Allocation of funds for future development activities is problematic - Hon. Prasanna Ranatunga, Minister of Urban Development and Housing

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Hon. Prasanna Ranatunga, Minister of Urban Development and Housing, said that the supplementary estimate to be submitted to the Parliament will not allocate funds for urban development activities. The minister said that due to the economic crisis in the country, the treasury has informed that all the future development activities should be temporarily stopped and the development activities that have been started should also be temporarily stopped so as not to incur losses. The minister further stated that it can only be said correctly after the supplementary estimate is presented to the parliament.

The Minister mentioned this when the members of Parliament inquired about the allocation of funds for future development activities the Ministerial Consultative Committee on Urban Development & Housing met recently (05).

The development of Najima Estate on Ferguson Road, Colombo North was discussed at length. Officials of the Urban Development Authority mentioned that this land was used as an intermediate camp where the low-income people were temporarily settled until they were settled in permanent houses in 2006. But recently some people have forcibly settled in this land, so legal steps have been taken to evict them.

Also, the request made by the Member of Parliament Hon. Yadamini Gunawardena for rebuilding the Modara Kimbulaela playground was also considered here.

There was also a discussion at length regarding the problems in providing water supply to the residents of the apartment complexes in Colombo. Furthermore, the MPs were of the view that apartment owners living in Colombo receive one bill including housing charges and other charges together and that the water charges in it are very high.

Officials of the Urban Development Authority mentioned that because the National Water Supply and Drainage Board supplies water in bulk, monthly fees are charged according to the prices of the National Water Supply and Drainage Board.

The minister asked why the National Water Supply and Drainage Board cannot charge the water charges. Here the officials mentioned that they are currently working to establish the Condominium Management Authority to manage the apartments and after that these difficulties will be minimized.

Members of Parliament, officials from the Ministry of Urban Development and Housing, Urban Development Authority and other officials representing relevant institutions were present at the Committee meeting.

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