

NCASL welcomes President's plans to utilise local talent

COLOMBO: The National Construction Association of Sri Lanka (NCASL) said yesterday it welcomes President Mahinda Rajapaksa's plans to utilise local talent.

The NCASL welcomes President Rajapaksa's statement to the Daily News said it on June that local human resources and expertise would be utilised whenever possible for the country's development; he plans to dispense with overseas sponsored feasibility studies for local development projects and go for local expertise which would reduce costs.

The President's pledge is also a reiteration of the statement he made while he was Prime Minister and Minister of Highways. At a rally in Kurunegala, he said the

contracts for major projects such as Kandy-Kurunegala should be given to domestic contractors.

"This has been the cherished objective of the NCASL represents the construction industry. While the NCASL is totally in agreement with the vision of the President to channel the local reservoir of talent and skills into the country's development activities, it is the fervent hope of the NCASL that this would not be done merely in terms of cost-cutting," NCASL said in a release.

It added: Contracts of almost all mega-development projects today are handled by foreign construction companies.

Many of these projects are being designed and constructed by foreign personnel and built with for-

eign building material at exorbitant contract fees. The domestic contractors and the construction community as a result, are being severely deprived.

With ground-breaking projects being announced under the Mahinda Chinthanaya, the NCASL wishes to emphasise that in the case of foreign-funded projects, pressures be brought at the highest levels to deviate from the present conditions and bring in domestic construction-community even at some levels so that the indigenous skills could be used wherever possible. By doing so, the Sri Lanka's construction-community could at least share some portion of the pie while participating in the nation-building process".