Dividends of liberation will accrue soon to people in the North- Basil Rajapaksa

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Senior Advisor to the President and Chairman, Presidential Task Force for the Development of the North, Basil Rajapaksa, MP, said that while offering a political solution to the peoples of the North who have been liberated from the grip of terrorism, steps are being taken to develop the province according to home-grown strategy by the name of ‘Uthuru Wasanthaya’ (Northern Spring).

Mr. Rajapaksa was speaking at a meeting of the Task Force at the Vavuniya Divisional Secretariat today (15) where the progress of the ‘Uthuru Wasanthaya’ programme was being discussed. The Task Force also discussed matters pertaining to the 180-day programme that is being implemented concurrently. Infrastructure development, electricity, water supply and sanitation, agriculture, irrigation, livestock development, inland fisheries, health, solid waste disposal, education, sports, cultural affairs and transportation are some of the areas that will be covered under this programme. The officials handling the road development activities in Vavuniya said that projects worth Rs. 1010 million are already underway in the district. The total cost of developing the A-9 Highway with ADB assistance was said to be Rs. 710 million. A total of Rs. 380 million will be spent on the Vavuniya-Horowpathana road and Rs. 360 million on the Medawachchiya-Mannar road, officials further stated.

Meanwhile road construction in relief villages currently housing IDPs is nearing completion at a cost of Rs. 150 million.Mr Rajapaksa instructed officials to ensure that all electricity be provided to all houses in the Vavuniya District within the stipulated 180-day period. At present, 62% of the households in the district have access to electricity, it was pointed out. Mr.Rajapaksa said that the process of providing electricity to the remaining areas should commence immediately after they are cleared of landmines and that priority should be given to this. He further instructed officials to expedite the work related to water supply and agricultural activities in order to facilitate the quick return to normalcy. He observed that President Mahinda Rajapaksa had wanted to encourage the use of organic fertilizer in the North. Since Vavuniya is a land-locked district, it has been decided to develop inland fisheries in the area and issues pertaining to this were also subject to discussion at the meeting. With respect to livestock development, it was decided to launch a special programme to capture stray cattle and streamline milk production. Since there is a serious problem in transporting milk to other parts of the country, a programme will be launched to ensure that each child in the district gets a glass of milk. It was revealed that in addition to developing sectors such as education and health, steps have been taken to set up police stations, divisional secretariat offices, post officers etc in the area. “The Northern Spring Programme is being implemented by officers from the area itself and they are fully aware of the needs, aspirations and sensibilities of the people,” Mr. Rajapaksa pointed out. He urged all officers present to ensure that the dividends of liberation accrue to the people in the Northern Province as quickly as possible. Rizard Bathiyutheen, Minister of Resettlement and Disaster Relief Services, Governor of the Northern Province, Dixon Dela, Member of Parliament (Tamil National Alliance), Sivanathan Kishore, District Secretary Vavuniya, P.S.M. Charles, and the Wanni Commander, Major General Jagath Jayasuriya were also present at the meeting. Courtesy: news.lk