
Two Major Northern Irrigation Tanks to be Rehabilitated

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A master plan to revive two partly abandoned major irrigation tanks in the North is under discussion at the Irrigation Department. And, irrigation engineers are already in the process of drafting the plan. These tanks, in the heart of the Northern Province, will be rehabilitated at a cost of Rs. 635 million on the instructions of Ports, Aviation and Irrigation Minister Chamal Rajapaksa.

The poor knowledge on the function of ancient irrigation systems had lead towards an unplanned disruption of ancient tank systems during the large-scale irrigation development projects, and many planners were not been able to capture the harmony between local and regional hydrological characteristics, an Irrigation Ministry official said. He further said that larger reservoirs usually act as feeders for smaller cascade tank systems.

With the conclusion of 30-year-old civil war, the government is busy resettling war displaced back in their own lands and most of them are farmers. Their incomes are based on producing paddy or other agriculture-based products. And, proceeding with such rehabilitation will be vital factor to cater to their domestic and agricultural needs he said. The Giant's Tank (Yoda Wewa) and Akatthinuruppu tank in Mannar will be rehabilitated at the first phase of the project. And, further, the Giant Tank located in Manthai (West) DS Division will also be rehabilitated at cost of Rs. 385 million. The project will be funded by the World Bank. funds.

“It is estimated that 25,000 acres of land could be cultivated benefitting 7,000 farmer families when the tanks are rehabilitated, and as soon as the resettlement process begins, sufficient water should be ready for the families who return back to their own lands,” Irrigation Department Assets Management Director, N. Indrasenan said. Indrasenan is in charge of the Northern Province irrigation project.

Akatthinuruppu tank in Musali DS Division is also to be rehabilitated soon at a cost of Rs. 250 million. The Japanese Agency JICA funds for the project under Pro-poor Economic Advancement and Community Enhancement (PEACE) scheme. “The development of an irrigation system is a crucial element in the social organization and cultural traditions. It not only sustains farmers, but also creates new floral and faunal communities,” the Director said.(JS) courtesy: news.lk