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வெளிநாட்டு அமைச்சு  
**FOREIGN MINISTRY**

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Date

## National Day Message of the Hon. Foreign Minister

On the happy occasion of the National Day of Sri Lanka, marking our country's 74<sup>th</sup> anniversary of independence from four and a half centuries of foreign colonial rule, it is with immense pride and pleasure that I extend my warm felicitations and sincere greetings to fellow citizens, both in Sri Lanka, as well as spread across all parts of the world.

Today, we commemorate our nation's journey to regain our freedom and the inalienable rights of our people from foreign political, economic and socio-cultural subjugation. We recall with reverence and profound gratitude, the dedication, sacrifice, determination and the struggle of our gallant forefathers to liberate our motherland.

The independence we gained on 4<sup>th</sup> February 1948 enabled the country to initiate the political, economic and socio-cultural transformation of our people. Since independence, Sri Lanka has had its fair share of significant successes, especially in achieving near universal literacy and a healthy society, manifested by low infant mortality and increasing longevity of the population, directly attributable to the provision of free education and free public health services to the people by successive governments. However, it has to be admitted that we, as a nation have also had to face a number of formidable challenges along the way, including two bloody insurrections, as well as a costly and debilitating internal armed conflict lasting almost three decades which ended in May 2009. On this important day, we bow our heads in humble tribute to all our national heroes who had fought against foreign colonial rule and the gallant members of our brave armed forces, the Police and civil security personnel who had paid the supreme sacrifice in defending Sri Lanka's sovereignty, territorial integrity and national unity.

Today, we are at a critical juncture in this journey, where all Sri Lankans should re-dedicate themselves to strive hard to overcome the adverse impact of the current global COVID-19 pandemic that has plagued the entire world. In particular, the pandemic has severely and disproportionately affected the economies of developing countries, including Sri Lanka and the lives of the lower income groups. Therefore, I believe, it is vital that all Sri Lankans in the country and abroad unite and support the efforts of the government to defeat the pandemic and revive the economy.

In celebrating the 74<sup>th</sup> anniversary of independence, we are determined to fulfil the pledges of the government of President Gotabaya Rajapaksa, under 'The Vistas of Prosperity and Splendour' policy framework, and build a peaceful and prosperous nation, maintaining friendly relations with all the countries in the world.

**Prof. G. L. Peiris, M.P.**

**Foreign Minister of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka**

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