



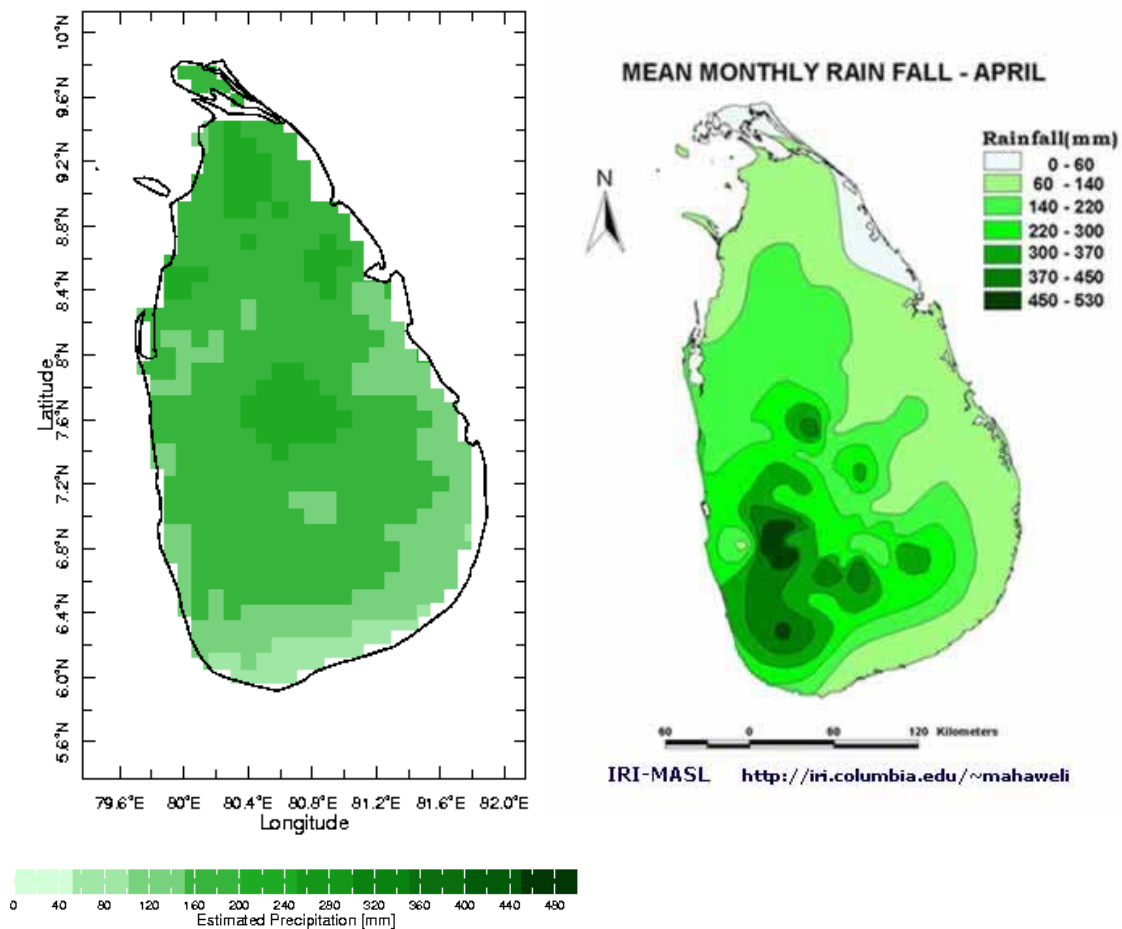
## April and May 2005 Climate in Sri Lanka : A Risk of Drought

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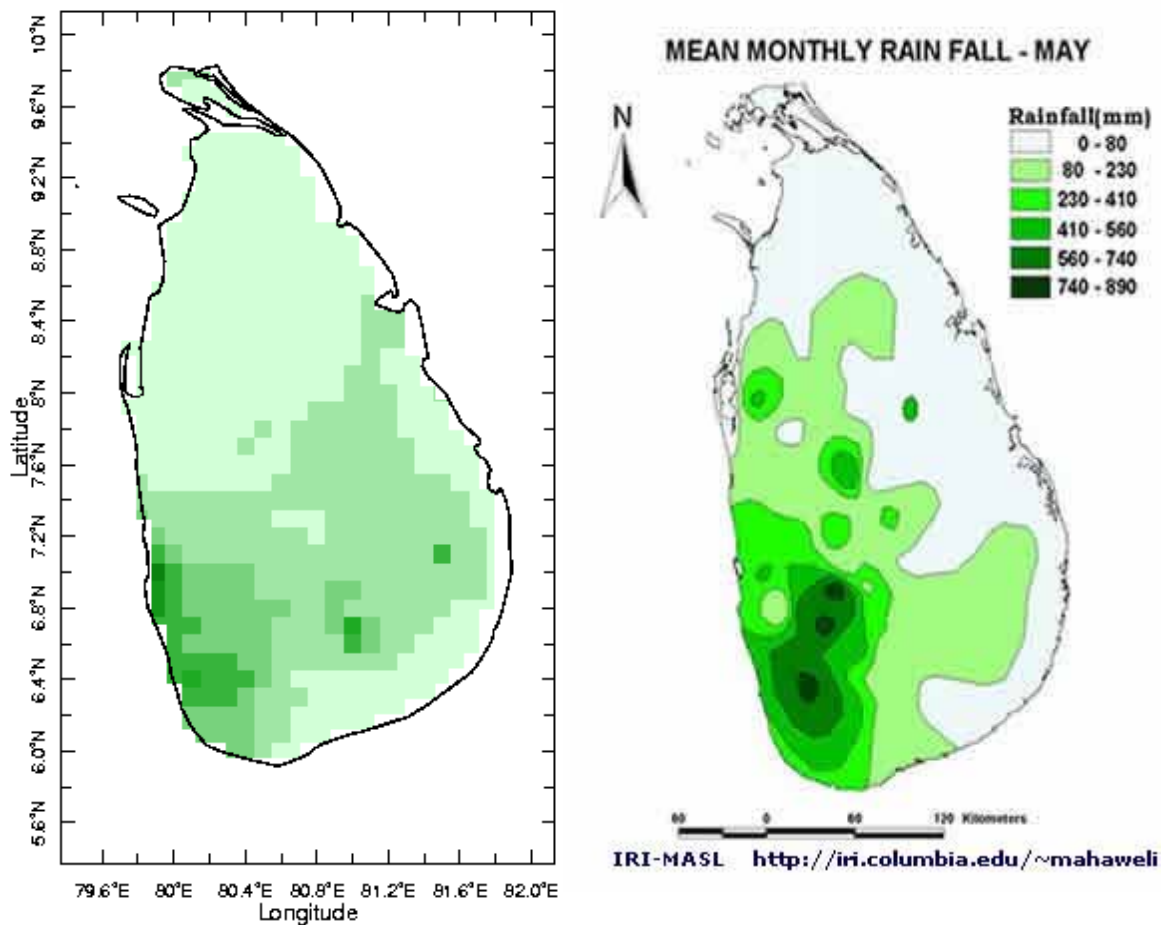
<http://www.climate.lk>

The rainfall during April and May 2005 was quite a bit below normal in the wet south-western hill slopes. This is the Yala rainy season and rainfall ranging from 60 to 600 mm is expected for April and May with the higher end of the range in the South West Hills. However, that heavy rainfall in the South-West quarter has not materialized. This failure has implications for all the island as this is the upper catchment for many rivers that feed agriculture and hydropower. (Continued in the next page)

### Maps Below: Estimated Rainfall for April 2005 and Average for April



### Maps Next Page: Estimated Rainfall from May 1-25 and Average for May



As of today, Kotmale and Victoria reservoirs on the Mahaweli River were only 25% and 50% full – these reservoirs are designed to be full after the Yala rain. The Kelani reservoirs too are a quarter empty. Together the Mahaweli and Kelani reservoirs account for 90% of the hydropower capacity and production. Hydropowers contribution to grid energy generation has come down from 85% to 65%. Hydro is the affordable electricity option even without the current high prices of petroleum.

Note, these estimates are derived from satellite estimates are only approximate. Yet, they give some indication of climate risk. Data from Mahaweli Authority and Meteorology Department were consulted. The downstream reservoirs feeding agricultural areas however are in the range of 60-90% capacity and thus one may not expect too severe a risk for agriculture . There are ominous signs that there is a drought risk ahead unless the rainfall catches up soon. Water supply for Colombo and electricity supply elsewhere may be at risk leading to higher expenditures for oil. Such shortfall and financial pressures may add momentum to the governments drive (As stated in the IMF/World Bank manifest) to privatize the petroleum corporation and electricity board.