

Work of Kotmale Mahaweli Maha Seya recommenced

The work of the Kotmale Mahaweli Maha Seya at Kadadora, recommenced on Thursday, May 8 with the chanting of "pirith" and sending up stainless steel by Central Engineering Consultancy Bureau (CECB) former Chairman Vidyajothi Dr.Eng.A.N.S. Kulasinghe.

This is the first time contemporary Sri Lanka has undertaken to construct a Stupa of this magnitude in Kotmale 1300 long years after Sinhala dynasty. It will be two feet less in height than the Ruwanwelisaya built by King Dutu Gemunu, CECB Chairman H.B.Jayasekera said.

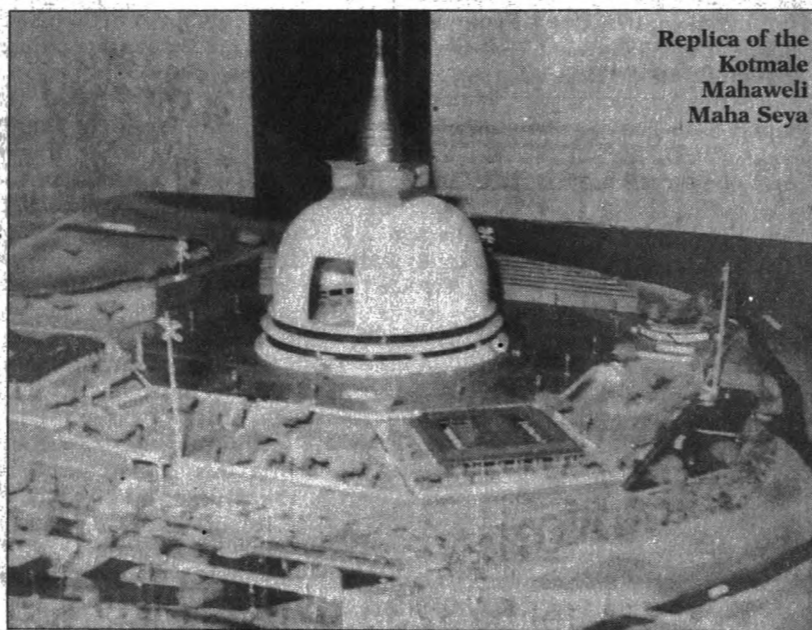
The work recommenced on the directives of Irrigation and Water Management Minister Gamini Jayawickrema Perera, is expected to be completed in 12 months.

The foundation stone for this edifice of religious and social importance was laid by late President J.R.Jayawardene on March 20, 1983, on the invitation of the then Mahaweli Development Minister Gamini Dissanayake.

Mr.Jayasekera added that the entire design-structure of the massive Stupa was formulated by Vidyajothi Dr.Eng.A.N.S.Kulasinghe, an eminent engineer of international repute. Sri Lankan Engineers, Technicians and the work force of the Central Engineering Consultancy Bureau (CECB) under the Irrigation and Water Management Ministry has undertaken the construction work.

The cost estimated in 1984 was Rs.140 million. But it will cost more now. We had to stop the work abruptly in 1991 and by then we had completed 100 feet from the ground at a cost of Rs.110 m. "What we have commenced now is the balance work of another 174 feet from the Square Chamber to the pinnacle and it will cost about Rs.80 m", he said.

We need more funds to complete the entire work and we look for public support. We invite the public to contribute generously



Replica of the Kotmale Mahaweli Maha Seya

towards the completion of the construction of the Stupa by sending their contribution Mahaweli Cultural Foundation Trust, A/c No.005 2101 10013, to the Bank of Ceylon, Hyde Park Corner branch, he said.

There will be a massive campaign to collect funds under the banner "Bandimu - Vandimu - Pudamu - Mahaweli Maha Seya" (Let us build, Let us venerate, Let us worship Mahaweli Maha Seya) during the Vesak season and those willing to hand over their contributions could do so at the collecting centres set up at Viewing Room at Kotmale Mahaweli Maha Seya or at the Dalada Maligawa or Ruwanweli Maha Seya or at the BMICH or at the entrance to the Dehiwala Zoo, Member of the Media Committee Premasara Epasinghe said.

Kotmale Sanga Nayaka Ven. Tispane Jinapanda Maha Thera said that in the vicinity of the Stupa there will be an International Centre for Buddhist Affairs and a temple will be a centre supporting the poor of the country. Mr. W.A.W Perera has volunteered to build the temple.

We know all this while people

supported the temple. But time has come for the temple to be more conscious of the people and we hope to work on the theme "from village to the temple and from temple to the village", the Thera said.

Media Committee Chairman of the project Kalakeerthi Edwin Ariyadasa said that the construction of Kotmale Mahaweli Maha Seya is a concept of late Minister Gamini Dissanayake who held the view that a Stupa constructed close to the Kotmale reservoir would stand as a symbol of appreciation of the sacrifices people made in vacating their much cherished birth place Kotmale, for a greater good and service to the nation.

The Stupa is situated close to the Gamini Dissanayake Samudraya - former Kotmale Reservoir. "We have received suggestions to inscribe in the walls of the Stupa the names of the villages, temples and the people who lost their lives in building Gamini Dissanayake Reservoir for the edification of the future generations. There is also a proposal to have a National Day to Mark the Mahaweli Maha Seya Day, he added.