# Sri Lanka's Colombo-Jaffna railway reopens

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Media captionThe reopening of the railway station is considered a positive symbol of post-war Sri Lanka, as Laura Westbrook reports

A popular Sri Lankan rail service known as the "Queen of Jaffna" has reopened, linking the capital, Colombo, to Jaffna in the country's north.

President Mahinda Rajapaksa inaugurated the newly renovated railway line, which was closed 24 years ago during Sri Lanka's bloody civil war.

The railway had provided a vital link between north and south, transporting goods and people through the country.



Its reopening is seen by many as a positive symbol of post-war Sri Lanka.

Image caption The reopening of the railway station is considered a positive symbol of post-war Sri Lanka Image caption Jaffna station was decorated ahead of Monday's ceremony Image caption Before its closure in the war, the railway line played an important role linking Sri Lanka's north and south Image caption Jaffna station has been rebuilt and renovated



The train will offer Jaffna's young a new experience - many of them have never seen a train before, the BBC's South Asia analyst Jill McGivering reports.

For decades, Tamils had used the service to travel the length of Sri Lanka, going back and forth between home villages in the north and jobs in the south, our correspondent adds.

During the civil war, government troops used the service to access the north - and the trains became a target for attack as they passed through areas controlled by the Tamil Tiger rebels.

The civil war, which lasted from 1983 to 2009, killed more than 70,000 people.

The conflict ended in May 2009, when government forces seized the last territories held by the Tamil Tigers.