

BUSINESS & ECONOMY

The Island

Japan to fund two Water Supply Projects in the Southern Province

The Japanese Government is to provide a sum of USD 63,068 (approximately Rs. 6.1 million) and USD 66,364 (approximately Rs. 6.4 million) towards two projects of 'Groundwater Development for the Augmentation of the Town Water Supply in Tangalle, Kirinda, Kataragama and Lunugamvehera Urban Water Supply Schemes' and 'Rural Water Supply for 30 drought affected villages in Hambantota District' under the Grassroots Grant Assistance scheme of the Government of Japan in order to facilitate more effectively the services of water supply to the communities in the South.

This was announced by Yasushi Akashi, Representative of the Japanese Government with responsibility for Peace Building, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction in Sri Lanka, during his visit to the southern region, on Saturday.

The people of Hambantota District continue to suffer from the severe inadequacy of water supply, mainly due to the limited and restricted facilities of the rural and town water supply especially during the seasonal droughts. The current water supply to the urban areas of Kirinda lasts only 4 hours a day and 8 hours in Tangalle and Lunugamvehera. It is only during the rainy season that a 24 hour water supply is secured in Kataragama. The project for 'Groundwater Development for Augmentation of the Town Water Supply in Tangalle, Kirinda, Kataragama and Lunugamvehera Urban Water Supply Schemes' is to construct 20 new high yielding tube wells with deep-well hand pumps for supplying safe and uninterrupted water to over 50,000 people in the four towns for 24 hours per day.

The rural water supply in Hambantota

District is greatly inadequate to cater to the required demand. During the dry season, people are forced to walk miles searching for water and are obliged to depend on unhygienic and unprotected water. Under this project, the most affected 30 villages in the district will be selected based on the recommendations of the Government Agent for Hambantota and the Water Resources Board of the Ministry of Irrigation and Water Management. The project will construct 25 tube wells with hand pumps, 5 production wells for pumping water supply schemes, pump houses and overhead tanks. The project is designed to benefit over 30,000 people.

As part of its efforts to reduce poverty and alleviate the difficulties of shortage of water supply, the Japanese Government has been assisting the southern region in several major projects recently. They are the -

Walawe left bank irrigation upgrading and extension project, which has been implemented under a yen loan, is to increase agriculture production and employment opportunities at the Walawe left bank, which is prone to frequent droughts.

Development study on comprehensive groundwater resources for Hambantota and Monaragala districts, and a new water supply program for Matara District has been considered and its feasibility has been analysed by the Japanese Government.

In addition, the following projects have also been successfully implemented in the southern region.

Samanalawewa Hydroelectric Power Project at a cost of Yen 36,966 million (Rs. 27,382 million)

Southern Highway Construction Project at a cost of Yen 18,770 million (Rs. 13,904

million)

Project for upgrading the facilities of General Hospital Matara at a total cost of Yen 362 million (Rs. 250 million).

Kirinda Fisheries Harbour, Tangalle Fishery Harbour and Tangalle Fisheries Training Center Projects at a total cost of Yen 4,408 million (Rs. 3,265 million)

Small and Micro Industries Leader and Entrepreneur Promotion Project (SMILE) I & II at a cost of Yen 10,270 million (Rs. 7,607 million)

Environmentally Friendly Solutions Fund (E-FRIENDS) at a cost of Yen 2,730 million (Rs. 2,022 million)

Poverty Alleviation Micro Finance Project at a cost of Yen 1,368 million (Rs. 1,013 million)

Plantation Reform Project at a cost of Yen 4,076 million (Rs. 3,019 million)