



President Mahinda Rajapaksa and First Lady Shiranthy Rajapaksa being welcomed on arrival at the Mattala Rajapaksa International Airport



President Mahinda Rajapaksa, First Lady Shiranthy Rajapaksa and other guests alighting from the aircraft.



President Mahinda Rajapaksa launching the City of Magam Ruhurupura



Members of the Maha Sangha and Ministers Dinesh Gunawardena and Wimal Weerawansa on the flight



President Mahinda Rajapaksa having a chat with school children



A section of the foreign dignitaries at the opening



An unforgettable experience for these students who had the unique opportunity of being part of this historic occasion.



Guests being welcomed by airline staff

# MATTALA TAKES OFF

Turning a new chapter in the country's aviation history, Sri Lanka's second international air gateway - Mattala Rajapaksa International Airport (MRIA), was opened by President Mahinda Rajapaksa yesterday. The facility will go down in history as the first ever to be operated as an international airport from day one of its commencement. The airport has been awarded Interna-

tional Airport Certification (certification of compliance and certification of aerodrome), enabling it to operate as an international airport from its inception. The MRJA will be a significant landmark in the journey of Sri Lanka towards becoming an aviation hub in Asia in line with the vision targeted under Mahinda Chinthanaya.

*Pictures by Sudath Silva*



The President addressing the gathering



President Mahinda Rajapaksa, First Lady Shiranthy Rajapaksa, Parliamentarian Namal Rajapaksa and special guests at the entrance of the Mattala Rajapaksa International Airport



President Mahinda Rajapaksa, First Lady Shiranthy Rajapaksa, Prime Minister DM Jayaratne, Mrs Jayaratne and other distinguished guests arriving at the Mattala Rajapaksa International Airport (MRIA) on the "City of Magam Ruhurupura"



A section of the special invitees



President Mahinda Rajapaksa unveiling the plaque to open the Mattala Rajapaksa International Airport. Special representative of Republic of China and Chinese Political Consultative Conference Vice President Luo Fuhe is also in the picture.



An aerial view of the Mattala Rajapaksa International Airport.