Integrated Nutrient Management Program is being implemented for the development of tea cultivation – Minister of Plantation Dr. Ramesh Pathirana

Date : 11-02-2022

Minister of Plantation, Hon. (Dr.) Ramesh Pathirana addressing the Ministerial Consultative Committee on Plantation yesterday (10) stated that his Ministry is ready to expedite the implementation of an integrated nutrient management program for the development of the tea industry in the face of existing challenges. The Minister said that not only chemical fertilizers but also shade, water and soil factors are very important to increase the production of tea.

Despite the shortage of chemical fertilizers in the country, the total production of tea has increased by 21 million in 2021 compared to 2020, the Minister said. He stated aforesaid when Member of Parliament Weerasumana Weerasinghe pointed out that many tea smallholders in Matara and other areas are facing difficulties due to the shortage of chemical fertilizers.

Member of Parliament Weerasumana Weerasinghe, pointed out to the Committee that it is appropriate for the government to maintain a proper process of providing organic fertilizer to tea estates in light of the increase in the price of chemical fertilizers. The Minister of Plantations said that some of the chemical fertilizers allocated by the government for tea cultivation were sold at higher prices in other areas. He also said that the price of chemical fertilizers would come down rapidly under the current global conditions. The Minister also pointed out that the government will provide 50% of the cost of providing water supply to tea estates in collaboration with the Tea Small Holdings Development Authority.

In addition, Member of Parliament Palani Digambaram inquired about the delay in the process of raising the basic salary of plantation workers to Rs. 1,000. Although the Minister refrained from commenting as this is an issue before the courts at present, he further stated that there should be an agreement between the employees and the management to resolve this situation.

Also, in response to a query made by the Member of Parliament Jagath Pushpakumara, the Minister said that if there are any irregularities withing the ministry whose main purpose is the betterment of plantation industry, he would take appropriate action if need be.

At the request of State Minister Dayasiri Jayasekara, a coconut nursery project in the Kurunegala District, a project to distribute coconut oil extraction machines as per a proposal made by Hon. Amarakeerthi Athukorala and at the request of Hon. MP Weerasumana Weerasinghe, to take immediate action to cultivate coconut on paddy fields in the Nilwala area in Matara which have been abandoned for more than 30 years were approved by the Consultative Committee.

State Minister Dayasiri Jayasekara, Members of Parliament Jagath Pushpakumara, S. Sridharan, Palani Digambaran, M. Rameshwaran, Sampath Athukorala, Weerasumana Weerasinghe and Amarakeerthi Athukorala were also present at the committee meeting held.

nt Management Program is being implemented for the development of tea cultivation – Minister of Plantation Dr. Ramesh Pathirana