to their wishes in any part of our country. Amidst all these challenges before us, there is also the responsibility of developing our country and taking the dividends of such development to the people. We celebrate the 59th anniversary of Independence with a firm resolve to overcome all challenges and carry out our responsibilities to the fullest.

Freedom is an endless process that does not end with its initial achievement. It is something to be won, cherished and sustained. Many are those among our people who sacrificed their lives to achieve freedom. I honour and salute all those patriots who served the cause of freedom. I wish you all a happy future.

MESSAGE



Ratnasiri Wickramanayake
Prime Minister of Sri Lanka

AS we commemorate the 59th Anniversary of Independence let us move forward with renewed hope of sustainable peace, economic development and prosperity for all Sri Lankans.

There is a firm commitment to go forward adopting pragmatic

step by step approach to progressively build mutual trust and confidence among all communities. We are pursuing through negotiations and dialogue, our common objective of achieving peace, justice and development for all our people. Prospects of peace combined with Government's growth oriented strategies will bring prosperity to the country's economy in the years to come. We look forward with confidence to a robust growth in the coming years despite continuing uncertain external environment.

As we move forward, we need to rise to the challenge of terrorism. Terrorism has become the dominant challenge disrupting all economic, social and political activities in this country. The majority of the people in this country, Sinhalese, Tamils and Muslims must enjoy the freedom

of living without fear and uncertainty in any part of the country. It can be achieved only if we all get together to fight against terrorism forgetting petty differences among us.

We must remember that our ancestors reacted strongly, for the sake of freedom, against foreign elements. They shed blood and tears to retain the freedom of our motherland. Because of these sacrifices we enjoy freedom. The time has come for us to rise as one for the sake of freedom, uniting to defeat the elements, which are standing against the unity of the land. The armed forces and the police have come forward to undertake this onerous responsibility. They are the heroes of our time.

Let us resolve, as we commemorate this National Day, to set a side our differences and work together to rebuild our country towards a brighter future.

GEMSTONES FOUND IN SRI LANKA



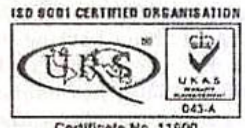
Warmest Felicitations To The Government And The Friendly People of The Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka On their 59th National Day

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MESSAGE



Rohitha Bogollagama
Minister of Foreign Affairs

TODAY, Sri Lankans all over the world celebrate the country's 59th anniversary of Independence with renewed hope for a peaceful and prosperous Sri Lanka.

We are celebrating the Independence Day on a historical changed political environment. We have entered into a new era of political consensus of all political, ethnic and religious groups of our country. The significant political development in the

country has provided a historic opportunity for all sections of the Sri Lankan society to fashion a new political solution to our national question and take collective action to defeat terrorism in our country.

Notwithstanding the many trials and tribulations the country experienced in the recent past; the resilience shown by the Sri Lanka economy, and the confidence the country commands in the International community are remarkable. Our economy continues its rapid growth despite the challenges thrown at it.

The expatriate Sri Lanka community plays an important role in contributing to the development of the Sri Lanka economy, enhancing the country's image abroad and promoting its culture. I look forward to their continued cooperation as we persist to overcome the challenge of achieving peace, reconciliation and prosperity. I take this opportunity to extend my sincere gratitude to all members of the Sri Lanka diaspora, who have been tirelessly working in the

interest of Sri Lanka in their host countries.

I also wish to take this opportunity to extend my sincere appreciation and gratitude to our service personnel and the police for ensuring stability and national security under extremely exacting circumstances.

Today, on this auspicious occasion, we as Sri Lankans must renew our commitment to redouble our efforts to realize a durable peace and create economic prosperity that will take Sri Lanka towards brighter future where the diversity of our society could be truly celebrated.

MESSAGE



Vadivel Krishnamoorthy
High Commissioner for Sri Lanka in Bangladesh

TODAY Sri Lanka celebrates the 59th Anniversary of Independence. On this happy occasion, I would like to extend warm greetings of the Government and the people of Sri Lanka to the Government and the people of the Peoples' Republic of Bangladesh. I would also like to extend my warm greetings and my best wishes to all Sri Lankan residents in Bangladesh. I am confident that they all share my desire to continue supporting the bond which grows stronger between our two countries.

Having assumed duties a few months ago, as High Commissioner for Sri Lanka, I am happy to say that I have enjoyed a warm and friendly reception from the Bangladeshi people and look forward to an enjoyable assignment. I sense the long-standing bilateral relations between Sri Lanka and Bangladesh with fullest satisfaction and convey my sincere desire to further enhance these relations, especially during the period of my assignment in Bangladesh.

I am happy to state that the Government of Bangladesh together with the Government of Sri Lanka is holding our bilateral relations in high esteem. While reciprocating these sentiments on behalf of the Government and people of Sri Lanka, I wish to state that our relations will indeed broaden and widen more and more on our journey together as South Asian nations.

Both Sri Lanka and Bangladesh held their first ever

Single Country Exhibitions in Colombo and Dhaka last year and I consider this is an important milestone to promote and introduce Sri Lankan goods and services to Bangladeshi market, as well as introducing Bangladeshi goods and services to Sri Lankan market.

The Government of Bangladesh, the Defence Ministry of Bangladesh and the training institutes of the three armed forces have continuously been providing training facilities to a large number of armed service personnel from Sri Lanka. I would like to thank the Government of Bangladesh for the invaluable assistance that they have given Sri Lanka in this area of relations.

The Sri Lanka Association in Bangladesh (SLAB) and the Sri Lanka Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SLBCCI) are established in collaboration with the High Commission of Sri Lanka in further promoting our friendly and cooperative relations. On this happy occasion of the National Day of Sri Lanka, I take this opportunity to express my gratitude to these associations for their contribution in promoting people-to-people contact between our countries for the success of our future relations. I renew my appreciation to these associations for their efforts by organising appropriate programs and other activities to further promote the healthy relations between our two countries.

I am also happy to note the contribution made by Sri Lankan investors in the apparel, hospitality, health, education and banking sectors in Bangladesh, and by providing skills required in the readymade garments, has made a contribution to the Bangladesh economy in creation of employment and generating exports.

I would like to take this opportunity to extend my heartfelt wishes to the government and the people of Bangladesh and look forward to a continued friendship on our bilateral relations in the time ahead. I wish the people of Sri Lanka and Bangladesh peace, happiness and prosperity.

Heartiest Felicitations to the Government of Sri Lanka On the occasion of the Independence Day

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Our Heartiest Felicitations on the National Day of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka



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