Even though 938 metric tons of plastic generated in the country every day, only 4 percent recycled - Sectoral Oversight Committee reveals

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It was revealed at the Sectoral Oversight Committee on Environment, Natural Resources & Sustainable Development that even though 938 metric tons of plastic is generated in the country every day, only 32 percent of it is collected, and only 4 percent of the collected plastic is mechanically recycled. Officials pointed out that even if the rest is collected, it is being disposed of informally in the environment.

This was discussed when the Committee met at Parliament recently, under the chairmanship of Member of Parliament Hon. Ajith Mannapperuma.

It was also revealed that industrialists have been allowed to import secondary plastic without any regulation. Therefore, the Sectoral Oversight Committee instructed the Central Environment Authority that licenses should be issued according to the needs of the industry in the future.

The officials revealed that Sri Lanka annually imports 4 lakh metric tons of plastic raw materials and 20,000 metric tons of waste plastic is also allowed to be imported. Although 20,000 metric tons of waste plastic was approved to be imported last year, it was revealed that only 5,179 metric tons of waste plastic was imported for the Sri Lankan industries. Therefore, the chairman of the committee advised the authorities to consider the need of the industry and give permission accordingly and to create a system for collecting the plastic brought in within a specific period of 5 years.

Officials told the committee that many people are not interested in collecting plastic for recycling due to the high cost. However, the chairman mentioned that this amount can be increased by increasing the incentives given for plastic collection. Moreover, he also emphasized the need to establish special centers in all parts of the island for plastic collection.

At the same time, the need to finalize the proposed environmental bill and implement it was also discussed at length by the committee.

Member of Parliament Hon. Akila Ellawala as well as a group of officials from the Ministry of Environment and the Central Environment Authority also participated at the meeting.

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