

Etisalat salutes Sri Lanka's Brave Hearts.

The brutal civil war which plagued Sri Lanka for 30 years has finally ended, but the healing process still continues, with many bearing irreversible scars which burn as reminders of the past. It is with this fact in mind that Etisalat Lanka has gone beyond the mere commercial aspect to aid soldiers who bore the brunt of the war, while actively fighting for us to have a better life.

The Sri Lanka Seva Vanitha Army Branch (SVAB) under the aegis of the Commander of the Army, Lieutenant General Jagath Jayasuriya USP, ndu, psc has launched a project "Brave Hearts" to build a resort type wellness center "*Abhimansala*" on the banks of the Nuwera Wewa in Anuradhapura to house and provide lifelong care for 52 totally disabled war heroes. In a move to uplift the lively hood of those soldiers, Etisalat Lanka is involved in constructing a cottage at "*Abhimansala*". Etisalat strongly supports, the SVBA's main objective of providing welfare facilities to the next of kin of war heroes who sacrificed their lives for their Nation, war heroes missing in action, and those injured whilst defending their motherland.

Recent statistics show that there are more than 300 totally disabled soldiers with multiple injuries ranging from spinal cord, brain damage and many other disabilities such as amputations, impaired hearing, vision, speech defects, paralysis and so on. Most of these War Heroes are in the prime of their youth, although afflicted with permanent disabilities. Majority of them are wheelchair or bed ridden or have impaired mobility, requiring a variety of assisting devices. Therefore post injury care is vital for their survival. However, most of them face difficulty once they go home, as the infrastructure is inadequate to accommodate their needs. Most importantly, specialized nursing care needed by some, cannot be obtained at domestic level.

Etisalat CEO, Dumindra Ratnayaka said in this regard, "we are acutely aware that post war rehabilitation is a long and effortful process and as a company we want to do anything in our power to assist this recovery. We want to show our appreciation and admiration to our soldiers and recognize the fact that now; it is our turn to help them and our country." Lieutenant General Jagath Jayasuriya added, "This is a very 'special community' in our country that has taken over a magnanimous burden in the name of the country and are now burdened with traumatic experiences.

He further said, "Today the Army is in a period of transition from a 'fighting Army' to a 'Peace time Army'. Along with the Army contribution to national development, it is also the responsibility of the Army to provide the best available care and comfort to all those officers and men who have been injured in battle. We are grateful to Etisalat for their generous sponsorship and acknowledgment of Sri Lanka's genuine Brave Hearts."

