

FROM THE EDITOR...

The Central Expressway (E04) has been one of the most important construction projects in Sri Lanka that will link the Sri Lankan capital, Colombo, with main cities Kurunegala and Kandy. Original idea of the construction of Central Expressway was made in 2002 and construction was started in 2014. It provides a fast alternative to the existing Colombo - Kandy (A1) and Ambepussa - Trincomale (A6) roads. It consists of four phases; Phase I (Kadawatha to Mirigama), Phase II (Mirigama to Kurunegala), Phase III (Pothuhera to Galagedara), Phase IV (Kurunegala to Dambulla).



The expressway starts at the Kadawatha Interchange on the E02 Outer Circular Expressway and will end in Dambulla at the A9 Kandy - Jaffna road, traversing through Gampaha, Kurunegala and Matale districts. A link expressway starting from Pothuhera and ending in Galagedara will provide access to the Kandy district.

The construction of first stage from Kadawatha to Mirigama will be a four lane divided carriageway (with room for future two lanes) for a length of 48.2 km (30.0 mi). There are interchanges at Kadawatha, Gampaha, Veyangoda and Mirigama with fifty overpasses and thirty underpasses along the route. The initial estimated cost of Phase I was approximately Rs. 70bn with more recent costs estimated at Rs.130bn.

Construction of the second stage of the project from Mirigama to Kurunegala, will also be a four-lane divided carriageway for a length of 40.91km (25.42mi), with thirty overpasses and five underpasses. Interchanges are proposed at Nakalagamuwa, Dambokka, Kurunegala and Yaggapitiya. The tentative cost of construction for Phase II is Rs. 149.0 bn. This Phase was completed in 2022 by local construction companies for the 1st time in Sri Lanka.

Third phase of the expressway spans a total of 32.45 km and includes four interchanges. It has been confirmed that interchanges will be established at Pothuhera, Polgahawela, Rambukkana, and Galagedara. Presently, construction on the 13.7 km stretch between Pothuhera and Rambukkana is progressing at an accelerated pace. The construction of Phase III of the expressway is one of the most challenging road constructions projects of all times since geography of the area poses an enduring challenge. The initial phase of this section is scheduled for completion by 2025, with the entire project set to be finalized and operational by July 2026. Once construction is completed, the public will have access to the Central Expressway from Mirigama to Rambukkana, significantly enhancing connectivity and transportation efficiency in the region.

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