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Massive Development in North to establish Sustainable Peace

News Desk – Media Unit – Office of Governor (Northern Province)

Irrigation

HIGHLIGHTS OF IRRIGATION SECTOR REVIVAL AFTER LIBERATION OF NORTHERN PROVINCE IN MAY 2009

It should be noted that the people in Northern Province depend on agriculture and fishing. Irrigation facilities are required to do various cultivation activities in the region. The people of this area did their cultivation with much difficulty during war times. But with the end of war in 2009, the things have changed a lot. People are provided with necessary irrigation facilities. Government has made arrangements to fulfill these requirements.

Background Information / Overview

In Northern Province, agricultural contributions are the major share to national GDP of our country and hence Irrigation sector plays a vital role in the development of the nation. Irrigation has been practiced in Northern Province since ancient times and is almost exclusively used for the cultivation of paddy. Irrigation Schemes in the Northern Province have storage reservoirs which assure supplemental irrigation during dry spells in the Maha season and assure irrigation facilities to limited areas during the Yala season.

54 Major / Medium Irrigation schemes in Northern Province, including eight major tanks are being maintained by the Irrigation Department Northern Province. These schemes primarily provide irrigation water to 69,591 Acres benefiting more than 25,000 farming families in this region. Valukkaiaru drainage scheme providing drainage facilities to 2,000 acres, 34 Salt Water Exclusion schemes providing saltwater exclusion facilities to 7,561 acres and Jaffna Lagoon scheme of 20,000 acres are also come under the purview of Irrigation Department, NP.

Until liberation of Vanni area from LTTE, due to the turbulent situation prevailed in this province, satisfactory maintenance could not be carried out for more than two to three decades. In addition to this, severe damages caused by the heavy floods have worsened the situation. As a result, most of the schemes were found to be in dilapidated condition. Since the Irrigation Head Works were in hazardous stage, there was potential threat of failure. Due to the dilapidate condition of channel system, the water losses were very high and hence the resource utilization was well below the designed level. The malfunctioning of Salt Water Exclusion Schemes has caused Salt Water intrusion into the cultivable lands and ground water. The farmers were facing lot of hardships in transporting the commodities to and from their paddy fields due to the poorly maintained channel roads.

After the conclusion of humanitarian operation launched by the Security Forces for the liberation of the entire Northern Province from the LTTE in May 2009, the Government of Sri Lanka initiated a rapid resettlement and development programme for the Northern Province.

In this direction, the government had implemented a 180 days development program under “Vadakkinn Vasantham” in May 2009 to support its effort for rapid resettlement of internally displaced people (IDP) of Northern Province. Primary livelihood activity of them is agriculture, it was strongly felt that the revival of Irrigation schemes are also a must for successful resettlement of IDPs in this region. These schemes not only provide irrigation water under gravity and lift but also recharge the groundwater aquifer enabling abstraction of water for drinking, domestic uses and raising cattle. Groundwater augmentation is also important to maintain home garden and perennial trees.

Reactivation of Operation & Maintenance Activities

Realizing the importance of its services in this crucial stage, the Irrigation Department voluntarily marched forward into the war affected region, setting an example for other agencies to follow. The immediate challenges faced by the department were re-establishing its own organizational structures and providing irrigation facilities to the resettling farmers to help them to restore their livelihood.



The irrigation department was successful not only in establishing its own infrastructure from the ruin, but also was successful in providing basic irrigation facilities by reactivating its operation and maintenance activities in irrigation schemes.



Rs.45 million allocated during 2009 and Rs.56 million allocated during 2010 by the provincial council were effectively spent to ensure irrigation and drainage facilities under 14 and 32 Major / Medium Irrigation Schemes in Northern Province during 2009 and 2010 respectively.



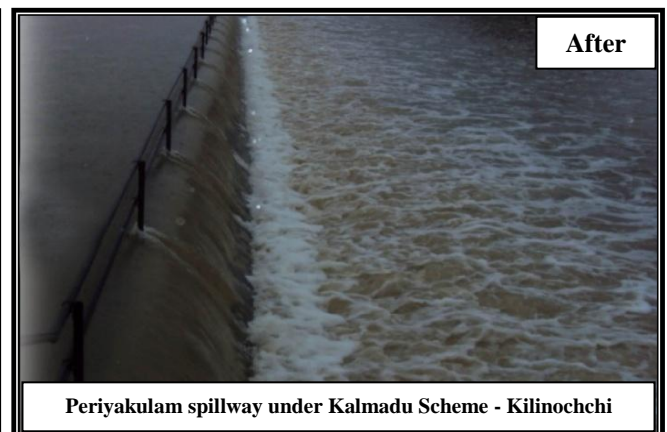
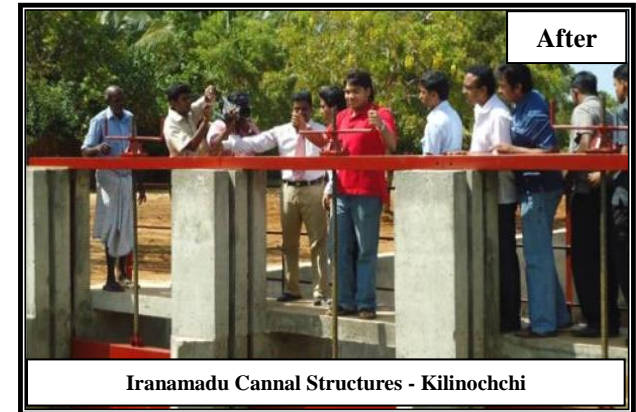
In order to extend this service, Rs.56mn was allocated in 2011 and trouble free water issues were ensured for all resettled farmers. As a result of this effort considerable extent of cultivable lands were assured irrigation facilities and were brought under cultivation. The summary of results is shown below.

District wise Extent cultivated under Provincial Irrigation Schemes in Northern Province.

SI.No.	District	2009/2010	2010	2010/2011	2011	2011/2012
		Maha (Ac)	Yala (Ac)	Maha (Ac)	Yala (Ac)	Maha(Ac)
1	Kilinochchi	6,269	-	22,257	11,890	27,124
2	Mullaitivu	2,687	5,042	10,294	9,305	17,793
3	Vavuniya	1,930	250	5,587	1,240	5,615
4	Mannar	-	-	4,367	757	4,301
5	Jaffna	2,069	-	1,987	-	2,024
TOTAL		12,955	5,292	44,492	23,192	56,857

Urgent Improvements / Safety Measures

Most of the irrigation schemes in Northern Province are in a dilapidated hazardous condition and functioning below its designed levels. As a consequence, the next laborious task assigned to the irrigation department by the Hon. Governor, Northern Province was to take immediate measures to safeguard the most dangerous schemes that were about to breach. In spite of security threat caused by land mines, the Irrigation department bravely tackled this challenge and ensured safety of selected 16 schemes at the expenses of Rs.95Mn during 2009 and 9 schemes at the expenses of Rs.90Mn during 2010 allocated under provincial council funds. In order to safeguard further 7 schemes, Rs.30mn is allocated in 2011.



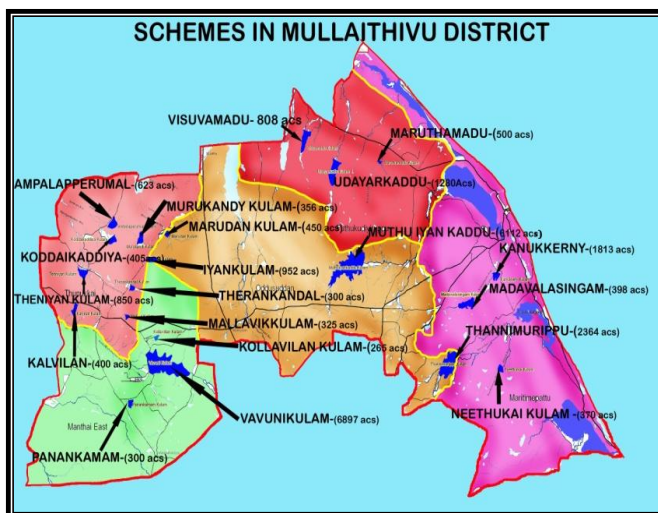
Rehabilitation of Irrigation Schemes

Attending urgent repairs with the limited funds are not sufficient to bring the schemes back to their original operational stage. Since most of the schemes were not rehabilitated for the past three decades, they are functioning well below their potential and the risk of failure is considered to be unacceptably high in their present state. Almost all the channels and channel structures are in dilapidated conditions. Due to such uncontrolled system prevailed, the water losses are very high, depriving cultivation of significant extent during yala by farmers. Therefore there is a need for full rehabilitation to bring the tank parameters back to the original designed profile.

Realizing this urgent need, irrigation rehabilitation is included as a component under many projects formulated under “Vadakkinn Vasantham” Program initiated with the guidance of Minister of Economic Development Hon. Basil Rajapaksa in par with the Mahintha Chinthanaya of His Excellency Mahinda Rajapaksa, the President of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka and being implemented under the direction of an able administrator Hon.G.A. Chandrasiri as the Governor of the Northern Province.

Under these projects, Irrigation Schemes are rehabilitated to bring the schemes back to their original designed profile and to ensure satisfactory irrigation facilities to the specified cultivable lands. In order to achieve this objective, activities such as rehabilitation of head works, rehabilitation of distribution channel system, rehabilitation of drainage channels, and rehabilitation of agricultural roads are carried out.

Mullaitivu District



All most all the 4 major and 16 medium Irrigation schemes managed by the Irrigation Department, Northern Province in Mullaitivu District were badly affected due to the prolonged conflict and there were potential threats of failure of embankments due to its dilapidated and hazardous condition. However owing to the timely intervention of the Government, this department was able to prevent many catastrophes with the support of its dedicated front line workers, the farmer community and the Security forces, especially Sri Lanka Army.

Having completed the Government's 180 days rapid development programme commenced in May 2009 successfully, Hon. Basil Rajapaksa, Minister of Economic Development had directed authorities to allocate more than Rs.2300 million from various programmes to this district for the rehabilitation of 16 irrigation Schemes and other facilities, on the request of the



Madawalasingam Inlet Canal to sluice - Mullaitivu

Hon.G.A.Chandrasiri, Governor of the Northern Province.

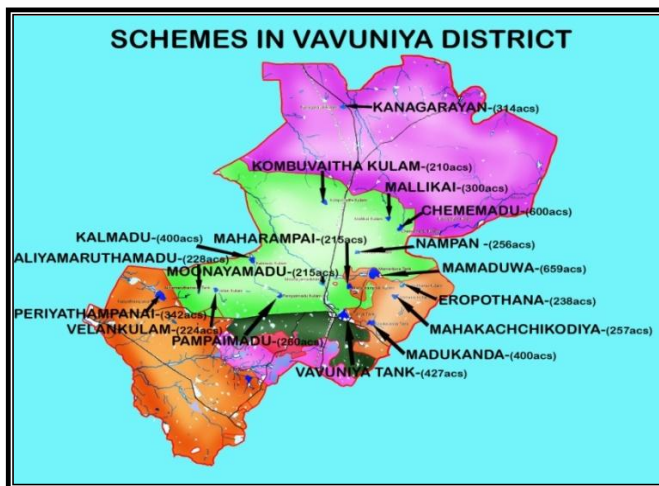


Earth work on Vavunikkulam Tank Bund - Mullaitivu

Out of this allocation, Rs.670 million was allocated for the rehabilitation of Vavunikulam Scheme to benefit 6060 acres of paddy land under gravity irrigation and 837 acres of high land under lift irrigation owned by more than 3000 farm families. Under this project, the Tank Bund is strengthened, Sluices and spills are improved, and the canal systems and all control structures are rehabilitated. After completion of this project, 1000 acres of abandoned land not cultivated from the inception of the scheme would be brought under cultivation and the cropping intensity also will increase to 1.40 from 1.10 at present.

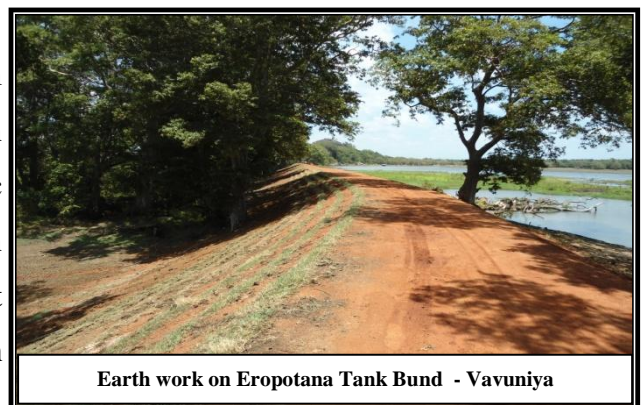
Once all the projects will be completed most probably end of this year, more than 22,546 acres of paddy and 3219 acres other field crops will get assured water and about 30% of this acreage could be brought under cultivation during yala season, benefiting more than 11,000 farm families and ensure assured income for all of them.

Vavuniya District



In the register of the Irrigation Department, Northern Province, there are 17 medium Irrigation Schemes in Vavuniya District, irrigating an extent of 5755 Acres of paddy lands which are owned by over 1800 farm families. Due to the conflict situation prevailed in this district for the last three decades, these schemes became dilapidated condition due to unsatisfactory maintenance.

After the liberation of the Northern Province from the LTTE, the Government allocated more than 630 million through the Ministry of Economic Development for the rehabilitation of 13 irrigation schemes and other facilities. in Vavuniya District on the request of the Hon. Governor, Northern Province.



Earth work on Eroptana Tank Bund - Vavuniya



Channel Lining in Kanakarayanikulam - Vavuniya

Rs.36 million was allocated for the rehabilitation of the most affected Kanakarajan kulam Scheme in Vavuniya South. Now the rehabilitation works are completed and 314 acres of paddy lands have been brought under cultivation by 210 farm families with a increased cropping intensity of 1.3 from 1.1

When all the rehabilitation works are completed at the end of this year, more than 5750 acres of paddy land could be brought under cultivation by more than 1800 farm families with a increased cropping intensity of 1.3 in Vavuniya District.

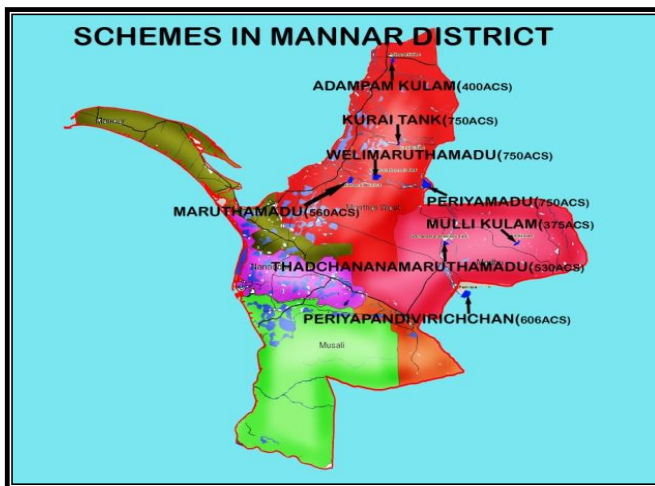


Earth work on Nampankulam Tank Bund - Vavuniya



Channel Lining in Mamaduwa - Vavuniya

Mannar District



In Mannar District 7 Irrigation Schemes are maintained by the Irrigation Department, Northern Province, irrigating an extent of farm families. Due to the conflict situation prevailed 4721 acres of paddy lands which are owned by over 1500 in this district for the last three decades, these schemes became dilapidated condition due to unsatisfactory maintenance.

After the liberation of the Northern Province from the LTTE, the Government allocated more than Rs.390 million through the Ministry of Economic Development for the rehabilitation of 06 irrigation schemes and other facilities. in Mannar District on the request of the Hon.Gorvernor, Northern Province.



Inspection of Palavi by Hon. Governor NP - Mannar

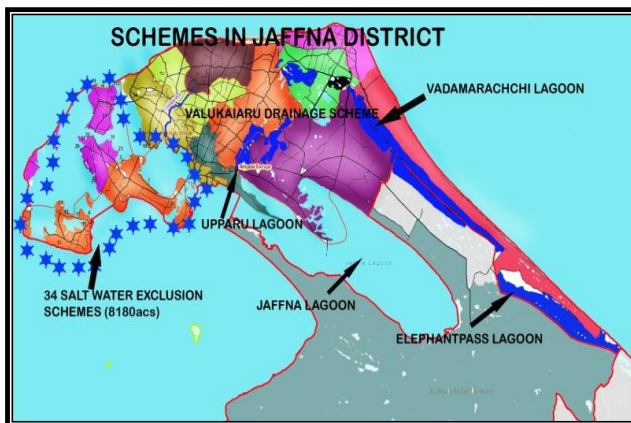


Rs.55 million was allocated for the rehabilitation of the Palavikulam and its surroundings in Thiruketheswaram temple area by Hon. Basil Rajapaksa, Minister of Economic Development and the works were executed by the Irrigation Department with the close guidance of the Hon. Governor G.A.Chandrasiri within a short period.

All these works are being maintained by this department on the instruction of the Hon.Governor with the support of temple trustees.



Jaffna District

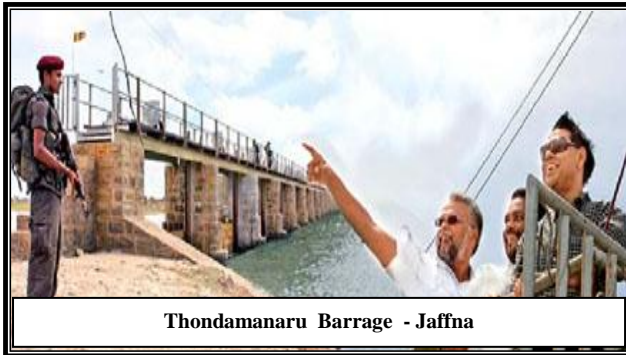


Jaffna Peninsula has no rivers or reservoirs due to its flat topography and is totally dependent on rainfall to recharge underground aquifers. However, 3 numbers Lagoon Schemes (Upparu Vadamarachchi, & Elephant pass), Valukkai aru Drainage Scheme, 34 Nos. Salt Water Exclusion (SWE)Schemes and more than 600 Ponds / Tank are available as surface water resources for the benefit of the people of the Peninsula. But, during the conflict period, most

of these schemes were badly damaged and were not in operational condition or functioning with less efficiency.

After, liberated this region in May 2009, many rehabilitation activities are taken place in the irrigation sector at a cost of Rs. 585 Mn under the “Vadakkinn Wasantham Programme” on the leadership of Hon.Governor G.A. Chandrasiri with the guidance of Hon.Basil Rajapaksa, Minister of Economic Development.





Thondamanaru Barrage - Jaffna

Both, Upparu Lagoon Scheme consisting of Ariyalai Barrage and Vadamarachchi Lagoon Scheme consisting of Thondamanru Barrage under Jaffna Lagoon Scheme were successfully rehabilitated with the investment of 125 Mn. and at present these lagoons are isolated from the sea water.

Due to this intervention, gradual conversion of these lagoons to fresh water lakes is observed and water of the wells in the adjoining area is becoming fresh.

Valukkai aru Drainage Scheme consisting of a Barrage at Araly, Canal Systems and Ponds is being rehabilitated with an investment of Rs. 280 Mn. About 2000 Acres of paddy and 375 Acres of cash crops were cultivated under this scheme by more than 4900 farm families



Kirai Main Channel in Valukkai Aru - Jaffna



Arali Barrage in Valukkai Aru - Jaffna

Due to this massive investment, the sea water entering into the main land during high tide and discharge of flood water during rainy season are carried out through this reconstructed Barrage successfully and now 275 acres of additional lands were brought under cultivation

Of the 34 SWE schemes in Jaffna peninsula, 17 schemes have been rehabilitated so far and another 5 schemes are being rehabilitated with a total investment of 125 Mn. Now utilizing this fresh water retained one side of the bund, farmers already started other field crop cultivation



Kallundai SWE Scheme - Jaffna



Athisaya Vairavar Kulam in Velanai - Jaffna

Hon.Governor of Northern Province G.A.Chandrasiri has initiated a another important programme through Irrigation Department to sort out the severe water shortage problem in the Island sector on the guidance of Hon.K.N. Douglas Devananda, Minister of Traditional Industries and Small Enterprises with the assistance of Security Forces. Under this programme several ponds in Delft and Velanai Peradeshiya Sabah areas were deepened in order to save more water during rainy days

for the use in dry periods and now their water problem is permanently solved.

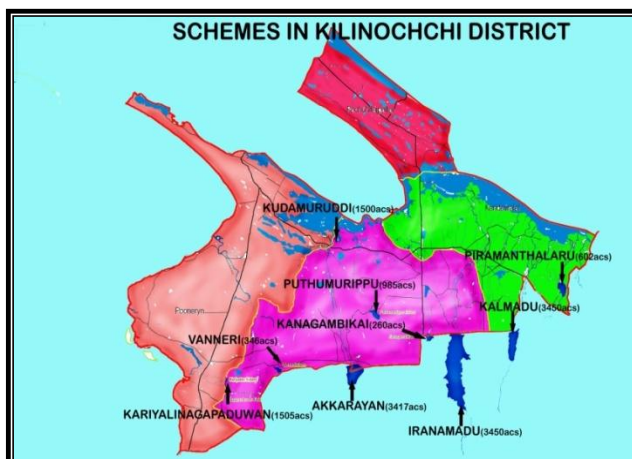
Hon. Governor of this province had started another special programme again through this department to improve the Pullukulam area in order to make the Jaffna town area as a place of tourist attraction and a place for recreation for the people of Jaffna. This programme has already been successfully completed and people are started gathering around this area for recreation.



Pullukkulam - Jaffna

During the short spell of this development era started by the Government in May 2009, most of the Irrigation Schemes in Jaffna District were rehabilitated or being rehabilitated and the benefits are being enjoyed by almost all the people of the Jaffna District.

Kilinochchi District



Kilinochchi District being an agricultural district, it will largely depend on the irrigation network for its development and it has 7 river basins and there are 5 medium tanks and 4 major tanks and the coastal area of the district has No. of S.W.E. bunds. Maintenance of these tanks and canals and the Irrigation network were seriously affected during the last 3 decades and ultimately these schemes are in heavily dilapidated condition.

To ensure the livelihood of the resettled IDP in this region, most of the schemes have been undertaken for rehabilitation, at a cost of Rs. 4800 million, benefitting 33,350 Acres of cultivable land and 10,615 families under the “Vadakkinn Wasantham Programme” with the guidance of Hon. Basil Rajapaksa, Minister of Economic Development and the leadership of Hon.Governor G. A. Chandrasiri

Kalmadu Restoration was identified as the priority over all other works, as it was blasted by the LTTE terrorist during high escalation of the war in January 2009. This restoration activities were commenced in August 2010 and successfully restored in October 2011 by investing 115 Mn for the benefit of 1025 families.



Restoration of Kalmadu Tank - Kilinochchi

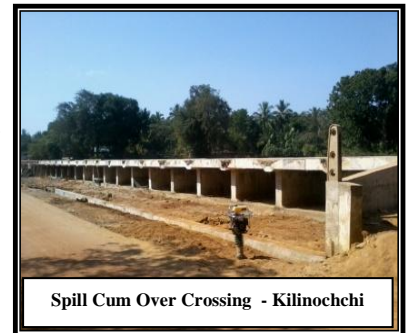
During last Monsoon rain, it was able to store to its full capacity and maha cultivation has been successfully completed in 4250 acres, after 8 seasons from Maha 2008/2009. At present this tank has sufficient water and the farmers are getting ready for their yala cultivation.



Iranaimadu Radial Gated Spill - Kilinochchi

The Head works of Iranaimadu Major Irrigation Scheme is also in hazardous stage for the last so many years and all the channel networks are in heavily dilapidated condition. However, after resettlement, urgent rehabilitation works were taken place for the irrigation channel at a cost of Rs 55 Mn. And farmers started their cultivation activities from Maha 2009/10 under this scheme.

However, this scheme was taken up for rehabilitation and allocated 10.63Mn US \$ for the Head works improvement while another 22.22Mn US \$ earmarked for the Down Stream Development. At the completion of these mega projects, entire cultivable lands of 21,985 Acres could be brought under cultivation with high intensity benefiting 6495 farm families directly.



Spill Cum Over Crossing - Kilinochchi

Another 06 Major/Medium schemes and six 06 SWE Schemes, are being rehabilitated with the investment of Rs 689 Mn for benefitting 7,115 Acs and 3,095 farm families directly.