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Land Grabbing in Wilpattu To Sannar Act of Ministry of Economic Development

It is heartening to see that the Ministry of Economic Development sign boards at the entrance of destroyed forest areas in Sannar Forest Reserve and Kalaru reserve. Roads have been constructed more than one kilometre inside the forests and over 1000 year old trees have been cut down and burned. There are houses coming in certain lands while some lands only have a ready made toilet donated by Japan.

Over 2000 acres of both Sannar Forest Reserve and Kalaru reserve have been destroyed while Wilpattu North sanctuary is waiting for the destruction by the squatters who have put of kadgen huts along the road constructed across Wilpattu National park not more than 500 meters away from the Wilpattu park boundary.

Cutting of forests is an illegal act under the Forest Ordinance or under the Fauna and Flora Ordinance. According to the information the forest land belongs to the Forest and Wildlife Departments have been re-

leased by a Presidential Task force. However, EIA Regulations require to study the environmental impacts if more one hectare of the forest area converting to a non forest activity. Therefore the destruction at both Sannar and Kalaru Reserve are illegal acts.

There are plenty of barren lands in those areas if the Ministry of Economic Development needs lands for development activities or for the human settlements. Therefore, destruction of remaining forest lands in the North and east cannot be justified as a development activity.

The remaining forest in the North and East is the umbilical code of the humans to the nature. It was reported that 16 forest areas have not been able to declares as the conservation areas due to the opposition of the said ministry.

We stress the need of the Ministry of Economic Development to make the development more sustainable by preserving every remaining forest lands and respecting to the environmental laws of the country.

Seven Worst Visual Polluters in Sri Lanka

Visual pollution is unnoticed by most people. While cities are subjected to visual pollution more, rural areas have many such instances. We identify seven worst visual polluters in the following list.

No 1: Politicians and their supporters who paint their names and numbers in the scenic rocks and public places are our number one visual polluter in our list.

No 2: Telecommunication agencies and the telecommunication Regulatory Authority who have destroyed scenic mountain tops for erecting ugly towers comes number two in our list.

No 3: Big banners cut-outs of the politicians and Agrochemical companies which have erected across the most scenic areas and paddy fields come number three in our list.

No 4: Electronic sign boards and LED advertisement boards rising in the cities, junctions are our fourth visual polluter. They further risk lives as they distract drivers attention.

No 5: Election posters and tuition posters are the number five in our list. They make public places ugly.

No 6: Neon lights and the LED lights wrapped around the trees in function halls, hotels and restaurants comes in our number six visual polluters.

No 7: Land developers who destroy the trees and the green while subdividing lands comes as the next visual polluter in this list.

The list can be longer. However, so far no visual pollution regulations to control such acts.



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