
Our goal is to bring the country together: President

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By Sandun A Jayasekera The era in which parents in the south showed Jaffna and Point-Pedro to their children on the map of Sri Lanka would come to an end soon when our motherland is totally free and rid of terrorism in the next couple of days, if not hours, President Mahinda Rajapaksa said.

Addressing a ceremony held last afternoon to mark the opening of the new building complex of Sri Sumangala Boys School Panadura on its centenary, President Rajapaksa said, although he has visited Jaffna as a schoolboy, his three sons have not been able to enjoy that luxury. "People in the south used to travel to Jaffna by train with their fellow Tamil brothers and sisters while Tamils travelled to the south the same way. However, Velupillai Prabhakaran has destroyed that mutual friendship, respect and harmony that existed for decades. Now, after about three decades, the opportunity has come to re-build the bridge of peace, harmony and friendship between the two communities, as a result of the successful liberation struggle carried out by the armed forces," President Rajapaksa stressed. The most devastating damage the tsunami did to Panadura was the destruction of Sri Sumangala Vidyalaya. The catastrophe would have been a national tragedy if the tsunami had struck on a school day. Fortunately, it struck on a Poya holiday. When the preparations were underway to construct the new building complex a plethora of problems and disputes cropped up. Ultimately, the construction of this new building complex became a reality thanks to the Japanese government who contributed Rs. 380 million towards its construction through JICA. Sri Sumangala Vidyalaya began in 1909 as the fruit of Buddhist renaissance bloomed at the start of the last century simultaneously with other leading Buddhist schools like Dharmaraja in Kandy, Ananda Vidyalaya in Maradana and Mahinda College in Galle. The Buddhist renaissance not only paved the way for the freedom struggle but also led the way to create a cultural, social, educational and moral development among the people, President Rajapaksa emphasized. "A similar enthusiasm, a kind of patriotism, a love for the country and its heritage and values has come into being once again after a long time. This is a direct result of the efforts of our heroic armed forces, who saved the country from the most ruthless terrorist outfit in the world. The economic, cultural, agricultural and social policies of the government are based on the Mahinda Chinthana that upholds the Sri Lanka heritage and has saved the country from many disasters, he said. "Our goal is to create a Sri Lanka where all citizens could live in peace and harmony under one Lion Flag. Our effort is to live in a country where people in the south can use the A9 highway to go to Jaffna and come back without any threat," he noted. Courtesy: dailymirror.lk