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அரசாங்க தகவல் திணைக்களம்
Department of Government Information

Decisions taken at the meeting of the Cabinet of Ministers on 15.03.2021

01. Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Education in the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka and the Higher Education Commission of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan on Collaboration in the Field of Higher Education.

It is proposed to sign a Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Education in the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka and the Higher Education Commission of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan to implement an educational and scientific knowledge exchange scholarship program in the field of higher education within a period of five years to strengthen mutual cooperation and expand educational opportunities in the fields of education in the two countries. The Government of Pakistan has agreed to provide 1000 scholarships during the relevant period under this Memorandum of Understanding. This includes 800 full scholarships and 200 Semi-Scholarships for Free first degree course. It is also expected to exchange 50 Sri Lanka / Pakistan University faculty members between universities in the two countries for specific periods of time for research seminars and other academic activities. The proposal presented by the Minister of Education to sign the relevant Memorandum of Understanding accordingly, was approved by the Cabinet of Ministers.

02. Obtaining the support of Television Services to Continue the Learning and Teaching Process in the Education System during Covid 19 Outbreak

When schools were closed due to the epidemic in March 2020, TV program "Gurugedara" designed by the National Institute of Education was telecasted by the Rupawahini Corporation's "Channel Eye" and "Nethra" channels to continue educational activities of the students those who are appearing for the Grade 5 Scholarship, GCE (O/ L/) and GCE (A/L) Examinations. With the aim of preventing the disruption of students' education due to the delay in the commencement of 3rd school term 2020, the telecasting of Sinhala and Tamil medium educational programs for grades 3 to 13 launched as the 2nd phase of the Gurugedara program from November 16, 2020. These programs are telecast in conjunction with Channel "Eye" and "Nethra" channel. Accordingly the Cabinet of Ministers approved the proposal presented by Hon, Minister of Education to continuously telecast the Rupawahini Program "Gurugedara".

03. Acquisition of the land "Anderson Golf Links Field" where Shalika Stadium and Sports Complex are located by the Sri Lanka Transport Board through a free grant

The Shalika Stadium and Sports Complex are located in a land called "Anderson Golf Links Field" which covers an area of 3.4125 hectares and the land has been in the custody of the Ceylon Transport Board since 1966. The cabinet of Ministers agreed to approve the combined proposal presented by Hon. Minister of Transport to transfer the land to the Ceylon Transport Board through a grant in accordance with the provisions of the Land Ordinance without the right to sell the land to another party and subject to recovery of its undeveloped value to the Government.

04. Programme to initiate Home - shop comprised of both a house and a shop in one household in every Grama Niladhari division targeting young women entrepreneurs selected from Samurdhi families.

The Ministry of Highways has planned to implement a Home – shop in every Grama Niladhari division in association with other relevant line ministries targeting 25,000 young women entrepreneurs selected from Samurdhi families with a view to strengthen the food distribution network. National level guidance for the project will be rendered by the task force for the economic revival and eradication of poverty while monitoring the project will be carried out by the State Ministry of Samurdhi, House Economic, Micro – Finance, Self - Employments and Entrepreneurship Development. This programme is planned to be implemented by the 100,000 kilo meters highways development pogramme covering the entire island. The proposed houses and shops will be constructed adjoining the roads those are proposed to be constructed under 100,000 kilo meter of roads development project whereas, those Home – Shops are to be constructed in the sizes of 200, 300, 400 and 500 square feet. Accordingly, the Cabinet of Ministers approved the proposal submitted by the Minister of Highways for the implementation of the said programme.

05. Obtaining a goods transportation aircraft for Sri Lankan Aviation Company Limited (SLA) on lease.

The fleet of Sri Lankan Aviation Company Limited is comprised of a large number of economical narrow body aircrafts. As a result of that, more attention has been paid on the passenger air routes network in the recent years. This has led to underutilization of aero goods transportation potential due to lack of suitable air crafts that cater the goods transportation facility. With the outbreak of COVID – 19 pandemic most of the air craft companies have paid attention on aero goods transportation since passenger transportation became limited. Sri Lankan Airlines currently operates freight operations to

26 destinations. Considering the current market changes, it has become a fine opportunity for the main aeronautical companies to enter into goods transportation market via main air routes seeking the goods transportation market share. Therefore, paying attention on the potential for air goods transportation, it has been planned to change the available Sri Lankan company structure strategically. Accordingly, the Cabinet of Ministers granted approval to the resolution forwarded by the Minister of Tourism for obtaining an air craft for goods transportation on lease to Sri Lankan Aviation Company Limited subject to following the international competitive procurement methodology.

06. Imposing a Thripitaka (Three Doctrines) Conservation Act.

This country has been recognized as the centre for Buddhism whereas it is a responsibility of the Government to safeguard the 'Buddha Sasana' and nurture it by giving the priority to Buddhism. Commemorating the 2500 year Sri Sambuddhathwa Jayanthi (Buddhist Anniversary) in the year 1956, the Thripitaka has been translated to Sinhala language and been printed thereby. Thripitaka has been declared as a national heritage by the gazette notification dated 07th February 2019 with the objective of securing the Thripitaka while it has been prohibited for conservation, providing erroneous definitions or translations without the permission of the Government. The Cabinet of Ministers have given their consent to the resolution furnished by the Hon. Prime Minister as the Minister of Buddha Sasana, Religious and Cultural Affairs for passing a 'Thripitaka Conservation Act' in the Parliament for the security of the Thripitaka for the sake of the future generations and thereby instruct the Legal Draftsman to prepare the draft act / bill in this connection.

07. Implementing the new tax proposals.

A Bill has been drafted by the legal draftsman to amend the Inland Revenue Act, No.24 of 2017 and the Value Added Tax Act, No.14 of 2002 in order to implement tax reforms adduced by the "Economic Revival Origins" presented to introduce a simple, transparent and an effective tax system as pledged by His Excellency President to the people and the tax revisions and policy decisions relevant to the budget proposals submitted by the 2021 budget. Clearance of the Attorney General has been received for the abovementioned acts and the Cabinet of Ministers approved the proposal tabled by Hon. Prime Minister as the Minister of Finance to publish this bill on the gazette and subsequently submit to the parliament.

08. Procuring construction machineries, equipment and goods transporting vehicles and supply them to the government institutions.

The government has planned to implement many development projects in Highway, Irrigation, Building and other fields. However, it has been observed that implementing the said development projects as expected will be difficult due to consider the volume of contractors in the construction industry and the local construction industry. Under that situation, a number of important projects identified are expected to be handed over to the government institutions engaged in construction works for implementation. Accordingly, it has been planned to increase the capacity of the said institutions engaged in the construction work by procuring and supplying earthmoving and construction machineries, road construction and building construction machineries required for the implementation of such projects, default building and goods transporting service providing and maintenance vehicles by the government. The Cabinet of Ministers granted approval for the proposal tabled by the minister of Highways to purchase the said machineries by following the relevant procurement process under the Supplier's Credit Facility scheme awarded by such equipment manufactures in collaboration with local agents.

09. Supplying adequate stocks of rice to the market.

The Cabinet of Ministers noted the lack of adequate stocks of rice in the market at present under the controlled price and discussed possible alternatives. Accordingly, the Cabinet of Ministers decided to first convert the stocks of paddy purchased from farmers by the Paddy Marketing Board into rice and distribute them continuously through the branch network of Sathosa and to consider alternative measures to be taken further considering the progress of the programme.