A bright future for Vakarai

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President assures parents and children at Vakarai Maha Vidyalayam grand opening: * Never forget this is your motherland * Today's children would become kings tomorrow President Mahinda Rajapaksa during his second visit to Vakarai since its liberation yesterday assured the people who had undergone many challenges and hardships due to terrorism, that they had a bright future ahead.

The President who received a rousing welcome from the people of the area during his visit, declared open the new Vakarai Maha Vidyalayam built on the rubble of its former tsunami/terrorist devastated structures. The school is now considered as the most modern and technically advanced in the Batticaloa district. The European Union which contributed Rs. 300 million for the effort said that the school stands as a monument to triumph over adversity for the people of Vakarai and next generation Sri Lankans. "This reconstruction work on one of the largest schools in the Eastern Province is a commendable example of international cooperation, together with the participation of the Government, non-government and community organizations irrespective of ethnic or religious differences," the EU quoting the President in their message said. The EU Ambassador in Sri Lanka Bernard Savage said "It is with great pleasure that Vakarai MV is gifted to the present and future students from the generous people of Europe as a token of their longstanding friendship with Sri Lanka." President Mahinda Rajapaksa addressing the students during the grand opening of the rebuilt Vakarai MV advised them to equip themselves with quality education using the modern facilities available, as it was one thing which could not be robbed off them. "Coupled with quality education you should also cultivate good moral habits and humane qualities to become a good and productive citizen," he added. As the President reverted to Tamil after a few brief sentences in Sinhala he was greeted with a thunderous applause from the people who had gathered in their numbers ,both inside the auditorium and outside it. The President while acknowledging the warm applause from the crowd which lasted during the entire duration of his speech said "This is our motherland and we are children of the same mother." "Dear children, never forget that this is your motherland. As such you should think what you have done for the country so far and what you could do in the future. You are flagbearers of the Nation and the ones who should protect this country tomorrow. Today's children are the ones who would become Kings tomorrow." Also President told the grateful people that it was time to rebuild the Nation under one flag as terrorism had been defeated. He noted that the era where people had used cyanide to commit suicide was over. "Now you can go to your Hindu temples, schools, market, paddy fields and for fishing and bath in the sea freely and without fear," he added. He said that ethnic divisions would not exist in the future and there would be no minorities. "We all should work together to propel the Nation towards sustainable development," he noted. The President also said that Vakarai was now on the fast track to development. "Facilities such as new infrastructure, schools, electricity, transport, health facilities, employment generation avenues are coming up on a daily basis," he added. Minister, Prof. G.L. Peiris said that it was important for the international community to understand that what had being achieved in Sri Lanka was a herculean task. He also said that Sri Lanka with the dawn of peace was now in a position to use its inherent strengths and added that these would be used as pillars of future development. Education Minister Susil Premjayanth, meanwhile added that the Government's intention was to give all Sri Lankans equal opportunities in education irrespective of where they live. Eastern Province Chief Minister S. Chandrakanthan, National Integration and Reconciliation Minister V. Muralideran and Disaster Relief Services Minister Ameer Ali, EU Ambassador to Sri Lanka Bernard Savage, also spoke. The event was also attended by IOM Chief M. Abdikkar, Nation Building Minister Susantha Punchinilame, Senior Presidential Advisor Basil Rajapaksa MP, Wimal Weerawansa MP, Eastern Province Governor Rear Admiral Mohan Wijewickrema, other politicians, military and the public. Courtesy: defence.lk