

News

Sri Lanka

Embassy of Sri Lanka
Washington D.C

February 2016

PRESIDENT SIRISENA'S REMARKS AT THE 68TH INDEPENDENCE DAY CELEBRATIONS

Today, we have gathered here to celebrate with pride and grandeur the 68th anniversary of our Independence Day. This is the 68th annual occasion that we celebrate the national independence, since we gained independence from the British administration and colonial rule 68 years ago.

Between 1948 and 2016, the world as well as our country has undergone immense changes and transformations in economic, political, social and cultural spheres. I believe that there is a difference between the interpretation of 'freedom' the people of this country expected in 1948 and the 'freedom' we expect today, sixty-eight years later.

I would call a child born in 1948 or in the 1950s, as a Child of Culture. Today, children born in 2016, at the beginning of the 21st century, may be called a Children of Technology. I believe that we should unite the 'Child of Culture' and the 'Child of Technology' in our collective effort to build the nation and the country.

Dear children, parents and friends, we are aware that in our struggle for independence from colonialism, many of the contemporary Sinhala, Tamil and Muslim national heroes then fought together for in-

dependence with unity, amity and brotherhood, zealously sharing the same conviction for independence, which they achieved.

If we go back in history, we see that, from the days when foreign invaders occupied our country from 1505 to 1948, a period of over 400 years under foreign domination, we lost many things. We lost what was ours and our authenticity. Our culture eroded. The economy was heavily ruined. During those four hundred odd years as a colonised nation, Sri Lanka lost the agricultural prosperity we enjoyed, and the great irrigation systems built in the days of our great kings.

This devastation took place during a period of 400 years. Since 1505 our heroic leaders sacrificed their breath, sweat and tears and fought for independence for years, which was won in 1948. Although we were emancipated from colonialism, the foreigners who invaded and ruled our country for approximately four hundred years left us leaving behind many problems they created.

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REMARKS BY AMBASSADOR
PRASAD KARIYAWASAM
AT SRI LANKA'S
68TH INDEPENDENCE DAY
CELEBRATIONS IN WASHINGTON DC

Ayubowan, Wanakkam, Assalamualaikum. Good evening, Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentleman.

Today, the people of Sri Lanka celebrate the 68th Anniversary of Independence with a sense of confidence and renewed pride: -our abiding commitment to democracy has been re-affirmed at two historic elections held in January and August 2015; and -we are committed to ensuring that the fruits of democracy and citizenship are enjoyed by ALL the people of our country, equitably.

At the official event held today in Colombo to mark the 68th Anniversary of Independence, which was graced by the President, Prime Minister, Chief Justice, Leader of Opposition, religious leaders and the public, we upheld the practice of singing our beloved Nation's National Anthem in both Sinhala and Tamil.



As a Sri Lankan who has witnessed the pain and anguish that our nation has been through for long years, I am proud that we upheld this practice today at this Reception, this evening, to celebrate our Nation's Independence in this important city. Together with my wife and staff members of the Embassy of Sri Lanka to the United States of America, I extend a warm welcome to all of you, who have joined us today to celebrate the 68th Anniversary of Sri Lanka's Independence.

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REMARKS BY THE UNDER
SECRETARY OF STATE PATRICK
KENNEDY AT SRI LANKA'S 68TH
INDEPENDENCE DAY
CELEBRATIONS



Thank you, Ambassador Kariyawasam, for that kind introduction, and the honor of your invitation. And I must say that I'm incredibly excited to visit your beautiful country later this month and see the progress already made on our new embassy complex.

68 years ago today, Sri Lanka found itself in good company when it joined the rather exclusive club of great nations that chose the fourth day of the month to declare independence from the United Kingdom.

Like Sri Lankans are doing today, in a few months Americans will mark our anniversary of independence, when we will also remember the heroes and patriots of years past, and reflect on how far we've come in our long quest for a more perfect union.

And like Sri Lankans of today, Americans are still striving to address some of the very challenging problems that have long bedeviled us. Problems like poverty, discrimination, and injustice.

But Sri Lankans and Americans both understand that these problems can only be solved through the use of the ballot box, the voice of a free press, the strength of a healthy civil society, and the actions of an empowered citizenry that is committed to democracy, human rights, and progress for all.

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REMARKS BY AMBASSADOR PRASAD KARIYAWASAM AT THE EAST-WEST CENTER, HAWAII: SRI LANKA – A HUB IN THE INDIAN OCEAN

Sri Lanka is an island nation with a recorded history of over 2500 years.

Since time immemorial, Sri Lanka has been known to the travelers of the ancient world as a hub in the Indian Ocean, who identified the country with many names like Lanka, Serendib and Ceylon.

Travelers like the 13th Century Muslim Scholar Ibn Battuta and 4th Century Chinese Buddhist pilgrim Fah Hien have described the glorious past of my country in vivid detail.

During the colonial era, since 1505, the Portuguese, the Dutch and then the British have held a foothold in Sri Lanka.



Contacts with the United States started when American merchant ships from New England called at the Galle harbor around the same time that the new American Republic adopted its Constitution.

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BERKLEE COLLEGE OF MUSIC USA CELEBRATES SRI LANKA WITH SPECIAL MUSIC VIDEO RELEASED ON 04 FEBRUARY 2016



“Berklee Celebrates Sri Lanka” is a project initiated by Sri Lankan students at Berklee College of Music, USA with the sole intention to promote Sri Lankan tradition and culture. The project brings together over 50 performers representing 17 different countries such as the United States of America, Colombia, Luxembourg, Indonesia, Malaysia, India, Japan, South Africa, Kenya, United Kingdom, France, Madagascar, Ecuador, South Korea, Mexico, Puerto Rico, and Turkey, all working as one unit to celebrate the rich culture and heritage of Sri Lanka.

All these students come together to create a musical masterpiece by fusing both old and new musical traditions packaged in the form of a music video to be released on February 4th 2016 as a means of Berklee Celebrating Sri Lankan Independence Day along with the 21 million+ Sri Lankans worldwide.

The project is led by Sanchitha Wickremesooriya and Shannon Jacob, two Berklee Alumni from Sri Lanka who have been able to achieve great heights and do such projects thanks to the College’s unparalleled contemporary music programs. The video additionally features our New York based guest artists Nalinda Pieris, Uthpala Eroshan and Dilhan Pinnagoda on the Yak Bere, Geta Bere and Devil Dancing respectively.

View the music video

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WHAT IS SRI LANKAN FOOD? HERE ARE THE 7 DISHES YOU NEED TO KNOW

BY MICHELLE NO

It's about time Sri Lankan ("Shree-Lun-kan") cuisine developed a reputation independent of its more assimilated neighbor India's. As spicy as Thai food, but light like Mediterranean, Sri Lankan food is delicious, if not a bit unfamiliar to the average American. As one of my friends explained, "Sri Lanka is only about the size of West Virginia. We're kind of a tiny, random-ass island, and an emerging market. We don't really reach critical mass anywhere in America."

To guide you through this vegan-friendly, seafood-heavy food genre, we compiled this list of Sri Lankan classics. Enjoy, and spread the word.



Dhal curry (lentil curry)

The most basic and common of Sri Lankan curries, this staple dish consists primarily of lentils, tomato paste, cumin, and other spices. Like most recipes hailing from the island, it uses coconut milk in lieu of dairy milk -- something that most starkly differentiates this cuisine from Indian. While emulsifying ingredients into a creamy whole, the coconut base eschews the excessive richness that cow's milk might add to a dish, and gives you an excuse for thirds.

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WSJ: CHASING THE WORLD'S LARGEST ANIMAL IN SRI LANKA

A lazy beach getaway becomes an impromptu safari when the prospect of spotting a blue whale arises



By HENRY WISMAYER

IT WAS SIX A.M. when the procession of headlights began to pierce the predawn darkness at the dockyard. Bleary-eyed tourists from all along Sri Lanka's south coast were arriving at the harbor in Mirissa for a chance to spot a blue whale, thought to be the largest animal ever to have inhabited the earth.

My motives for heading to Mirissa were different. I was just doing what many first-time visitors to Sri Lanka's southern coast do almost instinctively: looking for a quiet beach on which to achieve no goals whatsoever. Mirissa appeared a likely spot to find one.

Ever since the Tamil Tigers' 30-year insurgency was crushed in 2009, tourism along Sri Lanka's south coast has been on the rise. For now, though, Mirissa has escaped the large-scale development that is walling off its neighboring towns behind rows of resorts. Three-and-a-half hours from Sri Lanka's capital, Colombo, by train, Mirissa still exudes a laid-back vibe that draws backpackers and other independent travelers happy to avoid the package-tour crowds.

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NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC WILDLIFE WATCH

One Country Will Destroy Its Ivory—and Pray for Elephants

Sri Lanka also becomes the world's first country to apologize that elephants are being killed for their ivory.

By Laurel Neme

During the past several years, I've watched country after country destroy their stockpiles of confiscated elephant ivory, preventing that ivory from somehow slipping back into the black market and symbolically demonstrating commitment to stopping the illegal trade.

But to my mind, something that's always been missing is an apology: No country has ever formally said sorry for its complicity in the trade. However on January 26th Sri Lanka held a religious ceremony to do just that.



“We have to apologize,” said the Venerable Omalpe Sobitha Thero, the Buddhist priest who led the service. “Those elephants were victimized by the cruelty of certain people. But all of human society is responsible. We destroyed those innocent lives to take those tusks. We have to ask for pardon from them.”

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SRI LANKA RATIFIES THE CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Sri Lanka ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities on 08th February 2016 and became the 162nd State to ratify this Convention.

The text of this Convention was adopted by the UNGA on 13 December 2006, and opened for signature on 30 March 2007. Following ratification by

the 20th party, it came into force on 3 May 2008. Sri Lanka signed this Convention on 30th March 2007.

By ratifying this Convention, Sri Lanka undertakes to abide by the terms of the Convention which is to promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities, and to promote respect for their inherent dignity.

Source : <http://www.slmission.com/index.php/news/91-latest/832-sri-lanka-ratifies-the-convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities>