

Decisions taken by the Cabinet of Ministers on 29.04.2024

01. Preferential Trade Agreement between Sri Lanka and Indonesia (ISLPTA)

Cabinet approval has been granted on 10.07.2023 to initiate negotiations to enter into a Preferential Trade Agreement with Indonesia. Relevant official discussions were held between the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs and the Deputy Minister of Trade Indonesia on 14.03.2024. The first meeting of the Trade Negotiations Committee was held online on 03.04.2024 and 04.04.2024. The Negotiation Committee has exchanged views on the areas of discussion methodology, relevant data sharing timeline, scope and coverage. The two parties have agreed to hold the second meeting of the negotiation committee on 2024.06.19 and 20 in Colombo. The Cabinet took note of the facts presented by the President regarding the progress achieved so far in relation to the proposed Preferential Trade Agreement.

02. Making the Mirissa marine zone a Blue Flag Coastal Zone and a marine wildlife sanctuary conforming to international standards

In the meeting held on 22.05.2023, the Cabinet of Ministers discussed the proposal regarding the declaration of the Mirissa Marine Zone as a wildlife sanctuary. A ministerial sub-committee headed by the Prime Minister has been appointed to further study the proposal with the participation of all relevant parties and submit recommendations to the Cabinet. The sub-committee has made recommendations aimed at increasing the tourism economy of the southern province by five times by turning the Mirissa maritime zone into a Blue Flag Coastal Zone and a Marine Wildlife Sanctuary conforming to international standards. Accordingly, the Cabinet of Ministers approved the proposal presented by the Prime Minister to implement those recommendations through relevant ministries and institutions

03. Kankasanthuraya Port Renovation Project

The approval of the Cabinet of Ministers has been given on 02.05.2017 for the implementation of the Kankasanthuraya port renovation project under Indian loan funds. Approval for offering Project Management Consultant Services has been given on 18.12.2019. Due to the estimated cost provided by the consulting service agencies being higher than the relevant loan amount, the project has not been able to be implemented as expected. Therefore, further discussions have been held with the Government of India regarding the possibility of completing the project under the Public Private Partnership Method. Considering the importance of the project, the Government of India has agreed to grant the entire estimated cost of the project. Accordingly, the Cabinet of Ministers approved the proposal presented by the Hon. President in his capacity as the Minister of Finance, Economic Stabilization and National Policy to accept the financial grant and to enter into relevant agreements for that purpose.

04. Bilateral Air Services Agreement between Sri Lanka and Kazakhstan

Cabinet Approval has been given on 13.05.2013 to sign an Air Service Agreement between the aeronautical authorities of the two countries for the development of air services between Sri Lanka and Kazakhstan. However, it has not yet been possible to sign the said airline agreement. Under the proposed Air Services Agreement, it is expected to operate 7 flights per week from any point in Sri Lanka to Astana and/or Almaty in Kazakhstan along the specified route. Accordingly the Cabinet of Ministers approved the Proposal presented by the Minister of Ports, Shipping and Aviation to sign the Air Service Agreement agreed upon by both parties.

05. Operation of a gold shop in the Departure/Transit area of Katunayake Bandaranaike International Airport.

The proposal to introduce gold business as a new business opportunity in the departure/transit area of Bandaranaike International Airport, Katunayake has been considered and the proposals in this regard have been submitted by the Airports and Air Services (Sri Lanka (Private)) Company Limited. At present this facility is not available in Bandaranaike International Airport, Katunayake and therefore Airports and Airlines (Sri Lanka (Pvt)) Limited has planned to set up a gold shop in the departure/transit area. As such, the Cabinet of Ministers approved the proposal presented by the Minister of Ports, Shipping and Aviation to invite tenders following the international competitive procurement method to select a suitable operator for the operation of a “Gold Shop” in the departure/transit area of the Katunayake Bandaranaike International Airport, following the international competitive procurement method, to call for tenders.

06. Renovation of Karainagar Boat Yard owned by CEY-NOR Foundation Ltd

CEY-NOR Foundation Ltd. was established in 1967 at Karainagar, Jaffna with the help of a Norwegian non-governmental organization NGU and became a public company in 1990. This foundation was engaged in the production of fiberglass boats and the operation of the Karainagar boat unit has been discontinued since 1990 due to the prevailing conditions in the area. In the year 2016, 350 million rupees have been spent for the renovation of this boat yard. However, due to insufficient funds, the remaining civil works and procurement of machinery have not been completed. The Government of India has agreed to provide a financial grant subject to a maximum of 290 million rupees for the completion of the renovation of the Karainagar Boat Yard belonging to this foundation and for several other works. The approval of the Department of National Planning and the Department of Foreign Resources has been received for this project. The Attorney General's clearance has been received for the Memorandum of Understanding to be signed between the two parties in relation to receiving the proposed financial grant and the approval of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has also been received. As such, the Cabinet of Ministers approved the proposal presented by the Minister of Fisheries to sign the Memorandum of Understanding in relation to obtaining the proposed financial grant.

07. Memorandum of Understanding between Rwanda and Sri Lanka to exempt diplomatic, official or service passport holders from obtaining visas

With the aim of improving bilateral relations between Rwanda and Sri Lanka, approval has been given on 07.05.2019 to sign a memorandum of understanding to exempt the holders of diplomatic, duty or service passports from the two countries from the requirement to obtain visas. However, it has not been possible to sign the MoU till now. Therefore, the Cabinet of Ministers approved the proposal presented by the Minister of Public Security to sign the Memorandum of Understanding between Rwanda and Sri Lanka to exempt citizens holding diplomatic duty or service passports from obtaining visas for a period not exceeding 30 days as agreed between the two parties.

08. Using the resources of the Sri Lanka Forestry Institute, which belongs to the Department of Forestry, to promote forestry education.

It has been recognized that by conducting training programs in addition to the regular in-service training course conducted for Forest Conservation Department officers, for officers of government and non-government organizations using the facilities of the Sri Lanka Forestry Institute, they can develop positive attitude knowledge and skills towards forests. It has been recognized that by conducting training programs for officers of government and non-government organizations using the facilities of the Sri Lanka Forestry Institute in addition to the regular in-service training course conducted for the officers of the Forestry Department, they can develop optimistic attitude, knowledge and skills towards forests. Also, by providing the facilities of the Sri Lanka Forestry Institute to other institutions and the public, the government will be able to get additional income. Accordingly, the Cabinet of Ministers approved the proposal presented by the Minister of Wildlife and Forest Resources Conservation to lend the Nuwara Eliya Sri Lanka Forestry Institute and its Inamaluwa Field Training Center to external parties for conducting short-term training programs.

09. Sustainable development of culture-based freshwater fisheries

The Government of Japan has agreed to provide a grant of US\$ 3 million for the sustainable development of Culture-Based Freshwater Fishery Industry to be implemented by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization to ensure food, nutrition security and improve the livelihoods of rural people. The proposed project is planned to be implemented in Anuradhapura, Batticaloa, Mullaitivu and Monaragala districts. The proposed project is expected to increase freshwater fish production in selected reservoirs and ensure sustainability of freshwater fisheries. Accordingly the Cabinet of Ministers approved the proposal presented by the Minister of Fisheries to exempt the related taxes for the goods and equipment planned to be imported for the implementation of the project.

10. Extension of the project period of the Technology Education Development Programme implemented under the OPEC Fund's provision which is for the International Development.

Although Technology Education Development Programme was to be inaugurated in 2018 and ended in 2022, the project could be completed in the prescribed period owing to the Covid impact and the economic crisis prevailed in the country. Prior to this, the approval of the Cabinet of Ministers had given approval to extend the period of the project until 30.03.2024. Under the project it was planned to construct 36 laboratories as 04 each of the 09 provinces and to renovate / upgrade 15 existing laboratories. At present the physical progress of the project is 65%. Also it has been planned to spend the foreign exchange hoped to be the saved under this project for creating and converting small technology units for the 135 schools where Technology subject stream is implemented and provision of required technical equipment and goods, as well as enhance the capacity development of the teachers. Accordingly, the Cabinet of Ministers granted approval submitted by the Minister of Education to further extend the project period up to 2025.03.30 so that the expectations of that project can be realized.

11. Nominating the CHINA HARBOUR ENGINEERING COMPANY (LANKA) LIMITED as a secondary establishment with strategic importance.

The CHINA HARBOUR ENGINEERING COMPANY (LANKA) LIMITED has been recognized as a secondary entrepreneurship with a strategic importance as an establishment engaged in urban facilities monitoring related businesses to generate employment opportunities, sustainable development and settling residential community. Accordingly, the Cabinet of Ministers approved the proposal submitted by the Hon. President in his capacity as the Minister of Investment Promotion to declare the order for awarding the releases and encouragements proposed by the acts recognized under the schedule II of the Colombo Port City Economic Commission by a gazette notification

12. Amendment of Sri Lanka Telecommunication Regulatory Act No. 25 of 1991

Approval of the Cabinet of Ministers was granted at their meeting held on 01.01.2024 for amending Sri Lanka Telecommunication Regulatory Act No. 25 of 1991. Accordingly, the clearance of the Attorney – General has been received for the draft bill of Sri Lanka Telecommunication Regulatory (Amended) Act which has already been prepared in all three languages by the Legal Draftsman. The Cabinet of of Ministers granted approval to the resolution furnished by the Hon. President in his capacity as the Minister of Technology to publish the said draft bill in the government gazette notification and subsequently present the same in the Parliament for their concurrence.

13. Amendment of the Penal Code and the Criminal Procedure Code for banning of all physical punishments in all the sectors.

Civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of a child have been emphasized by the Child Rights Convention in which Sri Lanka also is a partner. Statute 19 (1) of the Child Rights Convention emphasizes that the Government stakeholders shall take all appropriate legal administrative, and educational measures in order to protect a child under the protection of either parents, legitimate guardians, or another person from causing all types of physical or mental violence, injuries or abuse, discrimination or negligence, or disregard, differently treating or exploitation etc; including sexual exploitation. A recent study conducted in relation to Sri Lankan context by the United Nation's Committee on Child Rights revealed that a large number of children are prone to physical punishments, abuses and violence due to lack of legal provisions prevailing in home, within remedial protection background, within institutions for penalty orders implementing and in schools. In addition to that, a Supreme Court decision relevant to a fundamental rights petition filed by a student experienced hearing discrepancies followed by an assault by a teacher has been held the relevant teacher and the Government responsible for violating the 11th statute of the Constitution. It has been scientifically proven that a child may physically or mentally be impact in the long run by such physical punishments both mentally and physically. Therefore, legal amendments should be introduced with immediate effect covering any act coming under cruel and / or daring physical and / or non – physical punishment category. Accordingly, the Cabinet of Ministers have granted approval to the joint resolution made by the Hon. President along with the Minister of Justice, Prison Affairs and Constitutional Reforms in order to take necessary measures to amend both the Penal Code and the Criminal Procedure Code including provisions for banning of all physical punishments in all the sectors

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