

FROM THE EDITOR...

Sri Lanka is renowned as a country having a rich hydraulic civilization spanning over two thousand years. The Department of Irrigation was established by Governor West Ridgeway on 15th May 1900 to revive the ancient irrigation network and to start new irrigation projects. Since then, the Department has contributed immensely to the development of existing and new irrigation works. Recently, the Government of Sri Lanka embarked on a new journey to transfer Mahaweli water to dry lands of north western, north central and northern provinces under the Mahaweli Water Security Investment Program (MWSIP) with the aims of the water security and agricultural productivity of communities living in the northern provinces of Sri Lanka. The total investment cost of the program is around LKR 90 billion (\$ 675 million) and the Government of Sri Lanka has entered into two loan agreements to obtain financial assistance for tranche of the program. The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has agreed to provide \$ 453 million under the Multi-tranche Financing Facility (MFF) of ADB through three tranches for the program implementation. The government contribution for the total program is \$ 108 million and the balance \$ 114 million has been arranged through co-financing.



Three major investment projects; Upper Elahera Canal Project, North Western Province Canal Project, and Minipe Left Bank Canal Rehabilitation Project were implemented under the above investment program. The construction of new and improved water conveyance and storage infrastructure under the program will increase the productivity of agricultural lands in the above provinces. A total of 25,000 farmer families under Upper Elahera Canal Project, 40,000 farmer families under North Western Province Canal Project and 15,000 farmer families under Minipe Left Bank Canal rehabilitation will be benefitted under the program.

The 101 km long North Central Province Canal Project (NCPCP) has been hailed as the largest irrigation project of the country after 1998. The NCPCP comprises two components. The first component is the construction of the 8.83 km long Kalu Ganga-Moragahakanda Transfer Canal (including two tunnels) that transfers water between the Kalu Ganga and Moragahakanda reservoirs. The second component is the construction of the Upper Elahera Canal that connects the Moragahakanda reservoir to the existing reservoirs Huruluwewa, Manankattiya, Eruwewa and Mahakanadarawa in the north which includes 28.5 km of tunnels (comprising of South Asia's longest irrigation tunnel) and 10km long cut and cover conveyance. Further, NCPCP has a 104 m long tail race canal from Moragahakanda reservoir power flow, 22.6 km long concrete lined open canal, a 331 m long elevated flume (across natural stream - Heeratiya), 4 km long level crossing reservoirs & transition and establishment of a control centre for the NCPCP. These reservoirs feed existing irrigation and water supply schemes. MWSIP's estimate of the cost of the NCPCP is LKR 65,000 million.

NCPCP has a number of other benefits to the regions and the country. Targetted agricultural lands can be cultivated in both Yala & Maha seasons without interruption of water supplies. Access to safe drinking water will be vastly improved. Further, there will be a positive impact on the environment and for people in the areas due to recharge of the groundwater table following water transfer through the newly constructed canal system. Once completed, NCPCP will fulfil the aspirations of the communities in north central and northern provinces.

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