

## Embassy of Japan in Sri Lanka

“Foreign Minister's Commendations 2021” announced by the Government of Japan. 🇯🇵 🇱🇰 On 20 August 2021, the Government of Japan announced the names of the Sri Lankan recipients of the 'Foreign Minister's Commendations 2021'.



“Foreign Minister’s Commendations” are awarded annually to those persons or organizations having rendered exceptional and distinguished services to the promotion of mutual understanding, friendship and goodwill between their countries and Japan through economic and technical cooperation, information and cultural activities, as well as other activities to enhance international relations

### 1. The Sri Lanka Eye Donation Society

Since the establishment in 1961, in fulfillment of the last will of the late Hon. J.R. Jayewardene, the Sri Lanka Eye Donation Society (SLEDS) has been donating over 8,000 corneas (more than 200 annually) to Japan alone, including Hon. J.R. Jayawardene’s own corneas, that the left one was donated to a Japanese woman and the right one to a Sri Lankan fellow citizen. The Government of Japan, in turn, has been extending both grant and technical assistance to the SLEDS, while mutually promoting heart-warming friendship and medical interactions between Japan and Sri Lanka. It was at the San Francisco Peace Conference in 1951, that the first bud of long-cherished friendship began to sprout between the two countries, through the ever-memorable speech delivered by Hon. J.R. Jayewardene, eloquently supporting Japan’s reintegration into the international community by quoting the eternal word of Lord Buddha - “Hatred ceases not by hatred, but by love.” The Sri Lanka Eye Donation Society is a culmination of such unparalleled spirit of compassion and courage, and the announcement of commendations brings back the memories of the San Francisco Peace Conference in new light, which marks the 70th Anniversary in September this year.

### 2. Senior Professor H. D. Karunaratne, Department of Business Economics, University of Colombo, and Director of the University of Tokyo Sri Lanka Office

Snr. Prof. H. D. Karunaratne has been spearheading academic interactions between Japan and Sri Lanka for more than three decades. Having obtained PhD in Economics at Nagoya University under the MEXT Scholarship awarded by the Government of Japan, Snr. Prof. Karunaratne has been teaching the theory and experience of Japan’s post-war economic miracle while releasing numerous publications on the same subject. Snr. Prof. Karunaratne has also been playing a key role in the Japanese Graduates’ Alumni Association of Sri Lanka (JAGAAS), in various capacities, including as the incumbent President, making a significant contribution to strengthening the mutual understanding between the two countries in scholarly aspect, such as editing a commemorative book “A Journey in Harmony: Sixty Years of Japan-Sri Lanka Relations” upon the 60th Anniversary of the establishment of the diplomatic relationship between Japan and Sri Lanka, among others. After being appointed as the first Director of the University of Tokyo Sri Lanka office in 2019, Snr. Prof. Karunaratne has been enthusiastically promoting “Study in Japan” campaign through online programs, at various colleges and universities, despite the challenging circumstances under the COVID-19. The Embassy of Japan expresses its heartfelt congratulations and deep appreciation to the Sri Lanka Eye Donation Society and Snr. Prof. H.D. Karunaratne for working relentlessly for the cause of true friendship between Japan and Sri Lanka.