

Decisions taken by the Cabinet of Ministers on 08.01.2024

1. Recommendations made by the Finance Commission to the President for the year 2024

With the aim of achieving a balanced regional development in the country the Financial Commission has been established under Article 154 R of the Constitution to assess the provisions required for the provincial councils, and to make recommendations for providing more meaningful allocations to provincial councils from the National Budget. The Cabinet of Ministers approved the following recommendations presented by the Commission to the Honorable President for the year 2024.

- a. Recommendations regarding assessment of provincial capital and recurrent requirements for the year 2024
- b. Recommendations regarding allocation of Government grants among Provincial Councils
- c. Policy recommendations regarding the allocation of resources in a more meaningful way for provincial councils and the efficient use of those resources

Also, Cabinet approval was given to submit the report with the recommendations of the Financial Commission in relation to the year 2024 to the Parliament as per the provisions of Article 154 R(7) of the Constitution.

2. Anuradhapura Maha Vihara Development Plan

Since Anuradhapura Maha Viharaya is a complex of religious and historical value in Sri Lanka, the need to carry out the exploration and conservation of the Anuradhapura Maha Vihara in a formal and specific time frame has been identified. Accordingly, the Professor Robin Cunningham, a foreign expert with international experience in the field of archeology has submitted a project report based on a notification given by the honorable president to him regarding the implementation of the Mahavihara exploration, excavation and conservation project. The project report has proposed to implement this project within a period of 6 years from 2024 to 2029. Accordingly, the Cabinet of Ministers approved the proposal presented by the Hon. President to carry out the excavation and conservation work of the Mahavihara under the direct supervision of the Department of Archeology and the Central Cultural Fund jointly by the Office of the President and the Ministry of Buddhism, in accordance with the project report.

3. Establishment of a University of Science and Technology

It has been recognized the desirability of establishing a University of Science and Technology with the support of a prestigious university in the United States of America with the aim of preparing the foundation for producing a group of skilled professionals to lead the critical sectors of new scientific discoveries, technological innovation and sustainable development. Such a university will provide the opportunity to utilize modern methodologies, foster global academic

linkages and create an enabling environment for research and development. Accordingly the Cabinet of Ministers approved the proposal presented by the Hon. President to establish the proposed University of Science and Technology as a Public-Private Partnership by selecting one partner university from among several identified universities including UC Berkeley, UC Riverside, UC Davis and University of Michigan in collaboration with that university.

4. Establishment of new investment zones

The need to develop a joint mechanism between the public and private sectors to build an export-oriented economy has been emphasized in the 2022 budget. Accordingly, the appropriateness of developing new investment zones has been identified as follows.

- a. Establishment of new Investment Zones in Northern, Eastern, Northwestern and Southern Provinces.
- b. Establishment of New Investment Zones in Mankulam, Paranthan Chemicals Company Premises and Kankasanthure Cement Corporation Premises
- c. Establishment of new Investment Zones in Iranawila and Trincomalee
- d. Expansion of Bingiriya and Hambantota Investment Zones

The Asian Development Bank has agreed to provide the necessary technical assistance for the establishment of a proposed economic zone. Accordingly, the Cabinet of Ministers approved the proposal presented by the President in his capacity as the Minister of Investment Promotion to develop those investment zones based on an appropriate public-private partnership model

5. Establishment of a Sri Lankan Embassy in Astana, Kazakhstan

It has been recognized that it is desirable to establish a Sri Lankan Embassy in Astana, Kazakhstan. In order to further develop the existing diplomatic relations between Kazakhstan and Sri Lanka. A great opportunity has been created for Sri Lanka to connect with the Central Asian region due to the establishment of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA) in Kazakhstan and Sri Lanka being a member of the conference. As there is a significant increase in tourist arrivals from Kazakhstan to Sri Lanka, the establishment of a Sri Lankan embassy in Astana will help further promote tourism and cultural cooperation between the two countries. As such, the Cabinet of Ministers approved the proposal presented by the Minister of Foreign Affairs to establish the proposed Sri Lankan Embassy in Astana, Kazakhstan.

6. Re-opening of Sri Lanka Missions abroad

The following Sri Lanka Missions are temporarily closed during 2021/2022 period and the need to reopen these missions has been identified.

- I. Sri Lankan Consulate General's Office in Nicosia, Cypress
- II. Sri Lankan Embassy in Baghdad, Iraq
- III. Sri Lankan Consulate General's Office in Frankfurt, Germany

Accordingly the Cabinet of Ministers approved the proposal presented by the Minister of Foreign Affairs to reopen the missions mentioned above.

7. Cooperation Program 2023 to 2025 between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Sri Lanka and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan

Both parties have agreed to sign a cooperation program agreement between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Sri Lanka and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan for the period from 2023 to 2025. The objective of this cooperation program is to strengthen and expand bilateral relations, including political, economic and cultural cooperation between the two countries, as well as focus on mutual issues. Accordingly the Cabinet of Ministers approved the Proposal presented by the Minister of Foreign Affairs to implement the proposed cooperation program between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Sri Lanka and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan.

8. Award of contract for provision of ground operation services for aircraft of Sri Lankan Airlines Limited at Tokyo-Narita Airport, Japan

Bids have been invited under the international bidding process to select a suitable service provider to provide ground operation services for the aircraft of Sri Lankan Airlines Limited at Tokyo-Narita Airport, Japan. Two bids have been submitted accordingly and International Air Cargo Terminal Co. Ltd is the lowest bidder that has responded substantially. Accordingly the proposal presented by the Minister of Ports, Shipping and Aviation to award contract for providing airport ground operation services from 01.08.2024 to 31.07.2027 for the aircraft of Sri Lankan Airlines Limited at Tokyo-Narita Airport, Japan to International Air Cargo Terminal Co. Ltd, the lowest evaluated substantially responsive bidder, as recommended by Standing Cabinet Appointed Procurement Committee, was approved by the Cabinet of Ministers.

09. Renovation of optional roads, by ways, rural roads of 100,000 kilometres.

It has been planned to enhance 1500 kilometres of roads that construction work had been inaugurated under 100,000 kilometre roads programme and suspended constructions, in a way appropriate for safe transportation during the year 2024. The total cost estimated in this connection is rupees 20 billion and is scheduled to be completed within six (06) months in the year 2024. Accordingly, the Cabinet of Ministers approved the proposal submitted by the Minister of Transport and Highways to implement the programme for renovating the selected highways and byways so that they would be appropriate for transportation within the first six months (06) of the year.

10. Orders on poisons, opium and dangerous drugs (disposal of case items) 2023

According to sub section (6) of section 77 a of Poisons Opium and Dangerous Drugs Ordinance the subject Minister of Justice is entrusted with the power to order with the agreement of the Justice Services Commission the methodology to dispose of the case items including a drug, a substance, a good or a structure. The Cabinet of Ministers granted approval for the proposal furnished by the Minister of Justice, Prison Affairs and Constitutional Reforms to furnish the orders on poisons, opium and dangerous drugs (disposal of case items) 2023 which has been published by the extraordinary gazette notification No. 2360/21 of 27.11.2023 ordering the mechanism to dispose drugs, substances, goods or structure according to the legal parameters for concurrence of the Parliament.

11. Project to develop the Torrington Hockey Ground

The construction activities of the artificial hockey ground in Torrington were performed in 2009 and the grass has been destroyed due to expiration and excessive usage of the ground making it difficult to use. The Asian Hockey Association has agreed to award an artificial lawn for the ground free of charge. Accordingly, the Cabinet of Ministers approved the resolution furnished by the Minister of Youth Affairs to accept the required artificial grass for the lawn granted from the Asian Hockey Association and to develop the ground according to international standards.

12. Increase of cost of living allowance paid to the government employees

The Government had planned to increase the cost of living allowance by rupees 10,000/- from January 2024 by the Budget proposals of the year 2024 and to grant it from April 2024. However, owing to the prevailing economic situation, requests from various parties were tabled to grant at least a portion of that allowance during the first months of the year. Accordingly, considering the pressurized economic circumstances existing within the country, the Cabinet of Ministers approved the resolution furnished by the Hon. President to pay a portion of 50% which will be 5000/- from the cost of living allowance that is increased from January 2024 to all the government employees and escalate certain allowances of medical doctors and University lecturers.

In the event of any inconsistency between the Tamil and English translations of this document, the Sinhala text shall prevail.