



Decisions taken by the Cabinet of Ministers on 11.12.2023

1. Delegation of powers to the District Secretaries to perform the role of the National Disaster Relief Services Center more effectively and efficiently.

The National Disaster Management Center was established in 1996 to plan and implement relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction activities under the then Ministry of Social Services and Social Welfare. The institution has been named as the National Disaster Relief Services Center since 01.01.2007 and has been functioning till now as a government institution. The proposal presented by the President in his capacity as the Minister of defense to delegate the necessary powers to the District Secretaries/Government Agents to perform the role of the institution more effectively and efficiently was approved by the Cabinet of Ministers.

2. Entering in to an Agreement between the Republic of Korea and Sri Lanka on Mutual Legal Cooperation in Criminal Matters

It has been proposed to sign an agreement between the Republic of Korea and Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka on mutual legal cooperation in criminal matters. Accordingly, a delegation consisting of senior officials of the Ministry of Justice, Prison Affairs and Constitutional Reforms, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Attorney General's Department and a delegation of relevant institutions of the Republic of Korea have drafted the relevant agreement. It is expected to improve the effectiveness of crime prevention, investigation, filing of complaints and to improve the effectiveness of crime prevention in both states. Accordingly the Cabinet of Ministers approved the proposal presented by the Minister of Justice, Prison Affairs and Constitutional Reforms to sign the said agreement between the two parties and then ratify it by the diplomatic missions of the two countries.

3. Signing a Memorandum of Understanding for the implementation of the Community Based Tourism Development Project focusing on the Central, North and Eastern Provinces

The Cabinet approval has been granted on 09.01.2023 to enter into an Memorandum Of Understanding between the Korean Tourism Organization and the Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority for the implementation of a pilot project related to the implementation of a community-based tourism development project, focusing on the Central, Northern and Eastern provinces of Sri Lanka under a grant of 2.172 billion Korean Won. The implementation of the full project was planned based on the success of the pilot project. Meanwhile, representatives of the Korean Tourism Organization have visited the respective provinces. After that visit, instead of implementing a pilot project, they agreed to start the entire planned project at once. Accordingly, the Cabinet of Ministers focused its attention on the measures taken to reach a revised agreement between the two parties in order to implement the project and agreed to proceed accordingly.

4. Establishment of Inter-Ministerial Standing Committee on Human Rights

It has been recognized the need of appointing an Inter-Ministerial Standing Committee on Human Rights to act as a stable national framework for an effective domestic process of follow-up and reporting on Human Rights and Reconciliation in Sri Lanka. Accordingly, the Cabinet of Ministers approved the proposal presented by the Minister of Foreign Affairs to establish a Inter-Ministerial Standing Committee on Human Rights with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as the coordinating / lead agency.

5. Establishing a mechanism for expeditious decision-making for the implementation of renewable energy projects

In order to meet the Nationally Determined Contribution targets by 2030, the need to accelerate the implementation of renewable energy projects has been identified. The Cabinet of Ministers decided on 20.11.2023 that a new system should be introduced for the speedy implementation of renewable energy projects, taking into account the time it takes to implement such projects following the existing methods and the difficulties that interested investors will have to face while working according to those methods. Accordingly, the Cabinet of Ministers approved the proposal presented by the Minister of Power and Energy to appoint a combined standing committee representing the following institutions to take decisions regarding renewable energy projects and monitor whether the relevant institutions implement those decisions efficiently and promptly

- **Presidential Secretariat (Chairman of the Committee)**
- **Prime Minister's Office**
- **Ministry of Finance, Economic Stabilization and National Policies**
- **Ministry of Investment Promotions**
- **Ministry of Wildlife and Forest Resources Conservation**
- **Ministry of Environment**
- **Ministry of Tourism and Lands**
- **Ministry of Industries**
- **Ministry of Power and Energy**
- **Ministry of Irrigation**
- **Ministry of Water Supply and Estate Infrastructure Development**
- **Sri Lanka Sustainable Energy Authority**
- **Ceylon Electricity Board**

6. Appointing an Authorized Agent to submit visa applications for foreigners visiting Sri Lanka through the online system

In the meeting held on 11.09.2023, the Cabinet of Ministers decided to appoint an evaluation committee to evaluate the proposal submitted by GBS Technology Services & IVS Global – FZCO and VFS VF Worldwide Holdings Ltd to act as an authorized agent for the online submission of visa applications for foreigners visiting Sri Lanka. The evaluation committee appointed accordingly has submitted its report. As such the Cabinet of Ministers approved the proposal presented by the Minister of Public Security to perform according to the recommendations of that report and to sign the relevant agreement which has been drafted according to the observations made by the Attorney General.

7. Acquisition of a portion of land by the Sri Lanka Police for the establishment of Rangala Police Station

The Rangala police station is currently functioning in a building belonging to Gatagahawela plantation company on a rental basis. Due to insufficient space in the building, it has become difficult for the officers to perform their duties properly. Therefore, the Cabinet of Ministers approved the proposal presented by the Minister of Public Security to acquire a 2 acre portion of land from the Duckwari Estate belonging to the Udupussellawa Plantation Company to the Sri Lanka Police for the establishment of the Rangala Police Station.

8. Awarding the contract for the design and construction of the Ratmalana Railway Diesel Power Set Factory under the Railway Efficiency Improvement Project.

International bids have been invited for awarding the contract for the design and construction of the Ratmalana Railway Diesel Power Set Factory under the Railway Efficiency Improvement Project which is being implemented under Asian Development Bank funds. Out of 09 bids submitted for this, 02 bids have been rejected. The Cabinet Appointed Standing Procurement Committee has submitted its recommendation after evaluating the remaining 7 bids. Accordingly the Cabinet of Ministers approved the proposal presented by the Minister of Transport and Highways to award the said contract to China Civil Engineering Construction Company who is the lowest responsive bidder in accordance with the recommendation of the Cabinet Appointed Standing Procurement Committee.

9. Procurement for purchase of oil and lubricants for Sri Lanka Transport Board

National Competitive Bids have been invited for purchase of Oil and Lubricants for Sri Lanka Transport Board. The Cabinet Appointed Standing Procurement Committee has recommended purchase of relevant oil and lubricants from Lanka IOC and from Chevron Lubricants Lanka PLC based on each item. As such the Cabinet of Ministers approved the proposal presented by the Minister of Transport and Highways to award the respective contracts to the recommended companies.

10. Conducting an investigation on Killing Mr. Edward Henry Pedris 108 years ago by a decision of the colonial court-martial

Mr. Edward Henry Pedris, who was 27 years of age at the time, was brought before a military court and convicted of treason by the colonial administration of Sri Lanka accusing him of rioting and treason against the government, and on 07.07.1915 he was sentenced to death ignoring all appeals. The body of the late Mr. Henry Pedris has been cremated at an undisclosed location following the procedure prescribed for the cremation of a convicted criminal under martial law. It was later revealed that he was killed as a result of a plan carried out by the senior officials who ruled the country at that time. As such the Cabinet of Ministers approved the proposal presented by the President to appoint a three-member committee chaired by Mr. Anil Gunarathna, retired Supreme Court Judge, to reveal the information about this, study the relevant matters and submit a report with recommendations to the Cabinet of Ministers in order to bring justice to him.

11. Amendment of Schedule VIII to Fauna-and-Flora-Protection-Ordinance-No. 2 of 1937

According to the plant classification system under the schedule VIII of Fauna-and-Flora-Protection-Ordinance-No. 2 of 1937 as last amended by Fauna-and-Flora-Protection (Amendment) Act No. 7 of 2022, more than 680 plant species belonging to 121 genus have been declared as protected plants. However, the need to revise the said schedule to suit the present needs has been identified. As such the Cabinet of Ministers approved the Proposal presented by the Minister of Wildlife and Forest Resources Conservation to appoint a committee comprising experts in the fields of Botanical Classification & Nomenclature, Ecology, Wildlife Conservation and Human Botany and to revise the Schedule VIII to Fauna-and-Flora-Protection-Ordinance-No. 2 of 1937 as per the recommendation of the committee.

12. Amendments to Partition Law

Approval has been granted by the Cabinet of Ministers at their meeting held on 25.09.2023 to introduce appropriate revisions to partition law with a view to completing partition cases in an accelerated manner. Accordingly, the clearance of the Attorney General has been granted to the draft bill prepared by the Legal Draftsman. Therefore, the Cabinet of Ministers approved the resolution furnished by the Minister of Justice, Prison Activities and Constitutional Reforms to publish the said draft bill in the government gazette notification and thereby submit the same to the Parliament for its concurrence.

13. Introduction of legal provisions to retain under house arrest as a remedy to remanding.

The congestion in the prisons has been identified as a long - lasting issue in the prisons in Sri Lanka. A committee chaired by a Supreme Court judge has been appointed to furnish appropriate recommendations to introduce legal provisions to keep the suspects and offenders of cases under house arrest instead of them being imprisoned / remanded as a remedy to the issue. The Cabinet of Ministers approved the resolution furnished by the Minister of Justice, Prison Activities and Constitutional Reforms to instruct the Legal Draftsman to prepare a draft bill based on the report furnished by the said officers' committee.

14. Submission of the term published in the gazette notification under the Special Commodity Act No. 48 of 2007 for the concurrence of the Parliament.

Approval of the Cabinet of Ministers has been granted at their meeting held on 30.10.2023 for escalating the special commodities tax of 25 cents per kilogram imposed at the import of sugar up to rupees 50/-. Accordingly, the Cabinet of Ministers granted approval to the resolution submitted by the Hon. President in his capacity as the Minister of Finance, Economic Stabilization and National Policies to forward the term imposed by the extraordinary gazette notification No. 2356/20 dated 01.11.2023 under the provisions of section 2 of the Special Commodity Act No. 48 of 2007 to the Parliament for its concurrence.

15. “Urumaya Programme” that transfer the sole rights of state lands to permit lands and grant holders.

The public including farmer community who has been granted with land permits and grants under the Lands Development Ordinance has confronted with various difficulties when utilizing the granted lands for human and development requirements due to non – availability of sole rights to the lands enjoyed or developed by them. Therefore, in order to minimize the issues, the Hon. President proposed at his budget speech 2024 to take necessary precautions within the existing legal framework to grant the sole rights to the public including the farmer community and to initiate and implement a programme named “Urumaya Programme” at the beginning of the year 2024 to enable completion of the said programme within couple of years of its inauguration. The programme is planned to be implemented under three stages and is expected to transfer the sole rights of residential and farmer lands to two million families. Accordingly, the Cabinet of Ministers granted approval to the proposal forwarded by the Minister of Tourism and Lands to issue a grant with sole ownership under section 2 of the State Lands Ordinance in relation to the plots of lands to which permits and grants have been issued under the Land Development Ordinance following the relevant steps.

16. Construction of hybrid renewable energy systems in small islets of Jaffna.

The Government of India has given its consent to supply the Government of Sri Lanka with a sector grant of United States Dollars 11 million for supplying electricity to residents of Delft, Nainathivu and Analathivu islets of the Jaffna peninsula. Accordingly, bids have only been called from Indian contractors to implement that project as per the conditions of the memorandum of understanding entered into. The Cabinet of Ministers approved the proposal submitted by the Minister of Electricity and Power to grant the contract to U – Solar Clean Energy Solutions (Pvt.) Ltd. based on recommendations furnished by the standing procurement committee appointed by the Cabinet of Ministers after the evaluation of the proposal furnished in relation to that.

17. The solar power project of 700 megawatts that is proposed to be installed on the surface of Poonakari reservoir.

The Cabinet of Ministers granted approval on 11.09.2023 at their meeting to accept the proposal furnished by United Solar Energy Company as a policy for the development of a solar power station of 700 megawatts with 100% battery power storage system including necessary transmission lines from the

Poonakari reservoir to New Killinochchi Grid Sub Station, to evaluate the project proposal and to appoint a negotiation committee appointed by the Cabinet of Ministers to submit recommendations to the Cabinet of Ministers with a view to decide the procurement charges of electricity power. Accordingly, the Cabinet of Ministers granted approval to the proposal forwarded by the Minister of Electricity and Power to implement the proposed project with United Solar Energy Company based on the recommendations furnished by the negotiation committee and sign an agreement to procure electricity.

18. Amendments for value - added taxes No. 14 of 2002.

Approval of the Cabinet of Ministers was given at the meeting held on 30.10.2023 to amend the value added tax act No. 14 of 2002 imposing provisions to decline the limit of registration for value - added taxes with effect from 01.01.2024 to the total value of supplies that tax can be charged from rupees 80 million to rupees 60 million from the total value of supplies that taxes can be recovered per year, and to escalate the value - added tax rate from 15% to 18%. The bill has been drafted by the Legal Draftsman adding applicable revisions and the clearance of the Attorney General has been granted to that. Accordingly, approval of the Cabinet of Ministers was granted to the resolution submitted by the Hon. President in his capacity as the Minister of Finance, Economic Stabilization and National Policies to publish the draft bill in the government gazette notification and subsequently furnish the same to the Parliament for its concurrence.

19. Awarding the contract of supplying fuel for aircraft of Sri Lankan Airways Limited at the Dammami airport.

The contract of supplying fuel for aircrafts of Sri Lankan Airways Limited at the Dammami airport is to be ended from 31.12.2023. Quotations from the only aircraft fuel supplier available there Modern Consortium for Refuelling Aircraft Co. Ltd. (MCRA) have been called. Accordingly, the Cabinet of Ministers granted approval to the proposal submitted by the Minister of Ports, Shipping and Aviation Services to award the said contract as a direct contract as per the recommendation of the Standing Procurement Committee appointed by the Cabinet of Ministers.

20. Awarding the contract of supplying fuel for aircraft of Sri Lankan Airways Limited at 09 airports.

The contracts of supplying fuel for aircraft of Sri Lankan Airways Limited at the airports of Bangkok, Beijing, Dubai, Hyderabad, Karachi, Male and Riyadh is to be ended on 29.02.2024 while at the airports of Kuala Lumpur and Jakarta will be ended on 31.03.2024. International competitive bids have been called to supply fuel at these airports. Bids have been furnished by 11 aircraft fuel supplying companies while one (01) bid to Karachi airport and two (02) or more bids to other eight (08) airports have been received. Accordingly, the Cabinet of Ministers granted approval to the proposal submitted by the Minister of Ports, Shipping and Aviation Services to award the said contracts to the bidders who substantially responded and submitted minimum quotations as per the recommendations of the Standing Procurement Committee appointed by the Cabinet of Ministers.

21. Issuance of a new rule under section 22 of Foreign Exchange Act No. 12 of 2017.

Approval of the Cabinet of Ministers has been granted to issue rules under 22 of Foreign Exchange Act No. 12 of 2017 to enable suspensions / restrictions of direct remittances applicable to capital transactions and certain current transactions to be implemented from the month of April

2020. Subsequently, measures were taken to extend the valid period of such rules several times and, the valid period of the current rule expires on 27.12.2023. the approval of the Cabinet of Ministers was granted to the resolution submitted by the Hon. President in his capacity as the Minister of Finance, Economic Stabilization and National Policies to overrule the clause of suspension of investing shares of employees in stock schemes and employees preference schemes across forward investment accounts sustaining the suspensions / restrictions mentioned in the current rule and issue a new rule for another 06 months which will be effective from 28.12.2023 as well as to submit the so issued rule to the Parliament for its concurrence.

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