

Hayleys reconstruct ancient tank

According to legend the history of a 19 acres Kattabuwawa tank situated near Mahawa in the Yapahuwa electorate was built prior to the enthronement of King Parakramabahu I of Polonnaruwa.

It was repaired in 1941 by the then Irrigation Department. Kattabuwawa residents whose livelihood was agriculture, utilised water from this tank for their cultivation as well as for other domestic needs.

This tank has been neglected and not maintained for decades. The abandoned tank gradually turned to be a waste land filled with mud and earth.

The irrigation system thus disappeared and the area under cultivation was greatly reduced causing much hardship to the people of the area.

This state of affairs remains till Hayleys Agro Company, an affiliate of Hayleys Group, saw the importance of this tank and came forward to renovate the Kattabuwawa tank.

Mr. Sunil Mendis, Chairman, Hayleys Group of Companies then contacted Mr. Karu Jayasuriya, Minister of Power and Energy and offered to reconstruct this tank at a cost of three million rupees.

Reconstruction commenced on March 3 with the co-operation of Irrigation Department.

With the chanting of Pirith led by Ven. Thunmullegama Sumanasiri Thero, the Adhikarana Sangha Nayake of Wannu Hathpaththuwa, the reconstruction activities commenced. Mr. Karu Jayasuriya inaugurated the projects by cutting the earth first.

Minister of Irrigation H. G. P.

Nelson, Paddy Cultivation Development Minister D. M. Bandaranayake and Sunil Mendis, Chairman, Hayleys Group along with other officials participated the occasion.

Minister Karu Jayasuriya speaking on the occasion said that Agro Company undertaking such a project was an example for other business establishments to follow.

The minister expressed hopes that the private sector would participate in the reconstruction work of many tanks uncared for. He also emphasized the significance of returning to the society a portion of the profit they earn from the people.

Mr. D. H. Bandaranayake, Paddy Cultivation Development Minister, said that there were 1200 abandoned tanks in Kurunegala district. The Agro Company coming forward to reconstruct the Kattabuwawa tank was a great help to the economically backward people of the area to lead a happier life in future.

Minister of Irrigation H. G. P. Nelson referred to the history of Hayleys Company said the attitude and policies of Agro Company would benefit peasants.

Kattabuwawa tank once reconstructed would serve 75 percent families in the area. By embarking upon this project, Hayleys Agro intends to fulfil three goals —

1. To develop the tank enabling to retain sufficient water to carry out cultivation successfully during both Yala and Maha seasons.

2. To upgrade the living standards

of the cultivators by way of introducing profitable grains and providing training.

3. To introduce suitable and long-standing plans to develop other abandoned tanks.

Hayleys Chairman Sunil Mendis said that it was not a difficult task for their establishment which has been a leading supplier of agro equipment over a period of three decades, to complete the reconstruction work by June this year and hand over to the Peasants Organisation.

The technical experts had already proposed and plans relating to agro promotion programme would be implemented.

The President of Kattabuwawa Peasants Organisation P. H. W. Mudiyanse said there were 75 families engaged in cultivation and their main problem is lack of water for their 47 acre paddy fields. Since the tank is filled with mud and earth, there is no way of retaining water.

We have to rely on rain but the rain is unreliable, at times no water is available when blossom begins.

When there was water available the yield per acre was about 100 bushels but now it has decreased to 60 bushels.

"Consequent to the intervention of Hayleys, we are confident that this tank will be filled with water again paving way for a prosperous living for us", he added.

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Kattabuwawa ancient tank



Hayleys Group Chairman Sunil Mendis and members of the Director Board taking part in the inauguration of the reconstruction ceremony of the Kattabuwawa tank