# Yal Devi will show our resolve for unity and coexistence - President

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President Mahinda Rajapaksa, announcing the extension of the Colombo – Jaffna Railway Line, and the resumption of the Yal Devi Express train service, said that he had asked the Minister of Transport to run the Yal Devi train at least five more kilometres beyond Vavuniya and consolidate the nation’s resolve that our war heroes have shown.

"It would show our resolve for co-existence. What we are attempting now is to breathe new life into the heart of the nation; to start the journey that would unite the entire nation after 19 years," he said. President Rajapaksa called upon "India, China. Pakistan, Japan and other countries that helped us in our struggle against terrorism to come forward and assist us in this reconstruction, so that terrorism would not be able to raise its head again. In the struggle against terrorism, we realized that you are our genuine friends," he said. Reconstruction of the 28 railway stations to resume the rail service to the North is not a burden to the growing friendship between our communities. "I have decided to rebuild the Jaffna station employing the people of my own village, Hambantota. Engineers, masons, carpenters etc. from Hambantota would go and rebuild the Jaffna station. Likewise people from other districts should contribute and participate to build the other stations", the President said. Extracts of President’s address: “There is a question that many ask today. It is how the North can be protected after it is liberated. It is possible for me to easily answer this in words and satisfy a minority in Colombo that is always pleased with questions and answers. Yet, I believe that what is greater is to implement a program, rather than answering questions and doing nothing. Therefore, friends, this is how we defend the North that we have liberated. By reconstructing the Yal Devi Railway Line we are defending the North. Many years ago all of us travelled together in the Yal Devi. The unfortunate events of the recent past brought this to an end. We participate today in the new launch of Travel in Freedom in the Yal Devi. It is the undeniable reality that in the past the sound of the Yal Devi was akin to the heartbeat of the nation. Three years ago we not only explained how we would liberate the North and East but also how we would defend the liberated areas. We stated in the Mahinda Chinthana our intention to reconstruct the Northern Railway Line to the Jaffna peninsula and Mannar Line. Within three years, we are ready to carry out this pledge in a memorable and honourable way. I would say again that the rhythm we heard from the Yal Devi was not the sound of a train but the pulse of the nation. Then the Yal Devi train had 11 compartments. Public servants from Jaffna who worked in Colombo all left for home every weekend by the Yal Devi. Every Sunday night they would return also by the Yal Devi, to carry on the work in government offices. The SLFP was then very strong in Jaffna. As the party’s youngest MP, I went to Jaffna by Yal Devi to meet our party leaders there. Yal Devi was a symbol of a single and undivided country. Like the emblem of State, the Yal Devi was also a resource which contributed to the effective functioning of the public service throughout the country. It symbolized public administration spread far and wide.”Courtesy:Island.lk