

Moragahakanda project - a new chapter in Lanka's development saga

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COLOMBO: In a landmark event in the country's irrigation history the Government will commence tomorrow the construction of the Moragahakanda-Kaluganga Development Project, the largest ever agriculture development project in Sri Lanka.

President Mahinda Rajapaksa along with Prime Minister Ratnasiri Wickramanayake will ceremonially inaugurate the construction work on this mega irrigation scheme at Elahera marking the biggest ever development drive launched by his Government.

The project estimated to cost Rs.40,000 million will be the largest ever investment made on a single irrigation project in Sri Lanka and also the largest development project included in the Mahaweli Development Plan.

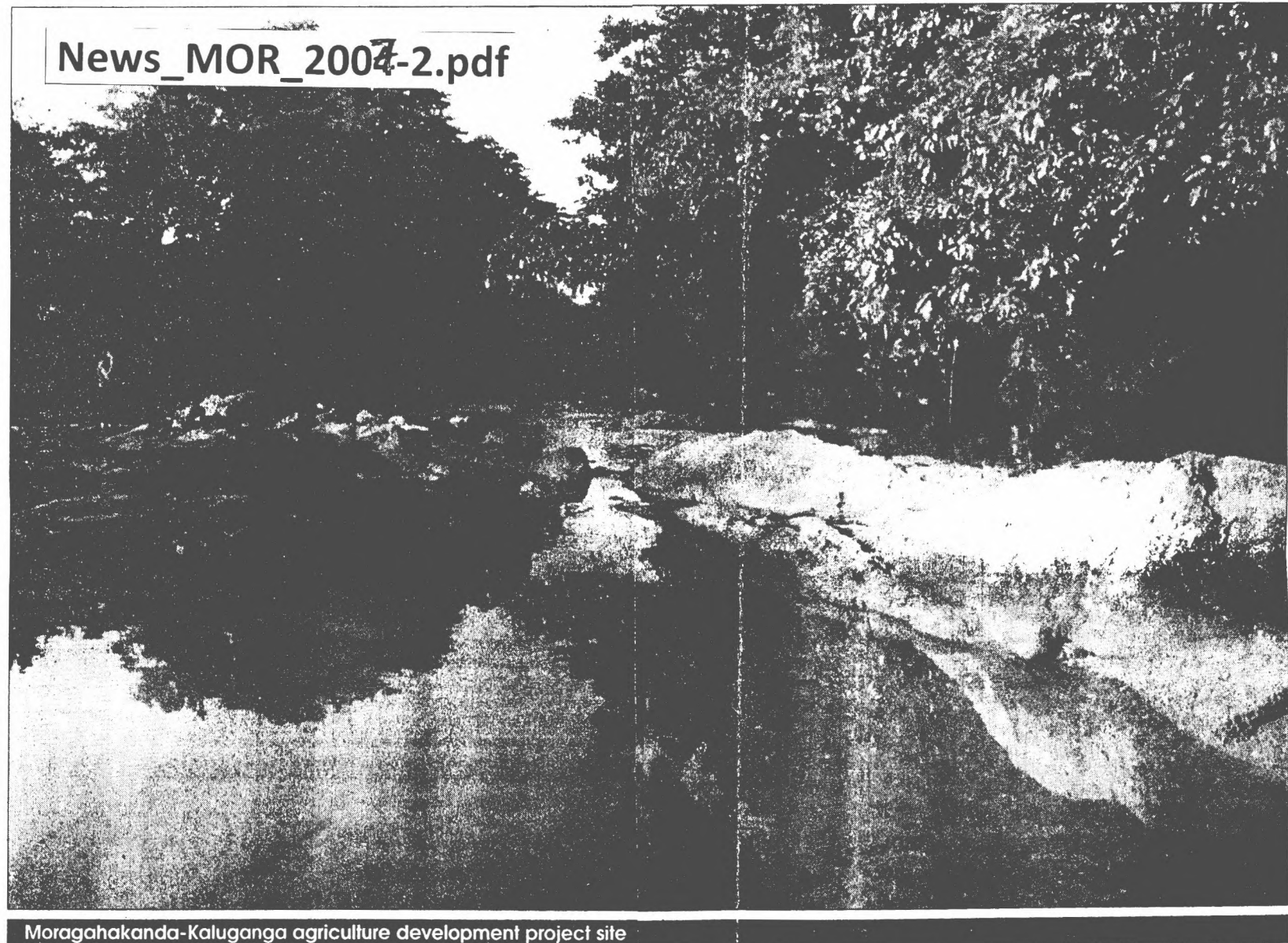
The construction of the Moragahakanda-Kaluganga Development Project is a fulfilment of another pledge given to the people in the Mahinda Chintana.

The President in his Mahinda Chintana manifesto on page 43 has pledged to the nation: "It is my intention to complete the 10,000 tanks programme and implement multipurpose irrigation schemes such as Moragahakanda, Uma Oya, North Central Main Canal, Deduru Oya, Menik Ganga, Kubukkan Oya, Hada Oya, Kirima Oya and Urawa."

According to Agriculture, Irrigation and Mahaweli Development Minister Maitripala Sirisena due to time consumed on various feasibility studies, the construction work on proposed Moragahakanda-Kalu Ganga Development Project had been delayed over the past four decades.

However due to the firm commitment made by President Mahinda Rajapaksa, the Government has been able to commence this project with effect from this year.

This will be the final reservoir project to be constructed under the Mahaweli Development Programme. The project has been given priority to ensure water requirements for agriculture purposes to benefit over one hundred thousand farmer families, especially in the North Central and Eastern



Moragahakanda-Kaluganga agriculture development project site

Provinces. This mega irrigation scheme will not only uplift the economic conditions of farmers but also boost to country's national economy. Hitherto all projects implemented under the accelerated Mahaweli development programme gave priority only to power generation. Significantly, the Government will implement the Moragahakanda-Kaluganga Development Project with the focus on irrigation requirements in the agriculture sector. However, the Moragahakanda reservoir will generate 21.6 MW of power, he said.

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legama area. The Sri Lanka Mahaweli Authority will implement this project by entirely utilising the expertise of our local engineers and Government officials. The project will be implemented under the full supervision of Minister Sirisena.

The project will overcome water deficits in the Yala season affecting 87,439 hectares in Matale, Anuradhapura, Polonnaruwa and Trincomalee districts.

In order to overcome the water shortage of these four districts in Yala season, the project will provide irrigation facilities to Kalawewa, Parakrama Samudraya, System G, Kaluganga Basin, Huruluwewa feeder canal,

Mahakanadarawa and Manankattiya tanks.

In addition the project will increase water supply to the above four districts for domestic and industrial use. The construction of Moragahakanda and Kaluganga reservoirs will provide irrigation facilities to cultivate 1,500 hectares of new lands in the North Central province.

The entire capacity of Moragahakanda reservoir will be 569.9 million cubic metres. The entire land area submerged by the Moragahakanda reservoir is 29.5 square kilometres. The entire capacity of Kalu Ganga reservoir is 265.6 million cubic meters. A total 8.4 square Kilometres will be submerged by the Kalu Ganga reservoir.

The project is expected to upgrade the productivity of the agriculture sector up to 165-185 per cent. The value of the annual agricultural products produced by the project will be US \$ 17 million. The project will also save an annual amount of US \$ 2.2 million expenditure locally by supplying water to household and industrial sectors.

The project reports reveal that the income of the farmer community benefited by the project will be increased by 80 per cent.

Due to construction of Moragahakanda reservoir, 1,999 families have to be resettled while 458 families have to be resettled due to the construction of Kalu Ganga reservoir. The President has instructed that all resettlement activities should be done without causing any hardships to these families.

The Government has decided to provide compensation and alternative lands to all these families. As requested by the villagers, the Ministry will take steps to resettle them within the Matale district. This is because any project implemented in the country can only be successful if it has the public backing, he said.

The Government will improve the common facilities within the proposed new town to be established. The villagers have also expressed their gratitude to the President for taking immediate measures to expedite the construction work on this mega irrigation project.