

# 2011

## Uthuru Wasanthaya heralds new era for North



Project Hope

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from Colombo.

The 'Uthuru Wasanthaya' or the Northern Spring is in full swing. For the Presidential Task Force for the Northern Development Chaired by Senior Presidential Advisor Basil Rajapaksa (M.P.), implementing a mega project is not just one directed

Identifying priorities is the key factor in properly implementing such a mega project. Without depending on secondary information the Task Force meets local government authorities, people, and displaced people at welfare centers, to get a clear picture of the respective localities by making regular field visits.

Northern spring mega development plan focuses on three main aspects security, resettlement and infrastructure development. It is implemented in three stages 180-days program, short term plan and the long term plan. At present the Government is implementing the 180-day accelerated plan to resettle people. Under the 180-day program resettling internally displaced people is a primary target. Establishing water supply schemes is another component in developing towns and villages for resettlement. Rajapaksa directed Government Officials during a recent visit to Kilinochchi to rebuild the town water tank and the water supply scheme in Kilinochchi within three months.

Restoration of electricity in the area, to support the livelihoods of resettled people, is carried out under the plan. Around 60 percent of the population in the Vavuniya district use electricity and it is to be increased up to 100% by the end of the year. According to the Vavuniya district Secretary, P. S. M. Charles the Government has allocated Rs. 300 million for 2009.

Since Vavuniya is a land-locked district, it has been decided to develop inland fisheries in the area and issues pertaining to this were discussed at the meeting. A program will be launched to streamline milk production and provide children a glass of milk.

## De-mining

As soon as these areas were liberated the Government initiated the de-mining program. "A major part of the de-mining activities is conducted by the Sri Lanka Army and three Non Governmental Organizations", said Chandra Fernando, spokesperson for the Presidential Task Force for the Northern development. "In the Mannar district where the resettlement program is already on de-mining is taking place in the Manthai West and in the Giant Tank area," Fernando said. "Simultaneously, the repairing and reconstructing of the Giants' Tank is taking place and at the moment under a World Bank project the Giant Tank bund is raised to increase the capacity to store water," he added. The renovations and reconstructions of the irrigation systems and canals are also taking place and will be completed shortly.



## Access roads

"Due to the LTTE threats most of the access roads in the districts were not properly maintained and reconstructing the road network will be a boost to the development program," S. Yoganandan, Director



## DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

"We have already selected 12 contractors and within the first three months they must complete one kilometer of the roads," Fernando said. Under an Asian Development Bank project the Silavaturai-Murunkan road will be developed.

The short and long term programs under the 180-day accelerated development program for the Northern Province under Northern Spring, is progressing in the Mannar district.

Planning of the Mannar district secretariat said explaining the present situation in the district. Under the Northern Spring, the A14 Road or the Medawachchiya-Mannar road will be reconstructed from Cheddikulam to Murunkan. The reconstruction work of the 48 kilometers of the A32 road will commence soon.

## Livelihood

The Task Force is in the process of identifying owners of lands and agricultural equipment will be provided to commence cultivation. Tractors, seed paddy, fertilizer subsidiaries will be given to resume their farming.

Restrictions imposed on fishing were fully lifted promoting the once flourishing fishing industry in the North. In 2007, Mannar fishermen netted 6,875 metric tons of fresh fish and 595 metric tons of dried fish. According to 2006 statistics 9,147 fishermen were registered in the district.



According to the Ministry of Fisheries, over 67,500 metric tons of fish were transported to the south from the north annually before 1983. Over 39,000 fishermen in 219 villages in the north will benefit by the Uthuru Wasanthaya Program. With the development program, fishermen will be given boats, fishing nets and

other equipment to commence trade. They are now free to engage fully in fishing. Infrastructure facilities in the fishing villages are to be developed. During the 2006-2007 Maha season Mannar district produced 31,285 metric tons of paddy and in Yala season in (2007) another 2904 metric tons were produced.

The area has the potential to produce a large yield of paddy and seed paddy harvest. In the newly liberated areas there are stretches of abandoned paddy lands. There will be green fields once again, when people are resettled.

Apart from the Giant Tank, the irrigable stretch of land under Akkathimurippu and Viyadikulam tanks in the Musali Divisional Secretariat Division are 6,231 hectares and 1,223 hectares, respectively.

In addition, Periyamadu, Vellimaruthamadu, Kurai, Adampankulam of Manthai West and Periyapandivirichchan and the Maruthamadu anicut provides water to a total of 530 hectares of land.

While the Madu Church prepares for the feast in August, people are being resettled in Mannar starting from the Musali area. The Government is in the process of re-opening schools while helping the displaced to resettle.

## Accessibility

Under the 'Gama Neguma' project Rs. 175 million is allocated for development projects in each Grama Niladhari (village headmen) division. In addition inland fisheries and other vocational training programs to promote self employment are implemented in the Vavuniya district, District Secretary Ms. P. S. M. Charles said.

She said Rs. 100 million is allocated to develop roads, in the rural areas which are under the Local Governments while the main access roads are reconstructed by the Road Development Authority.

Under the Northern Spring, road development, uplifting transport system, developing ayurvedic hospitals, repairing and reconstructing irrigation systems as well as improving the Jaffna University are given priority.

For 2009, the Ministry of Nation Building has allocated Rs. 400 million for 'Gama Neguma' project being implemented in Jaffna, District Secretariat officials stated. Under the Gama Neguma program, developing fisheries and agricultural industries and livestock development activities are in progress. With the launch of the Chunnakam Power station Jaffna will receive an uninterrupted supply of electricity. The Thondamanaru barrage which will commence soon will help improve the fresh water in the area.



## Progress

Northern Spring is a development program catering to the needs of the districts. Infrastructure development, electricity, water supply and sanitation, agriculture, irrigation, livestock development, inland fisheries, health, solid waste disposal, education, sports, cultural affairs and transportation are some of the areas that will be included under the program.

