

Decisions taken by the Cabinet of Ministers on 19.02.2024

01. Promotion of maritime passenger transport between Sri Lanka and India

It has been recognized that the promotion of maritime passenger transport between Sri Lanka and India has the potential to promote the tourism industry by providing increased access to tourists from both countries, and through improved connections, to encourage cooperation in the fields of cultural exchange, arts and sports. For that, it is essential to introduce a low-cost travel and transportation fee system. Accordingly the Cabinet of Ministers approved the proposal presented by the Minister of Ports, Shipping and Aviation to reduce the deviation tax currently charged to passengers leaving Sri Lanka by passenger vessels and passenger ships to USD 5 and USD20 respectively and grant free baggage allowance up to 60 kg to a passenger traveling by passenger vessels.

02. Allotment of land on long term lease basis for the construction of an monastery for Sri Narayanguru Centenary Celebration

The Sri Narayana Dharma Sangam Colombo Trust has requested for an allotment of land from Nuwara Eliya district to build a monastery with Indian aid for the centenary of Sri Narayan Guru. Accordingly, 06 acres of 2 roods of the land called Rambodawatta belonging to the Land Reform Commission in Kothmale Divisional Secretariat of Nuwara Eliya District has been identified for that purpose. As such, the Cabinet of Ministers approved the proposal presented by the Minister of Tourism and Lands to provide the Sri Narayana Dharma Sangam Colombo Trust with this land on Long Term Lease basis for a period of 30 years.

03. Handling the Sri Lanka's Offshore Wind Potential

Based on the results of a feasibility study on the development of offshore wind recently conducted by World Bank consultants, the North, West and South-East regions of Sri Lanka have been identified as areas with high potential to generate electricity through large-scale offshore wind power plants. Accordingly the Cabinet of Ministers approved the proposal presented by the Minister of Power and Energy to increase the contribution of large-scale renewable energy in the country and to take the necessary steps for the development of Sri Lanka's offshore wind potential in stages through private sector investments by developing economies of scale.

04. Commemorating the IORA Day in 2024 for Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA)

The Cabinet of Ministers was informed by the Minister of Foreign Affairs that actions will be taken to make the preparation of holding the IORA Day in 2024 for Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) in the Gall Face, grounds on 10.03.2024 under the theme of “A Sustainable Indian Ocean for Future Generation”, as planned with the participation of diplomatic missions of the member countries, partner states of discussion as well as a huge number of school students representing all the provinces of the island.

05. The procurement for supply of uniforms for officer in the rank of the Inspector of Police and junior grade officers and provision of shoes for officers in the posts of Police Sergeant / Police Constable.

It has been estimated that 732,000 metres of fabric material and 70,000 pairs of shoes are required in the year 2024 to be distributed as uniform materials respectively for officers in the rank of the Inspector of Police and junior grade officers and provision of shoes for officers in the posts of Police Sergeant / Police Constable in Sri Lanka Police. Therefore, the Cabinet of Ministers granted approval to the resolution furnished by the Minister of Public Security to procure the said stock of fabrics and the pairs of shoes adhering to National Competitive Bid invitation process from the provisions allocated for the year 2024 Sri Lanka Police.

06. English language to be considered for conducting legal proceedings and maintaining records in certain courts.

Particulars in the commerce sphere related to commercial activities are mainly used in the English language and require a considerable cost and time in translating those contents into Sinhala language. Due to that, an extended period to settle commercial disputes take place which leads to disadvantage when obtaining entrepreneurs. This situation also affected the position of Sri Lanka to be in a lower place the Ease of Doing Business ratings which envisage the ability of conducting enterprises in a country. As a remedy to this, it has been recognized as appropriate to issue an order by the subject Minister of Justice with the approval of the Cabinet of Ministers and in par with the provisions of the statute 24 (4) of the Constitution permitting to use English language in relation to all the activities in recognized courts or legal records and proceedings precisely mentioned thereupon. Accordingly, the Cabinet of Ministers approved the proposal submitted by the Minister of Justice, Prison Affairs and Constitutional Reforms to take necessary actions in the regard.

07. Obtaining approval for the Aayurveda Manual

In terms of section 77 of the Aayurveda Act No. 31 of 1961 amended by the Aayurveda (Amended) Act No.19 of 2023, orders should be prescribed the Aayurveda Manual and provide orders. Accordingly, realizing the objectives of the act, the Aayurveda Manual has been drafted as per the provisions of the act for the betterment of the indigenous medicine field to cater the contemporary requirements and also by realizing the sustainable development goals. The Legal Draftsman has confirmed after inspecting that apart from the technical contents other particulars are accurate. Therefore, the Cabinet of Ministers approved the resolution furnished by the Minister of Health to publish the draft Aayurveda Manual.

08. Current situation of the discussions on proposed India - Sri Lanka Economic and Trade Cooperation Agreement (ETCA)

13th round of discussions related to India - Sri Lanka Economic and Trade Cooperation Agreement (ETCA) has been held in New Delhi for 10 days from 08.01.2024. The nine sub – committees responsible for ‘goods trade’, ‘introduction, general provisions and general exceptions’, ‘service trade’, ‘rules of the origin’, ‘customs procedure and easing the trade’, ‘measurements for sanitation and sanitation of vegetation’, ‘technical constraints for trade’, ‘trade accords’ and ‘economic and technological cooperation’ had entered into discussions. The sub – committee on conflict solving and final provisions has scheduled to conduct their discussions at the end of February 2024 in New Delhi. Furthermore, the 14th round of discussions of the proposed cooperation agreement is scheduled to be held on the first week of March 2024. The Cabinet of Ministers took the information into consideration furnished by the Hon. President in regard to the current situation of the proposed India - Sri Lanka Economic and Trade Cooperation Agreement (ETCA)

09. Introduction of an act to establish a public performance categorization board by revising the Public Performance Ordinance No. 7 of 1912.

At present the Public Performance Ordinance No. 7 of 1912 is effective in regard to the public performances and the requirement of a new act has been recognized to introduce appropriate laws to the Sri Lankan society and that totally safeguard the independence of creations that would cater the international trends and standards. In this regard a fundamental draft bill has been prepared to take into consideration for the preparation for the formulation of a new act by a committee appointed with the chairing of Mr. Saman Athaudahetti who was the former Chairman of the Public Performance Board. Accordingly, the Cabinet of Ministers granted approval to the joint proposal furnished by the Hon. President and the Minister of Mass Media to revise the Public Performance Ordinance No. 7 of 1912, and direct the Legal Draftsman to prepare a draft bill including relevant provisions so that a new act named Public Performance Categorization Board can be introduced

10. Drafting the composite act on child rights

Ensuring the protection and the wellbeing of children have become challenging due to various changes occurred within the entire society in the recent times. There are common instances especially on which children are prone to various abuses, engage them in various abusive activities as well as they are deprived of enjoying their rights are reported. Therefore, it has been decided to formulate a composite act that ensures all right declared in the child rights convention in addition to the legal provisions existing for ensuring security and protection of Sri Lankan childhood. Approval of the Cabinet of Ministers has already been granted by their decision captioned 'Next Twenty - Five Years' dated 09.01.2023 to introduce a new act named 'Child Protection Act'. Accordingly, the Cabinet of Ministers granted approval for the resolution furnished by the Hon. President in his capacity as the Minister of Women, Child Affairs and Social Empowerment to direct the Legal Draftsman to prepare the composite draft bill on child rights.

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