

Ethanol to drive Lankan cars

Leading entrepreneur suggests sugarcane cultivation

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Chairman Pelwatte Sugar Industries Ltd (IPSL) Ariyaseela Wickramanayake has submitted a proposal where the country's full requirement of fuel can be produced by cultivating 65,000 hectares of sugarcane while fulfilling the total requirement of sugar for the country and producing more than 150 megawatts of electricity.

The total investment for this plan would be only 150 million US dollars which is the cost of only one third of upper Kotmale project.

This can be further reduced if existing four factories are made fully operational.

He insisted that this should not be postponed for years and Sri Lanka must act fast not to be too late as in many cases in the past.

Pelwatte sugar cane factory under his chairmanship has already invested



Chairman Pelwatte Sugar
Ariyaseela
Wickramanayake

Picture by Sumanachandra
Ariyawansa

Rs. 3,000 million by now and has achieved very successful results. He said the rapidly increasing fuel prices has become one of the most pressing factors in the world today and being a third world country this has caused serious economical problems to Sri Lanka. "Although several successive governments

have brought various proposals in the past to resolve this problem no one has been successful so far.

However, very few people know that Sri Lanka can produce all its fuel requirement and solve this major problem," he said.

Pointing out the benefits of acting fast he said that the country can immediately produce ethanol by cultivating 30,000 hectares around Pelwatte, Hingurana and Sevanagala factory areas while giving employment to 500,000 people in those areas directly and indirectly.

Apart from that 25 megawatt electricity could be produced in every factory and sugarcane leaves can be used to produce animal feed.

For example tea smallholders with certain subsidies earn 60 per cent of tea yield and likewise sugarcane cultivation can be encouraged as it grows anywhere without any problem.

"The private sector will come forward to start fac-

tories and the Pelwatte Sugarcane factory can guide all of them," Wickramanayake said.

"All petrol cars in Brazil have to use ethanol made out of sugarcane from 2007 by law. The USA will use ethanol made out of seed oil for 75 per cent of their cars by 2020.

"India does the same for 10-20 per cent of their cars. But having all the resources why are we waiting doing nothing about," Wickramanayake asked.

Wickramanayake said President Mahinda Rajapaksa has instructed him to produce ethanol required for all Government vehicles when he met the President at Siyambalanduwa.

He had acted with the support of the Moratuwa University and produced a sample to the President at the Deyata Kirula exhibition in 2007.

The President instructed his officials to follow it up. But Wickramanayake regretted that progress so far is very poor.



A sugar cane plantation

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