

**High Commissioner's message on the
72nd Republic Day of India**

My brothers and sisters in Sri Lanka,
Namaskar, Ayubowan, Vanakkam!

I warmly greet you on India's 72nd Republic Day, 26 January 2021.

I also convey my bestwishes on the forthcoming Independence Day of Sri Lanka: 4th February.

Both these days come amidst humanity's epic battle with the COVID 19 pandemic.

The dawn of year 2021, however, has brought us new hope in the form of COVID vaccines.

India produces 25% of all vaccines in the world. Her role as the 'pharmacy of the world' is even more significant for the humanity at this point.

COVID Vaccines produced in India have been air-lifted to several countries. They will arrive in Sri Lanka soon.

Such cooperation between India and Sri Lanka is only natural.

Our two countries are closely linked to each other as neighbours and friends.

The message of the Buddhahas illuminated our path.

Today, democratic ideals and strong people-to-people ties bring us together in pursuit of progress, prosperity and peace.

And in this endeavour, we are guided by strong leadership in both countries.

India is a dependable partner of Sri Lanka and will always be.

Indian projects touch the lives of the common people across Sri Lanka. *SuwaSeriya* 1990 ambulance service is a well-known example.

Our cooperation with Sri Lanka will always be guided by Sri Lanka's priorities in areas such as education and skills, agriculture and irrigation, technology and tourism, manufacturing and investment, water and sanitation.

A strong partnership between India and Sri Lanka will help realize the vision for prosperity and splendor for all.

India has stood with Sri Lanka as first responder, offering humanitarian assistance at times of crises— be it floods, Tsunami, or even fire on a vessel on sea.

Our Navies and Coast Guard have worked together to save precious lives, preserve marine environment and ensure maritime security.

As Indian Ocean countries, India and Sri Lanka work together to preserve and promote the principles of freedom of trade and navigation on seas, inclusive

cooperation, respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity and non-interference in internal affairs.

Sri Lanka's leadership of BIMSTEC advances our cooperation in the Bay of Bengal.

Friends,

While battling COVID pandemic last year, India also launched crucial economic reforms.

As India turns the winter of difficulties into spring of hopes, we renew our commitment to work with Sri Lanka for accelerated economic recovery and growth.

I end with our ancient prayers for the well-being of all.

Sarvebhavantusukhinah.

Sabbesattabhavantusukhitatta.

Thank you very much.
