

Local expertise for mega projects

President wants Lankan expats to join hands in nation-building

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COLOMBO: President Mahinda Rajapaksa is planning to dispense with overseas sponsored feasibility studies for local development projects and instead opt for local expertise at much reduced costs.

The President is emphatic that local human resources and expertise should be utilised wherever possible for the country's development while reports on feasibility studies on all such projects should be carried out under local expertise.

The country has enormous human resources and this vast reservoir of talent should be properly channelled into the country's development activities, President Rajapaksa told the *Daily News*.

He also called on the country's expatriate community with expertise in various fields to extend their service towards the country's development.

The cost of carrying out feasibility studies and preparing reports on development projects with foreign expertise is enormous. The country has vast human resources on par

with international standards. Therefore when the feasibility studies are carried out on various types of development projects, priority would be given to local expertise," he added.

This would in turn help in a big way to bring down costs and other expenditure incurred in planning mega development projects. This would also greatly reduce amounts obtained as loans and other monetary assistance for the projects.

He said that in the past carrying out feasibility studies and planning development projects with overseas expertise proved very costly. This could be negated with the use of local brains. The President said the Government would be able to save vast financial resources through this exercise.

While emphasising the importance of giving priority for local human resources in development, President Rajapaksa also sounded out the Lankan expatriate community for their assistance in the quest for development.

"They should come forward and ensure prosperity of their Motherland in every sphere," he remarked.