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## BUSINESS TIMES

### ADB-funded roads benefit rural folk

By Jayampathy Jayasinghe

View(s):

Sri Lanka's iRoad programme is the largest single, countrywide, integrated road development programme that affects a population of 22 million scattered across the country.

This project will have a massive socio economic impact on the rural communities, by uplifting their day-to-day life. This will enable the rural folk to contribute to the development of Sri Lanka, said Anil M.G. Perera, Team Leader, MGG-ECL JV, an ADB-funded Integrated Road Investment Programme (iRoad) of the Southern Province at a media briefing held at the Ministry of Highways in Battarmulla recently.

He said the origins of iRoad project started when the conflict in Sri Lanka ended in 2009 with the Sri Lanka government launching a huge investment programme to improve class A & B National Road Network and the expressways throughout the country with assistance provided by the ADB.

This programme is implemented in two phases covering the entire island. Ninety Five (95) contract packages consisting of Rs.2 billion each will be given to local contractors, where over 40,000 direct workers are involved with over 900 engineers with numerous suppliers and providers connected to the project.

Meanwhile the ADB has provided two multi finance facilities to improve, rehabilitate and maintain rural roads in Sri Lanka that include 6500 km of rural roads and 750 km of national roads. The objective of the iRoad project is to

improve all weather connectivity of rural areas so that the rural population can be involved in the national economic and social development of the country.

The Ministry of Highways and Road Development and Petroleum Resources Development (MOH&RD&PRD) is the executing agency while the Road Development Authority (RDA) is the implementing agency. The total loan for the iRoad 1 programme is Rs. 297 billion for 2014-2024 period and the loan for the iRoad 2 programme from 2017-2027 is



Mr. Anil M.G. Perera

Rs. 157 billion.

The iRoad 1 programme includes the Galle district with 66 roads and a length of 197 km; Matara district with 67 roads and 218 km in length; Hambantota district with 51 roads and length of 167 km; Sabaragamuwa Province in the Ratnapura district with 38 roads and length of 255 km; Kegalle district with 63 roads and length of 217 km; North Central Province of Anuradhapura district with 60 roads and length of 330 km; Polonnaruwa district with 55 roads and length of 170 km; Central Province of Kandy district with 50 roads and length of 221 km; Matale district with 51 roads and length of 194 km; Nuwara Eliya district with 43 roads and length of 180 km; North Western Province of Puttalam district with 38 roads and length of 220 km; Kurunegala district with 76 roads and length of 485 km and Western Province of Kalutara district with 83 roads and length of 276 km. The total length of the road network is 3130 km and the contract value is estimated at Rs. 71,978 million rupees.

According to Danapala Lokuge, a resident of Galle, the roads in his village had been in a bad condition for the past 50 years. But the quality of roads is at a high standard now and the land value has gone up. Time is saved for people to go to hospitals, and for the children to go to school.”

For the first time we have seen safety signs on the road including pedestrian crossings in our village.”

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