

FROM THE EDITOR...

The proposed South Asia Sub-regional Economic Cooperation (SASEC) Port Access Elevated Highway (PAEH) Project will construct about 5.3 kilometers (km) of an elevated toll highway with related facilities between New Kelani Bridge (NKB) and Galle Face in central Colombo 1. It will provide a direct link to the city center and the port from Colombo – Katunayake Expressway (CKE) via NKB, and then extend the expressway network into the city. The project will help alleviate traffic congestion in the densely populated areas of Colombo, improve last-mile connectivity from the country's expressway network to the international port in Colombo, provide better logistics services for freight operations, and facilitate regional trade.



The construction work of the Port Access Elevated Highway Project is executed under a loan from Asian Development Bank. The estimated cost of the Project is Rs. 28 billion and it was commenced in 2019. This expressway is constructed on piers in an environmental friendly manner, connecting the newly developed Port City and Galle Face to the Ingurukade Interchange of the new Kelani Bridge Project.

The leading construction company of the project is China Civil Engineering Construction Corporation and the consulting firm is a joint institution of three consultancy firms in the United States, England and Sri Lanka. From the Port City, the expressway will connect to the Marine Drive through a proposed tunnel without interrupting the beauty of Galle Face. With the completion of the Port Access Road, it will take only 4 minutes to travel from the Galle Face to Peliyagoda.

According to financial forecasting, the elevated highway will help the country to save as much as Rs.397 billion per annum, which is currently incurred due to traffic congestion, and it would make a huge positive impact on the country's economy. Since the New Kelani Bridge will directly connect to the Colombo-Katunayake Expressway on the north side, and extended to Orugodawatta intersection on the south side connecting with the Port Access road, there will be a possibility of travelling to outskirts of Colombo with no congestion. Since container freight traffic will be given a new entrance, the congestion on roads mainly around Orugodawatta, Baseline Road and surrounding areas will be significantly reduced. Also, since the Port Access Road is being constructed at the Colombo Port premises, there will be no land acquisition and disruption to the public. In addition, the project will enhance the Colombo Port premises by demolishing irregular buildings in the port premises.

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