

VEN.MAHA SANGA AND DIGNITARIES OF OTHER RELIGIONS,  
HON. AKILA VIRAJ KARIYAWASAM, THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION,  
HON. MINISTERS,  
HON.STATE MINISTER OF EDUCATION  
HON.STATE MINISTERS,  
HON. DEPUTY MINISTERS,  
HON. MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT,  
SECRETARY, MINISTRY OF EDUCATION  
STATE OFFICIALS,  
PAST PRINCIPALS OF ROYAL COLLEGE AND PRINCIPALS OF OTHER SCHOOLS,  
DISTINGUISHED GUESTS,  
MEMBERS OF THE ACADEMIC STAFF,  
SECRETARY, ROYAL COLLEGE UNION AND OLD BOYS,  
SECRETARY, SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT SOCIETY AND PARENTS,  
Ladies and Gentlemen and my fellow Royalists.

On behalf of Royal College it is my honor and privilege to deliver the note of welcome at this august occasion. First held in 1836, the Prize Giving of Royal College has always been a gathering of great significance. Being the highlight of the Royal College Calendar, this event recognizes outstanding achievements of Royalists. Throughout the ages, our forefathers have graced this occasion in various capacities and their legacy humbles me. With these thoughts in mind, I warmly welcome all of you to the 164<sup>th</sup> Prize Giving of Royal College.

Royal College is based on three fundamental principles. First and foremost is holistic education. 'We will learn of books and men, and learn to play the game.' As our College Anthem rightly states, education should mold us to be better men, and for that; we need all round knowledge. A student's life at College will encounter various activities and events which will differ from, but supplement class room activities. Therefore every Royalist should strive to become an all-rounder. Today, the best of them will be awarded and recognized.

Traditions and culture are also an integral part of this school. It is expected that an institution of this age should possess rich traditions and culture. Every Royalist who walks within the halls of College will experience unique and meaningful traditions which have withstood the test of time. It is our responsibility to protect these ideals and pass them down to the future generations understanding the changes that need to be done while protecting the core values. The event which you are witnessing today is one such historic tradition which has been guarded by generations.

Finally, equality. We do not see a difference in race, culture, creed nor religion. Once anyone dons the crest over their hearts, they become a member of one family. A group of brothers. We eat at Dansals together; go to Kovil together, fast together and Sing Carols together. One who barely eats 3 meals a day due to poverty might share his only meal with a kid from a wealthy background not knowing their backgrounds, because those facts do not matter. Those which valued here are good moral qualities, friendship and humility. That is what you will witness today. Those who deserve it will bear the prize and only merit and effort will be factors of consequence.

I welcome you to Royal College. To these principles. To our most hallowed occasion. I could not be more thankful for the role you play in making this event glamorous, memorable and truly inspiring.

Hope you have a pleasant afternoon.

Floreat!