

Decisions taken by the Cabinet of Ministers on 08.04.2024

01. Admissions on fee-paying basis for the degree of Medicine in the General Sir John Kotalawala Defense University

The General Sir John Kotalawala Defense University was made a University by the Sir John Kotelawala Defence Academy (amendment) Act No 27 of 1988. The Faculty of Medicine of this University was established in the year 2011 to train cadet officers as medical professionals as per the service requirements of the armed services and award degrees in Medicine and Surgery. Accordingly, the opportunity for local students to pursue a medical degree at that university is currently available only by joining the armed forces or the police as a cadet officer. Qualified foreign students have the opportunity to study those courses only on the basis of payment. Further expanding that opportunity, from the academic year 2024, qualified local applicants are also planned to be recruited for the medical degree course on the basis of payment. For that, in addition to the “Z” Score followed by the University Grant Commission for the recruitment of students for other national universities in Sri Lanka, criteria with some additional qualifications has been prepared. Accordingly, the Cabinet of Ministers approved the proposal presented by the Hon. President in his capacity as the Minister of Defense to recruit undergraduate candidates to the Faculty of Medicine of General Sir John Kotalawala Defense University to study medicine and art on the basis of payment based on those criteria.

02. Commencement of a Ship Prototype Project at Sri Lanka Coast Guard (SLCG) Advanced Training Centre (ATC), Kirinda

The Coast Guard Department of Sri Lanka has been established by the Department of Coast Guard Act, No. 41 of 2009. The role assigned to that department can be described as ensuring the security of Sri Lanka's coastal waters and deep sea, preventing illegal immigrants from entering the country and illegal emigrants' departure from the country, provide assisting in ensuring the safety of maritime traffic, and protecting the marine environment and performing the measures for the prevention and control of marine disasters. The department works with various international organizations and global security forces to protect the professionalism and legal status of those duties. Accordingly, the United States has agreed to provide a full grant of US\$355,575 (all taxes included) for a ship prototype project under the United States Department of State Export Control and Border Protection to train Sri Lankan Coast Guard officers. Accordingly, the Cabinet of Ministers approved the proposal presented by the Hon. President in his capacity as the Minister of Defense to establish and implement the project in Kirinda Sri Lanka Coast Guard Advanced Training Centre, Kirinda.

03. National Policy on Drinking Water and National Policy on Water Security

The need for a more comprehensive and up-to-date approach has been identified to address the trends and challenges in the drinking water supply service sector. Accordingly, the National Policy on Drinking Water and the National Policy on Water Safety have been formulated to meet the current and future needs by taking the advice of experts and stakeholders in the relevant field as well as public opinion. It is expected to achieve the objectives of ensuring access to safe and quality drinking water for all citizens, promoting sustainable water use and promoting economic growth and prosperity in the water sector. 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 Policies to appropriately integrate and implement the National Policy on Drinking Water and the National Policy on Water Safety with other related policies.

04. Transfer of lands to the Sri Lanka Ports Authority under the provisions of State Land Ordinance

The Cabinet of Ministers has given approval on 12.12.2017 to acquire or purchase 50 acres of land belonging to Sri Lanka Cement Corporation by the Sri Lanka Port Authority on order to develop the port of Kankasanthura. Based on the assessment of the Chief Government Appraiser, Sri Lanka Ports Authority has paid an advance payment of 52 million rupees to the Sri Lanka Cement Corporation for the transfer of the relevant lands to the Sri Lanka Ports Authority. Accordingly the Cabinet of Ministers approved the proposal presented by the Minister of Ports, Shipping and Aviation to take over the identified 23 acres and 12 perches of land by the Sri Lanka Ports Authority, following formal legal procedures under Section 6(1) of the State Land Ordinance as grants of undisturbed possession.

05. Memorandum of Understanding between Sri Lanka Institute of Biotechnology Pvt.Ltd. and Monash University in Australia

It has been proposed to sign a memorandum of understanding between Sri Lanka Institute of Biotechnology Pvt.Ltd. and Monash University in Australia to establish cooperation for research and innovation related activities. The approval of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the clearance of the Department of Attorney General have been received for the proposed draft MoU containing various tasks including tasks such as developing integrated proposals with research and services, innovative technology development and knowledge dissemination, exchanging research materials, exchange of Scholars, Scientists and Students, and conducting collaborative seminars, workshops and research related activities. As such, the Cabinet of Ministers approved the proposal presented by the Minister of Education to sign the Memorandum of Understanding between the two parties accordingly.

06. Establishment of Youth Agripreneurship Villages for the advancement of Agricultural Innovation Program

It is planned to implement the project of establishing youth Agripreneurship Villages to create a youth Agripreneurship community and to introduce agri-innovation to agricultural areas with the aim of attracting the youth community to agriculture and developing their economic status. The Cabinet of Ministers approved the proposal presented by the Minister of Agriculture and Plantation Industries to implement the Agripreneurship villages establishment project by selecting one village in each of the selected Divisional Secretariat Area in 2024, as the 1st phase and to facilitate the farmers to use new technology and smart technology.

07. Establishment of diplomatic relations between Sri Lanka and the Republic of Chad

So far, Sri Lanka has established diplomatic relations with 46 countries on the African continent. The government of Chad has also expressed its desire to establish diplomatic relations with Sri Lanka. As a multilateral partner, the Republic of Chad has supported Sri Lanka in the United Nations and other multilateral conferences. Accordingly, the proposal presented by the Minister of Foreign Affairs to establish diplomatic relations with the Chad Republic, was approved by the Cabinet of Ministers.

08. Presenting of an Order under the Sri Lanka Export Development Act No. 40 of 1979 in parliament for approval

Approval of the Cabinet of Ministers was granted at the meeting held on 29.05.2023, for the re-implementation of Sri Lanka's Tariff Relaxation Program under the Sri Lanka-Singapore Free Trade Agreement. Taking into account how the Cess levy was implemented by 01.05.2018, the program has been divided into 3 categories as "Category 0", "Category 10" and "Category X". An order under the provisions of Sri Lanka Export Development Act No. 40 of 1979 has been published in Extraordinary Gazette Notification dated 04.01.2024 to give effect to the removal of the first annual installment which is 1/5th of the Cess levy concerning 1087 Harmonized System Codes classified under Group "10" and removal of Cess levy applicable to 300 Harmonized System Codes classified under category "0" at once. Accordingly, the Cabinet of Ministers approved the proposal presented by the Hon. President in his capacity as the Minister of Investment Promotions to present this order in parliament for approval.

09. Designation as Secondary businesses of Strategic Importance

The Cabinet of Ministers approved the proposal presented by the Hon. President, in his capacity as the Minister of Investment Promotion, to designate the following companies as Secondary businesses of Strategic Importance and grant exemption or incentives to those companies from the Acts mentioned under Schedule II of Colombo Port City Economic Commission Act, and to publish the orders for the same through gazette notifications.

- PORT CITY BPO (PRIVATE) LIMITED - To carry out business as a service provider of Outsourcing of business processes for the overseas entertainment industry
- IVIVA PTE LTD – For running a business as an Information Technology service provider that creates products and solutions powered by Smart City Information Technology to support the various tasks of global clients in transitioning to a low carbon economy
- ECHELON TRADE (PVT) LTD - Running a trading business in textiles, apparel, luxury watches, gold and gems, electrical appliances and cosmetics across multiple global markets
- 99X TECHNOLOGY AS - To run a service providing business to global independent software businesses for crafting digital solutions for real user issues by production, engineering and innovation as well as website development, and by improving mobile applications.

10. Recruitment of 2,500 English Teachers mentoring in English medium under the ‘English for All’ Programme.

It has been recognized although the approved number of teachers for teaching the ordinary level subjects in English medium are 4,441, there is a necessity of 6,500 teachers for the purpose and in most of the schools teaching in English medium has been extended by planning the required activities in addition to the number of teachers engaged in the service according to a study performed with 765 schools. Accordingly, the Cabinet of Ministers granted approval to the proposal submitted jointly by the Hon. President with the Minister of Education to increase the number of approved teachers teaching English medium subjects up to 6,500 in order to accomplish the teacher requirement by 1,000 within the year 2024 in relation to the 765 schools where subjects are taught in English medium at present and to recruit 2,500 teachers that teach in English medium.

11. Revision of Election Security Deposit

It has been recognized that it is appropriate to update the security deposit limits existing in accordance with the provisions of the President's Election Act, Parliamentary Elections Act and the Provincial Councils Elections Act, timely in the current social, economic and political context. Accordingly the Cabinet of Ministers approved the combined proposal presented by the Hon. President and the Minister of Justice, Prison Affairs and Constitutional Reforms to advise the Legal Draftsman to prepare a bill to amend the relevant security deposits as follows,

- Increasing the security deposit of a candidate for an election from a recognized political party under the Election of the President Act No. 15 of 1981 up to 2.6 million rupees and the security deposit of an independent candidate up to Rs 3.1 million.
- Increasing the security deposit of a candidate from a recognized political party who contesting under the Parliamentary Elections Act No. One of 1981, up to Rs. 11,000/- and security deposit of an independent candidate up to Rs. 16,000/-.
- Increasing the security deposit of a candidate from a recognized political party who contesting under the Provincial Council Elections Act No. 2 of 1988 up to Rs. 6,000/- and security deposit of an independent candidate up to Rs. 11,000/-.

12. Implementation of proposed reforms on state owned banking institutions

Due to the shortcomings existing in the sectors of the entire administration, risk management and supervision etc in state owned banking institutions, those banks had to encounter drastic constrains during the economic crisis existed in the past. Therefore, with the objective of preventing re – occurrence of such constrains, a committee consisted of specialists of International Monetary Fund, World Bank and the Central Bank of Sri Lanka has recognized a number of reformations to be performed in those banks. Those reformations should have to be implemented as a structural requirement included in the comprehensive financial facilities programme provided by the International Monetary Fund as well as the fundamental activities under the development policy monitoring implemented by the World bank. Accordingly, the Cabinet of Ministers affirmed the resolution furnished by the Hon. President in his office as the Minister of Finance, Economic Stabilization and National Policies to implement those reformation proposals.

13. Renovation of motor vehicle workshops of Technological Colleges and Technical Colleges on the assistance of Korean International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) of the Korean Republic

In order to enhance the motor vehicle mechanical courses in the Technical Colleges of Maradana, Kandy, Bandarawela, Kegalle and Sammanthurei under the Department of Technical Education and Training, the Korean International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) has rendered the financial assistance during the period 2013 – 2015 for enhancing 05 motor vehicle workshops. Since those workshops have been utilized for approximately 10 years by now, their equipment has to be repaired, updated and newly supplied. The Korean International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) has agreed to provide financial assistance of USD 75,500 for this work. The Cabinet of Ministers granted approval to the resolution furnished by the Minister of Education to sign the proposed discussion note proposed to be signed between the two parties.

14. Introduction of Indicative Price for selected essential food commodities

It has been recognized that although Sri Lankan Rupee is being over valued against USD and other foreign currency, no deduction of the prices of essential imported retail food commodities is visible in the market. Furthermore, there is a considerable difference between the unloading prices and the retail prices of essential imported food items. Under such circumstances, the Consumer Affairs Authority under the guidance of the Ministry of Trade, Commerce and Food Security has initiated to implement a programme to publish the prices after studying estimated market prices of selected essential commodities by the Authority as declared prices on weekly basis. Through that, the consumer gets the opportunity to purchase the said food items by being more careful about the market prices of those essential commodities. The information about the declared prices in relation to 09 essential food items selected as such was submitted for the attention of the Cabinet of Ministers by the Minister of Trade, Commerce and Food Security.

15. Draft Bill of Sri Lanka Electricity Act

Approval of the Cabinet of Ministers was granted at their meeting held on 20.11.2023 to publish the draft bill of Sri Lanka Electricity Act in the government gazette notification and to table the same in the Parliament for its concurrence. Accordingly, after publishing the draft bill, various opinions and proposals from various stakeholders including the public have submitted so that those opinions and proposals can be reviewed and appropriate provisions can be included in the said draft bill through the revisions to be made further and can envisage the government policy on the reformations of the electricity sector as well. Clearance of the Attorney General has been granted for the draft Electricity Bill prepared again by the Legal Draftsmen including the so identified revisions. Accordingly, the Cabinet of Ministers approved the proposal submitted by the Minister of Electricity and Power to publish the draft bill in the government gazette notification and subsequently submit it to the Parliament for approval.

16. Introduction of Indicative Price for selected essential food commodities

It has been recognized that although Sri Lankan Rupee is being over valued against USD and other foreign currency, no deduction of the prices of essential imported retail food commodities is visible in the market. Furthermore, there is a considerable difference between the unloading prices and the retail prices of essential imported food items. Under such circumstances, the Consumer Affairs Authority under the guidance of the Ministry of Trade, Commerce and Food Security has initiated to implement a programme to publish the prices after studying estimated market prices of selected essential commodities by the Authority as declared prices on weekly basis. Through that, the consumer gets the opportunity to purchase the said food items by being more careful about the market prices of those essential commodities. The information about the declared prices in relation to 09 essential food items selected as such was submitted for the attention of the Cabinet of Ministers by the Minister of Trade, Commerce and Food Security.

17. Memorandum of Understanding between the All Island Shasanarakshaka Mandalaya and Vietnam Buddhist Sangha Sabha

A proposal has been tabled to sign a memorandum of understanding between the All Island Shasanarakshaka Mandalaya of Sri Lanka and Vietnam Buddhist Sangha Sabha in order to further strengthening the cultural and religious relationship between Vietnam and Sri Lanka. The draft of the memorandum of understanding for that has gained the concurrence from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the clearance from the Attorney General's Department. Therefore, the Cabinet of Ministers granted approval to the proposal forwarded by the Minister of Buddhasasana, Religious and Cultural Affairs to sign the said memorandum of understanding.

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