

Opinion

Stop building expressways

Build coal power stations and electrify railways

I read with interest the news item in "Daily News" of 10-08-2002 titled "US\$ 300 million Project Colombo-Kandy Expressway to lessen travelling time".

What a colossal waste of funds? In ten years time, world crude oil prices will be more than double and ninety percent of the local motorists will not be able to use their cars or vans. Expressways will be white elephants.

The Colombo-Katunayaka Expressway is a colossal blunder and a tragic waste of public funds. It is only 22 miles long and cannot be called an expressway. There will be a big traffic jam at each end. If the Colombo-Katunayake Railway had been electrified every one would have been benefited. House maids and tourists would have blessed the government.

Due to deforestation, rainfall throughout the island has reduced and Hydro Power has also reduced. Upper Kotmale will be a white elephant. The government should scrap Upper Kotmale and use the Japanese Aid to build a second coal power station at Mawella. The decision to build the first coal power station at Trincomalee is wise.

As regards electrifying the railway some people may say that the poor people won't be able to afford the high fare. There is a solution to this — two thirds of the carriages will have the present fare and be the second class. One third of the carriages will have reserved seats and have ten times the normal fare and be the first class.

The Asian Brown Cloud is caused by forest fires, dramatic increases in burning of fossil

fuels in vehicles, industries, power stations and inefficient cooks burning wood, cowdung and other bio fuels. The solution is to stop deforestation, plant new forests, electrify the railway and have Trolley buses in low country towns.

We need more power, hence there is no alternative but to build two Coal Power Stations. This would cause pollution but would be much less than the pollution caused by above sources.

We must conserve power hence import of domestic air conditioners must be restricted, since even a window air conditioner consumers twenty times the power of a ceiling fan.

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