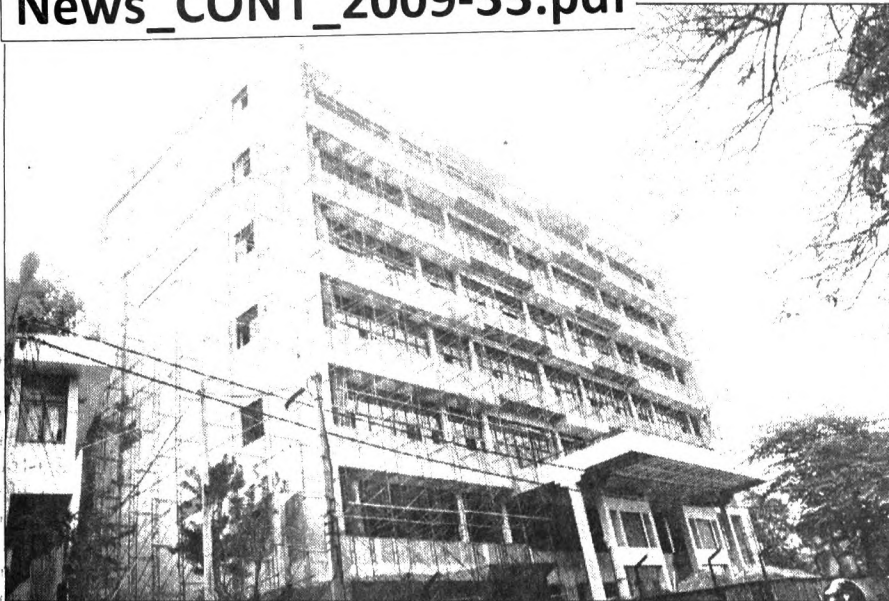
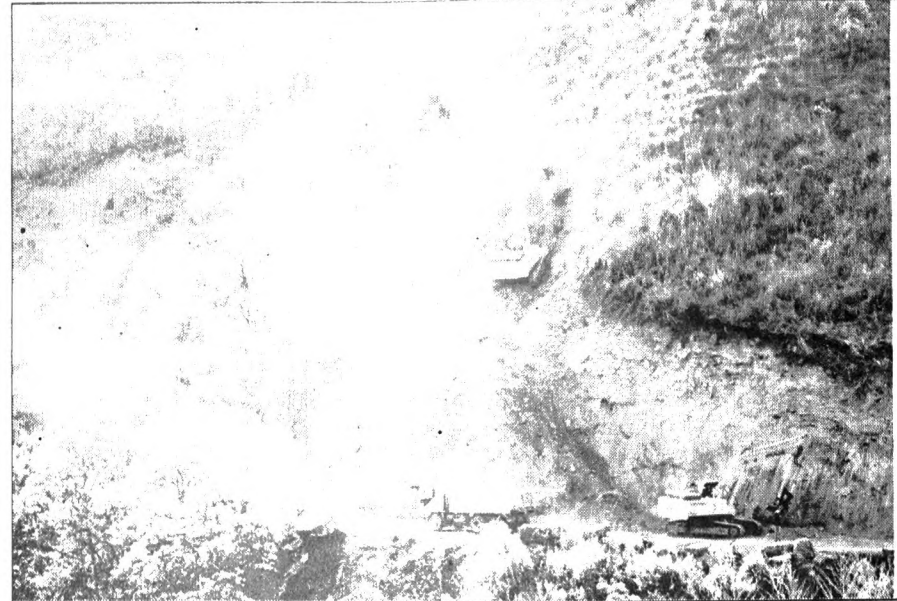


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Badulla District Secretariat Complex



A road under construction. Pictures by Indrajith Perera

Uva development on a new high

DHARMA SRI ABEYRATNE

Uva, widely known as Uva Wellassa, is a historic area where thousands of our valiant heroes sacrificed their precious lives for the sake of the territorial integrity of the country in the ancient times. Uva serves as a catchment area for many rivers and streams nurturing agriculture and several waterfalls such as Dunhinda, Diyaluma, Rawana Ella. The landscape and the scenic beauty has been a huge tourist draw card.

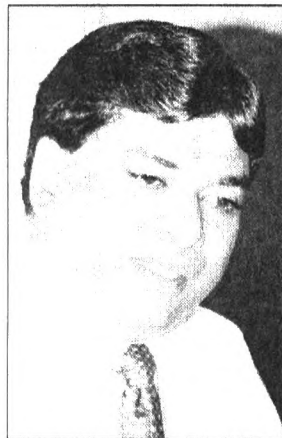
The *Daily News* recently visited the Uva Province to review the ongoing development activities in the area, mainly in the Badulla district.

At first we decided to meet the Badulla District Secretary who bears the main responsibility of carrying out Government's decisions, as provincial head of administration.

Under the guidance of the Central Government, a comprehensive development program is being implemented in the province, District Secretary, Rohana K. Dissanayake told the *Daily News*.

A massive development program launched by the Government is rapidly progressing.

"Badulla is an agricultural district where tea, vegetable and paddy are culti-



Badulla District Secretary, Rohana K. Dissanayake

vated. In the Upper Uva, tea and vegetables are abundant while in the Lower Uva paddy is cultivated. The population is around 850,000 in 567 G.S. Divisions. Of this 175,000 are estate workers. A recent survey has revealed that 32 percent of the population in the province is below the poverty line which is a grave condition", Dissanayake said.

Therefore it is vital for the Government to introduce a mechanism to alleviate poverty while ensuring overall development in every sector. As planned, development priorities are set to achieve its targets. The district is being developed in all aspects, he said.

Gama Neguma one of the leading development programs which commenced in 2006 aiming at upgrading

infrastructure development in rural areas has also stepped into the Province. A number of development activities such as roads, infrastructure development, social activities and livestock development are being carried out through the *Gama Neguma* project in the area.

Five years ago only 45 percent of the housing units had the electricity facility. Today, more than 75 percent of the houses have been provided electricity.

"Development of the road network linking Badulla district with neighbouring towns is the main reason for the rapid development. Wallawaya - Badulla road,

and Badulla will be shortened by about four hours. It will facilitate the transport of Uva produce to the capital city, largely. It will further help increase the income of the Uva cultivators, Dissanayake said.

Education and health sectors in the province have been significantly developed during the past few years. The Government has allocated Rs. 850 million to upgrade health facilities in Uva to provide adequate relief to over 1.5 million beneficiaries. Three buildings are being built to expand health facilities. The Badulla Provincial General Hospital will be further developed with the

Education and health sectors in the province have been significantly developed during the past few years. The Government has allocated Rs. 850 million to upgrade health facilities in Uva to provide adequate relief to over 1.5 million beneficiaries. Three buildings are being built to expand health facilities. The Badulla Provincial General Hospital will be further developed with the provision of additional specialities into a full fledged hospital.

Badulla - Kandy road, Badulla - Welimada road are a few among the main road development projects. The construction of the Badulla - Colombo main road is nearing completion. Once it is completed the distance between Colombo

provision of additional specialities into a full fledged hospital.

The Government has taken steps to solve the teacher shortage in the Province in line with the 'Equal education for all' concept. Several computer

laboratories have been established in schools facilitating students to access modern technology. The Uva-Wellassa University which will be opened soon by President Mahinda Rajapaksa is considered a boon for Uva. The university is constructed in a serene location ideal for studies. The university comprises all academic and other facilities such as modern lecture halls, laboratories, libraries, broad-band fiber optic connections and hostels.

A six storied building is being built at a cost of Rs. 303 million, for the District Secretariat office fulfilling a long-felt need. The foundation stone for the complex was laid in 2005 by President Mahinda Rajapaksa, as the then Prime Minister.

"Protecting youth is a valuable investment for the development of the country. A special program has been launched under the theme, 'Let's be the front-liners to build a better society'. The program is carried out in three steps. Initially, we have taken steps to protect youth from drugs, alcohol and smoking which are the worst enemies of youth. Secondly, moves are underway to protect youth from accessing pornography. Thirdly, a move will be initiated to instill discipline in private tuition classes in the area. "Most of us are aware that private tuition leads to indiscipline. There-

fore, we had a discussion with all tuition masters and persons organizing tuition classes in the area. They agreed to maintain discipline in tuition classes" Dissanayake said.

Over 900 development projects have been carried out through the Provincial Secretariat offices. Under these projects, more than 100 kilometers of rural roads have been constructed or renovated. For the benefit of the Estate Community, Tamil speaking Grama Niladaris have been appointed. More than 3,000 Tamil teachers have been appointed to Tamil medium schools in the district to meet the shortage of Tamil teachers. In addition, 10 estate hospitals have also been developed to cater to the health needs of the people.

The Uva Provincial Council has launched 300 development projects allocating Rs. 900 million, Chief Secretary to the Uva Provincial Council P.B. Amarasekara said. "Under this, a large sum amounting to Rs. 400 million has been allocated for the development of education in the Province. Additionally Rs. 280 million has been reserved to develop the health sector and Rs. 60 million to develop the road network. Rs. 60 million has been set aside for tourism promotion", Amarasekara added.