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90 waterfalls in Sri Lanka

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A recent survey conducted and completed on waterfalls in Sri Lanka has revealed the existence of 90 waterfalls, ranging from 165ft to 465ft in height, in Sabaragamuwa, out of 272 located and identified in the island by a team led by an enthusiastic youth age 23, Asitha Indika Weerawardana, under the patronage of youth friendly organization engaged in the discovery of waterfalls in Sri Lanka.

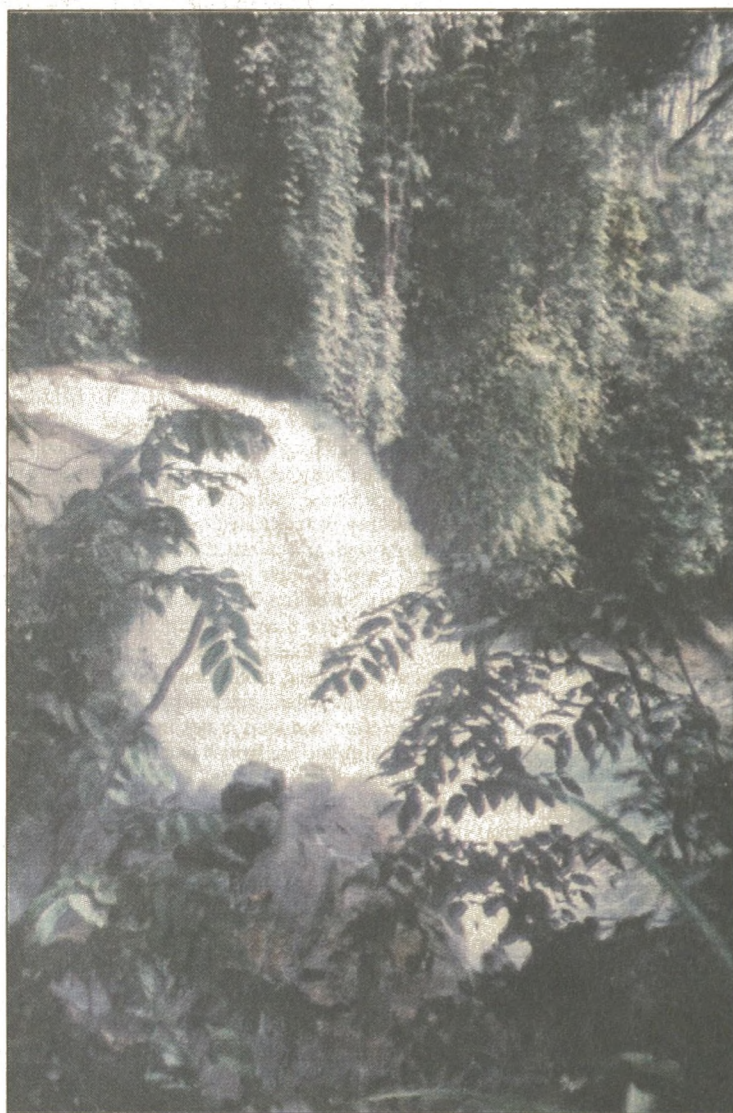
The large scale destruction of the forest reserves by the organized timber thieves, forest fires indiscriminate tea planting, squatting, unauthorized digging for gems, and many other reasons had led to the destruction and consistent land-policy over the years had placed the 90 waterfalls newly discovered in the imminent danger of extinction the survey had revealed.

His findings have also out-dated the information on waterfalls in Sri Lanka in general and Sabaragamuwa in particular, in the two books on the subject, namely a guide to waterfalls in Sri Lanka by Eberhard

Kautzch, a German writer, and 'Sri Lanka Diya Eli' by Padmalatha Abeysinghe. The first book mentioned the number of waterfalls as 96 in Sri Lanka and 13 in Sabaragamuwa and the second, 75 in Sri Lanka 12 in Sabaragamuwa. The new research study on waterfalls, locating 90 falls, was of great significance for Sabaragamuwa, when the Tourist Industry was in the offing and the search for avenue of Rural - Electricity was under way. These waterfalls when developed and protected could provide a rich source of attraction to the foreigners, bringing foreign exchange to the country and the new source of income to the ruralfolk in the village where the falls were located, Asitha told the *Daily News*.

In addition to the permanent waterfalls, already mentioned about 20 more 'deadfalls' had been discovered which come into being during rainy season, in the mountain ranges of Samanala, Rakwana, Denagama and Balangoda according to the report.

The location and



Ballamala Ella - Nivitigala 174ft.

identification of 90 waterfalls had taken five

years to complete the report revealed.

Apart from treating waterfalls as 'things of beauty' in the tourist industry they could also be useful to produce cheap electricity to the rural sector by erecting small power houses fitted with small scale turbines, as in Pelmadulla without affecting the 'sight-value' and the environment beauty of the falls when wisely planned.

Of the newly discovered waterfalls, 14 are in Ratnapura, 19 in Pelmadulla, 19 in Balangoda, 10 in Rakwana 6 in Kolonna and 5 in Kalawana electorates. As development and protection of the waterfalls were covered by section 114 of the Pradesiya Sabha Act, the local

authorities could without fear embark upon the development investment out of their funds and grants reaping an income package many times the funds invested through the tourist industry, Asitha pointed out.

For the protection of the waterfalls as natural-heritage from the vandalism and natural causes, steps should be taken by the relevant local authorities to declare such areas under them as 'protected areas, converting them in to the paradise for tourists. That could easily be done by the joint effort of the SPC and the ministry of Environment and Forest Resources, in addition to the Ministry of Tourism if the local bodies took the initiative.



Miniella - 46ft Ayagama