

FROM THE EDITOR.....

Phasing out of Railways by default has put too much emphasis on road transport, or vice-versa, as one could also say too much emphasis on road transport is phasing out Railways by default. What ever way one might put it, the fact is that presently in Sri Lanka, Rail transport is playing the proverbial second fiddle to Road transport. This could well be the reason why road users have become impatient to further allow the priority right-of-way granted for rail over generations.

Sri Lanka ventured into the era of 'flyovers' with the construction of the Ragama over-pass. From then onwards all over-passes constructed had been over railway lines. The main reason for construction was to reduce road traffic congestion. Though this clearly indicates the newly invested priority for road users, by not resorting to eliminate railways totally, it seems that we are still clinging on to the vestiges of technical rationalities which placed railways on a higher stead for mass transport.

Being a poorer country in a world dependent on non-renewable energy sources, faced with an energy crisis coupled with severe environmental degradation emanating from the same cause, we can not and should not ignore the possibilities of getting maximum productivity out of energy expenditure. In this context wouldn't it be more prudent to divert the substantial sums of money spent on road congestion alleviation exercises to railway improvement? This is a crucial issue to be taken up by all Engineers concerned at appropriate forums.

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