

FROM THE EDITOR.....

Reducing the travel time of a 30 km route by as much as 75% is what has been achieved by the newly opened Colombo Katunayaka Expressway (CKE). After successfully defeating terrorism that had been plaguing the country for a long period, we are on the way to development with ambitious targets. In this scenario, the fact that transportation infrastructure becomes a prerequisite launch board, has not escaped our Engineers, political decision makers as well as funding agencies. It is a fact that hinder free expedient access from the first international airport to the commercial city of the country will facilitate corporate activities, industry and tourism.

Emergence of better highways and expressways has been the highlight of transportation infrastructure in this country for the past few decades. However, in the development of any infrastructure in this era of fast depleting natural resources, very special considerations need to be granted to economy and sustainability in a global sense. When it comes to transportation, the primary consideration should be to minimize the cost per unit per unit distance, be it people or goods, without neglecting sustainability, environmental and social impacts. When above factors are given cognizance under a technical viewpoint, it would become very clear to you that Rail transport naturally comes to the lead. As a mass land transport mode with the lowest rolling resistance and predefined right of way, rail transport has the aptitude to keep the burden posed by travel and transport needs of an ever growing populace on our planet, at bay. This fact is amply endorsed by the so called 'Developed' countries of the world that have adopted rail as the primary land transport mode.

It can not be denied that, our country has in fact, retracted pre independence rail track infrastructure and given undue prominence to roads. Though drastically late, we should at least now direct our energies at improving and expanding the railway infrastructure in this land. In support of this argument, suffice to say that, it could be the only way in a future devoid of abundant fossil fuels.

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