

The banana 'game'!



The banana fair in progress under a scorching sun



An elderly farmer eagerly waits for a good price

A day at Hatporuwa banana fair

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Walawa region has always been known for its rich fertile, brownish soil. Any cultivation would flourish on the banks of the Walawe river which flows down passing many valleys from Horton Plains to Ambalantota. Mahagama lies close to Suriyawewa, boundary of Hambantota and Moneragala districts and the area is famous for its banana plantations.

Banana cultivations stretch over a vast area as far as the eyes could see. The banana fair in Hatporuwa, perhaps the grandest and biggest of all makes the small town located between Suriyawewa and Embilipitiya quite busy and eye-catching every Saturday noon.

Under a scorching sun I could see bananas being brought in to the site by farmers in their tractors. As the fair commences with the lighting of a fire cracker, farmers wait for merchants who normally come to purchase bananas from distant areas - from Colombo to Akkarapattu.

The transactions are done on the spot. Some farmers seem to be satisfied about the prices quoted by the merchants while some are not too happy. The contented farmers go home with a pouchful of money but some less fortunate return home bare handed with a tractor loaded with unsold bananas!



Bananas being carted to the kottas by porters



Money on the spot



Farmers arrive at the fair site in a tractor full of bananas.



Bananas bought by merchants being loaded to a lorry