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இலங்கையின் பிரதம அமைச்சர்

Prime Minister of Sri Lanka

Independence Day Message

Today we celebrate a most significant milestone, the 75th anniversary of independence from Colonial rule.

Vast majority of us celebrate this occasion to acknowledge our privilege of being born in a free Sri Lanka and proud to unfurl our national flag to mark this momentous landmark. This is also an occasion to reflect on the pangs of the anguish suffered by those who were born before February 4, 1948 living in subjugation under colonial rule and the struggles carried out by our ancestors to win freedom for us.

Sri Lanka's revulsion of foreign domination and the spirit to resist began on the 2nd March 1815 itself when Wariyapola Sri Sumangala Thera removed the British flag when it was hoisted few hours before the surrender agreement was signed on that mournful day.

Today, we not only celebrate our freedom, but also pay tribute to the ones who fought for it, to the ones who held a vision for our country, and to the ones who sacrificed themselves for the same. The bravery, heroic acts as well as untold miseries suffered by our forefathers during their struggle for freedom of the Motherland must not be allowed to fade away from our memories.

The great rebellions of Uva-Wellassa in 1818 and Matale in 1848 resulted in untold sacrifices and miseries and in the last century a nonviolent freedom struggle took place. The galaxy of leaders from Anagarika Dharmapala, D B Jayathilake, F R and D S Senanayake, Henry Pedris, T B Jayah, Ponnambalam Ramanathan, N M Perera, Phillip Gunawardena, S A Wickremesinghe to many other carried forward the independence movement towards its success.

We must also pay our homage to the valiant members of armed forces who made similar sacrifices to sustain and safeguard the hard-won freedom from extremists and separatists during the last 75 years.

As a free nation we achieved much progress and built a literal youth force, provided an excellent health and education services to the people. However, during the recent past our country faced several challenges leading to economic setbacks. The government has taken series of actions to ensure recovery of the economy, while increase agricultural production to attain self-sufficiency and food security. Our ardent desire is to overcome challenges and build an economically sound progressive nation.

As proud citizens of this country, it is our responsibility to sincerely perform our duty to work together and transform the growth and development of our country.

Keeping the sacrifices of our ancestors to win freedom in mind, we should take an oath to carve a better future for our motherland.

Dinesh Gunawardena
Prime Minister
Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka