

Unprecedented Development in Puttalam

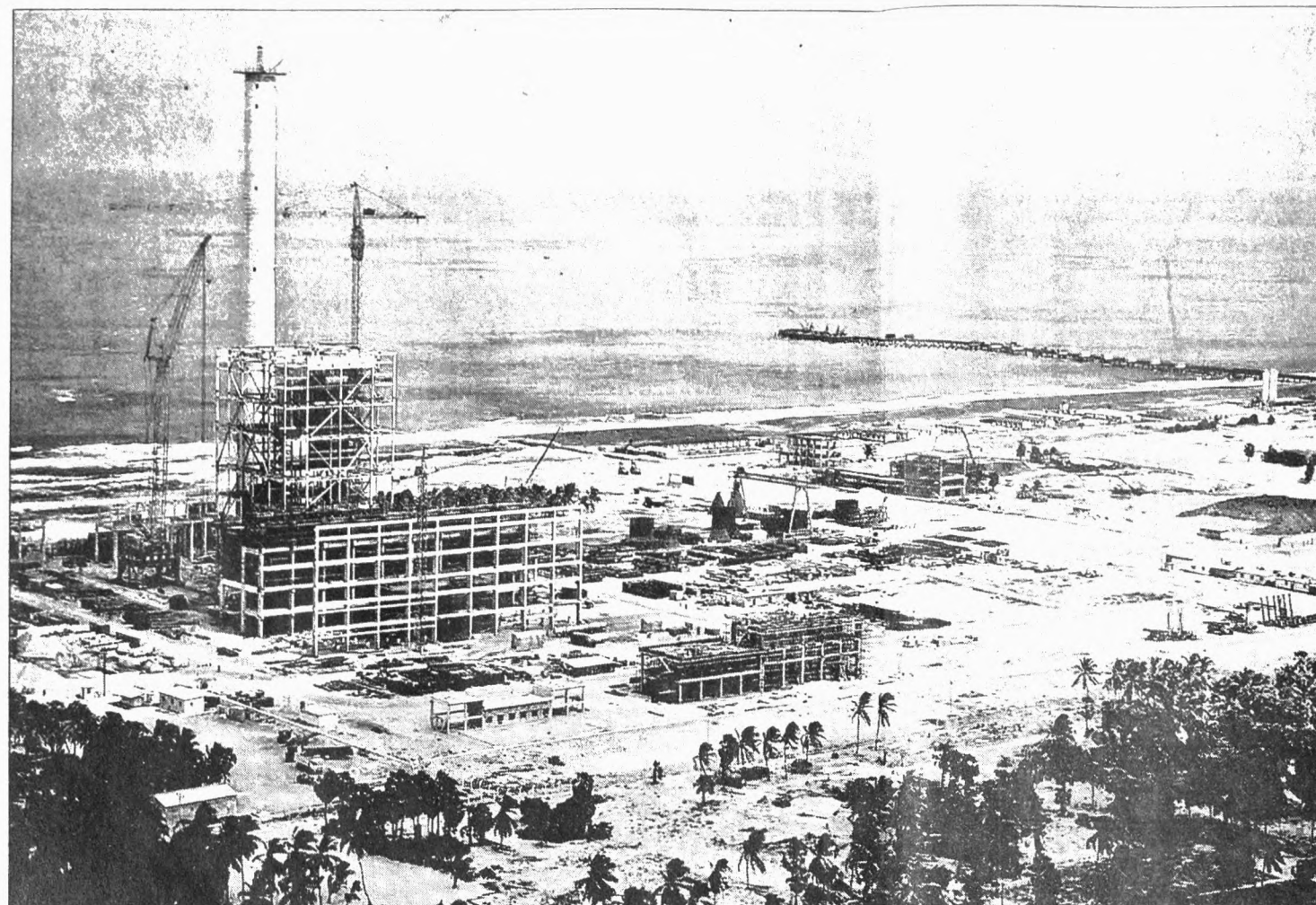
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The main objective of 13th amendment to the Constitution is to devolve power at provincial level to accelerate the development process of the country. Policies of the country's regional development have undergone a complete change following the Provincial Councils. But no tremendous development in the rural areas of the country had been observed during the regimes of four presidents due to their less interest or focusing the majority of votes specially in town bound areas at the elections.

President Mahinda Rajapaksa clearly adopted the matter and accelerated development process of rural sector of the country where 80 percent of the country's population is living. President Rajapaksa was able to address it successfully through the "Gama Neguma" master development program of his own Mahinda Chinthana.

An opportunity has arisen to review the success of development in the Puttalam district one of the two districts in the North



The first Coal Power Plant at Norochcholai under construction

mega irrigation project cutting across the Thunmodara in Wariyapola was planned. It aimed at irrigating the Puttalam District and the Rajanganaya. But despite several efforts the project never got off the ground.

concluded after mediation of President Mahinda Rajapaksa.

Deduru Oya basin is the fifth largest river basin in the country covering 2616 km². The annual rainfall in the basin averaged to 1628mm. Annual rainfall

irrigation and agriculture is at very high percentage compared to water usage in other sectors such as domestic, industrial and commercial. There are four major reservoirs to support irrigated agriculture systems in the basin. In addition

water availability varies spatially and temporarily across the basin, significantly. Hence the water resources assessment is an important exercise to establish accountability of water to meet present and future demands.

to the people in the Puttalam town and adjacent areas will also be provided under this project. A dam is now being constructed across the Deduru Oya at Thunmodara where it meets three other canals namely Kibulwana Oya,



Map of Puttalam district

families out of 900 have been resettled on lands irrigated under the Radevi Bedi Ela irrigation project. The resettlers have been provided all infrastructure facilities such as electricity and pipeborn water. Rest of the families will soon be resettled at Thalamera farm providing either compensation or a plot of land. The Government has paid compensation amounting Rs. 120 million to people whose lands have been acquired for development activities.

About 500,000 people in the North Western Province will benefit by the project which is funded entirely by the Government.

2. Construction of Norochcholai Coal Power Plant:

The Norochcholai Coal Power plant (NCPP) project is a lead project of the Government to enhance economic growth, poverty reduction and ensure balanced regional development through cost effective power sector development.

The construction of NCPP was inaugurated by President Mahinda Rajapaksa on May 11, 2006 which had been blocked over a decade due to public protest. The successful completion of the project will expand the capacity of the national power grid of the country. Therefore the timely implementation of this project was an immediate need of the country.

The first coal power plant being constructed at Norochcholai, Puttalam will initially generate 300MW when it is fully. The operational potential of supplying steady and low cost electricity to the national grid will be confirmed after commissioning of this project.

It will also reduce the unit cost from the present level of Rs.11 per unit to Rs.5 per unit.

The Power and Energy Ministry is taking steps to construct 80 fully furnished houses at Daluwa, Norochcholai for 72 families displaced due to the construction of coal power-house.

Widening of the road to Norochcholai power-house 18km along the Palavi Junction to Kalpitiya as a 60 ft road has been already commenced.

Development of the road to the power house and to provide electricity have also been commenced.

Steps have been taken to provide road facilities, schools, community halls, hospitals to transform Daluwa into developed city. The cost of this project would be nearly US\$ 455 million. Credit Facilities will be received through the Exim Bank of China.

4. Infrastructure and other service related development projects in the Puttalam District:

Maga Neguma development drive stated in the Mahinda Chinthana has played a main role in infras-

structure development sector in the Puttalam district. About 30 km of roads have been repaired spending over Rs. 80 million. Reconstruction of Palavi - Kalpitiya road cost over Rs. 150 million.

Government also spent over Rs.350 million to strengthen the regional administration expanding new building facilities of the divisional secretariats of Mahawewa, Chilaw, Mundalama, Wannappuwa, Anamaduwa, Pallama, Wanathawilluwa, Kalpitiya, Nattandiya and Arachchikattuwa.

In addition, the construction of maternity ward complex to the Chilaw base hospital has been completed at a cost of Rs.68 million through the allocation of provincial council funds.

5. Proposed Kalpitiya Dutch Bay Resort Development Project:

The proposed development project placed at 150 km north of the capital, Colombo. Kalpitiya region is one of the most beautiful coastal areas located in the North Western Province of the country. Given the investment opportunities available in 2008 Lanka Tourism Authority launched the above project. A plan has been made to develop 14 islands in the proposed zone.

Under the proposed development plan a 250 m long length will be constructed between Theeladi and Mohothuwaram. The Government allocated Rs. 10 million have been released to the Divisional Secretariat of Kalpitiya in this regard.

To construct tourist resorts, Rs.81 million have been released to the Kalpitiya Divisional Secretariat for the acquirement of land of the area.

The activities in respect to the acquirement of two islands from the Puttalam Lagoon are in progress.

6. Development of the fishery sector:

The Chilaw Fishery Harbour and Ulhitiyawa anchorage have been constructed at a cost of Rs. 228 million, under the supervision of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Ministry. A laboratory to diagnose the diseases of inland prawns was established at Battulu Oya to encourage the investors in prawn culture industry.

To protect the houses of the people who are living along the sea belt from Lansigama to Mudukattuwa from sea erosion, a sea barrier had been formed by the Coastal Conservation Department. About 150 families were benefited from the project. Government spent over Rs.126 million over this project.



Palavi-Kalpitiya road constructed under the Maga Neguma development drive

Western Province (NWP) over the strong criticism of opposition political parties.

The administrative district of Puttalam situates in the North Western Province surrounded on the North by Modara Gam Aru bordering Mannar and Anuradapura districts and South by Ma Oya bordering Gampaha and the sea.

The district has a land area of 3013 Square Kilometers including coastal belt of 288 Kilometers in length. Deduru Oya, Mee Oya and Kala Oya, Baththulu Oya and Ranthabala Oya which flow through the district to drain the water runoff of the district.

There are three climate zones in the district. They are wet zone and dry zone. The coconut area between the Ma Oya and Deduru Oya is identified as a suitable place for coconut cultivation.

The paddy is cultivated in the area adjacent to the water tanks of Hiripitiya, Karawitta, Katupotha and Iginimitiya which were built by ancient kings.

Major Development projects implemented for Puttalam District.

1. Deduru Oya irrigation project:

More than 45 years ago a

The project had been not implemented due to the protests of affected parties in the district.

But under the present regime issues related to the rural community has been

varies spatially and temporarily across the basin significantly. Annual evaporation in the area averaged 1250 mm. The total basin population is approximately one million. Water use for

tion to the major reservoirs, approximately 3000 small and medium size tanks are found in the basin to provide irrigation and domestic water supplies. In Deduru Oya basin, the surface

This Mega irrigation project estimated to cost Rs.200 million will add 2.5 MW electricity to the national grid. It is expected to be completed by 2010.

Drinking water facilities

Maguru Oya and Hakwana Oya.

No foreign expertise have been used for this project. Over 50 percent of the construction have now been completed. Over 300



A villager receiving a cheque from the Highways and Road Development Minister T.B. Ekanayake to compensate their lands for the Deduru Oya project.