

FROM THE EDITOR.....



Throughout our history, all great wars have been fought with one objective in mind - land. If considered in a lesser extent, most of the human conflicts are simply framed on the object of possession of land. Even in the animal kingdom, fighting for the possession of space is the most common conflict observed and the continuous struggle between man and other living beings from micro-organisms to elephants, in some way or the other, is related to the ownership of space. This fact is not at all surprising as all living beings need space to live, feed and breed and it is very well limited on earth. As land creatures the space we need is on dry land and although the total area of the earth is fixed the land area is expandable by reclaiming the sea.

This is the philosophy augmented with the concept of a “prime location” in terms of human economics, which is behind the multi-billion rupee Colombo Port City project which was launched few years back. In net terms, adding even a few hectares to the limited land area of a country is a gain. However, in comparative terms we have to carefully weigh the short as well as long term cost/benefit aspects of a project of this nature, especially within the perspectives of environmental impacts, depletion of natural resources, carbon foot-print of the operation, etc. This evaluation is quite important as, though significant fraction of the material needed for reclaiming could be extracted from the seabed, the balance which in no way could be interpreted as insignificant, has to be obtained from dry land. This leads us, Engineers to wonder how viable a project such as the above is, judged solely by technical and economical analysis that we are very well accustomed to.

Eng. (Prof.) T. M. Pallewatta, Int.PEng (SL), C.Eng, FIE(SL), FIAE(SL)
Editor, 'ENGINEER', Journal of The Institution of Engineers.