

Decisions taken by the Cabinet of Ministers on 12.02.2024

01. Commercial plantation management

In the budget speeches for 2023 and 2024, the President has pointed out that a large amount of land owned by government plantation agencies such as the Janatha Estate Development Board and the Sri Lanka State Plantation Corporation has remained without cultivation or productive use for a long time due to various reasons such as legal problems, institutional conflicts, lack of capital etc. It has been recognized that such large scale lands and underutilized lands appropriate to be given on lease basis to selected investors with the potential to grow exportable crops, raise livestock farms for export and produce other exportable goods and services. A plantation reform program has been prepared by the Non-Cabinet Minister of State Plantation Enterprise Reform to effectively utilize the such lands in a way that will bring multiple benefits to the society by involving local entrepreneurs. Accordingly the Cabinet of Ministers approved the Proposal presented by the Hon. President for the implementation of the said project.

02. Establishment of a National Hospital and a Children Hospital in Gampaha Biyagama Area

Due to the high population growth in Gampaha district and the industrialization of the district, the district acts as a major service delivery center and for that reason, the demand for health services is increasing. The need to build a national hospital and a children's hospital has been recognized to meet that demand. Accordingly, a National Hospital and a Children Hospital are planned to be established in that district under the public-private partnership system. Accordingly the Cabinet of Ministers approved the combined proposal presented by the Hon. President and the Minister of Health to implement the proposed project after acquiring two parcels of land of 7 acres and 3 roods located in the village officer's domain in Biyagama North and providing basic infrastructure.

03. Introducing courses on artificial intelligence to the education system

Regarding the introduction of courses on artificial intelligence in the education system, it was decided at the meeting of the Cabinet of Ministers held on 02.10.2023 that it is appropriate to introduce the proposed courses in accordance with the recommendations made by the task force appointed for the formation of a national strategy and plan related to artificial intelligence. As a part of the strategic plan, a pilot project is designed to introduce artificial intelligence courses to general education. As such, the Cabinet of Ministers approved the proposal presented by the Hon.

President in his capacity as the as Minister of Technology and the Minister of Education to implement the said pilot project with the support of Microsoft as follows,

- To revise the international syllabus currently implemented by the Microsoft institute based on the recommendations of the National Institute of Educational and commence the proposed pilot projects from grade 8 in schools where the necessary basic human resources are available.
- Digitization of schools selected for the pilot project under the facilities provided by the Microsoft institute
- Training of 100 Information and Communication Technology subject teachers as trainers by Microsoft Institute

04. Access to the Protocol on the Amendment to the Convention on International Civil Aviation

Sri Lanka has signed the International Civil Aviation Convention in 1948 and accordingly Sri Lanka has become a party to the Convention. The 25th General Assembly meeting held on 10.05.1984 approved the amendment of the Chicago Convention to prevent the use of weapons by States Parties against civil aircraft in flight. The said amendment has been in force since 01.10.1998 and a committee has been appointed to make recommendations regarding Sri Lanka's accession to the protocol related to the said amendment (Article 3 bis) to the Chicago Convention. The committee has recommended that there is no obstacle to accessing the said alliance document as the relevant Article 3 bis is also included in the schedule of the Civil Aviation Act No. 14 of 2010. Accordingly, the Cabinet of Ministers approved the proposal presented by the Minister of Ports, Shipping and Aviation to enter into to the paper of alliance related to the amendment to the Convention on International Civil Aviation signed in Montreal on 10.05.1984.

05. Termination of maintaining the area within the Madupara National Park excluded from conservation by the Department of Forestry as a wildlife reserve

In order to raise the legal status of the Madupara Sanctuary, according to a proposal made by the Strategic Environmental Assessment of the Northern Province to upgrade the sanctuary as a National Park, Madu Road Sanctuary was designated as a National Park on 22.06.2015 by a Gazette Notification, by removing some of the existing settlements in the sanctuary and including the forest parts adjacent to it. It has been decided that the remaining paddy lands cultivated since a long time and the land developed as settlements in the Madupara Reserve should be released from the reserve. Accordingly, steps have been taken to release an area of 56.8 hectares from the reservation status through the gazette notification dated 08.08.2023. Accordingly the Cabinet of Ministers approved the proposal presented by the Minister of Wildlife and Forest Resources Conservation to release the area exempted from conservation by the Wildlife Conservation Department following the method mentioned in the Forest Animals and Flora Protection Ordinance.

06. Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Transport of Russia and the Ministry of Transport and Highways of Sri Lanka on the development of cooperation and retraining of personnel in the field of transport

In the discussions held during the recent official visit of the Minister of Transport and Highways to Russia, the importance of entering into a Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Transport of Russia and the Ministry of Transport and Highways of Sri Lanka has been discussed in order to develop cooperation between the two parties. Accordingly, the Cabinet of Ministers approved the proposal presented by the Minister of Transport and Highways to sign the said agreement between the two parties subject to obtaining the clearance of the Attorney General's Department for the draft Memorandum of Understanding prepared accordingly.

07. Conducting the International Holy Bhagwath Geetha Festival 2024 in Sri Lanka

Annual Bhagwath Geetha festival is conducted by the Kurukashethra Developmet Board in Haryana State in India for paying tribute to the sacred Bhagwath Geetha along with the series of religious activities related to sacred Bhagwath Geetha which is considered to be the most sacred book of Hindu devotees. During the recent years it has been held in overseas countries as well and the International Holy Bhagwath Geetha festival for the year 2024 has been proposed to be held in Sri Lanka. Accordingly, the Cabinet of Ministers has granted approval to the proposal furnished by the Minister of Buddha Sasana, Religious and Cultural Affairs to conduct that festival in Nelum Pokuna premises from 01.03.2024 to 03.03.2024 with the financial sponsorship of Kurukashethra Developmet Board in Haryana State in India.

08. Housing programme for Sri Lankan overseas employees

Sri Lanka Foreign Employment Bureau collaborated with the National Housing Development Authority and the licensed banks has planned to implement a housing programme for overseas employees. It is expected to grant a maximum of rupees 10 million as a loan grant, and contribute a portion of its loan interest amount by Sri Lanka Foreign Employment Bureau. The loan amount obtained under the proposed loan scheme, should be paid by foreign exchange remitted through legitimate channels within the period the loan receiver is engaged in an overseas employment and payments would be made in Sri Lankan rupees once the foreign employment is completed and returned to this country. Accordingly, the Cabinet of Ministers approved the proposal submitted by the Minister of Labour and Foreign Employment to implement the proposed housing programme.

09. Building a Cooperative Trade Centre named 'Cooperative Square'

Having taken the resolution furnished to construct a cooperative trade centre named 'Cooperative Square' on 27.11.2023 at the meeting, the Cabinet of Ministers decided to direct the National Development Committee for its recommendations on the proposed project. Accordingly, the National Development Committee recommended for the implementation of that project. The Cabinet of Ministers granted approval to the resolution furnished by the Minister of Trade, Commerce and Food Security to implement the proposed project as a public private and

cooperative partnership project, identifying an appropriate investor subsequent to calling summoning aspirations without being a burden to the consolidated fund based on those recommendations.

10. Making the ‘Urumaya Programme’ which grant licenses for lands and freehold ownership for government lands for license holders relevant for lands granted by Sri Lanka Mahaveli Authority to the public.

Approval of the Cabinet of Ministers has been granted at their meeting held on 11.12.2023 to implement the ‘Urumaya Programme’ which grant licenses for lands and freehold ownership for government lands. Accordingly, the Cabinet of Ministers approved the proposal submitted by the Minister of Irrigation to implement the ‘Urumaya Programme’ in relevance to the lands provided by Sri Lanka Mahaveli Authority as well, as per the programme implemented by the Ministry of Tourism and Lands at present.

11. Amendment of the Online Security Act.

having passed at the Parliament, the provisions of the online security act are being implemented at present. Since the amendments submitted at the committee sessions in the Parliament with regard to the said draft bill should be made in par with the decision of the Supreme Court, there had been no opportunity to introduce proposed amendments furnished by the eminencies in the field. Therefore, the Cabinet of Ministers granted approval to the resolution furnished by the Minister of Public Security to direct the Legal Draftsmen to prepare a draft bill for amending the online security act based on revisions recognized through further discussions with eminencies in the field who had forwarded with proposals for relevant amendments.

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