

MESSAGE BY HIS EXCELLENCY, PRESIDENT CHEDDI JAGAN
ON THE OCCASION OF REPUBLIC DAY

February 23 this year marks 24 years since Guyana attained Republican status. This is an important landmark in the history of our country. It reminds us that as a people we have reached a level of mature nationhood in keeping with our deep sense of responsibility.

When Guyana became a Republic in 1970, we as a nation set ourselves certain tasks which were informed by the fruits and lessons of the long and hard struggles of the various peoples that settled here. We created our own symbols and aspired to reach the heights of political and economic prosperity and social cohesion our forefathers dreamt about.

A lot has happened over the past twenty-four years. There were trials and tribulations and many of the goals eluded us. But as a people we never lost faith and continued the struggle for a better life and a democratic order. The victory of the people to choose their government on October 5, 1992, was the culmination of the struggle to achieve one of the important tasks which we had set ourselves on achieving republican status.

Today, more than ever before, we have a glorious opportunity to deepen the process of nation building which the Republican status started. It is the responsibility of each and every one of us to understand that history is made by the people and that it is only with our active involvement in all aspects of life that we can determine the future of this country. The PPP/Civic government is optimistic that you will rise to the challenge and make our Republic a proud, prosperous, independent and respected one. Our many sung and unsung heroes, I am sure, would want us to carry on as they had courageously done.

The challenges facing the Republic today demand that we live and work together in peace, dignity and harmony for the good of the nation. We have a nation to build and only through the collective efforts of the entire nation can this be achieved. The democratic values now being entrenched must be the foundation upon which all of us can play a meaningful role in economic recovery.

This year, as you may have observed, the annual flag raising ceremony usually held on the eve of Republic Day will not be present among the varied activities held on this anniversary. This in no way suggest any lessening of the importance of this significant occasion. The flag-raising ceremony will now grace the anniversary of our Independence. May 26. As usual February 23 will continue to be a public holiday.

It is encouraging to see that this year, without the controlling hand of government, Mashramani is promised by the organisers to be "Better than Before." This is indicative of the new process of collective involvement and responsibility which is unfolding. Mashramani is our carnival. Let us enjoy it. Let us march as One People, One Nation with One Destiny. And let us remember that it is Republic Day, a time to recall the great deeds of our heroes and recommit ourselves to the exciting task of building a new Guyana.

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

February 27, 1994

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