Measures to import a stock of rice similar to Keeri Samba rice to supply the rice requirement during the upcoming festive season - Minister of Trade, Commerce and Food Security, Hon. Nalin Fernando

Date : 25-11-2023

- **Necessary steps to restore sugar supply in the domestic market in future**
- **Lanka Sathosa to provide a continuous contribution to maintain the price of essential food items without a price increase**

Hon. Nalin Fernando, Minister of Trade, Commerce and Food Security stated that steps have been taken to import a stock of rice similar to Keeri Samba rice to supply the necessary rice for the upcoming festive season. The Minister mentioned this at the Ministerial Consultative Committee on Trade, Commerce and Food Security which met in Parliament recently (Nov. 23).

Further commenting on the said, the Minister stated that the main and large-scale paddy mill owners of the country have taken measures to alleviate the situation where a shortage of Keeri Samba and samba rice has been artificially created by hiding the stocks without releasing them to the market. Accordingly, the Minister also stated that a system will be designed to empower the business fraternity by focusing on the issues faced by the small and medium scale paddy mill owners.

The Minister stated that it is reported that there is a shortage of sugar in the local market due to the concealment of sugar stocks post setting a maximum retail price for sugar and importers have suspended the import of sugar in a situation where it is not possible to distribute sugar in the market. Therefore, the Minister stated that given that there is a risk of having a shortage of sugar stocks, taking all factors into consideration, measures have been taken to remove the maximum retail price imposed on sugar.

Hon. Nalin Fernando stated that Lanka Sathosa has succeeded in providing essential products to the consumers at an affordable price, and with the aim of providing relief to the consumers during the coming festive season, Lanka Sathosa has taken measures to reduce the prices of nearly 400 items including essential food items.

Furthermore, according to the Minister's assurance to relaunch the Mahapola Higher Education Trust Fund and Trade Fair, which was started by late Hon. Lalith Athulathmudali. Accordingly, arrangements have been made to hold the Mahapola Higher Education Trust Fund and Trade Fair from 13.12.2023 to 17.12.2023 at the Ja-Ela Municipal Council Grounds, the Minister said.

Ministers, Memebrs of Parliament, the secretary to the Ministry of Trade, Commerce and Food Safety and the respective of officials representing the relevant institutions were present at the Committee meeting held.

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