

Decisions taken at the Cabinet Meeting conducted on 22-07-2024

01. Social Protection Policy in Sri Lanka

It shows that unrelated programmes, scheme of proposals, institutions and outputs which are combined to the Social Protection System at present, have been less contributed to the confined efficiency existing in the aforesaid Social Protection System and national development. Accordingly, Ministry of Finance Economic Stabilization and National Policy has identified the necessity of a National Social Protection policy for Sri Lanka. The National Social Protection Policy has been formulated to provide strategical guidance to develop a proper co-ordinated and coherent social protection policy with the participation of all relevant parties. Accordingly, approval has been granted by the Cabinet of Ministers to the proposal presented by the Hon. President in his capacity as Minister of Finance Economic Stabilization and National Policy in order to implement the said policy.

02. Preparation of reports to be submitted to the United Nations Framework Convention on climatic changes

According to the United Nations Framework Convention on climatic changes and Paris agreements, Sri Lanka should prepare national communication reports on climatic changes and submit to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climatic Changes. Accordingly, the first biennial transparency report is due to be submitted on 31-12-2024 and the second transparency report is due to be submitted on 31-12-2026 and Further, the fourth National Communication should be submitted during the year 2027. Ministry of Environment has submitted a project report to the Global Environment Facility in order to obtain the required funds to prepare aforesaid relevant reports and submit it during the period 2024 - 2028 . Global Environment Facility has agreed to grant Us \$ 1.23 Million in order to prepare reports based on the said project report. Cabinet of Ministers has approved the proposal presented by the Hon. President in his capacity as a Minister of Environment to enter into relevant agreements for obtaining the said grant.

03. Transferring of portion of land to the University of Colombo for the requirement of hostel of the Institute of Indigenous Medical Science.

The portion of land in extent of 0.1765 Hectares and the buildings situated therein which is owned to Department of Irrigation was transferred to the Ministry of Higher Education at that time on 50 Years lease basis under the cabinet approval for the hostel requirement of female students studied at the Institute of Indigenous Medical Science. Institute of Indigenous Medical Science had been turned into a faculty of Colombo University by the Extra Ordinary Gazette published on 13-02-2023 and it has been decided to use this land in order to maintain as a hostel of female students. Accordingly, Cabinet of Ministers has approved the proposal presented by the Minister of Education to transfer the portion of land to the University of Colombo enabling to utilize the said land situated at No.330, Dr. N.M. Perera Mawatha, Colombo 08 for the hostel requirement of female students.

04. Advancing the diploma course of the Katunayake Institute of Engineering Technology to the status of degree course

The Katunayake Institute of Technician Training was established in 1985 under the National Apprentice and Industrial Training Authority and it has been established as the Institute of Engineering Technology since 2006. The institute awards the **National Diploma in Engineering Sciences** to the students who

have completed 4 years of period of education. University of Vocational Technology and National Apprentice and Industrial Training Authority have agreed to advance the said **National Diploma in Engineering Sciences** to the status of Engineering Technology Degree. Accordingly, Cabinet of Ministers has approved the proposal presented by the Minister of Education to enter into Memorandum of Understanding between these two institutes to award Engineering Technology Degree.

05. Importation of liquefied latex and rubber sheets under the temporary import and export scheme

There is annual demand of 60,240 of Metric Tons technical specification rubber for solid tire manufacturing factories in Sri Lanka and there is a situation that local manufacturers cannot fulfil the said demand as to the shortage of high quality rubber in the country. Accordingly, Cabinet of Ministers has approved the proposal presented by the Minister of Agriculture and Plantation Industries to grant the permission to import technical specification rubber registered by the Rubber Development Department and approved by the Rubber Research Institute of Sri Lanka for the rubber manufacturing companies for the purpose of export of liquefied latex and rubber sheets prepared from liquefied latex under the Temporary Import Scheme (TIEP).

06. Taking over plots of land located on old canal road of the new hospital road, Thalpathpitiya, Maharagama to the Urban Development Authority

A plot of land in extent of 27.5 Hectares located at the Thalpathpitiya village at the Divisional Secretariat Division of Maharagama was transferred to the Urban Development Authority in 1984. However, plots of land depicting in old canal road, located at New Hospital Road, Thalpathpitiya, Maharagama which was already developed have not been formally transferred to the Urban Development Authority. Accordingly, Cabinet of Ministers has approved the proposal presented by the Minister of Urban Development and Housing to transfer the portion of lands depicting in old canal road to the Urban Development Authority by a free grant without charging any fee.

07. Granting plot of land located at Beira lake, Kurulu island for the development activities to the Sri Jinrathana Bikshu Training School Committee under long term lease basis

The Kurulu Uyana Island in extent of 143 perches located in the southwest Beira lake was transferred to the Urban Development Authority as a part of Colombo City Development Plan under the Beira lake Restoration Project in the year 2000. A request has been made by the Chief Incumbent of the Gangarama Temple to use the said portion of land which is remained as underutilized condition at present, to be developed as a Buddhist secret and tourist attraction place which shows the cultural heritage. Accordingly, Cabinet of Ministers has approved the proposal presented by the Minister of Urban Development and Housing to transfer the said portion of land to the Sri Jinrathana Bikshu Training School Committee under the lease basis for a period of 50 years based on the lease value determined by the Chief Assessor of the Government.

08. Pleading the apology regarding Compulsory Cremation policy enacted in Sri Lanka during the COVID-19 pandemic

As stipulated in the guidelines published by the Ministry of Health on the Clinical Management of COVID-19, cremation was recommended as a methodology, for the disposal of dead bodies of the persons who died due to the COVID-19 virus. Accordingly, 276 dead bodies of Muslim persons who had passed away as to the virus were cremated and in the year 2021 February, the permission was granted to bury the dead bodies with strict restrictions. In July 2021, a study was commenced by the Ministry of Water Supply with the assistance of University of Jayawardenapura to identify the SARS-CoV-2 virus in aquatic environments in Colombo and Kandy including the river water, the water released from the hospitals, other quarantine places and other potential places where the waste water was discharged. It was revealed in this studies that there is no virus in the surface water. A second study was also completed in March 2024

by the china- Sri Lanka joint research and Demonstration Center for water technology under the Ministry of Water Supply and estate Infrastructure Development that investigated the transmission of SARS-CoV-2 virus to water resources including the ground water and it was confirmed that the faeces and the urine are the primary source of the transmission the virus but not with the safe burial. Accordingly, Accordingly, Cabinet of Ministers has approved the joint proposal presented by the Minister of Justice, Prison affairs and Constitution Reforms, Minister of Foreign affairs and Minister of Water Supply and Estate infrastructure Development to plead the apology on behalf of the Government, from all the communities effected as a consequence of compulsory cremation policy enacted in Sri Lanka during the COVID-19 pandemic period.

09. The proposed Act on burial or cremation of dead bodies on religious discretion

As stipulated in the guidelines published by the Ministry of Health on the Clinical Management of COVID-19, cremation was made compulsory in removal of the dead bodies of the persons who died due to the COVID-19 virus. The decision was created the displeasure among the various religious groups human right activists especially Muslim religious persons. The studies made in this respect have been confirmed that the faeces and the urine are the primary source of transmission the virus but not with the safe burial. Therefore, in order to prevent arisen of such condition in future, attention has been drawn to introduce a law, a certain person or relations to be selected the burial or cremation of the dead person at their discretion. Further, it has been seemed that introduction of new laws is appropriate to donate the dead bodies to the Medical Faculty, if necessary. Accordingly, Cabinet of Ministers has approved the joint proposal presented by the Minister of Justice, Prison affairs and Constitution Reforms, Minister of Foreign affairs to instruct legal Draftsman in order to prepare a draft for the introduction of new law.

10. Maintaining the Mahinda Rajapaksha National Tele Cinema park under public- private partnership

It has been decided at the cabinet meeting conducted on 02-05-2023 to obtain the recommendations of the National Agency for Public –Private Partnership to manage the Mahinda Rajapaksha National Tele Cinema park under the public- private partnership. Accordingly, Cabinet of Ministers has approved the proposal presented by the Hon. President in his capacity as a Minister of Finance Economic Stabilization and National Policies to identify suitable investor to manage the Mahinda Rajapaksha National Tele Cinema park under the public- private partnership and to maintain the park and to enter into an lease agreement for the 30 years with the identified investor.

11. Engagement of dry bulk transport vessels belonging to the Ceylon Shipping Corporation for the period of 2024-2027

Bids have been called for the function to lease Mv. Ceylon BreeZe and Mv. Ceylon Princess vessels which are owned to the Ceylon Shipping Corporation on time frame lease basis and commercial management for the period of 2024/2025 and 2026/2027. Two bids have been received for that purpose and the Cabinet of Ministers has approved the proposal presented by the Minister of Ports, Shipping and Aviation to award the contract to the M/S Wallen Shipping (Singapore) Ptc Ltd for 3 years based on the recommendation of the Technical Evaluation Committee and Standing Procurement Committee appointed by the Cabinet of Ministers after appraisal of the said bids.

12. Implementation of special programme to economically empower the women and youth engaged in the handloom industry.

Rs 300 Million of provisions has been allocated by the 2024 budget to the Ministry of Industries to implement special programme for the empowerment of women and youth who engaged in the jobs in the handloom industry. Accordingly, combined project proposal has been prepared in order to resolve the problems encountered by the industrialist such as lack of entrepreneurial skills, lack of environment

friendly and sufficient infrastructure, lack of quality products that fulfil the market demand and insufficient marketing facilities and the recommendations of the Department of National Planning has been received to the said proposal. Accordingly, the Cabinet of Ministers has approved the proposal presented by the Minister of Industries to implement the development programmes which are identified by the said project proposal, by the institutes, the National Enterprise Development Authority, Department of Handloom, Lanka Salu Sala Limited and National Design Center.

13 Protection of Idol house in the tradition of ‘gedige’ of the Gadaladeniya Saddharmathilaka Raja Maha Viharaya

Gadaladeniya Saddharmathilaka Raja Maha Viharaya was built according to the Pallawa architecture during the Gampola period under the initiative of a monk by the name of Dharmakeerthi. It has been proposed to construct a roof for the purpose of protection of Idol house in the tradition of ‘gedige’. Since Department of Archaeology does not have the requisite human resource and the technical equipment, accordingly, the Cabinet of Ministers has approved the proposal presented by the Minister of Buddhasasana, Religious and Cultural Affairs in order to entrust the said function to the Central Engineering Consultancy Bureau, the institute that has the capability and full of human resources.

14. Amendment of Inland Revenue Act No 24 of the 2017 to expedite the tax appeal process

As per the provisions of the Inland Revenue Act, a tax payer who is not satisfied with a decision of Inland Revenue Department, can submit an appeal to the Commissioner General of Inland Revenue. The Commissioner General of Inland Revenue should give his/her decision in respect of the appeal without exceeding 02 years. A tax payer who is not satisfied with the decision of Commissioner General of Inland Revenue furthermore, can forward an appeal to the Tax Appeal Commission to review the said decision as well and the decision of the Tax Appeal Commission should also be given within 270 days from the date receipt of the said appeal. Accordingly, approximately 3 years can be taken for the appeal process and as a consequence, the government has not been able to collect the taxes amounting to 73 Billion Rupees. Taking into consideration these matters, Cabinet of Ministers has approved the proposal presented by the Hon. President in his capacity as a Minister of Finance Economic Stabilization and National Policies to instruct Legal Draftsman to prepare a draft to introduce appropriate amendments to the Inland Revenue Act No 24 of the 2017 to expedite and formalize the tax appeal process.

15. Establishment of regulatory body by the name of ‘Films Sri Lanka’ for the National Film Development Commission

It has been discussed at the cabinet meeting conducted on 29-04 -2024 the proposal submitted to establish ‘National Film Development Commission’ with the objective of setting up a new institutional framework in order to enable to carry out regulatory based activities removing from the business activities conducted by the National Film Corporation at present, and to provide opportunities and facilities to enter the digital platform and thereby to move the local cinema to the international level. It has been decided to discuss in respective of the proposal with all the parties in the film industry and to obtain their ideas as well. Accordingly, it has been decided to replace the National Film Development Commission by the name of ‘Films Sri Lanka’ based on the matters forwarded at the discussion conducted with all the parties in the film industry and to take into account the proposals submitted at the said meeting in preparing the proposed draft. Accordingly, Cabinet of Ministers has approved the proposal presented by the Minister of Mass Media to instruct the Legal draftsman in order to prepare a draft for establishment of ‘Films Sri Lanka’ institute based on the matters forwarded.

16. Amendment of the Act on the Security of Online Methodologies Act No. 9 of 2024.

In per with the decision given by the Supreme Court on the draft bill on the security of online methods, and subsequent to being passed the draft bill in Parliament, the Security of Online Methods Act No. 9 of 2024 is now in operation. Before the bill was passed at the Parliament, the experts in the field have expressed their concerns for amendments of certain sections in the bill, yet there was no possibility to include such amendment proposals in the bill at the committee stage. Therefore, approval of the Cabinet of Ministers was granted at their meeting held on 12.02. 2024 to prepare a draft bill to amend the Security of Online Methods Act No. 9 of 2024 with the said amendments. Accordingly, clearance of the Attorney General has been received to the draft bill prepared by the Legal Draftsman. Whereas the Cabinet of Ministers approved the proposal forwarded by the Minister of State Defence to publish the said draft bill in the government gazette notification and subsequently present the same to the Parliament for its concurrence.

17. National agenda on anti - corruption

With the reign of the present government in July 2022, its pioneer objective has been the enhancement of governing system, eradicating corruption, re – establishing the state finance and sustainability of credits and revival of economy. Accordingly, the foundation for the National Agenda for Anti – Corruption has been prepared across empowering the Anti – Corruption Act No. 9 of 2023 by amalgamating the Anti – Corruption Act (Authority 26), Bribery and Corruption Commission Act No. 19 of 1994 and Assets and Liabilities Statement No. 1 of 1975 to empower the international standards and disciplines such as provisions of the United Nations Convention on Anti – Corruption and standards of the Financial Action Task Force. Furthermore, the activities to prepare the draft bill on properties earned from crimes is on the final stage. Accordingly, in par with the report of the legal, organizational and strategic framework for anti – corruption mentioned in the International Monetary Fund’s governing judgmental evaluation’s technical assistance, the followings have been recognized as main active items of the agenda on the anti - corruption.

- Empowering the Anti – Corruption Act No. 9 of 2023
- Development of a national anti – corruption plan for the period of 2025 – 2029
- Amendment of the National Audit Act No. 19 of 2018
- Establishment of an assets statement and a conflict of interest procedure with productivity and transparency.
- Introduction of new methodologies for acting in relation to receipts earned from crimes and money laundering.
- Strengthening case investigation and case filing activities relevant to corruption.
- Introduction of amendments to the Companies Act No. 07 of 2007 and taking other applicable measures so that the legal framework on meaningful ownership can be strengthened.
- Empowering a state procurement law ensure the transparency of the state procurement.
- Declaring all companies that receive tax relief through the Strategic Development Project Act No. 14 of 2008 and across the Board of Investment.
- Suspension of Strategic Development Projects Act No. 14 of 2008 until a clear and a transparent process for evaluation of investment promotion conditions costing and proposal evaluation is declared.
- Implementation of a reformation policy of entrepreneurship that is under the government.
- Initiation of short term anti – corruption procedures within each revenue departments.
- Establishment of a new management methodology for the Employees Provident Fund.
- Amendment of laws, regulations and procedures applicable to supervision of finance division in the banking sector.

- Empowering the Judiciary Service Commission.
- Strengthening the right to information.

Accordingly, the Cabinet of Ministers granted approval to the resolution forwarded by the Hon. President to pass the anti – corruption agenda as the national agenda for the government on anti – corruption and order all authorities to act according to the said agenda.

18. Draft bill of State Assets Management

Approval has been granted at the meeting of the Cabinet of Ministers held on 17.10.2022 to identify movable or immovable non finance assets that a state institution fully owns, transferred, acquired, divested or borne by or utilized and to prepare a national assets register while updating it from time to time and to introduce a law on state assets management including provisions for confirming the receipts of proper benefits of those assets to the state institutions. Accordingly, clearance of the Attorney General has been granted to the draft prepared by the Legal Draftsman. The Cabinet of Ministers granted approval for the proposal forwarded by the Hon. President in his office as the Minister of Finance, Economic Stabilization and National Policies to publish the said draft bill in the government gazette notification and subsequently submit it to the Parliament for their concurrence.

19. Submission of Import and Export (Control) Regulations No. 09 of 2024 issued under Import and Export (Control) Act No. 1 of 1969 to the concurrence of the Parliament.

The Cabinet of Ministers granted approval for the resolution furnished by the Hon. President in his capacity as the Minister of Finance, Economic Stabilization and National Policies to submit the Import and Export (Control) Regulations No. 09 of 2024 that was published in the gazette notification No. 2390 / 19 dated 28.06.2024 imposed under the Import and Export (Control) Act No. 1 of 1969 for the approval of the Parliament.

20. Submission of the order gazetted under the Colombo Port City Economic Commission No. 11 of 2024 to the Parliament.

As per the decision of the Cabinet of Ministers dated 29.04.2024, China Harbour Engineering Company (Lanka) Limited has been nominated as a secondary enterprise with strategic importance. Accordingly, nominating the said company as a secondary enterprise with strategic importance, an order has been published under section 53 of the Colombo City Economic Commission No. 11 of 2021 across the extraordinary gazette No. 2383 / 34 of 09.05.2024. Therefore, the Cabinet of Ministers granted approval to the proposal furnished by the Hon. President in his capacity as the Minister of Investment Promotion.

21. Establishment of the National Electricity Consultancy Board and the National Grid Operator as per the provisions under Act No. 36 of 2024.

The Sri Lanka Electricity Act No. 36 of 2024 has provided for efficient management of activities in the electricity industry for restructuring of its institutional structure. Renovation Secretariat, National Grid Operator and the National Electricity Consultancy Council have to be established under this. The Reconstruction Secretariat in the electricity sector has been established by now. Accordingly, the Cabinet of Ministers granted approval to establish the National Electricity Consultancy Council as per provisions of the said act and to appoint the Board of Directors for the National Grid Operator.

22. Amendment of National Minimum Wage of Workers Act No. 3 of 2016.

Approval of the Cabinet of Ministers was granted at their meeting held on 25.03.2024 to revise the National Minimum Wage of Workers Act No. 3 of 2016 so that the minimum national wages of private sector employees can be increased up to rupees 17,500/- while the national daily wages can be increased up to rupees 700/-. Accordingly, the clearance of the Attorney General has been granted to the draft bill prepared

by the Legal Draftsman. Therefore, the Cabinet of Ministers granted approval to the proposal furnished by the Minister of Labour and Foreign Employment to publish the said draft bill in the government gazette notification and subsequently, submit the same to the Parliament for its concurrence.

23. Relief to those who pawned gold jewellery in banks.

The immense economic crisis experienced within the country during the past affected negatively every sector in the economy both directly and indirectly and as a result of the crisis, pawning gold jewellery took place accelerated. The arrears of pawn advances of rupees 210 billion in the year 2019 increased up to rupees 571 billion by the month of March 2024 making it a growth of 172%. Considering the said circumstances, the licensed banks have recognized the necessity of granting relief to low income generating community who has obtained pawn advances from them. Accordingly, the Cabinet of Ministers granted approval to the resolution furnished by the Hon. President in his office as the Minister of Finance, Economic Rehabilitation and National Policies to implement an appropriate programme to grant an interest relief by the General Treasury subject to a maximum of an annual 10% for pawn advance that do not exceed rupees 100,000/- that has been obtained from the licensed banks on or before 30th June 2024 on individual basis.

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