

# Trails *of* Renaissance

2019 - 2021

*Memories of  
a Journey towards success  
made with an escort  
along a path of  
immense hurdles .....*



Milawa Detention and Correctional Center  
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DEPARTMENT OF  
PRISONS



**Hon. M.U.M. Ali Sabri**  
President's Counsel  
**Minister of Justice**

## Message of the Hon. Minister of Justice

**I**t is a pleasure for me to present a message to the “Trails of renaissance”, a booklet prepared in relation to the special projects implemented with a view to directing the Department of Prisons towards a new path.

It is a clear fact that the Department of Prisons, which represents the last stage of the criminal justice chain of a country, plays a vital role under the National Policy Framework of the current Government “Vistas of Prosperity and Splendor”. Suspects who are incarcerated through the existing judicial system of the Country are incarcerated and taken care of by the Department of Prisons, it also holds responsibility over the onerous task of rehabilitation and re - integration of inmates as righteous citizens. Further, the Department of Prisons is entrusted with a considerable amount of duties in relation to confirming the National Security and Social Safety of the Country.

The Department of Prisons have been engaged in identifying the sectors where prison reforms are required and has prepared a five year plan on how those reforms should take place. During the past two years it has taken initiatives on implementing various projects in order to achieve the objectives of the said plan.

Special attention has been focused on uplifting inmate wellbeing in implementing new projects, specifically through the use of new technology. One of the greatest achievements of the Department of Prisons during the past two years was reducing the inmates’ involvement in various illegal activities being in Prisons to a minimum.

The Department of Prisons was able to overcome an immense challenge by reducing it’s number of inmates to 18,500 ( which was around 32,200 by October in year 2020), with the assistance of the Ministry of Justice, Attorney General’s Department, the Police Department and other responsible Institutions. Further, with the aim of providing the inmates with facilities that equal international standards such as the Nelson Mandela Rules and as a solution to the overcrowding of Prisons, steps have been taken to relocate the Prison premises in Colombo in a land of around 200 Acres situated in Horana. This would further formalize

the method of rehabilitation while providing an appropriate environment for the Prison Officers to perform their duties with adequate facilities.

In addition to that, we have updated and introduced timely amendments to the Prisons Act No.18 of 1844, under the guidance of the Ministry of Justice, thus familiarizing the Prison system with International level core values. It is crystal clear that the Department of Prisons is following its distinctive goals with a strong determination, if the Prison system of about a few years back was compared to the current Prison system one would be able to clearly observe the fact that the aforementioned determination has been fruitful. Therefore, as the Cabinet Minister in charge of the relevant subject, I'm happy to announce that I am very pleased with the current progress of the Department of Prisons and I wish to extend my heartfelt wishes to all the Officers whose dedication lies behind this success. I wish luck for every endeavor aimed at achieving the goals of the Department. Finally, I would like to sum this up with a quote from Nelson Mandela- the South African President, who guided us to think differently.

**“For to be free is not merely to cast off one's chains, but to live in a way that respects and enhances the freedom of others”**

According to the quote, freedom is not only limited to the removal of one's chains, it also includes the creation of an environment that respects and enhances the freedom of others.

Managing the Prisons for the benefit of all human kind is a responsibility entrusted to all of us at the Prisons Department.



## Message of the Secretary to the Ministry



**Major General (Retd) V.R. Silva**

RSP, VSV, USP, NDU, IG

**SECRETARY**

State Ministry of Prison Management and  
Prisoners' Rehabilitation Affairs

The prime objective of the Department of Prisons is to formalize the rehabilitation process and to prepare inmates who return to the society with the skills, knowledge and attitudes necessary to live and work normatively. The Department of Prisons initiates various activities and projects with an aim to achieving this goal.

Overcrowding within prisons is a major issue faced by the Prison Management at present and the Department has taken several initiatives to overcome this challenge.

In keeping with the "Vistas of Prosperity and Splendor" the Policy Statement of the present Government, the Department has already taken steps to construct several Prisons with modern facilities. The Prison at Angunakolapelessa, constructed according to international Standards is already functioning, the aim here is to provide the inmates with facilities for long term rehabilitation alongside with their basic requirements.

Various crimes and corruptive activities undertaken by inmates convicted of capital crimes (high profile prisoners) within past few years had raised concerns within the society. I take pride in claiming it a huge achievement of the Department of Prisons that the Boossa Prison has been converted in to a High Security Prison to detain such high profile prisoners.

Identifying that the traditional method of rehabilitating drug addicts from within the Prisons tend to provide negative outcomes, has paved the way for the construction of a Treatment and Rehabilitation Unit inside the Weerawila Prison to commence. This is a step taken forward by the Department in Rehabilitating drug addicts.

The members of the Prison Intelligence and Defense Unit have been provided with a special training in order for them to be transformed in to the new Unit called, "Sri Lanka Prison Emergency Action Tactical Force". This new Unit is to be provided with modern technological security equipment in order for them to directly engage and prevent criminality, corruption and recidivism occurring within Prisons.

I wish success for all future endeavors of the Department of Prisons that has shown a substantial progress in relation to rehabilitation of inmates while taking immediate actions over much required Prison reforms.

I take this opportunity also to thank all our Officers for their commitment and diligence in realizing all those objectives.



## “Commencement”



**H.M.T.N. Upuldeniya**  
Commissioner General of Prisons

The Department of Prisons plays a vital role in ensuring the National Security and Social Safety of the country, through the custody, care and correction of prison inmates who are incarcerated by the judicial system of the country.

The duty assigned to a Prison Officer is not an easy task and has to be performed with an enormous commitment in the midst of various difficulties, risks, challenges and threats. Further, since a majority of the inmates are people determined as convicts or suspects by the judicial system of the country as a result of going against the progression and wellbeing of the society they live in, their management has to be done with extreme care and caution.

Accordingly, reorganization of Prisons, including changes in administration was implemented during the past period with a view towards the proper delivery of the services of the Department of Prisons. Many steps have been taken to efficiently deliver the aforementioned services of the Department within the past year and a brief overview of those steps and their achievements are presented in this booklet.

The service rendered by the Department of Prisons within the previous year was not an isolated effort, it was aided by the copious support of various Institutions, Departments and Parties. Therefore, I make this an opportunity to thank all the parties for their tremendous support.





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*You can do  
What I can not do  
I can do  
What you can not do  
Together  
We can do great things*

*- Mother Teresa*

# Forerunners of Renaissance



**Thusitha Indrajith Uduwara**

Additional Commissioner  
General of Prisons  
(Covering up Duties)  
Commissioner of Prisons  
(Operations/ Intelligence)



**Chandana Ekanayaka**

Commissioner of Prisons  
(Administration and  
Rehabilitation)  
Media Spokesperson  
for the Prisons



**Maleen Liyanage**

Commissioner of Prisons  
(Industries)



**Sunil Kodithuwakku**

Commissioner of Prisons  
(Supply and Services)



**Eng. W.M.P.B. Weerasinghe**

Director (Engineering)



**Anuradha Rajasinghe**

Commissioner of Prisons  
(Finance)



**Suranji Wijayawardhana**

Director (Planning)



**D.M.B Karunarathna**

Commissioner  
(Internal Audit)



**Dr. Hemantha Ranasinghe**

Deputy Director  
(Prisons Medical Services)

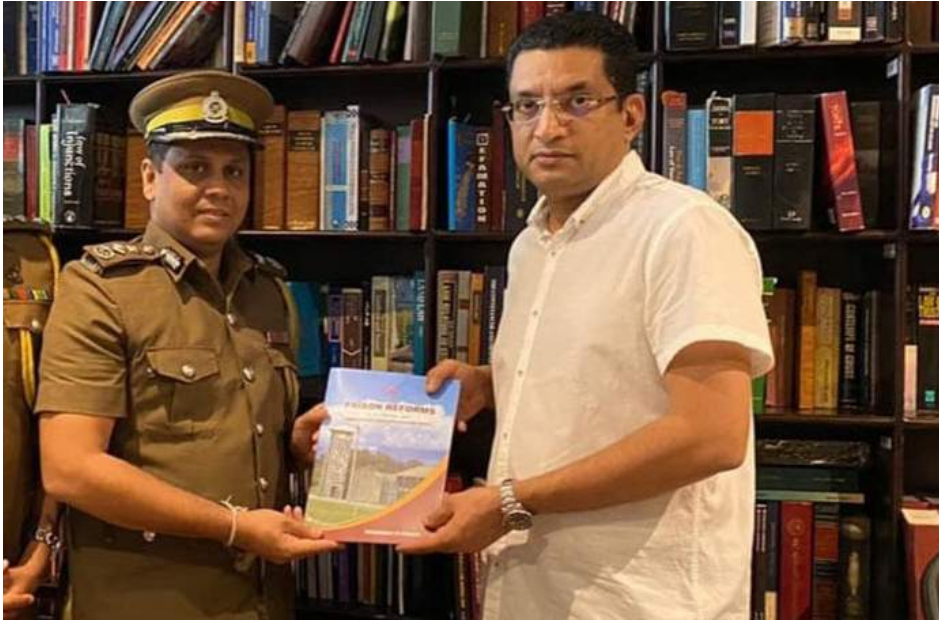


**Jagath Weerasinghe**

Superintendent of Prisons  
(Headquarters)



# A FIVE YEAR PLAN



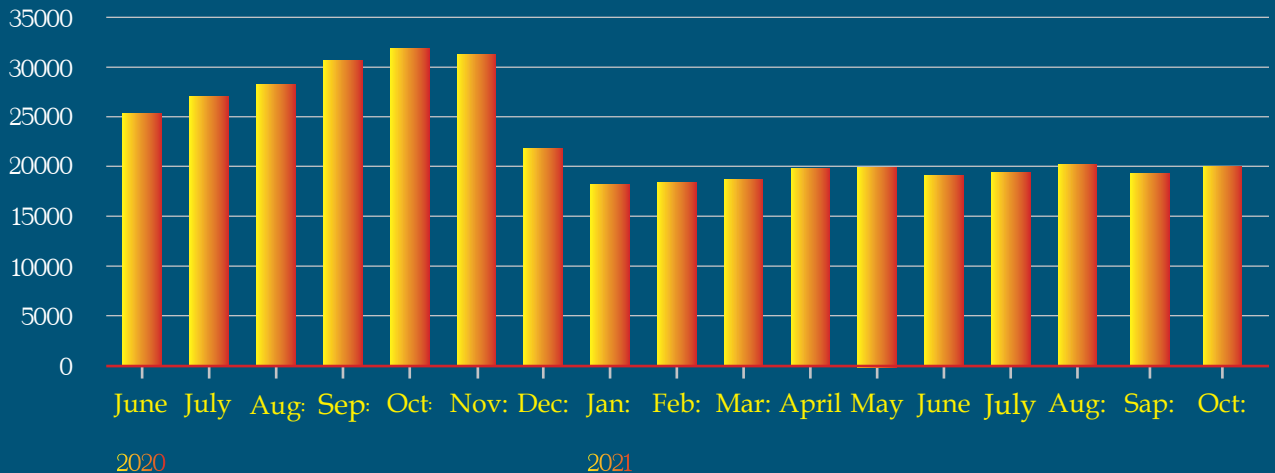
This five year plan has been prepared under the theme of 'A Rights Based Correctional System for a Safer Society', based on a period of 5 years from 2021 – 2025 and covering 09 major sectors recognized from within the Department of Prisons in order to achieve several targeted functions.

**'A RIGHT BASED  
CORRECTIONAL SYSTEM  
FOR  
A SAFER SOCIETY'**

- 01** Minimizing the overcrowding of Prisons
- 02** Reforms in Prison Management
- 03** Capacity building of the Prison Staff
- 04** Reforming Prison Legislation
- 05** Formalizing the Prison Security Procedure
- 06** Improving the Prison healthcare system
- 07** Strengthening the inmate Rehabilitation Process and measures for effective use of the Workforce
- 08** Reorganization of Women's Prisons and Training Centers of Youthful offenders
- 09** Implementing the e- Prisons concept

## ROOM FOR INMATES - MINIMIZING PRISON OVERCROWDING

Number of Inmates



The total number of inmates that could be detained within the Institutional system managed by the Sri Lanka Prison Department is only 13241. However, for many years this limit has been overstepped and as a result, unlike ever before in the history, the number of inmates reached 32000 during October 2020, causing a high pressure situation within Prison Institutes island wide. The Covid Pandemic only added to the pressure by further intensifying it.

This caught the special attention of the Hon. President and under the advice of Hon. Ali Sabri, President's Counsel and Minister of Justice and Hon. Lohan Ratwatte, State Minister of Prison Management and Prisoners Rehabilitation Affairs, after consultations with The Sri Lanka Police Department, the Attorney General's Department and the Department of Government Analyst, a number of nearly 13000 inmates who were incarcerated for minor offences and various other offences related to drug addiction were granted bail and were provided an opportunity to Re- integrate. Further, necessary steps were taken to review the rules that have been enacted in relation to this.

# Role of the Presidential Task Force for National Security/ Social Security



Mobsters and large scale drug dealers who have been incarcerated through the country's Judicial System are detained in various prisons within the country. There were many accusations that, despite their detention they continued their criminal activities from within the Prisons without hindrance. These mobsters and drug dealers were a great challenge for the Prison Management, and the situation only worsened with them starting to threaten not only the minor Officers but also the Senior

Officers of the Department causing a huge disruption in the Prison Management.

In this scenario, the "Presidential Task Force to build a Secure Country, Disciplined, Virtuous and a Lawful Society", led by the Secretary to the Ministry of Defense, took immediate action with the participation of the Commissioner General of Prisons, to curb all these illegal activities while taking necessary steps to strengthen the country's security, social safety as well as the Prison Administration. In addition to that, a High Security Prison was established in Boossa and high risk inmates were transferred there to be detained under extreme vigilance.

## The Objectives of establishing the High Security Prison at Boossa

- 01** To detain the prominent mobsters of the country who were an immense threat to the society
- 02** To isolate and detain major scale drug dealers.
- 03** To provide security for inmates requiring high security and inmates facing threats from outside
- 04** Ability to focus special attention on high risk inmates and the convenience in managing.
- 05** Isolating inmates who affect National Security and Social Safety, thus disabling them of engaging collectively in such activities.

## The progress generated through the establishment of the High Security Prison at Boossa

- 01** Minimization of the accusations and criticism directed at the Department of Prisons.
- 02** Reducing the pressure and threats previously experienced by the Prison Officers in managing the inmates detained in this Institution.
- 03** Ability to detain high risk inmates under adequate security.
- 04** Minimizing the illegal acts of leading crimes, dealing drugs, asking for ransoms and threatening people from within the Prisons.

# Mobile Phone – A challenge for the Prisons

There have been continuous allegations that the inmates involve in drug dealings, threatening for ransoms and leading other criminal activities being in prisons.

Therefore jammer systems that block mobile phone signals are to be installed in the Prisons island wide, the aim here is to prevent the inmates from obtaining telephone calls from within the Prison premises.

Accordingly, these mobile signal jamming devices have been installed in the following Prisons

Walikada Prison  
Angulakolapelassa Prison  
Bussa Prison  
Negombo Prison  
Kaluthara Prison

Necessary steps have been taken to install these mobile signal jamming systems in Mahara, Kalutara and Dumnbara Prisons. The Center for Defense Research and Development which functions under the State Ministry of National Security and Disaster Management provides support in this.





## A Second Eye for the Prison

Installation of Security Camera systems in Prison Institutes is highly important in reinforcing the security outside and inside of Prisons, in simplifying the operation and inspection of daily routines within the Prisons and in minimizing irregularities that may occur inside as well as outside of Prison Institutes.

Accordingly, Camera systems have already been installed in the Prisons at Angunakolapelessa, Boossa and Kaluthara and actions are underway to install camera systems in the Colombo Remand Prison, New Magazine Prison, The Female Section at the Welikade Prison and Prison Hospital - Welikade, thus covering the Colombo Prison Premises.

Further, initial measures are taken to install camera systems in Prisons at Mahara and Negombo.

## Staying the course with a team spirit



Smuggling of contraband items into Prisons continues to be a significant challenge in prison Administration. Officers of the Special Task Force of the Sri Lanka Police were attached for external security of Prisons with the aim of minimizing such smuggling activities and strengthening the security outside of Prisons.



Accordingly the said Officers are engaged in following duties

- **Searching** the prisoners/suspects that enter the Prisons.
- **Searching** the Officers and other parties that enter the Prisons.
- **Searching** all the vehicles, items that enter the Prisons.
- **Engage in** the security of outside security points and watch towers.
- **Engage in** the monitoring activities of CCTV systems and Mobile signal jammer systems installed in prisons.
- **Securing** the inmates of Prisons.

These STF Officers are already engaged in duties at the Angunakolapelessa Prison, the High Security prison at Boossa and the Prison premises at Colombo.

# A NEW MEANS OF ACCESSING THE OUTSIDE SOCIETY FOR INMATES.



Provision of means for prisoners and suspects and their relatives to meet each other while in prison is an acclaimed Human Right as well as a Right that goes along with the National and International Regulations and Standards related to Prison Administration.

Accordingly, the following matters were taken in to consideration,

The outdated methods used for inmates to meet their relatives

Relatives having to visit the Prisons from faraway places spending money and time

The loopholes that exist in the current methodology that pave the way for irregularities

Allowing inmates to meet their relatives even amidst pandemics such as Covid- 19

And the ***E-Visit*** concept was introduced, using modern technology, as a solution to the above issues. Two other concepts, namely the ***Pre Booked Visit*** and ***Video Visitation*** have been introduced under this.

The method of visiting relatives and other visitors using the ***Video Visitation*** concept was initiated at the Angunakolapelessa Prison with the participation of Hon. Lohan Rathwaththe, State Minister of Prison Management and Prisoners' Rehabilitation Affairs. The concept is implemented at several other Prisons by now and necessary plans have been made to implement the same at all the Prisons within the country in the future.

## PRE BOOKED VISIT Methodology

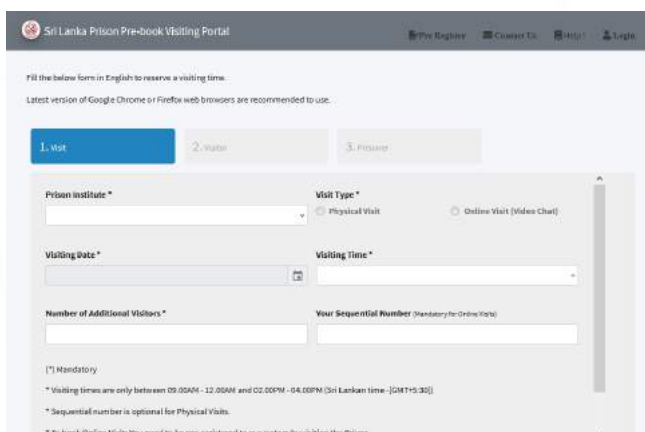
This method provides citizens with the ability to reserve a time and date to visit their relatives in prison. Accordingly, when a person makes a request to visit a relative in prison, the relevant prison will forward an SMS message to the mobile phone of the person making the request and the relevant person can visit the prison on the given date, at the given time without waiting in queues.

The Department of Prisons has created a website for this and anyone who wants to book a visit can reserve a date and time through that. This method allows the visitors to meet their relatives safely without wasting time while the Prison Administration is granted the opportunity to formalize and properly manage the visiting schedule at the same time

## VIDEO VISITATION Method

This method allows the inmates and their relatives to see and speak with each other through video technology, this is especially beneficial for foreign suspects/ prisoners, who are granted the opportunity to see and speak with their relatives through this. Following are several benefits of this methodology recognized through usage.

- Relatives of inmates do not need to spend their time and money on travelling from faraway places to visit their kin in prison, instead they can see and speak to their relative in prison from their home.
- There is no need to wait on queues inside Prisons.
- The inconveniences people experience during being searched before entering in to the prison is no more.
- People being exposed to pandemic situations like the Covid - 19 is prevented.
- Even foreign inmates get an opportunity to see their relatives.



The screenshot shows the 'Sri Lanka Prison Pre-book Visiting Portal' website. The page has a dark header with the portal name and navigation links for 'Home', 'Register', 'Contact Us', 'Help', and 'Login'. Below the header, there is a message: 'Fill the below form in English to reserve a visiting time. Latest version of Google Chrome or Firefox web browsers are recommended to use.' The main content area features a form with three tabs: '1. Visit' (selected), '2. Visitor', and '3. Prisoner'. The form includes fields for 'Prison institute \*', 'Visit Type \*' (with radio buttons for 'Physical Visit' and 'Online Visit (Video Chat)'), 'Visiting Date \*', 'Visiting Time \*', 'Number of Additional Visitors \*', and 'Your Sequential Number (Mandatory for Online Visit)'. At the bottom, there are footnotes: '[\*] Mandatory', '\* Visiting times are only between 09:00AM - 12:00AM and 02:00PM - 04:00PM (Sri Lankan time - GMT+5:30)', '\* Sequential number is optional for Physical Visits.', and '\* To book Online Visits You need to be pre-registered to our system by visiting the Prison.'





## Judicial processes through Video Technology

The need for an online procedure to present inmates to the Courts arose out of the following factors

- The high risk situation of Covid – 19 Virus entering in to the Courts and from the Courts to the Prison, through the presentation of inmates for Court Proceedings under the current Covid – 19 situation in the Country.
- The risk of Court Officers as well as the Officers at the Prisons catching Covid – 19.
- The delays that occur in Court proceedings of inmates who cannot be produced before the Courts.
- The risk of special inmates being attacked outside of Prisons.

This method allows the Prisons to efficiently and effectively conduct their court proceedings, while at the same time it saves the huge amount of money spent on transporting inmates daily. Further, this helps in the prevention of contraband items being smuggled in to Prisons.

This method has been used specifically for the Proceedings of the Court of Appeal and is also used for other Law Courts upon necessity.

**Court Automation** is a project proposed to further formalize this process, plans have been made to conduct Court proceedings through a software that connects Prisons and Courts. The Project is implemented under the guidance of

Hon. Ali Sabri, President's Counsel,  
Minister of Justice and supervised by Mr.  
M.M.P.K. Mayadunne, Secretary to the  
Ministry of Justice.

# Rehabilitation instead of Punishment

It has been commonly observed that most inmates who are incarcerated are convicted of offences related to drugs, it has also been observed that recidivism is also related to drug addictions.

In order to stop drug addicts from being repeatedly incarcerated it is better to subject them to a more formal rehabilitation procedure as an alternative for imprisonment. Prevention of offenders being re incarcerated in this manner is not an easy task and it also causes a significant amount of administrative issues.

As a practical and effective solution for this situation, steps have been taken to develop the Open Prison Camp at Weerawila as a Rehabilitation and a Treatment Centre for drug addicts. By now, the infrastructure facilities sufficient to detain 500 inmates have been established in the premises as a pilot project.

It is expected to develop this premise with facilities adequate to house and rehabilitate 2000 inmates in the future, and it has been planned to use the “Pre - Fabricate” buildings granted by the Ministry of Defense for this. Further, plans are made to engage Institutes and Ministries such as the National Dangerous Drugs Control Board and the Vocational Training Authority in the rehabilitation process in order to provide the inmates with a professional guidance, knowledge and experience that match up to the current job market.



# CAPACITY BUILDING



Numerous issues have arisen within the Department due to the inability to recruit officers for Posts which have been vacant for many years. As a whole, currently there is a dearth of about 2000 Officers in the Department and following procedures have been implemented in order to fill those vacancies.

- A number of 65 Jailors, 05 Female Jailors, 12 Rehabilitation Officers and 02 Female Rehabilitation Officers have been recruited and attached to Prisons after completing a preliminary Training at the Angunakolapelessa Prison Training School.
- 200 Officers who have legally resigned from the Tri Forces upon completion of 12 years of Service has been recruited to the SPEAT FORCE of the Department of Prisons and have started the training at the Boossa Military Camp.
- 788 Prison Guardes have been recruited and have been directed for their 14 day practical training at 26 selected Prisons Island wide.



## 12th Passing out of Class II Apprentice Jailors and Rehabilitation Officers

The passing out ceremony of the Class II Apprentice Prison Jailors and Rehabilitation Officers

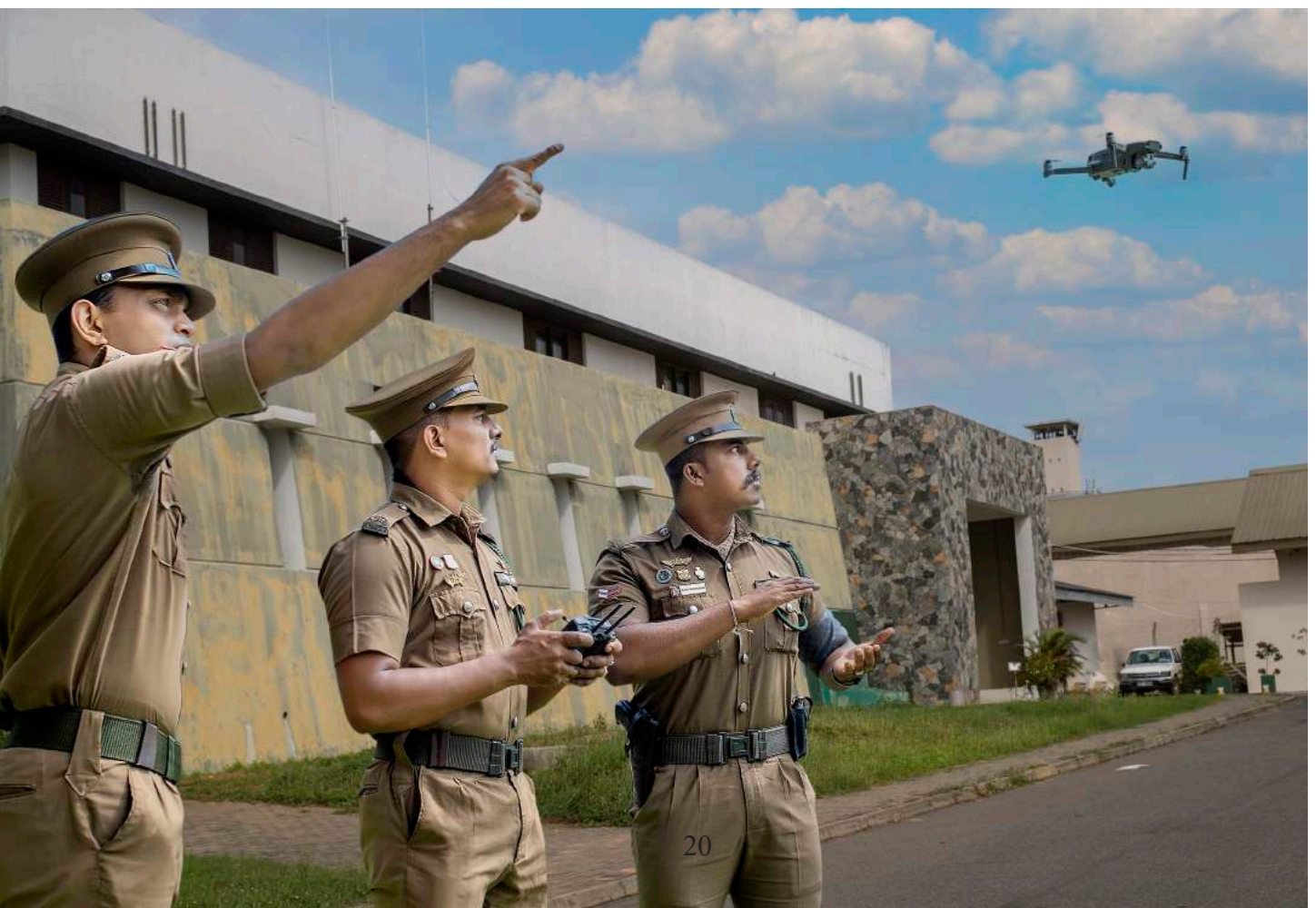
recruited to fill the vacancies in the Department of Prisons was held under the patronage of Hon. Minister of Justice M.U.M. Ali Sabri (President's Counsel) on 26.11.2021 at the Angunakolapelessa Prison Stadium.



# Prisons armed with modern technology

Actions were taken to introduce **Non- linear Junction Detectors** and **hand held Non- linear Junction Detectors** to the Sri Lanka Prison Emergency Action Tactical Force was in 2021, together with a training for the relevant officers on those equipment. The aim here was to efficiently and properly maneuver the Emergency Search Operations conducted to confiscate contraband electronic devices that are hidden inside inmates and within the prison premises.

Further, the Prison Emergency Action Tactical Force (SPEAT FORCE) was also introduced to the **Quadcopter (Drone)**, an equipment with Day & Night Cameras, that can be used in the searches regarding parcels that are thrown inside prisons located in urban areas and can support in supervising the illegal activities and behaviors of inmates from a distance. Relevant Officers have also been trained in using this device.



# An Emergency Action Tactical Force for the Prison



The Intelligence and Security Unit of the Prisons was functioning in a very lethargic manner during the past period. This caught the attention of the Presidential Task Force to build a Secure Country, Disciplined, Virtuous and Lawful Society as well as the Defense Secretary and accordingly the reorganizing process of this Unit was initiated.



In Accordance with the above, the term Intelligence and Security Unit of the Prisons was amended as Sri Lanka Prison Emergency Action Tactical Force (SPEAT Force) and the Prison Intelligence Unit was also taken under the purview of this. This Unit conducts emergency searches in Institutes, searches Persons, vehicles, items and goods that enter in to Prisons, conducts emergency raids in Prison Institutes and collects intelligence information and conduct relevant investigations. This SPEAT Force Unit is also involved in identifying Officers engaged in illicit activities and taking disciplinary and legal actions against them.

The Officers attached to this Unit have been provided with many trainings and were also given new uniforms. In order to further strengthen this Unit, 200 Officers who have legally left the Tri Forces have been recruited and trained at the Boossa Army Camp, under Cabinet approval.

# 102nd Passing out of Apprentice Officers of the Prison's Emergency Action Tactical Force



The passing out ceremony of 194 Officers, who had legally left their Service at the Sri Lanka Tri Forces after 12 years of service, and recruited to the Department of Prisons for the first time in history, as Officers of the Prison's Emergency Action Tactical Force, was held under the patronage of the Defense Secretary, Major General G.D.H. Kamal Gunaratne (Retired) and with the participation of the Chief of National Intelligence, Major General Jeewaka Ruwan Kulatunga on 26.01.2022 at the Angunakolapelessa Prison Stadium.

These Officers who are recruited to the Prison's Emergency Action Tactical Force with an aim to strengthening the Security of Prison Institutes all through the island, under the five year plan of the Department of Prisons are also to be engaged in the tasks of Special escorting and Riot Control.



# **SPEAT** **FORCE**

Forward Without Stopping





# Reorganizing the Intelligence Units at the Prisons



Reinforcing the Prison Intelligence Unit and taking necessary measures to build capacities of the officers attached, was a significant endeavor undertaken by the ***Sri Lanka Prison Emergency Action Tactical Force (SPEAT Force)*** during the past few months. This Unit also holds responsibility over collecting Intelligence information, in partnership with the State Intelligence Service and the National Intelligence Unit, fortifying the security of prisons and conduction of investigations, identification of Officers engaged in corrupt activities through the Prison Intelligence Unit and other State Intelligence Units, and taking necessary legal and disciplinary action against them.

The Police Special Task Force was also involved in training the Officers attached to this Unit, providing them with an opportunity to develop necessary knowledge and skills. The State Intelligence Service also contributed in this by providing training for 90 Officers of the Prison Intelligence Unit.

The mediation and contribution of the Defense Secretary Chief of National Intelligence and the Director of National Intelligence in further strengthening this Unit was a great assistance.



# A new Training School

The Centre for Research and Training in Corrections, has been used as the Prison Training school for the whole of the past period. Steps were taken to establish a new subdivision of the Center for Research and Training in Correction at Angunalokapelessa Prison, due to the following reasons.

- The Prison Training School at Colombo can only house 80 trainees at one time.
- There isn't adequate facilities for lecture halls and accommodation.
- The accommodation facilities of the Training School are currently reserved for the accommodation of the Officers of the Police Special Task Force.
- Around 1000 Officers are to be recruited in the future and there isn't adequate training facilities to train them at the current Centre.

Accordingly, necessary actions were taken to establish a Training School with adequate facilities within the premises of the Angunakolapelessa Prison.

In addition to that, actions are underway to establish a fully equipped Correctional Education Centre at the Horana premises once the Colombo Prison is shifted there.



# FREEDOM

*A*s I walked out the door toward the gate that would lead to my freedom, I knew if I didn't leave my bitterness and hatred behind, I'd still be in prison"

- Nelson Mandela -

# A second opportunity for life as an inmate



The continuous overcrowding of prisons is due to two major reasons, i.e., the death sentence not being implemented despite the Judicial system of the country awarding death sentences and the four year review system implemented in accordance with the Prisons Ordinance regarding long term prisoners, not being in function. As a result the mental pressure of the inmates increase together with the inmates overcrowding inside of prisons.

Accordingly, the Presidential Task Force to build a Secure Country, Disciplined, Virtuous and Lawful Society, has given special priority to this issue and it has introduced the process of Presidential pardon as well as the mechanism of granting a special pardon through a process of review.

A committee representing the State Ministry of Prison Management and Prisoners' Rehabilitation Affairs and other relevant Institutions and Departments was appointed to prepare a mechanism on granting pardon and the final report of the committee has been handed over to the Hon. Minister of Justice, Hon. Ali Sabri, President's Counsel and Minister of Justice as well as Hon. Lohan Ratwatte, Minister of Prison Management and Prisoners' Rehabilitation Affairs and Hon. Dr. (Mrs.) Sudarshini Fernandupulle, State Minister have provided a necessary advice and a significant contribution in this.



# Prisons to match International Standards



The Colombo Prison complex consists of the Prison Headquarters, Prison Training School, Welikada Prison, Colombo Remand Prison, New Magazine Prison, the Prison Hospital and the Female Section as well as the Prison Quarters.

The three major prisons within this complex are the prisons of Welikada, Magazine and Colombo Remand and there is a huge overcrowding inside of those prisons at the moment, the buildings inside those prisons are also very old. Further, it has been observed that only a minimum amount of facilities could be provided for inmates inside those Institutes. The extreme lack of space inside these institutions and the areas around the prisons becoming highly populous, has made it extremely difficult to expand these Institutions or to construct new buildings within the premises.

Further, it has been difficult to fulfill the requirements of Standards and International Charters on Treatment of Prisoners within the Colombo Prison premises. The need to establish Prison Institutes with more space and facilities has arisen out of this. Also, the Officers attached to the Colombo Prison premises are subjected to work with minimum facilities for years and this has created a huge pressure on them. The commercial value of the land where the Colombo prison complex is currently situated, has also made it a target of the economically significant projects of the country.

Accordingly, initial measures have been taken with the participation of the Urban Development Authority to shift the Colombo prison premises to a premise in Horana, Millewa and the initial planning and designing activities related to the shifting of the Magazine Prison have already been completed.

# FIELD VISIT

to the land proposed to  
relocate Welikada Prison  
Complex in Millewa, Horana  
by His Excellency  
The President of  
Democratic  
Socialist Republic of  
Sri Lanka  
Gotabaya Rajapaksha



# Training Opportunities



Officers attached to prisons frequently have to work with the Country's Judicial System, they also have to deal with those who have been convicted of offenses or have been made suspects by the Judicial System. As they have to work in a very risky and pressurized environment, where issues regarding Human Rights and Fundamental Rights keep continuously emerging, it is compulsory that they have a proper understanding of the above fields as well as the updated International Laws and Regulations on Prison Administration.

Therefore, it is a need of the hour that the Prison Officers be granted frequent training and learning opportunities. Accordingly, many training opportunities were provided to the Officers during the past period, despite the Covid -19 Pandemic situation in the Country.

# Progression of Officers Training Workshops

- 01** Two training workshops were conducted by the International Red Cross on the Minimum Standards in Treatment of Prisoners.
- 02** 05 Training Workshops, on Prison Management and Dynamic Security was conducted by the UNODC, for all the Commissioners of Prisons, Superintendents of Prisons and all the Chief Jailors.
- 03** A Training Program on Dynamic Security was conducted by the UNODC, for selected Prison Guards and Sergeants attached to the Prisons of Galle, Boossa, Matara and Angunakolapelessa.
- 04** Training conducted by the Army Intelligence Training School at Karadeniya, for the Officers of the Prison Emergency Action Tactical Force.
- 05** Training sessions conducted by the Police Special Task Force for Senior Prison Officers and Officers of the Prison Emergency Action Tactical Force
- 06** Necessary steps have been taken by the Sri Lanka Army to conduct a training workshop for the Senior Prison Officers.
- 07** Plans have been made on conducting many Training programs on Prison Management, The Mandela Rules, Dynamic Security, Incident Management and on conducting searches, with the participation of the UNODC/ICRC.





# Curbing the Covid - 19 pandemic within Prisons



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The Covid - 19 situation has become a huge challenge for external Institutions and Prisons both.

Covid - 19 infected inmates have been identified from within many Prisons and the overcrowding issue of the Prisons has made it extremely difficult to curb this situation within Prison premises. Further, as most inmates are very reluctant to follow proper health practices, guiding them to adhere to the prescribed health guidelines has become an extremely difficult task. However, many significant steps have been taken to prevent the spread of Covid - 19 within Prisons and to treat identified patients. The Ministry of Health, The Director General of Health Services and the Staff as well as the Presidential Task Force on Prevention of Covid -19 provides a significant assistance in this process. The steps taken so far under this are as below





- Take legal actions required to minimize the inmate population within prisons, in consultation with the Attorney General's Department, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Prison Management and Prisoners' Rehabilitation and the Department of Police.
- Use the Prison Institutes at Pallanassena, Boossa and Old Bogambara as centers to quarantine inmates imprisoned by Courts.
- The Aiyakachchi Army Camp, Pallekele Open Prison Camp, Training School for Youthful Offenders at Thaldena, Watareka Open Prison Camp, Female Section at the Angulakolapelessa Prison, Welikada Prison Hospital and the Pabodha Meth Sewana Prison Institute at Ambepussa are being maintained under the supervision of Health Staff as treatment centers for inmates testing positive for Covid - 19.
- Establishment of an Information Centre to furnish relatives with information on inmates related to the Covid - 19 Pandemic situation
- The Prison Officers being given both Covid -19 prevention Vaccines under the vaccination program for Prison Offices
- Vaccination of inmates.

# A Prison Museum for Old Bogambara



The Bogamba Prison holds a significant place in the history of the Prison Department, when the above premises was shifted to Pallekele, the land on which the Prison was situated in was assigned to the Urban Development Authority. During the future development activities of the land the Department of Prisons made a proposal to construct a Prison Museum, on a part of the said building, for the first time in history

The aim of this venture is to provide a place for the general public to visit and learn about the trends in the Prison System, methods of punishment from the reign of Kings, the Criminal Justice System and ancient artifacts found inside the Prisons of Sri Lanka, historically significant information on special inmates detained in prisons and the trends in Uniforms and other items used by Prison Officers. It also aims at providing a place of learning for persons interested in learning about this field.

Apart from the Museum, it is also planned to establish a restaurant that reflects the life inside of prisons, with the structure of the restaurant constructed in a manner that represent prison cells.

This project is soon to be initiated under the guidance and advice of Hon. Lohan Ratwatte, Minister of Prison Management and Prisoners' Rehabilitation Affairs and Major General V.R. Silva Secretary to the Ministry of Prison Management and Prisoners' Rehabilitation Affairs.

# Transforming the Prison Service in to a Correctional Service



## ***“LEADERS OF CORRECTIONS”***

Keeping in line with the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners, a lot of other countries in the region have taken steps to establish the Prison service as a Correctional Service and are also engaged in recruiting, training and promoting Officers in a more formal procedure.

Nevertheless, the Prison Department does not still have a formally approved Service Minute and this has led to issues in recruitment, training and promotions. In some occasions different methods of recruitment has to be used for the same post. Many countries in the region have transformed the prison concept in to a correctional concept and the need to transform the Sri Lanka Prison Service in to a Correctional Service has become a timely need.

Accordingly, a Service Minute has been prepared on transforming the Prison Service in to a Correctional Service and forwarded for necessary approval.

## Improvement of accommodation of inmates



The heavy congestion inside the prisons has led to the requirement of constructing permanent and Pre fabricated buildings inside prison institutes that have space enough to construct more buildings. These constructional projects are implemented under the cooperation and observation of the Army, Navy and the Civil Defence Forces of the Country.

### **Progress in the construction of permanent buildings**

Construction of Permanent buildings at Pallansena Prison premises are currently underway and the construction activities of the four buildings there, are in the last stage.

### **Progress in the construction of precast buildings**

Plans were made to construct Pre fabricated buildings in the Prisons at Wariyapola, Magazine, Dumbara, Kalutara and Mahara. Accordingly, constructions have begun in all the other Prisons apart from the Mahara Prison and the construction activities of Six buildings are completed by now.

# Organic Fertilizers produced through the labor of Inmates



In keeping with the “Vistas of Prosperity and Splendor”, the Policy Statement of His Excellency the President of Sri Lanka, and in order to realize the concept of a poison free country, a program to produce organic fertilizer and poison free vegetables and fruits inside of prisons was initiated at the premises of the Open Prison Camp at Batticaloa, under a concept of Hon. Lohan Ratwatte, Minister of Prison Management and Prisoners’ Rehabilitation Affairs.

This maneuver is to be initiated in the Open Prison Camp Institutions of Weeravila, Kandurugasara, Thaldena, Hangilipola and Anuradhapura under the theme “Sarusara - from prisons to farms”. This would aid in uplifting the mental health of Prisoners while also providing a vocational training to be used in a self-employment after their release.



# Emergency Plans

## *A Contingency plan to overcome Covid*

The Covid - 19 pandemic which rapidly spread around the world posed an immense challenge to the Prisons. The major reason behind this was the inability of the prisons to comply with the prime preventive measure recommended in curbing the spread of the Coronavirus, which is social distancing. As a result The Department of Prisons had to undergo an immense pressure to save the inmates and Officers from this situation under conditions of extreme difficulty in maintaining social distancing amidst heavily congested prisons.

Measures were taken with the support of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, to prepare an contingency plan to prevent the spread of Covid -19 within Prisons. This contingency plan provides guidelines on how to engage in the daily routines of the prisons with Covid - 19 protective measures, and on the procedure to be followed if an Officer or an inmate is found to be infected with Covid -19.



# for the Prisons

## *A Contingency Plan on Event Management*



Incidents of riots, hunger strikes, rooftop protests and inmates and Officers being held hostage, are often reported from prisons. Such incidents often end in loss of lives and property. Therefore, it is most necessary to prevent such incidents from taking place and to manage such situations in a manner that prevents loss of life and property.



Accordingly, measures were taken with the support of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the Senior Officers of the Prison Headquarters and prison Institutions, to prepare a contingency plan to provide guidelines on how to manage such situations in a professional manner without loss of life and property.





# ADHIKRANABHIMANI

## Better access to justice for the people of the Northern Province

In order to make His Excellency the President's policy statement 'Vistas of Prosperity' a reality, the Ministry of Justice and its affiliated institutions launched “Adhikaranabimani”, a better “Access to Justice” Mobile Service Program for the Public of the Northern Province. The initial Ceremony was held at the Kilinochchi Central College on 27.01.2022 the Program continued there up to 28.02.2022 and was held at the Jaffna Central College on 29th and 30th.

Accordingly awareness programs were conducted for people of the Districts of Kilinochchi, Jaffna, Mullaitivu, Mannar, and Vavuniya on the functions of all the institutions under the purview of the Ministry of Justice, the aim of this endeavor was to provide an overall knowledge about peace and reconciliation for people of the Northern Province. The Department of Prisons actively engaged in this mobile service and steps were taken to provide following facilities to the public.

- Providing solutions/ answers to the issues of the relatives of suspects/ inmates who are incarcerated.
- Providing the opportunity of visiting relatives to those inmates who didn't get an opportunity to visit their relatives due to the Covid -19 situation. Under this, inmates incarcerated at any prison were provided the opportunity to visit their relatives then and there through the e- visit technology introduced by the Department of Prisons.
- Raising awareness among the Public on the process of recruiting Prison Officers.
- Fulfilling requirements needed to obtain legal aid for legal issues faced by inmates/ suspects in the Northern Province and providing Legal Advice when required.
- Providing solutions to issues faced by Prison Officers.
- Initiating an awareness raising program for School Children with the aim of preventing them from being addicted to drugs and from being engaged in various crimes, this program focused on the Districts of Kilinochchi, Vavuniya, Mannar, Jaffna and Mullaitivu.

Parallel to this, Hon. Minister of Justice Ali Sabri, President's Counsel engaged in an observatory tour of the Jaffna Prison. Mr. M.M.P.K. Mayadunne, Secretary to the Ministry of Justice, Thushara Upuldeniya, Commissioner General of Prisons and other senior Prison Officers participated in this.





# REHABILITATION PROGRAMS

## “ Amadivi Ridma – Fighting drug addictions in unison ”



“Amadivi Ridma – Fighting drug addictions in unison” is a special project initiated with the aim of preventing the use of drugs within prisons as well as rehabilitation of inmates who are drug addicts and prevention of inmates from being addicted to drugs.

This is implemented as a pilot project centering around the three prisons situated at Colombo.

This project was created with the aim of saving drug addicts through the interference of inmates with anti-drug attitudes who will be trained as fellow leaders.

The rehabilitation centers located at Pallekele, Watareka, Thaldeniya, Weeravila, Anuradhapura, Pallansena, Kandewatta, Meethirigala, Kalutara and Ambepussa have been selected to implement the second stage of this project, and necessary plans have been made to initiate the relevant future procedure.

# Inmates rehabilitated through reading



Actions are taken to improve the in house libraries of all the prison institutes, with the aim of developing the mentalities, improving the knowledge and thereby building positive attitudes of inmates incarcerated by the Courts under various charges. This is a joint venture with the Library Services Board. It is scheduled to train Officers on library procedures under this project. The Department has already published the Novel "Anuwassawa Asawa" and the collection of poems " Sipirige Pamula" , both being collective works of inmates. Steps are also taken to launch the collection of poems " Sipirige Pamula - 2" as soon as possible. This method has succeeded in developing the skills of the inmates while generating a change of attitudes

at the same time. Therefore, it has been planned to further formalize the in house library systems and to improve the already existing infrastructure related to libraries with the aim of re - socializing the inmates as righteous citizens. Both Governmental and Non - Governmental Organizations support in making this a success.

As an initial step, the library of the Youthful Offenders Training School was renovated with the sponsorship of the Boy Scouts' Society of the Wesley College Colombo.

# Initiation of the half Prison concept



Under this concept of half prison, selected inmates can leave the prison in the morning, serve in outside institutions and return to the prison at the end of the day.

This allows for proper usage of inmate labor and the relevant inmates are provided with the opportunity to excel in a relevant profession. The inmate receives a salary for his labor and this provides a huge support for the rehabilitation Process as well.

This concept is already implemented at the Watareka Open Prison Camp and the inmates there have been attached to the projects of the Avant Grade Company. The inmates leave for work every morning and return to the prison in the afternoon, they receive a salary for their labor together with a professional experience on the profession they are engaged in.

# “Sathi Pasala”



The Dhamma program

“Sarthaka Jeevithayakata Sathimath Bawa”

(Mindfulness for a successful life), is

a significant juncture in the process of re-integrate of inmates incarcerated by the Judiciary. This program, which is conducted by the Ven. Athurugiriye, Dhammavihari Thero, under the patronage of Ven. Udagama Dhammajewa Thero, has been successfully implemented for years on behalf of all the inmates. This program was even conducted online during the past period due to the existing Covid - 19 situation in the County.

This program has been conducted for all the rehabilitation officers attached for duties at all the Prison institutes, it has also been scheduled to conduct the same program for other Officers in groups.



One of the major reasons behind recidivism is the lack of proper supervision on prisoners upon being released as well as the prisoners going back to the community and the environment they associated with before being incarcerated. The fact that they are without an adequate means of living adds to this fact.

Accordingly, it has been planned to organize an island wide aftercare program including family welfare, with the aim of minimizing recidivism and improving the means of re- integration of inmates. This program aims at guiding released inmates to build a structured means of employment as well as at re socializing the released inmates with a proper social acceptance through the Public Officers at Divisional Secretaries. Through this program, after care committees are established under the guidance of the Divisional Secretary and the participation of relevant Public Officers and Prison Reform Officers, these committees are gathered every month to review the progress of the program.

Preparation of a formal methodology to prevent recidivism has been emphasized as an important task by the Presidential Task Force to build a Secure Country, Disciplined, Virtuous and Lawful Society. The proper implementation of this program would be extremely helpful in realizing the above goal. Accordingly, it was advised to properly implement the aforementioned program, at a conference held on 18th February 2021 at the District Secretariat, Colombo, chaired by the Defense Secretary, with the participation of all the District Secretaries.



**Editor**

**Creative Concept**



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