



04.06.2020

Director News  
News Editor

### Press Briefing on Cabinet Decisions

Press Briefing on decisions taken by the cabinet of ministers on 03.06.2020 was held at the Department of Government Information today (June 04, 2020). Cabinet Spokesmen Dr. Bandula Gunawardena, Minister of Higher Education, Technology, Innovations and Information & Mass Media and Mr. Ramesh Pathirana, Minister of Plantation Industries, and Export Agriculture participated the press briefing. The following is a summary of the facts stated there.

#### • **Economic Revival Assistance**

In accordance with the proposal presented by H.E. the president Gotabaya Rajapaksha

1. To increase the refinance facility of the Central Bank of Sri Lanka from Rs50 billion to Rs. 150 billion in order to address the financial restructuring requirement of small and medium scale entrepreneurs.
2. To exempt penalties of all income tax unpaid due to the Covid-19 epidemic, Accordingly, late payment charges will not be imposed for the payments made up to June 30, 2020. From July 2020 onwards, late payments will be fined.
3. Considering the economic revival priorities in the post-Covid 19 situation, as there are No large scale hydroelectric power plants have been added to the national electricity grid during the last 5 years power outages likely to occur in the years 2020-2021, it was decided to order the Chairman of SLEB to enter into agreements to establish a 300 MW power station in Puttalam.
4. Initiate projects of Renewable Energy with priority for public places, under India's USD 100 loan scheme

#### • **Payment of bills not settled by the previous government**

The value of unresolved bills payable for the services, supplies and contracts received by the previous government was Rs. 240.7 million. Hon. Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksha in his capacity as the Minister of Finance informed the Cabinet that measures have already been taken to pay Rs. 196.6 billion. Rs.44 billion is still to be paid and these payments are being made gradually even under difficult financial circumstances.

- **Expansion of National University System**

In accordance with the proposals presented by Hon. Bandula Gunawardena, Minister of Higher Education,

The national university system, particularly the technical universities, will be expanded by the increased loan amount provided by the Asian Development Bank's Science Technology and Human Resources Project.

Under this Government, it is planned to increase the number of students admitted to Universities from 30,000 to 60000 and to establish one National University in each District.

It is expected to build 10 universities by increasing the current Rs.165 million loan amount of Asian Development Bank by Rs. 50 million. Accordingly, New National Universities will be built in Kaluthara, Nuwara Eliya, Hambanthota, Mathara and Galle Districts this year.

The University of Sri Jayawardhanapura will be developed as an International Research University. It is expected to establish an Allergy, Immune and Surgical Biology Unit and a modern investigation unit for non-communicable diseases and allergies. Under the program, Rs. 400 million will be allocated for the purchase of respective equipment. The University of Sri Jayewardenepura is already in the process of exchanging students and professors with USA, UK and Sweden. Research programs with foreign experts and scholars will be expanded in the future.

- **Enhancing Shrimp Farming under the Aquaculture Development Activities**

In accordance with the proposal presented by Hon. Daglous Devananda, Minister of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources it was decided to provide special breed prawn variety to farms.

This prawn variety will be bred at breeding centers in the North Western Province with the assistance of NARA and expected to be distributed to shrimp farms.

- **Construction of bridges in Hambanthota**

In accordance with the proposal presented by Hon. Prime Minister in his capacity as the Minister of Road Development, it was decide to restart the constructions of 18 bridges in the Hambanthota District, which have been commenced but have been stopped.

Approval was granted to transfer these construction works from National Road Development Authority to the Road Development Authority. The Southern Province Road Development Authority will supervise the activities.

- **Providing tea plants free of charge to tea smallholders whose plants were destroyed due to the recent drought.**

The cabinet of Ministers granted policy approval for the proposal presented by Hon. Ramesh Pathirana, Minister of Plantation Industries and Export Agriculture, to provide relief to tea smallholders for tea plants destroyed by the recent drought.

### **Other matters discussed in the Cabinet**

- **Providing relief to the people who have been affected by the collapse of financial institutions**

It was discussed that,

Hon. Prime Minister has conducted a discussion with the officers including Governor of the Central Bank. Special attention was drawn to prejudice that depositors get from the collapse and closure of financial institutions. In accordance with the discussions made, actions should be taken by the Governor of the Central Bank of Sri Lanka for the credibility to financial institutions and to ensure the safety of the depositors.

When Considering the situation of The Finance Company, the Central Bank of Sri Lanka will continue to provide relief to the depositors of the company until the liquidation.

- **Establishment of a Special Presidential Task Force for a safe country**

H.E. the President. Gotabaya Rajapaksha has taken action to establish a special Presidential Task Force comprising the Secretary of Defense, the Commanders of the Three Armed Forces, and the Inspector General of Police and heads of Intelligence forces to create a safe country - a disciplined, lawful society in accordance with the powers vested in the President by Article 33 of the Constitution.

This will ensure law and safety of public throughout the country.

Please click the link below to get full video and audio.

<https://www.vishmithacloud.com/s-pYIkSfWh>