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இலங்கையின் பிரதம மந்திரி  
Prime Minister of Sri Lanka

4<sup>th</sup> February 2021

**Independence Day message**

It is with immense pride that we celebrate our 73rd Independence Day today. It is an opportunity to remind ourselves of the unfaltering spirit and commitment of our people in the fight for freedom.

Sri Lankans have stood the test of time, fighting many a battle, gallantly, in the long struggle to gain political, religious and cultural independence. Today, we are at a point in our journey where we must work collectively to ensure that the freedom we won, not once but twice, is a meaningful one for all Sri Lankans.

Despite the many challenges we faced as a nation last year, we have embarked on a journey and adopted policies that focus on the growth of the economy by giving preference to locally produced items. The 'Vistas of Prosperity' Manifesto has carefully studied and identified areas in each sector that need reform, to better serve Sri Lankans, not limiting, 'working towards a better tomorrow to achieve a prosperous Sri Lanka', to mere words, but a reality that is tangible and meaningful to all.

History tells the story of a nation and its people who have always stood resolute in battles against any local, foreign and terrorist outfits that threatened the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Sri Lanka. Our people's dedication and patriotism to protect our beautiful motherland reflect how we, as a nation, have stood against numerous challenges and continue to do so in these trying times.

The biggest challenge the world faces today is the COVID-19 global pandemic. As we work collectively towards our shared quest to overcome these perilous times, I believe that the unfaltering Sri Lankan spirit will unite and stand strong in defeating this pandemic and emerge victorious.

In celebrating our Independence, we remember all those who have paid with life and limb to protect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of our nation, time and time again. We also take a moment today, to remember those men and women who are the frontline soldiers battling this current pandemic we are facing, giving selflessly of their skills and time to protect Sri Lanka and her people.

I express my heartfelt gratitude to all Sri Lankans for their contribution towards the success of our motherland. Happy 73rd Independence Day.

**Mahinda Rajapaksa**

Prime Minister

Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka