

Progress Report 2025

Ministry of Labour

Chapter One

1.	Ministry of Labour.....	1
1.1	Introduction.....	1
1.2	Vision, Mission and Objectives.....	1
1.3	Key functions of the Ministry.....	1
1.4	Divisions under the Ministry.....	2
1.4.1	Administration and Establishments Division.....	2
1.4.2	Development Division.....	3
1.4.3	Planning and Monitoring Division.....	3
1.4.4	Finance Division.....	4
1.4.5	Internal Audit Division.....	4
1.5	Staff composition of the Ministry.....	6
1.6	Institutions Affiliated to the Ministry	7
1.6.1	Department of Labour.....	7
1.6.2	Department of Manpower and Employment.....	8
1.6.3	National Institute of Labour Studies.....	9
1.6.4	National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health.....	9
1.6.5	Office of the Commissioner for Workmen's Compensation.....	10
1.6.6	Shrama Vasana Fund.....	11

Chapter Two

2	Progress Achieved by the Ministry during 2024	13
2.1	Legal affairs.....	13
2.1.1.	Strengthening the legal framework to safeguard the occupational rights of employees	13
2.2.	Foreign relations.....	14
2.2.1.	Maintaining international labour standards.....	14
2.3	Planning, research and development activities.....	16
2.3.1.	Decent work programme	17
2.4	Administrative and establishment affairs.....	17
2.5	Financial progress of the Ministry.....	19
2.6	Department of Labour.....	20
2.6.1.	Social security of employees.....	20
2.6.2.	Industrial relation.....	22

2.6.3.	Inspection of the employment of employees by employers	25
2.6.4.	Legal protection to safeguard the rights of employment of employees.....	26
2.6.5	Protection and promotion of labour standards.....	28
2.6.6.	Safeguarding the occupational rights of employed women and young persons and eradicating child labour	29
2.6.7	Ensuring a decent work environment for the employee's occupational safety.....	32
2.6.8.	Activities undertaken to ensure occupational safety and health of the employee.....	33
2.6.9.	Website of the Department and Official social media activities of the Department	35
2.6.10.	Information dissemination activities.....	35
2.6.11.	Human resource management.....	39
2.6.12	Infrastructure development.....	41
2.6.13	Monitoring functions.....	42
2.6.14	Financial management.....	42
2.7.	Department of Manpower and Employment.....	43
2.7.1.	Career guidance, maintaining labour market information and public employment services.....	43
2.7.2.	Financial progress.....	47
2.8.	National Institute of Labour Studies.....	48
2.8.1.	Educating tripartite partners for better industrial relations.....	48
2.9.	National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health.....	51
2.9.1.	Enhancing occupational safety and health.....	51
2.9.2.	Financial progress achieved through operational income sources implemented by the institution.....	59
2.10	Office of the Commissioner for Workmen's Compensation.....	59
2.10.1.	Payment of compensation for occupational accidents	59
2.11.	Shrama Vasana Fund.....	60
2.11.1.	Promotion of worker welfare programmes.....	60
Chapter Three		
3	Future plans and programmes of the Ministry	63
3.1.	Ministry of Labour.....	63
3.1.1.	Strengthening the legal framework related to the labour sector.....	63
3.1.2.	Safeguarding the employer-employee rights amidst	

	globalization and open economic policies.....	64
	3.1.3. Decent work programme	64
3.2.	Department of Labour.....	64
3.3.	Department of Manpower and Employment.....	66
3.4.	National Institute of Labour Studies.....	67
3.5.	National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health.....	67
3.6.	Shrama Vasana Fund.....	68

List of Tables

Table 1.1	Ministry staff composition as of 31.12.2024.....	6
Table 2.1	Implementation of decent work programme.....	17
Table 2.2	Progress of establishment affairs.....	18
Table 2.3	Financial progress of the Ministry.....	19
Table 2.4	Reported data on strikes - from 01.01.2024 to 31.12.2024.....	24
Table 2.5	Information on awareness programmes conducted by the Social Dialogue and Workplace Cooperation Promotion Division from 01.01.2024 to 31.12.2024	25
Table 2.6	Information about the judicial proceedings conducted under the direct intervention of the Legal Division	27
Table 2.7	Progress in amending and introducing new Acts related to the labour sector	27
Table 2.8	Updating the minimum wages of wages boards	28
Table 2.9	Granting approval for 05-day work week.....	28
Table 2.10	Examination of the legal validity of collective agreements.....	28
Table 2.11	Granting approval for requests for deductions of wages under the Wages Board Ordinance and the Shop and Office Employees Act.....	29
Table 2.12	Providing explanations and interpretations for the inquiries made by employers and employees regarding the Acts and Ordinances.....	29
Table 2.13	Conducting investigations related to complaints received on child labour	29
Table 2.14	Investigations into complaints received on infringement of working conditions related to employment of women at night.....	30
Table 2.15	Information on awareness programmes conducted by the Women and Children's Affairs Division from 01.01.2024 to 31.12.2024	31
Table 2.16	Information on the employer-employee awareness programmes conducted by the Industrial Safety Division from 01.01.2024 to 31.12.2024 are as follows.	33
Table 2.17	Information on problematic situations resolved through interventions	34
Table 2.18	The details of the employer-employee awareness programmes conducted by the Occupational Safety and Health Division from 01.01.2024 to 31.12.2024.	34
Table 2.19	Information regarding training workshops held for National Occupational Safety and Health Week.....	39
Table 2.20	Information on the staff of the Department of Labour -as on 31.12.2024.....	39
Table 2.21	Information on recruitment of officers – From 01.01.2024 to 31.12.2024	39
Table 2.22	Information on conducting Efficiency Bar Examinations is as follows: - From 01.01.2024 to 31.12.2024.	40
Table 2.23	Recruitment of officers through interviews - From 01.01.2024 to 31.12.2024	40
Table 2.24	Training programmes organized and conducted by the Department for officers – From 01.01.2024 to 31.12.2024.....	41
Table 2.25	Recurrent and Capital Expenditure as on 31.12.2024.....	43
Table 2.26	Progress in implementation of job creation, promotion and public employment services programmes – Dep.of Manpower and Employment.	44

Table 2.27	Progress in conducting District Job Fairs and Regional Job Fairs - Dep.of Manpower and Employment.	44
Table 2.28	Recurrent and Capital Expenditures as on 31.12.2024..	47
Table 2.29	Details of Diplomas conducted under long-term training programmes.....	49
Table 2.30	Details of Certificate Courses.....	49
Table 2.31	Details of Certificate Courses.....	50
Table 2.32	Details of courses conducted upon the request of the client institutions.....	50
Table 2.33	Details of examinations conducted.....	50
Table 2.34	Financial progress.....	51
Table 2.35	Special programmes conducted by the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health – From 01.01.2024 to 31.12.2024.	52
Table 2.36	Information on National Diplomas in Occupational Safety and Health (English Medium)	54
Table 2.37	National Diploma in Occupational Safety and Health (Sinhala medium)	54
Table 2.38	Certificate Course in Occupational Safety and Health (Sinhala Medium)	55
Table 2.39	Foundation Course in Occupational Safety and Health	55
Table 2.40	Environmental Management Course for Executive Grade Officers.....	56
Table 2.41	Progress in conducting special programmes.....	56
Table 2.42	Financial progress achieved through operational income sources as per the financial statements closed as on 31.12.2024.....	59
Table 2.43	Number of cases filed as on 31.12.2024.....	60
Table 2.44	Financial progress of programmes conducted during 2024.....	62
Table 2.45	Physical progress of programmes conducted during 2024.....	62

List of Graphs

Graph 2.1	Number of decision letters sent for payment of EPF benefits from 01.01.2024 to 31.12.2024	20
Graph 2.2	Receipts and resolutions of complaints on infringement of statutory rights from 2020 to 31.10.2024.....	22
Graph 2.3	Receipt and settlement of complaints on industrial disputes from 2020 to 31.10.2024.....	23
Graph 2.4	Cases filed in Magistrate Courts and closed cases – From 01.01.2024 to 31.12.2024.....	27
Graph 2.5	Budgetary allocations and expenditure – Dep. Of Manpower & Employment	48
Graph 2.6	Development and other expenditure – Dep. Of Manpower & Employment	48
Graph 2.7	Lottery Revenue - From 2020 to 2024.....	62

List of Images

Image 2.1	Conducting programmes in collaboration with Community Police Committees to eliminate child labour in Sri Lanka.....	31
Image 2.2	International Women's Day Celebration Programme 2024.....	38
Image 2.3	Awareness programmes conducted to develop the National Occupational Safety and Health Policy.....	56
Image 2.4	The programme to finally announce the National Occupational Safety Policy was held on June 7th and July 31st, 2024.....	57
Image 2.5	The workshop to educate and train professionals on Work at Height (TOT) was held in collaboration with the Ericsson institute on 04th, 05th and 06th August 2024.	57
Image 2.6	The National Occupational Safety and Health conference 2024.....	58
Image 2.7	The Diploma and Certificate Awarding Ceremony for Occupational Safety and Health 2024.....	58
Image 2.8	School equipment distribution programmes conducted by Shrama Vasana Fund.....	61

1. Ministry of Labour

1.1. Introduction

The prime mission of the Ministry of Labour is to formulate and implement policies to enhance the contribution of the local labour force to economic development by protecting the occupational rights of private and semi-government employees, ensuring social security, ensuring industrial peace, directing skilled labour to the job market, providing employment, ensuring job security and promoting productivity in the country. In realizing this mission, the programmes of the ministry have been lined up, in terms of Gazette Extraordinary No. 2412/08 dated 25.11.2024, based on the sustainable development goals and the international conventions ratified by Sri Lanka. As per the said Gazette notification, the key function of the Ministry is to formulate, implement, follow up and evaluate policies, programmes and projects pertaining to the labour sphere and the scope of the institutions affiliated to the Ministry, based on the national policies implemented by the Government.

1.2. Vision, Mission and Objectives

Vision

A satisfied, productive labour force

Mission

Contribute to socio-economic development through industrial peace and cooperation, social security, protection of labour rights and promotion of productivity.

Objectives

- Strengthening employer-employee relations through tripartite empowerment.
- Ensuring working conditions and employee rights align with international standards.
- Elimination of child labour.
- Empowering working women, strengthening occupational safety and occupational laws, rights
- Enhancing flexibility in labour laws and procedures.
- Formulating effective strategies to ensure social security of working people.

1.3. Key functions of the Ministry

- Formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies, programmes and projects, in relation to the subjects of Labour, based on the policies implemented by the government.
- Providing public services within the purview of the Ministry in an efficient and public friendly manner
- Reforming all methods and procedures using modern management methods and technology to help ensure the performance of the Ministry's duties while eliminating waste and corruption.
- To deal with other matters relating to the administration of the Labour Tribunals.

- Formulation and implementation of policies for labour relations standards, employee administration, welfare and health in line with international standards.
- Maintain cooperation with International Labour Organization and International Social Security Associations.
- Administration and regulation of Employees' Provident Fund, private provident Fund and private pension schemes.
- Industrial relations and resolving of industrial disputes.
- Matters relating to formulation and regulation of rules and regulations relevant to labour relations.
- Registration of trade unions and introduction and implementation of positive measures for harnessing activities of all trade unions in the public and private sectors for the country's development.
- Implementation of the National Policy on Manpower and Employment.
- Creating a Social Security Fund to cover all levels of employees in the private sector
- Creating a social security fund that covers all employees
- Eliminating barriers for women to effectively occupy executive and management positions
- Introducing a long term insurance plan and pension benefits scheme for registered construction workers

1.4. Divisions under the Ministry

1.4.1. Administration and Establishments Division

Overseeing the overall administration, management, maintenance, training and coordination of the Ministry and its affiliated institutions falls under the purview of this division. It is also responsible for human resources management and related functions. Accordingly,

- Maintaining personal files of all public officers attached to the Ministry and the ancillary staff of the Hon.Minister and establishment activities related to them and updating information on the staff
- Establishment and administrative affairs to be concerned at the ministerial level in respect of the officers working in the departments and statutory bodies under the Ministry
- Preparation of cabinet memoranda for Ministry and taking action in respect of cabinet decisions
- Providing policy contribution to industrial cooperation, employment promotion and safety through updating of existing laws and enacting new ones
- Providing answers to referrals made by the Consultative Committee and Public Petitions Committee as well as parliamentary questions and refers public complaints forwarded by the Presidential Secretariat and the Prime Minister's Office as well as public grievances received directly from the public to the relevant institutions.

- Administration of vehicles of the Ministry, provision of necessary infrastructure facilities, training activities, management of capital goods and equipment, activities relating to overtime, holiday payments, gratuity insurance and approval of distress loans.

1.4.2. Development Division

Working on behalf of the Ministry of Labour by utilizing the Sri Lanka's association with the International Labour Organization (ILO) as a member nation, safeguarding the labour rights in the country and addressing labour-related issues, under internationally recognized conventions and recommendations, fall under the purview of this division.

- Presenting the progress made by Sri Lanka in relation to the implementation of the conventions of the ILO ratified by Sri Lanka to the ILO within the prescribed period.
- Taking action to brief the international community of the progress achieved by Sri Lanka regarding labour sector.
- Taking measures to procure the financial and technical assistance of the ILO for resolving issues pertaining to the field of labour.
- Initiating actions to have foreign training provided to officials of the Ministry and institutions thereunder.
- Taking necessary action to draft new laws and amend existing labour laws to be in tune with the present, and to implement them and follow up thereof.
- Entering into new MOUs/agreements, updating agreements, following up on the performance of agreements, activities related to joint committee meetings and all activities related to Regional / Global Dialogue
- Organizing mobile service programmes

1.4.3. Planning and Monitoring Division

Devising plans of the Ministry and all institutions under its purview required for navigating the development plans towards the set targets, and the implementation of them, progress review and follow up thereof are the key functions of this division. In addition, the division executes the following duties as well.

- Preparation of the annual action plan, outlining the development goals of the Ministry and its affiliated institutions, and submit it to the relevant stakeholders and making them implement the plan, at the same time, monitoring and encouraging the achievement of the targets through progress review and follow up thereof.
- Coordination with the Presidential Secretariat, Ministry of Finance, Department of Project Management and Monitoring and Department of National Planning in terms of National Budget Circular and submission of progress reports monthly and quarterly.
- Identifying and submit project proposals for preparation of annual budget estimates

- Preparation of the annual performance report detailing the progress achieved by the Ministry and submission of progress report for the committee stage debate of the budget.
- Appraisal of development project proposals related to the curriculum and referral to the Department of National Planning as appropriate.
- Contributing as relevant to action plans implemented by various Ministries

1.4.4. Finance Division

The core responsibility of the Accounts Division is to take necessary measures for efficient, effective and economical administration of financial resources allocated from the annual budget to the Ministry in compliance with state policies.

- Conducting Annual Board of Survey as per Public Finance Circular 01/2020
- Preparation of reports related to the agency of the financial authority and carrying out the work of delegation of financial powers
- Preparation of Annual Budget Estimate
- Preparation of Annual Financial Statement
- Preparation of Committee Report on Public Accounts, submission of monthly and quarterly financial reports to the General Treasury and other relevant institutions.
- Updating and maintaining the audit query documents and forwarding the answers to the relevant audit queries to the Auditor General

1.4.5. Internal Audit Division

The internal audit activities of the Ministry are carried out in terms of as per the appointments made in terms of Section 40 of the National Audit Act to ensure that the responsibility of the Chief Accounting Officer is carried out as set out in Section 38(b) and (f) of the said Act and requirements of Circular No. 01/2019 dated 12.01.2019 of the Department of Management Audit and the powers vested in the Internal Audit Division in terms of FR 133 and FR 134.

The responsibility conducting the relevant internal audit activities of the Ministry of Labour and Departments and Institutions under it and carrying out special investigations as per the requirement also fall under the scope of internal audit.

- Assessing the effectiveness of the internal audit and control system within the organization.
- Examining the compliance with the Establishment Code of the Government, the Finance Regulations of the Government, and the Finance Regulations and circulars, as well as other supplementary instructions periodically issued by the Ministry of Public Administration and the General Treasury.
- Efficient management of internal audit activities in alignment with the mission and objectives of the Ministry of Labour and Foreign Employment, its departments, and other affiliated institutions, adhering to audit principles and systems.

- Assessing the control systems established to ensure adherence to policies, plans, procedures, laws, and regulations that may significantly impact the activities of the Ministry.
- Evaluating and verifying the measures taken to protect assets and verify the existence of assets
- Evaluation of activities or programs and verification of information to ascertain whether physical and financial progress has been achieved in accordance with the established objectives of the Ministry
- Provide guidance to establish appropriate internal control processes and risk management processes for each division of the organization
- Communicating findings post-audit and submitting necessary corrections thereafter.
- Preparation and implementation of annual audit plan
- Making necessary arrangements for the submission of reports to the Department of Management Audit by the due date.
- Convening the Audit and Management Committee meeting and conducting the necessary activities
- Performing and reporting on specific duties as assigned by management from time to time.

1.5. Staff composition of the Ministry

Table 1.1. Staff composition of the Ministry

	Institution	Senior Level		Tertiary level		Secondary level		Primary Level		Other		Total		
		No. Approved	No. Employed	No. Approved	No. Employed	No. Approved	No. Employed	No. Approved	No. Employed	No. Approved	No. Employed	No. Approved	No. Employed	Percentage of vacancies
1	Office of the Ministry	19	17	3	2	73	43	35	24	1	1	131	87	35%
2	Department of Labour	217	126	668	504	1,928	1,671	476	410	-	-	3,289	2,711	18%
3	Department of Manpower & Employment	19	10	5	1	623	595	15	15	-	-	662	621	6%
4	National Institute of Labour Studies	9	3	13	7	18	9	5	2	-	-	45	21	53%
5	National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health	7	2	3	2	10	6	5	5	-	-	25	15	40
6	Office of the Commissioner for Workmen's Compensation	5	3	2	1	31	26	5	5	-	-	44	35	20%
8	Shrama Vasana Fund	1	1	4	3	8	4	4	2	-	-	17	10	41%
	Total	277	162	698	520	2691	2354	545	463	1	1	4213	3500	17%

1.6. Institutions Affiliated to the Ministry

1.6.1. Department of Labour

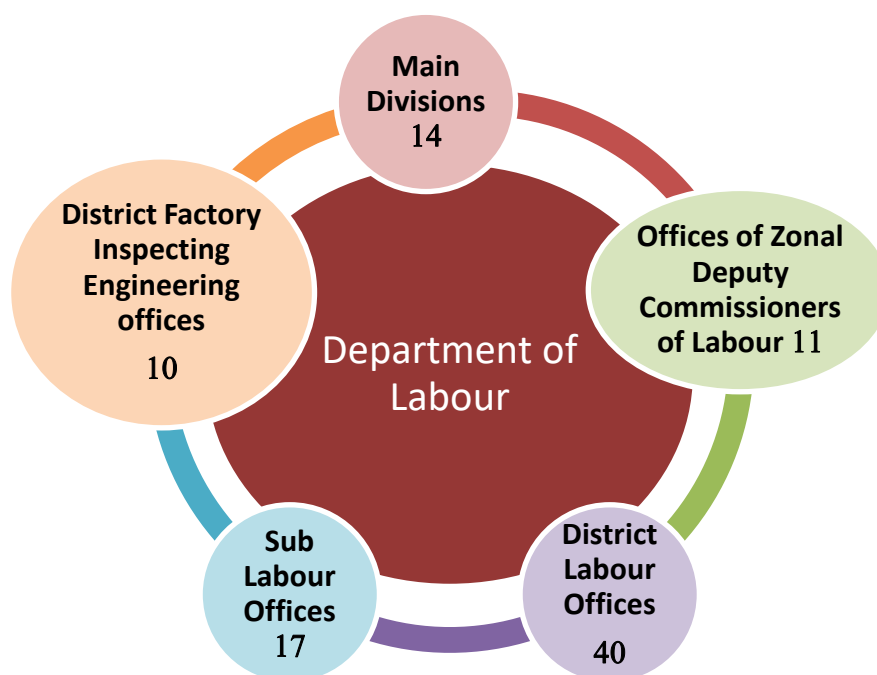
A key role of the Labour Department is to uphold the rights of the Sri Lankan private sector and semi-government sector employee community under the labour laws. The Department of Labour expanded its role in 2024 to proactively promote industrial peace by cultivating positive employer-employee relationships and reinforcing workers' rights, with the support of employers.

In line with the government's commitment to fostering a more conducive investment environment, the Department of Labour took initial efforts in 2023 to introduce the New Labour Law. This updated legislation aims to simplify the decades-old and intricate labour laws, thereby enhancing employer-employee relations.

Key Functions

- Making arrangements to enhance employer-employee relations at the institutional level by promoting social dialogue.
- Ensuring the protection of workers' rights through the enforcement of labour laws.
- Settlement of industrial disputes through conciliation, collective agreements, and arbitration.
- Provision of social security for employees through the Employees' Provident Fund.
- Addressing the occupational safety and health of employees.
- Dealing with elimination of child labour and protection of employed women
- Making arrangements to protect labour standards by strengthening wages and working conditions

Structure of the Department



1.6.2. Department of Manpower and Employment

The optimal utilization of a country's limited resources is a critical factor in its progress. The impact of a nation's human resources on the positive growth and behavior of key development factors such as economic development, innovation and creativity, workforce productivity, global competitiveness, social stability, health and well-being, demographic dividend, social progress, adaptation to technological change and human capital formation is immense. The inverse relationship between the development of a country and its development agents is formed through the efficiency and effectiveness of human resources. The Department of Manpower and Employment is operational from 01.01.2010 as per the Gazette Extraordinary No. 1640/31 dated 12.02.2010 with the aim of matching the human resources of Sri Lanka with the labour market by identifying global and local labour market trends.

Key functions

- Formulation and implementation of National Manpower and Employment Policy.
- Job creation and promotion activities
- Career guidance activities
- Collection, analysis and dissemination of labour market information
- All services related to public employment service

As the responsibility of preparing and implementing a National Manpower and Employment Policy stated as the first task has now been assigned to the National Human Resource Development Council, the department contributes to accomplishing the above objectives as a stakeholder institution.

1.6.3. National Institute of Labour Studies

The National Institute of Labour Studies, operating under the Ministry of Labour, was established on September 11, 2007 and enacted by the National Institute of Labour Studies Act No. 12 of 2010. The Institute is governed by a governing body made up of tripartite partners in the field of labour, employer, employee and government employees.

Key functions

- Conducting labour study programmes in collaboration with local or foreign institutions, taking steps to ensure the welfare of workers to make them active participants in the development process.
- Conducting seminars, workshops, conferences and meetings on labour studies and publishing magazines, journals, periodicals and books.
- Conducting research, surveys and making arrangements for courses related to labour studies, establishing and maintaining library and information services.
- Working in close cooperation with national and foreign institutions, organizations, associations and societies with similar objectives
- Conducting courses, including diploma programmes in labour studies, in collaboration with universities and similar institutions and awarding certificates and diplomas as necessary
- Engaging in activities aimed at maintaining industrial peace

1.6.4. National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health

With the aim of creating a safe and healthy workforce in Sri Lanka by following upright occupational safety measures and good health practices, the National Occupational Safety and Health Institute was established as a subsidiary of the Ministry of Labour and Labour Relations by the National Occupational Safety and Health Institute Act No. 38 of 2009.

This institute works on to creating a prolific workforce in Sri Lanka through daily environmental measurement surveys, risk assessment and medical examinations as well as trainings conducted as special programmes, projects and activities carried out on the basis of international cooperation with other countries.

Key functions

- Periodically assessing and evaluating the standards to be maintained in workplaces or the working environment and to advise the Minister on legislative requirements related to those standards.
- Providing consultancy services on all matters related to occupational safety, health and working environment
- Imposing or charging a fee for services rendered or facilities or equipment provided by the institution to any other institution, organization or other person

- Acquiring, holding, leasing or renting, mortgaging, encumbering, selling or otherwise disposing of any immovable or movable property for the purpose of carrying out the functions of the institution.
- Entering into and executing all agreements or contracts which may be necessary for the performance of the functions of the institution by the institution or by any other officer or agent authorized by the institution for the occasion.

1.6.5. Office of the Commissioner for Workmen’s Compensation

The Workmen’s Compensation Ordinance No 19 of 1934 was enacted to provide for the payment of compensation to workers for accidents caused in the course of employment. The principal enactment was amended on several occasions, the last of which was done by the Act No.10 of 2022. The Workmen’s Compensation Court comprises 14 circuit courts covering the entire island with the powers of district judge and magisterial powers. The Office of the Commissioner for Workmen’s Compensation has 43 positions including the Commissioner for Workmen’s Compensation, 3 posts of Additional Commissioners for Workmen’s Compensation who are judicial officers appointed by the Judicial Services Commission and 1 post of Grade 1 of the Sri Lanka Accounting Service and 1 post of the Sri Lanka Administrative Service. The prime objective of the office is to cause compensation to be paid to workmen who sustain injuries in the course of employment, who suffer from diseases contracted due to the nature of the employment and to dependents of workmen who die due to accidents in workplaces.

Provisions of the Code of Criminal Procedure, Code of Civil Procedure, and Evidence Ordinance are applicable for the workmen compensation court procedure, the appeal procedure is equivalent to that of district court.

Key functions

- Activities pertaining to recovery of compensation from employers for accidents, occupational diseases arising out of in the course of employment in the public or private sector and for dependents in the event of death of a workman. (According to the last amendment, the maximum compensation that can be granted is Rs. 2,000,000)
- Keeping the custody of the compensation entitled to minor dependants of a deceased workman in National Savings Bank until they reach maturity.
- In circumstances where the employer defaults the payment of compensation, seizing the movable and immovable property of such employer and sell them in public auction to recover compensation.
- Issuance, renewal and cancellation of workmen compensation insurance licenses
- Conducting onsite inspections in event of an accident caused to an employee.
- Causing compensation to be recovered for workmen employed in ships and aircraft registered in Sri Lanka for accidents caused outside Sri Lanka.

1.6.6. Shrama Vasana Fund

Shrama Vasana Fund established to promote welfare of employees by Act No. 12 of 1998 (as amended by Act No.15 f 2019) is an institution under the purview of the Ministry of Labour. Under 06 broad objectives outlined in the Act, the fund since its inception has initiated a number of welfare measures for the betterment of employees.

The main source of funding of ‘Sharma Vasana Fund’ is the income from the “Jathika Sampatha” lottery of the National Lotteries Board. With the growth of Jathika Sampatha lottery sales, the services to be performed for the welfare of workers can also be developed.

Key functions

- Promotion of the welfare of employees and their dependants.
- Providing financial and other assistance to employees when the institutions they were working in, are closed down without prior notice
- Providing medical and other facilities to employees and their dependants in times of emergency
- Providing temporary assistance to employees when inquiries are instituted against them
- Providing financial and other benefits to employees or their dependents, in times of distress.
- Presenting gifts to persons who have rendered outstanding service to employee welfare
- Providing financial relief to obtain legal assistance to employees where proceedings in respect of termination of employment of an employee or of an industrial dispute, is initiated or pending under the provisions of any written law, before the Commissioner General of Labour, a Labour Tribunal, an Arbitrator or an Industrial Court or any court of law

2. Progress Achieved by the Ministry during 2024

This Ministry is executing numerous programmes to fulfill the tasks assigned under the arenas of safeguarding the rights of the working people, ensuring their job security and establishing industrial peace in the country.

The country's labour force is 8.40 million, of which 8.01 million are employed. The Ministry is responsible for maintaining industrial peace in the country and thereby contributing to the socio-economic development of the country by implementing the mechanism to ensure occupational rights, occupational safety and health and social security of 3.75 million employees employed in the private and semi-government sectors, apart from government employees, those who engaged in their own business and, those who contribute to family businesses.

This chapter contains a summary of the progress achieved by the Ministry and institutions affiliated thereto up to 31 December 2024 through activities carried out for the realization of their respective objectives.

2.1. Legal affairs

2.1.1. Strengthening the legal framework to safeguard the occupational rights of employees

Formulating legal provisions in compliance with recognized national and international socioeconomic conditions and labour conventions and standards enabling an investment friendly environment in Sri Lanka and paving the way for the future advancement of the country is a timely responsibility entrusted to the Ministry. Currently, there are 50 acts and ordinances, and regulations in force in Sri Lanka aimed at safeguarding the rights and welfare of the working people. These rules have been enforced since the establishment of the Department of Labour. In order to meet the present and future challenges as well as to ensure the rights of the working people, necessary steps have been taken to amend the relevant Acts and Ordinances to ensure benefits to all parties by removing and simplifying the complexities between the Acts.

- **Amendment of labour laws with provisions meeting current demands**

The existing acts and ordinances enforced by the Department of Labour are insufficient to effectively respond to the contemporary socioeconomic changes and the corresponding transformations in the world of work. There is a growing need for a labor law that not only safeguards the rights of the working community but also supports the sustainability of businesses and enhances the attraction for foreign investors. Similarly, there is a necessity to streamline and simplify the Acts, thereby eliminating complexities and ensuring benefits for all parties involved. For this purpose, in order to amend the provisions of 13 Acts currently in operation, in accordance with the Cabinet decisions CP No./23/1439/625/025 dated 07.08.2023 and CP No./23/1439/625/025-I dated 30.10.2023, the rough draft has been forwarded

to the Legal Draftsman on 17.11.2023 to be prepared as a draft bill. This rough draft is to be further considered in light of the new government policies, and necessary amendments to be made and submitted to the new Cabinet of Ministers.

- **Amendment of the Shop and Office Employees Act, No. 19 of 1954 to suit the welfare of employees and to suit the present**

Shop and Office Employees (Regulation of Employment and Remuneration) (Amendment) Act, No. 28 of 2024 containing the provisions for the employment of women at night work in institutions as per the need of the hour, was passed in Parliament on 09.05.2024.

- **Amendment of the Employees' Provident Fund Act, No. 15 of 1958 to suit the welfare of employees and to suit the present**

As per the Cabinet decision CP No./24/1234/625/017 and dated 01.07.2024, the Bill has been referred to the Legal Draftsman on 06.08.2024 for preparation as a bill. However, the necessary amendments will be made after considering the further identified amendments and in light of the new government policies and will be submitted to the Cabinet of Ministers in the future.

- **The National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health Act, No. 38 of 2009**

The bill has been referred to the Legal Draftsman on 19.04.2023 in accordance with the Cabinet decision CP No. 23/0396/625/003 dated 07.03.2023. The Legal Draftsman has requested observations on certain matters in this regards and is to be further considered and amended in light of the new government policies, including amendments to be further made in accordance with new global and market requirements, and submitted to the Cabinet of Ministers.

- **Amendment to the Shram Vasana Fund Act, No. 12 of 1998**

The draft regulations to amend the Shram Vasana Fund Act is to be prepared and submitted to the Board of Directors for approval.

2.2. Foreign relations

2.2.1. Maintaining international labour standards

- I. Under Article 22 of the International Labour Organization (ILO), 4 reports for conventions have been drafted for the year 2024 and 4 reports have been prepared and submitted to the ILO by now.
- II. 01 report has been prepared and submitted to the International Labour Organization for non-ratified conventions under Article 19 of the International Labour Organization (ILO).

- III. Participation in 02 rounds of discussions related to International Monetary Fund (IMF)
- IV. Conducting 01 meeting related to the National Steering Committee on the Elimination of Child Labour (NSCECL) and coordinating all related activities.
- V. The report of the Tripartite Committee meeting on the establishment of a Social Security Fund with the technical assistance of the International Labour Organization has been submitted to the Cabinet of Ministers. Subsequently, the Cabinet of Ministers has instructed the Secretary to the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development and the Secretary to the Ministry of Labour to jointly take steps to review and revise the National Social Security Policy of Sri Lanka, which was previously approved by the Cabinet of Ministers. The Cabinet has also instructed the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development to submit the revised National Social Security Policy of Sri Lanka through the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development.
- VI. Coordinating and following up all activities related to the participation of tripartite delegates to the International Labour Conference held annually in Geneva. Accordingly, the International Labour Conference was held from 03.06.2024 to 14.06.2023 and was attended by 09 delegates representing Sri Lanka.
- VII. Arrangements are being made to formulate, launch and implement the Development of Employment Recovery Strategy, under decent work, with the technical assistance of the International Labour Organization (ILO) through a tripartite committee with the objective of finding solutions to labour market issues, which was a timely need due to the economic crisis.
- VIII. Taking steps to make the officials of other institutions related to this Ministry and officials of the Department of Labour participate in foreign scholarship workshops and training programmes. During the period from January 01, 2024 to December 30, 2024, 67 officers have gone abroad to attend foreign training courses and workshops.
- IX. Taking actions on the Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) to be signed between Sri Lanka and foreign countries in the field of social security, education and all related programmes.
- Arrangements are being made for the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Social Security Agreement between India and Sri Lanka. The agreement has been finalized and is awaiting ratification by the Indian side.
 - Arrangements are being made for the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the National Institute of Labour Studies, Sri Lanka, and the V.V. Giri National Institute of Education, India. The agreement has been finalized and is awaiting clearance from the Attorney General's Department.

- X. Coordinating all activities related to projects and workshops implemented with the technical assistance of the International Labour Organization. This includes a Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP) meeting and two Unemployment Insurance Consultation Meetings. The ILO submitted the Actuarial Report on the Unemployment Insurance to the Government.
- XI. Submission of visa request letters to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the officers of the International Labour Organization who are visiting Sri Lanka for the purpose of providing technical assistance. Accordingly, 42 letters of request have been submitted from 01.01.2024 to 30.09.2024.
- XII. Providing information related to important aspects of economic development and outlook for economic development published annually by the Central Bank of Sri Lanka and one report related to the Annual Report of the Central Bank has been submitted.
- XIII. 05 key committee meetings and 03 sub-committee meetings on plantation labour issues have been held with the local plantation companies and 01 meetings have been held with the Red Flag Organization.

2.3. Planning, research and development activities

- I. 24 mobile service programmes were successfully conducted at the district level under the banner of "GLOCAL FAIR – 2024 with the aim of introducing facilities and opportunities for migrant workers and the young children of migrant workers' families, preparing them to join the future labour market by enhancing their educational and professional skills, providing opportunities for members of migrant workers' associations to deliver services aimed at improving the living conditions of migrant workers and addressing their pressing concerns, conducting the 'Garu Saru' programme to enhance the professional dignity of workers engaged in occupations that are often undervalued in the labour market promoting the 'Smart Club' concept for school children and school dropouts to equip them with the knowledge and skills necessary for future employment opportunities and distributing school stationery to underprivileged children through the Shrama Vasana Fund.
- II. In recognition of the great contribution made by migrant workers in overcoming the economic crisis in the country, in collaboration with the Foreign Employment Division, **03 programmes were successfully conducted under the name "Vigamanika Harasara" in Kurunegala, Galle and Colombo districts** with the participation of migrant workers, members of migrant worker families and returned migrants.
- III. Initial work was carried out to revise the annual action plans of the Ministry and affiliated institutions in line with the new government policies.

2.3.1. Decent work programme

For Sri Lanka to embark on the path to development, it is essential to promote decent work. This approach aims to ensure equal opportunities for both women and men to engage in productive employment under conditions of freedom, equity, security, and human dignity. It is important to recognize that development is not merely about creating jobs but also about ensuring that the jobs created meet acceptable standards of quality. The Decent Work Programme operates under four key pillars: employment generation, promotion of national productivity, workplace ownership, social protection, and social dialogue. Furthermore, in addition to these core pillars, the programme coordinates initiatives across various sectors, focusing on productivity promotion and gender mainstreaming to achieve its broader objectives.

Under the decent work programme, Rs. 8.4 million will be allocated to the following institutions to implement various programmes and projects.

Table 2.1 - Implementation of decent work programme

	Institution	Reserved allocation (Rs.)	Amount used (Rs.)	Expense percentage
01	Department of Labour			
i	Social Dialogue and Workplace Cooperation Division	3,039,000.00	1,682,896.00	56%
ii	Women and Child Affairs Division	3,837,000.00	2,966,918.97	77%
iii	Occupational Health Division	244,000.00	244,000.00	100%
iii	Industrial Safety Division	915,000.00	909,295.00	99%
v	Planning Research Training and Publication Division	453,000.00	375,092.25	83%
	Total	8,488,000.00	6,178,202.22	72.78%

2.4. Administrative and establishment affairs

- I. From January to December 2024, the Ministry submitted 26 Cabinet Memoranda to the Cabinet of Ministers. Of these, 20 received Cabinet approval. The remaining memoranda were referred to various institutions for observations, approvals, or other necessary actions due to specific requirements.
- II. During the period under review, 713 public complaints have been received from government institutions such as the Presidential Secretariat, the Prime Minister's Office, various ministries and departments, as well as directly from the public. All of them have been referred to the Department of Labour and other relevant institutions for further actions and response reports have been obtained.

In addition, in accordance with the proposal to provide compensation to the employees of the Thulhiriya-Pugoda National Textile Mills Ltd. who lost their jobs due to a strike in 1978, applications were submitted for 2259 employees to obtain information about the relevant employees. The Cabinet of ministers approved the payment of compensation to 1717 eligible employees and forwarded the information to the Ministry of Finance to allocate the relevant financial provisions.

- III. 26 Requests have been received under the Right to Information Act and information has been provided for all requests. Similarly, in late 2024, this Ministry introduced a WhatsApp number (070 722 7877) for public complaints, suggestions and comments.
- IV. During the period under review, 43 Ministry officers participated in training courses conducted by various institutions. These officers were assigned to attend training programmes deemed essential for fulfilling their duties, in compliance with service regulations and recruitment procedures. The expenses for these training courses were happened to be managed in strict adherence to the expenditure management circular.

Table 2.2 - Progress of establishment affairs

No.	Activity	Progress
01	Answers to Parliamentary Oral Questions	12
02	Reports referred to the Committee on Public Petitions	1
03	Submission of Annual Reports for Cabinet Approval	2
04	Submission of Annual Reports to Parliament	5
05	Observations to Cabinet Memoranda	6

2.5. Financial progress

Table 2.3. – Financial progress of the Ministry

	Institution	Exp. head		Net provision (Rs. 000')	Expenditure (Rs. 000')	Balance provision (Rs. 000')	Expenditure percentage(%)	
01	Ministry office	193	Recurrent	324,878	269,550	54,968	83	
			Capital	29,450	13,032	16,418	44	
02	National Institute of Labour Studies		Recurrent	-	-	-	-	
			Capital	-	-	-	-	
03	National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health		Recurrent	-	-	-	-	
			Capital	-	-	-	-	
05	Office of the Commissioner for Workmen's Compensation		Recurrent	47,935	44,332	3,603	92	
			Capital	3,000	1,529	1,471	51	
Sub total				Recurrent	372,813	313,882	58,571	84
				Capital	32,450	14,561	17,889	45
06	Department of Labour	221	Recurrent	3,022,981.14	3,008,102.29	14,878.84	99	
			Capital	1,403,925	316,149.88	1,087,775.11	22	
07	Department of Manpower and Employment	328	Recurrent	592,915	580,091	12,824	97	
			Capital	29,725	19,829	9,896	66	
Total			Recurrent	3,988,709.14	3,902,075.29	86,273.84	98	
			Capital	1,466,100	350,539.88	1,115,560.11	23	
Sum total				5,454,809.14	4,252,615.17	1,201,833.95	78	

2.6. Department of Labour

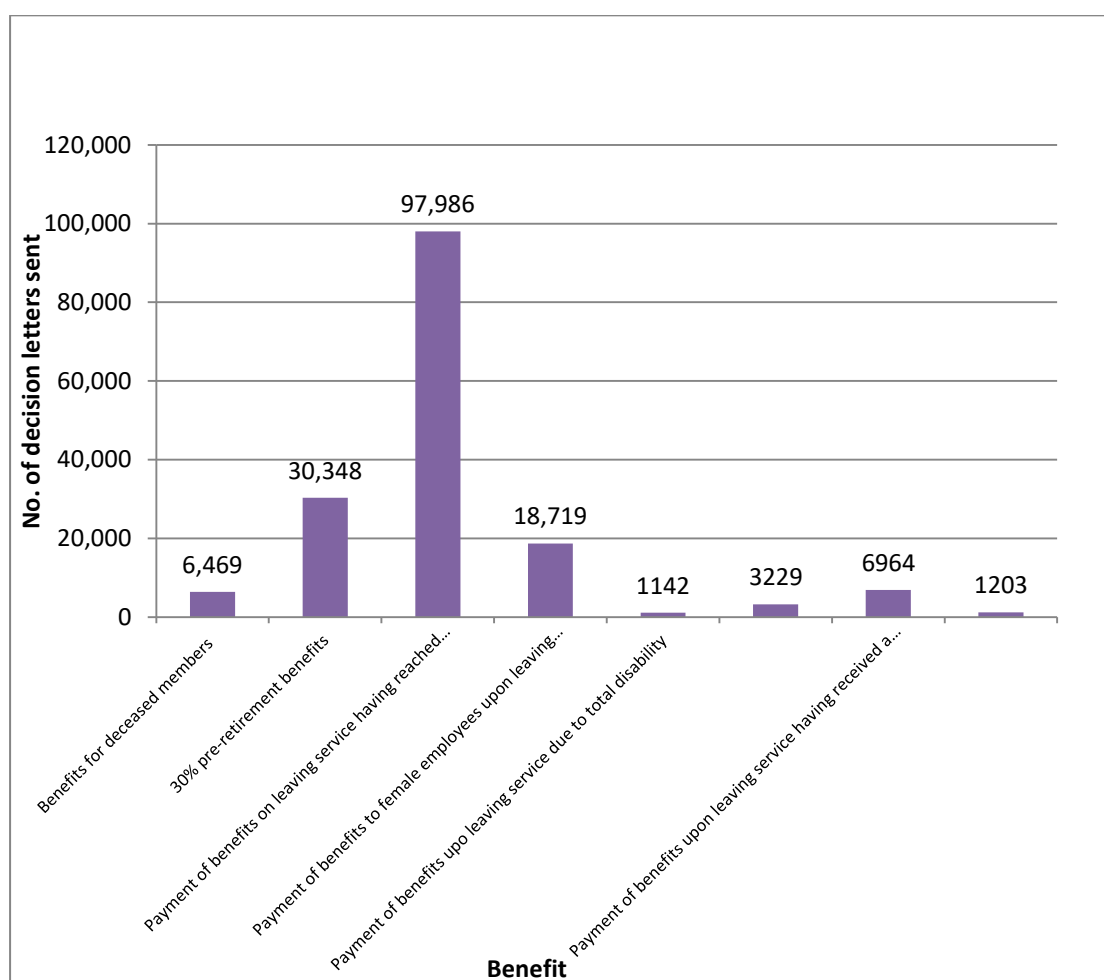
2.6.1. Social security of employees

The Employees' Provident Fund has been established by the Employees' Provident Fund Act, No. 15 of 1958 for the social security of the employees of the private sector and the semi-government sector in Sri Lanka. The administrative functions of this fund are carried out by the Department of Labour and its funds are managed by the Monetary Board of the Central Bank of Sri Lanka. Accordingly, the functions performed by the Department of Labour from 01.01.2024 to 31.12.2024 are as follows.

- **Payment of benefits of EPF**

166,060 decision letters have been sent regarding the payment of EPF benefits from 01.01.2024 to 31.12.2024 and the details are shown in the graph below.

Graph 2.1- Number of decision letters sent for payment of EPF benefits from 01.01.2024 to 31.12.2024



- **Sending notices to charge contributions from employers who default on contributions**

First notices and red notices are issued for employers who fail to make contributions as stipulated and if such notices are not properly responded to, action is taken to constitute legal actions and recover the contributions together with the surcharge and account them.

- Number of first notices sent - 14,412
- Amount calculated from first notices - Rs. 7247 million
- Number of red notices sent - 7040
- Amount calculated from red notices - Rs.3914 million

- **Measures taken to promote the Employees' Provident Fund and improve the efficiency of providing services to clients**

The new office premises on the first floor of the Labour Secretariat building were opened on 06.08.2024 to provide EPF related services to the employees at a single location. Accordingly, the Claim Branch, EPF Death Claims 'L' Branch, the 30% Pre-Benefit Payment Branch, and the Central Filing Section (CFS) is established on the first floor and services are being provided. Similarly, the new system of registering employees as members of the Employees' Provident Fund (EPF) for the District Labour Offices in North Colombo, South Colombo, East Colombo, West Colombo and Central Colombo has also been facilitated at this location.

Similarly, mobile service programmes were also conducted during the year 2024 with the assistance of the Central Bank of Sri Lanka to mitigate the problems arising due to the lack of proper awareness regarding the Employees' Provident Fund among the members and to educate the members as well as the employers.

The development of a new software for the registration of employees under the Employees' Provident Fund was carried out in the year 2023 and its future activities were carried out in the year 2024. Accordingly, the installation of this new software in all District and Sub-Labour offices was completed by December 2024. Via this, it is expected to make the registration of employees under the Employees' Provident Fund more efficiently.

Similarly, necessary measures were identified to promote employer registration and streamline the institution registry. Accordingly, conducting at least four group inspections per month was started by the Labour offices. It is also planned to carry out other activities identified in the year 2025 such as raising public awareness through media usage, and promoting field inspections by utilizing information about institutions available in the data systems of other government and semi-government institutions such as the Employees' Trust Fund Board.

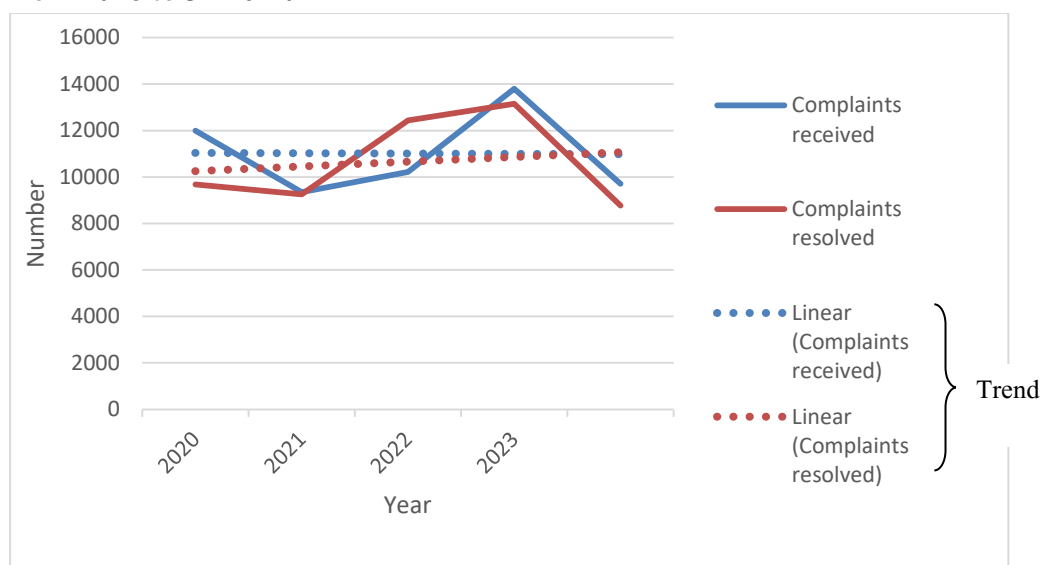
In order to simplify the system of payment of Employees' Provident Fund Benefits, the necessary amendments to the Employees' Provident Fund Benefits Application Forms, amendments to the Data Systems, etc., were identified and relevant steps were initiated.

2.6.2. Industrial relation

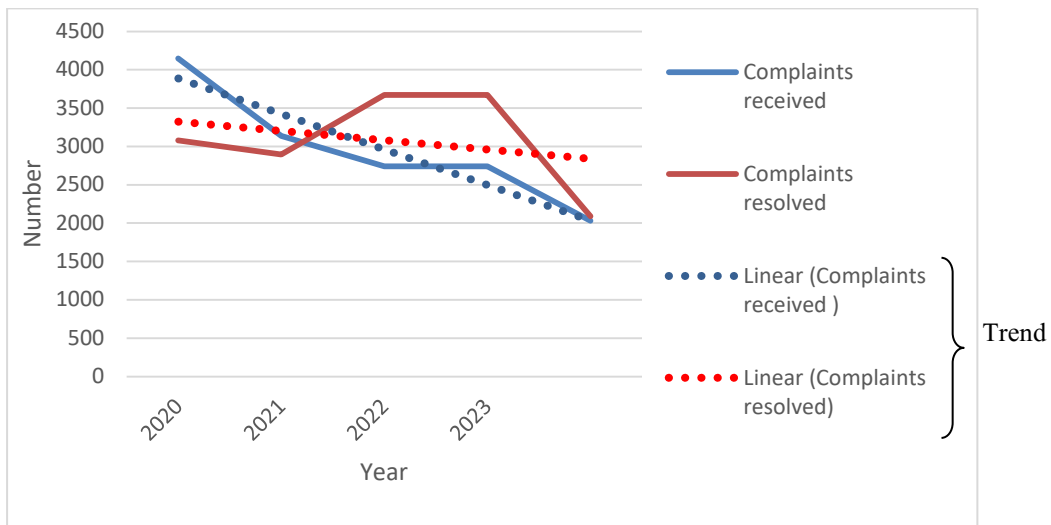
- **Redressal of complaints of infringement of statutory rights and settlement of industrial disputes**

Measures were taken to deal with the complaints on infringement of constitutional rights and industrial disputes made by employees or trade unions to the department's head office and district and sub-offices. Similarly, requests made to the Commissioner General of Labour to have a formal investigation conducted by a person who is not satisfied with a complaint investigation or an institution investigation that has been carried out were re-investigated as necessary.

Graph 2.2- Receipts and resolutions of complaints on infringement of statutory rights from 2020 to 31.10.2024



Graph 2.3- Receipt and settlement of complaints on industrial disputes from 2020 to 31.10.2024



From March, 2022, a private or semi-government sector employee who is wishing to submit a complaint to the Department of Labour is being provided with the facility to submit any issue related to his/her job to the Department of Labour through the online mode via <https://cms.labourdept.gov.lk> E-service. Accordingly, this Complaint Management System (CMS) includes the Occupational Safety and Health Module (OSH Module) and the Legal Module and the relevant software development activities are being carried out.

Similarly, the work of resolving complaints and petitions received by the Department of Labour can be done more efficiently and optimally by following a standard procedure. Accordingly, a standard procedure and a series of instructions for the resolution of complaints and petitions received by the Department of Labour were prepared as a guideline and those procedures are being used by the relevant offices and departments since November 2021. The basic steps to prepare a Comprehensive Guide for Handling of Inquiries on Labour Related Complaints were commenced in 2024 with the technical assistance of the International Labour Organization (ILO) to make these process more efficient.

- **Persuasion of both employer and employee for collective agreements**

By entering into collective agreements, employees are given more privileges than they are entitled to by labour laws, and employers are enabled to enter into conditions for more productive service from their employees.

The Social Dialogue promotes the entrance of employer and employee parties into such collective agreements. The total number of collective agreements in force as on 31.12.2024 including 14 collective agreements extended during the period starting from 01.01.2024 to 31.12.2024 is 225.

- **Conduct of arbitration**

Any industrial dispute which cannot be resolved by the Regional Offices or by the Industrial Relations Division of the Head Office shall be referred to compulsory

arbitration or to the Industrial Court. 219 disputes, including 81 disputes referred for arbitration between 01.01.2024 and 31.12.2024, were to be resolved in the year 2024. Out of them Investigations into 111 disputes have been completed during 2024 and 70 grants have been awarded and 41 grants are to be awarded in the future. Accordingly, 108 disputes were pending as of 31.12.2024.

- **Registration of trade unions**

Registration of all trade unions at the Registrar of Trade Unions of the Department of Labour is compulsory under the Trade Unions Ordinance. Accordingly, the number of trade unions / associations registered with the Department from 01.01.2024 to 31.12.2024 is 123. The total number of trade unions valid as on 31.12.2024 is 2141. In 2024, 100 trade unions were abolished.

- **Interventions to settle strikes**

As soon as an industrial dispute develops into a strike, the departments will intervene to prevent the situation and in the event of a strike, action will be taken to resolve the dispute related to the strike. Details of the strikes reported from 01.01.2024 to 31.12.2024 are as follows:

Table 2.4- Reported data on strikes - from 01.01.2024 to 31.12.2024

Field	No. of strikes reported	No. of employees participated	No. of human-days lost
Estate	04	1199	5879
Construction	-	-	-
Production	06	4795	22,550
Mining & Excavation	-	-	-
Accommodation & Food Supplies	-	-	-
Semi-government	-	-	-
Other Services	-	-	-
Total	10	5994	28,429

- **Maintaining a dialogue between the two parties- the employer and the employee**

In order to create a working environment that promotes industrial peace among the employers and employees of the private and semi-government sector institutions, programmes were organized by the Department to educate both the employers and employees from institutes of these sectors on labour laws.

Table 2.5- Information on the awareness programmes conducted by the Social Dialogue and Workplace Cooperation Promotion Division from 01.01.2024 to 31.12.2024

Nature of the programme	Name of the programme	No. of programmes conducted.	No. of participants/beneficiaries
Promoting social dialogue	Social Dialogue Promotion Programmes	155	9544
	Social Platform Programmes	24	2140

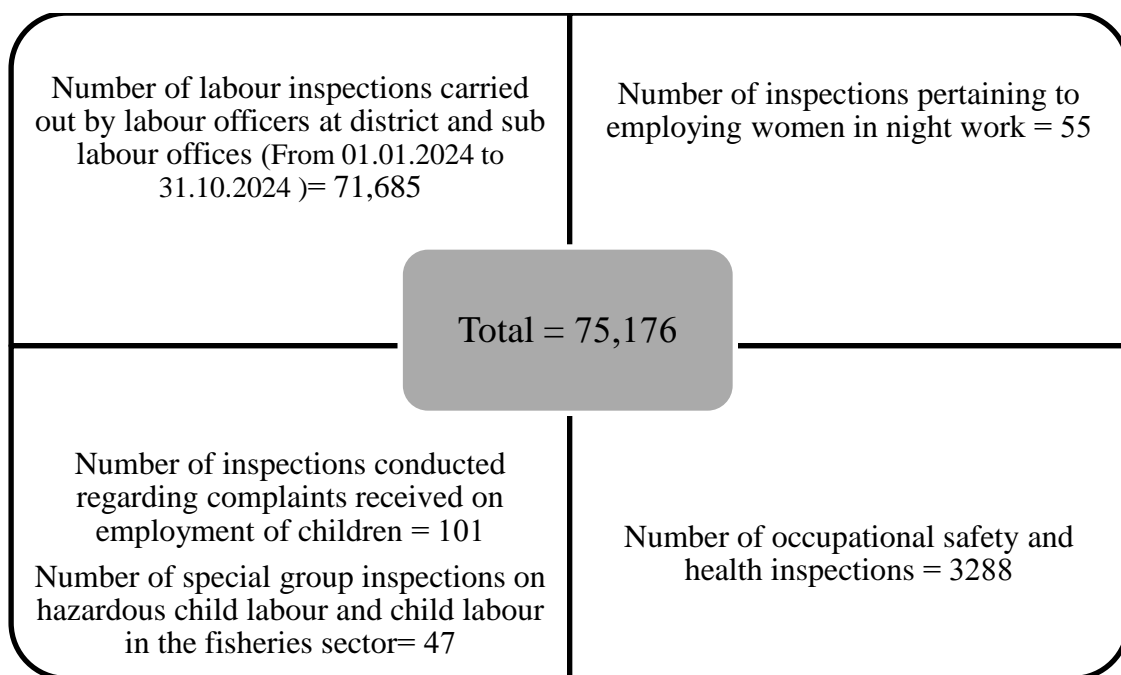
In addition to the above awareness programmes, activities were carried out in the year 2024 to award certificates of excellence for industrial reconciliation to relevant institutions with the objective of promoting social dialogue and workplace cooperation at the institutional level. Accordingly, the Award Ceremony of the Certificate of Excellence for Industrial Reconciliation was held on 06.11.2024 at the 10th Floor Auditorium of the Labour Secretariat.

Self-compliance with labour laws by employers leads to a sustainable employer employee relationship, which provides employers with many economic benefits. Therefore, the Department of Labour is taking steps to promote self-compliance of employers with labour laws at all times. Accordingly, necessary initial steps were taken to obtain the technical assistance of the ILO to formulate a programme for employers to make them self-compliance with labour laws, and its future activities are planned for 2025.

2.6.3. Inspection of the employment of employees by employers

The following are the details of the inspections conducted from 01.01.2024 to 31.12.2024 to ascertain whether the rules for employing the employees by the employers have been properly followed.

Figure- Performance of inspections - Progress from 01.01.2024 to 31.12.2024



Similarly, the labour inspection report used by labour officers to submit labour inspection information was revised to provide more information and began to be used since November 2024.

In order to conduct inspections of institutions located within the jurisdiction of the Labor Offices (especially within city limits) in a more systematic and efficient manner, a system was initiated whereby a District Labour Office conducts 04 group inspections per month and Sub-Labor Offices conduct 02 group inspections per month.

Initial discussions were held with representatives of the International Labour Organization (ILO) to seek technical assistance to streamline the labour inspection system to suit the current socio-economic environment. Accordingly, a comprehensive framework for labour inspections is expected to be in place by 2025.

2.6.4. Legal protection to safeguard the rights of employment of employees

The Department enforces a number of Acts for the protection of rights of workers. Accordingly, the Department of Labour conducts judicial proceedings against employers who violate these laws and thereby safeguard the rights of the employees. Accordingly, the progress regarding judicial proceedings conducted by the Department from 01.01.2024 to 31.12.2024 is as follows.

Graph 2.4- Cases filed in Magistrate Courts and closed cases – From 01.01.2024 to 31.12.2024

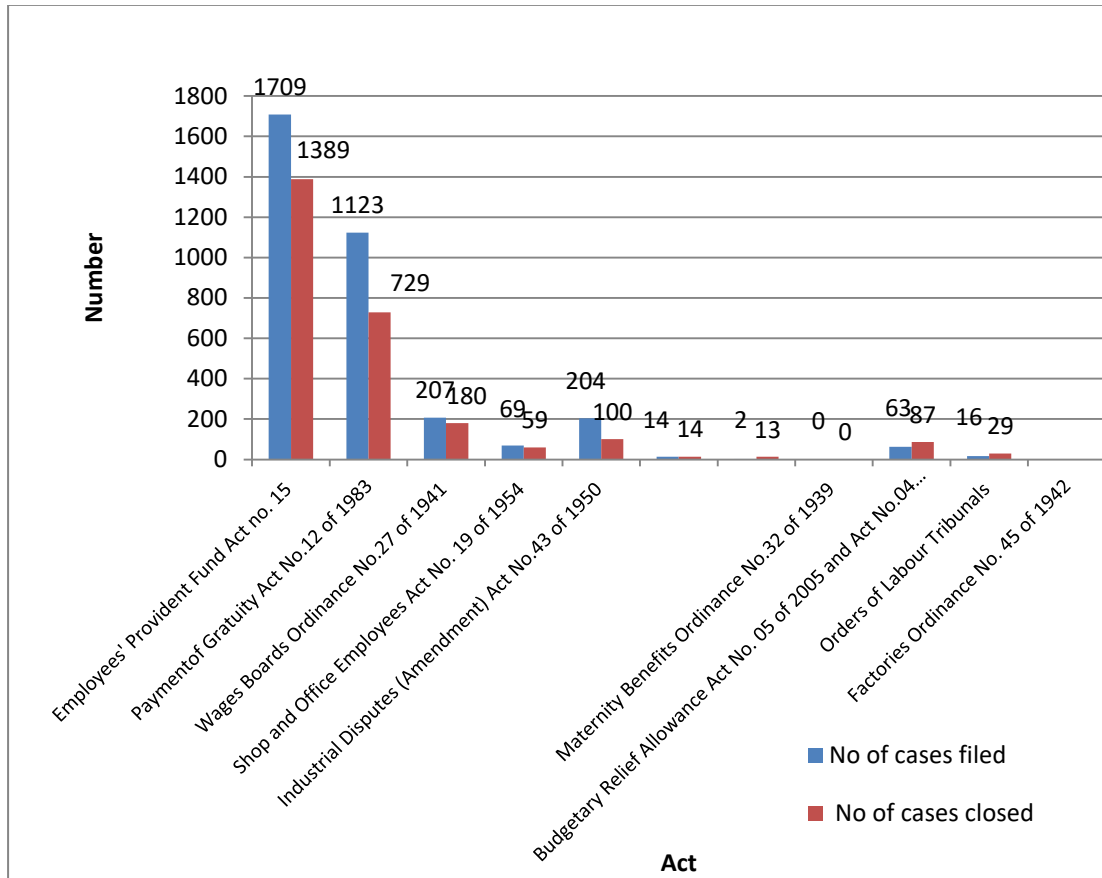


Table 2.6- Information about the judicial proceedings conducted under the direct intervention of the Legal Division is presented in the table above.

Court	No. of cases pending as on 31.12.2023	No. of appeal cases from 01.01.2024 to 31.12.2024	No. of appeal cases closed as of 31.12.2024	No. of appeal cases remaining as on 31.12.2024
Supreme Court	133	19	9	143
Appeals court	425	66	51	440
High Court	107	23	26	104
Commercial High Court	224	11	9	226

Table 2.7- Progress in amending and introducing new Acts related to the labour sector

Name of the Act	The objective of amendment
Shop and Office Employees (Regulation of Employment and Remuneration)	Amendment to the Shop and Office Employees Act, No. 19 of 1954 to provide for the employment of women employees at night in

(Amendment) Act, No. 28 of 2024	institutions which outsource IT based business processes and knowledge processes.
National Minimum Wage of Workers (Amendment) Act, No. 48 of 2024	Increasing the minimum monthly wage of employees from Rs. 12,500.00 to Rs. 17,500.00 and the minimum daily wage from Rs. 500.00 to Rs. 700.00 with effect from 11.09.2024

2.6.5. Protection and promotion of labour standards

Updating the salaries and working conditions of private sector employees and safeguarding the rights thereof is a priority of the Department. Accordingly, the following activities related to that subject area were carried out from 01.01.2024 to 31.12.2024.

Table 2.8- Updating the minimum wages of wages boards

Wages Board	Steps Taken to Update the Minimum Wage
1.Tea Plantation and Manufacturing Industry	The minimum daily wage to be paid for time-based work was revised to Rs. 1350.00 and the daily payment for every 01 Kg of tea leaves harvested in excess of the standard amount (Over Kilo Rate) was revised to Rs. 50.00. (This decision is effective from 10.09.2024)
2.Rubber Plantation and Gross Rubber Processing Industry	The minimum daily wage to be paid for time-based work has been revised to Rs. 1350.00 and the daily payment for every 01 Kg of latex brought in excess of the standard amount (Over Kilo Rate) has been revised to Rs. 50.00. (This decision is effective from 10.09.2024)

Table 2.9- Granting approval for 05-day work week

From 01.01.2024 to 31.12.2024			No. of projects pending approval as of 31.12.2024
No.of requests received	No. of approvals granted	No. of refusals	
339	320	(08)	11

Table 2.10- Examination of the legal validity of collective agreements

From 01.01.2024 to 31.12.2024			No. under review as of 31.12.2024
No.of requests received	No. of approvals granted	No. of refusals	
39	21	-	18

Table 2.11 -Granting approval for requests for deductions of wages under the Wages Board Ordinance and the Shop and Office Employees Act

Balance as of 01.01.2024	From 01.01.2024 to 31.12.2024			Balance as of 31.12.2024
	No.of requests received	No. of approvals granted	No. of refusals	
119	262	124	(128)	129 (These 129 institutions that submitted incomplete documents have been notified to submit the relevant documents)

Table 2.12 -Providing explanations and interpretations for the inquiries made by employers and employees regarding the Acts and Ordinances

From 01.01.2024 to 31.12.2024		Pending Preparation of answers as on 31.12.2024
No.of requests received	No. Responded	
70	69	01

2.6.6. Safeguarding the occupational rights of employed women and young persons and eradicating child labour

The Department of Labour undertakes to implement labour laws to protect the rights of women in employment, to provide an effective female labour contribution to the country by reviewing such laws in due course and recommending necessary amendments, and to eliminate child labour from Sri Lanka.

Accordingly, the following activities were carried out from 01.01.2024 to 31.12.2024.

Table 2.13 -Conducting investigations related to complaints received on child labour

Balance as of 01.01.2024	From 01.01.2024 to 31.12.2024		Balance as of 31.12.2024
	Complaints received	Complaints resolved	
13	100	101 (Out of these, 02 complaints of child labour have been revealed and necessary further steps are being taken to take legal action in this regard.)	12

Table 2.14 -Investigations into complaints received on infringement of working conditions related to employment of women at night

Balance as of 01.01.2024	From 01.01.2024 to 31.12.2024		Balance as of 31.12.2024
	Complaints received	Complaints resolved	
02	07	09	-

- **Granting approval for the employment of women in night work**
 - Approvals granted- 751
- **The programmes carried out under the project to eliminate child labour in Sri Lanka**

(a) Collaborating with Community Police Committees to eliminate child labour from Sri Lanka

The elimination of child labour and the taking of the message of civic responsibility to the grassroots through the Community Police Committees of the Sri Lanka Police was identified as the most practical. Accordingly, it was decided to cooperate in this national responsibility covering the Colombo District in 2024 and the entire island in 2025.

As the initial phase, a training of trainers session was held for the OICs in charge of the Community Police Divisions in the Colombo District, the OICs of the Community Police Units operating under that, and the relevant Deputy and Assistant Commissioners of Labour of the Department of Labour, to inform them and thereby to connect with the Community Police Committees of the Sri Lanka Police and take the message of completely eliminating all forms of child labour from Sri Lanka to the ground level, which was initiated in the third quarter of 2024.

In the second phase, relevant officers of the Department of Labour were involved in 52 Community Police Advisory Committees related to each police station in the Colombo District, and programmes were planned and carried out to educate all advisory committee members at the police station level.

Arrangements were also made to review the progress of these programmes through a progress review meeting on 10.12.2024.

As the third phase, a special programme was held on 18.12.2024 to explain the process of implementing this responsibility covering the entire island in the year 2025. The Senior DIG in charge of the Community Police Division of the Sri Lanka Police, the DIG in charge of the Community Police and Environmental Division, all OICs in charge of Community Police Committees in all police divisions of the island, and all Zonal Deputy Labour Commissioners, District Assistant Labour Commissioners and Senior Labour Officers of the Department of Labour participated in this event.



Image 2.1 - Conducting programmes in collaboration with Community Police Committees to eliminate child labour in Sri Lanka



(b) Obtaining pledges not to use child labor in formal sectors

The Department of Labour organized a commemorative programme on 18.06.2024 in conjunction with the 'World Day Against Child Labour', which falls on 12 June every year. At that time, a programme was initiated to obtain pledges from employers of formal sector institutions, especially those established in industrial parks under the

Industrial Development Board, that their institutions would not employ child labour. In parallel, a QR code was introduced via the official website of the department and arrangements were initiated to obtain a pledge from all institutions in the island that they would not use child labour. Similarly, labour officers conducting field inspections began obtaining pledges from employers in all other sectors, with a focus on the informal sector, to not employ child labour.

Table 2.15.- Information on awareness programmes conducted by the Women and Children's Affairs Division from 01.01.2024 to 31.12.2024





Nature of the Programmes	Name of the programme	No. of events held	No. of Participants/ Beneficiaries
Protecting the employment rights of women and youth and eliminating child labour	Awareness programmes for private sector employees on labour laws related to women and children	12	418
	Awareness raising on hazardous child labour and child labour laws in the fishing community in parallel with special group investigations on hazardous child labour and child labour	47	2176
	Awareness regarding hazardous child labour and child labour laws for small and medium scale employers in the tea and plantation, crop sector and industrial sector	62	1532
	A special training programme on the	01	142

	elimination of child labour and taking the message of civic responsibility to the grassroots level for the OICs in charge of the Community Police Divisions in the Colombo District, the OICs of the Community Police Units operating under them, the relevant Deputy Labour Commissioners and Assistant Labour Commissioners of the Department of Labour.		
	In collaboration with Community Police Advisory Committees, Department of Labour officials have been involved in educating Advisory Committee members on hazardous child labour and child labour laws.	14	587

2.6.7. Ensuring a decent work environment for the employee's occupational safety

It is the responsibility of the Department to minimize the occurrence of any physical injury or accident to the workers employed in the factories. The Occupational Safety, Health and Welfare of Workers in Factories in Sri Lanka is governed by the Factories Ordinance No. 45 of 1942.

To ensure a safe working environment, the Department mainly carried out the following activities from 01.01.2024 to 31.12.2024.

	2221 factories were registered under the new regulations of the Factories Ordinance from from 01.01.2024 to 31.12.2024. Accordingly, the number of factories registered under the new regulations of the Factories Ordinance as of 31.12.2024 is 6614.
The number of building plans surveyed and approved from 01.01.2024 to 31.12.2024 is 244.	
	District Factory Inspection Engineers have inspected 2578 factories from 01.01.2024 to 31.12.2024.
The number of fatal accidents reported and investigated from 01.01.2024 to 31.12.2024 is 47 and the number of non-fatal accidents is 1606.	


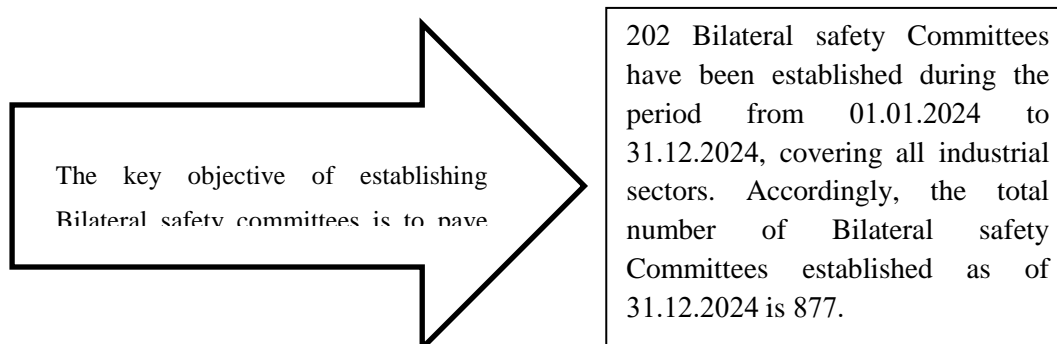
	<p>The number of high-risk machinery inspection reports inspected and submitted by authorized officers from 01.01.2024 to 31.12.2024 is 11,965.</p>
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Table 2.16- Information on the employer-employee awareness programmes conducted by the Industrial Safety Division from 01.01.2024 to 31.12.2024 are as follows.

Nature of the Programmes	Name of the programme	No. of programmes held	No. of Participants/Beneficiaries
Promoting occupational safety	Awareness programmes held on occupational safety (covering sectors such as garments, manufacturing, plantations, construction, etc.)	115	5288

- **Establishment of formal safety committees to enhance employee safety**



- **Developing training modules for use in training employers and employees on occupational safety and health**

Separate training module drafts were prepared for use in educating employers and employees on the 04 areas of occupational safety, electrical safety, mechanical safety and chemical safety in the construction sector. Its further work is planned to be carried out in the year 2025.

2.6.8. Activities undertaken to ensure occupational safety and health of the employee

In order to ensure the health safety of the workplace, the Department takes measures to investigate under scientific methods whether there are any health issues or chances of accidents occurring in the workplace and to inform about the steps to be taken and the measures to be taken to prevent such accidents. Accordingly, the following activities were carried out from 01.01.2024 to 31.12.2024.

- **Activities carried out during the period from 01.01.2024 to 31.12.2024**
 - Number of Environmental Measurements= 233
 - Number of biological inspections = 236
 - Number of occupational health and safety audits = 241

Table 2.17- Information on problematic situations resolved through interventions

Number of institutions that have had their problematic situations resolved through interventions	Output of the activity
08	Necessary interventions were made and measures were taken to resolve the problematic situations related to occupational safety and health, mainly in 08 institutions. This resulted in measures being taken to protect the standards of occupational safety and health rights of 1752 employees.

Table 2.18- The details of the employee awareness programmes conducted by the Occupational Health Division from 01.01.2024 to 31.12.2024.

Nature of the Programmes	Name of the programme	No. of programmes held	No. of Participants/ Beneficiaries
Promoting occupational health	Training programmes organized and conducted for employers and employees	92	1101
	On-the-spot field training programmes conducted for employers and employees following on-site inspections	173	2832


Further, a project to standardize the working environment (noise, light, heat, ventilation etc.) of small and medium scale industries in the Western Province was initiated in the year 2024. Accordingly, the project was implemented in the following industrial areas selected in the districts of Colombo, Gampaha and Kalutara in the Western Province.



- **Colombo District** - Panaluwa Industrial Estate and Panagoda Templeburg Industrial Area of Industrial Development Board
- **Gampaha District** - Ekala Industrial Estate of the Industrial Development Board

- **Kalutara District** - Nagoda Fullerton Industrial Estate, Horana Wawulagala Industrial Estate and Horana Aramanagolla Industrial Estate

The preliminary surveys of this project collected information on the total number of workers in factories, production, raw materials, working hours, employee welfare facilities and environmental conditions (light level, noise level, heat dissipation (Wet Bulb Globe Temperature – WBGT etc.). Similarly, as per the measurements taken on the environmental conditions, employers and employees were informed and made recommendations on how to improve the working environment by identifying cases of deviations from the standard.

2.6.9. Website of the Department and official social media activities of the Department

- I. The new official website of the Department of Labour (www.labourdept.gov.lk) was launched on 18.06.2024. Required documents for clients including application forms, model forms, instructions and Labour Acts and Ordinances as well as Wages Board Decisions to be followed by the employers are available on this website for download and the information will be updated on a regular basis. Similarly, the e-service facility of the department is being incorporated here and developed.
 
- II. The Department maintains an official YouTube channel, a Facebook page and a Twitter account to provide updated information to the general public.

YouTube Channel	Subscribers: 1.87K	
	Number of Videos included: 130	
Facebook Page	Followers: 1.5K	
Twitter	Followers: 105	

2.6.10. Information dissemination activities

- **Library of the Department of Labour**

The Department of Labour maintains the main library in Sri Lanka with regard to Acts and Ordinances, books and publications related to the labour sector. This will facilitate the staff of the Department of Labour, Ministry of Labour and other

institutions under it, as well as external readers, to refer to all the Acts and Ordinances, Books, Publications etc. pertaining to the field of Labour Law. The establishment of the Library Data Management System (KOHA software) is planned to be done in the year 2025 to further develop the facilities of the library.

- **Publications**

- **“Kathikawatha” magazine**

The objective of the “Kathikawatha” Magazine is to contribute to the reduction of disputes by providing the necessary knowledge to promote harmony between the employers and the employees in the institutions. Accordingly, Volume 23 of the “Kathikawatha” magazine was published in December 2024.



Project proposals have been prepared and submitted to be implemented in 2025 with the technical assistance of the International Labour Organization to develop an AI Chatbot to enhance public awareness on the role played by the Department of Labor and labor laws, and to develop a Self Learning Module to enhance the knowledge of officials regarding the field of labour law.

- **Surveys and studies related to the field of labour**

- **Survey on hours worked and labour costs**

This survey gathers data on labour costs, hours worked and average earnings required to formulate development strategies in the country. It provides the necessary information for planning and decision making in the public and private sectors as well as for the preparation of future plans for the upliftment of both the employees and employers.

Data from the Survey on hours worked and labour costs for the year 2023 are being compiled. Similarly, questionnaires were posted to relevant agencies to obtain relevant information for the year 2024.



- **Annual Survey of Private and Semi-Government Sector Employment - 2022**

The report publishes information on the average weekly working hours, average monthly nominal income, average monthly gross income, labour costs of private and semi-government sector employees, categorized by gender and occupation.

- **Study on Child Labour 2024 - Colombo District**

A study on child labour was carried out in the year 2024 with the objective of gaining an understanding of child labour in the Colombo District, assessing the progress of child labour eradication activities, collecting data on the socio-economic status of families with child labour and studying the measures to be taken to eradicate child labour.

A sample of 1000 housing units from 100 Grama Niladhari domains covering all Divisional Secretariats in the Colombo District was selected for this study. Simple randomization and systematic sampling were used for this purpose, and household unit survey method and rapid assessment method were employed for data collection.



The results of the study were presented to the National Steering Committee on the Elimination of Child Labour after gathering the data and the report “Study on Child Labour 2024 - Colombo District” was prepared and printed.

- **Study on the impact of the OSH Inspection on the compliance of the safety instructions in Tea Factories, factories under the Sri Lanka Board of Investments and Rubber Factories**

This study identified areas of weakness in factories such as weaknesses in factory registration, weaknesses in maintaining the General Registry used to record accident information, and deficiencies in first aid facilities. Accordingly, in order to minimize these weaknesses in factories in the future, an action plan has been prepared based on the recommendations made in this report and plans have been made to implement it from the year 2025.

- **Study on industrial disputes received by the Industrial Relations Division of the Department of Labour from 2020 to 2024**

This study examined 124 industrial dispute files received by the Department in relation to semi-government sector institutions such as the Sri Lanka Transport Board, National Housing Development Authority, Lanka Sathosa Limited, Sri Lanka Mahaweli Authority, etc. for the period 2020 - 2024. A report is being prepared containing recommendations on the administrative steps to be taken in relation to the main causes of industrial disputes identified therein.

- **Analysis of Reducing the Gap between Minimum Wage and Nominal Wage in Sri Lanka**

This study, jointly conducted by the Labour Standards Division and the Statistics Division, has recommended that the National Minimum Wage (Monthly) should be at least Rs. 24,120.00. Accordingly, it has been proposed to use these recommendations to make adjustments in future wage revisions in the private sector.

- **Observance of major commemoration days**

The Women's Day celebrations programme- 2024

The Women's Day celebration programme organized by the Department of Labour in parallel to International Women's Day, which fell on 08.03.2024, was held on 07.03.2024 at the Head Office of the Department of Labour.

A short video creation competition was held to raise awareness among the community on “Labour Laws Affecting Women” via social media and certificates were awarded to the winners of the competition. An open discussion forum on labour law affecting women was also held for the University students. The Shrama Vasana Fund also contributed to this.



Image 2.2 - International Women's Day Celebration Programme 2024

World Day against Child Labour - 2024

The programme organized by the Department of Labour, in parallel to the "World Day Against Child Labour" falling on June 12th, under the project to eliminate child labour from Sri Lanka by the year 2025, was held on 18.06.2024 at the 10th floor auditorium of the Labour Secretariat. A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between the Department of Labour and the Industrial Development Board to promote the elimination of child labour and the employers of 61 industrial parks operating under the Industrial Development Board pledged to maintain their institutions child labour free. A QR code was also introduced via the new website of the Department of Labour to obtain pledges from the formal sectoral institutions on the elimination of child labour.

National Occupational Safety and Health Week

Three training workshops on occupational safety and health were held on behalf of the National Occupational Safety and Health Week.

Table 2.19 - Information regarding training workshops held for National Occupational Safety and Health Week

Date of the training workshop	Venue of training workshops	No. of Employees /Employers Participated
23.10.2024	Panaluwa Industrial Estate of the Industrial Development Board	35
29.10.2024	Industrial Estate at Aramanagolla, Horana	45
25.10.2024	Vavuniya Divisional Secretariat (in Tamil medium)	33

2.6.11. Human resource management

Identification of staff requirements, recruitment as per requirement, promotions of officers, conduct of efficiency bar examinations, performance evaluation, granting of salary increments, transfers, retirement of officers, leave concerns of officers and disciplinary concerns of staff were also carried out in the year 2024.

Table 2.20 - Information on the staff of the Department of Labour -as on 31.12.2024

Designation	Approved No.	No. of employees employed as on 31.12.2024	No. of vacancies
Senior Level	217	126	91
Tertiary level	668	504	164
Secondary level	1928	1671	257
Primary Level	476	410	66
Total	3289	2711	578

Table 2.21 - Information on Recruitment of Officers – From 01.01.2024 to 31.12.2024

Designation	No. of vacancies to be filled	The date on which the examination was to be held	Date of Examination	Accordingly,	
				Date of recruitment	No. of officers recruited
Labour Officer (Grade II)	59	March 2022	29.04.2023	07.05.2024	57

The 57 newly recruited labour officers were given induction training from 08.05.2024 to 06.09.2024 and were then assigned to the regional offices and divisions of the department on 09.09.2024.

Table 2.22 - Information on conducting Efficiency Bar Examinations are as follows: -
From 01.01.2024 to 31.12.2024.

Designation	Name of Efficiency Bar Examination	No. of officers qualified to sit for the examination	Date of examination	No. of officers who sat for the examination
Assistant Commissioner of Labour (Departmental)	First Efficiency Bar Examinations	11	16.12.2024, 17.12.2024 and 18.12.2024	09
Labour Officer - Grade II	First Efficiency Bar Examinations	06	30.09.2024 and 01.10.2024	02
Human Resource Development Officer - Grade II	Second Efficiency Bar Examination	01	26.08.2024	-
Human Resource Development Officer - Grade II	Second Efficiency Bar Examination	01	25.11.2024	01
Office Employee Service - Grade III, II and I	First, Second and Third Efficiency Bar Examinations	44	18.12.2024 and 19.12.2024	42
Combined Driver Service - Grade II	Second Efficiency Bar Examination	03	17.01.2024	03
Carpenter -Grade II	Second Efficiency Bar Examination	01	18.07. 2024	01

Table 2.23 - Recruitment of officers through interviews - From 01.01.2024 to 31.12.2024

Designation	Number of vacancies to be filled	Accordingly,	
		Date of recruitment	No. of officers recruited
Office Employee Service - Grade III	35	02.08.2024	09

Similarly, the Department has identified the training needs of the entire staff of the Department, organized and conducted internal training programmes, referred officers to training courses conducted by external institutions, provided the necessary financial provisions to officers for pursuing undergraduate and postgraduate degrees as per the service requirement, and carried out the necessary coordination activities for foreign training.

Provisions of Rs. 10,400,000.00 had been received for the year 2024 for local training programmes. Out of which, the expenditure as of 31.12.2024 is Rs. 8,546,920.00 and the expenditure as a percentage of the provisions is 82%.

Table 2.24 - Training Programmes organized and conducted by the Department for Officers – From 01.01.2024 to 31.12.2024

N o.	The Nature of the Programme		No. of Programmes held	No. of officers participated
1	Local	Induction Trainings	01	57
2		Subject-specific training programmes held physically	16	727
		Programmes held online	09	Conducted via Zoom
3		Referrals of officers to workshops conducted by external institutions	08	142
4	Foreign	Foreign training programmes, seminars, and workshops	10	14

Moreover, the department has provided financials provisions to twenty officers for postgraduate degrees, degrees, diplomas and workshops as per the service requirement.

A request was made to obtain technical assistance from the Sri Lanka Institute of Development Administration (SLIDA) to prepare a Performance Evaluation System and a Non-Financial Rewarding System for the staff of the Regional Labour Offices, and it is planned to carry out future work in the year 2025 according to the plan presented by them.

Similarly, a request was made to prepare a Code of Ethics for officers for service delivery of the Department of Labour with the technical assistance of the International Labour Organization, and its future work is planned to be prepared in 2025.

The work of drafting training modules for the branches of the Department of Labour began in 2024. It is planned to prepare these drafted training modules more appropriately by a committee during the year 2025.

2.6.12. Infrastructure development

With the aim of providing more effective services to the clients spread across the island, the department took steps to develop the infrastructure facilities at the head office and regional offices of the Department located islandwide. Accordingly, minor repairs were carried out as required at the regional offices and the internal structural repairs were carried out at the Mehewara Piyesa building and the Labour Secretariat Building.

Accordingly, as of 31.12.2024, procurement activities were being carried out for the repair of the internal structures on the 16th floor of the Mehewara Piyesa

building, while the repairation of the internal structures on the 3rd, 4th and 5th floors of the Labour Secretariat building was being carried out.

Moreover, a new office premises on the first floor of the Labour Secretariat building was opened on 06.08.2024 to provide services related to Employees' Provident Fund to beneficiaries at a single place.

2.6.13. Monitoring functions

The progress and manner in which the branches of the Department are working towards achieving the goals set out in the Department's Annual Action Plan for the year 2024 was examined. Accordingly, the meeting of senior staff officers, chaired by the Commissioner General of Labour, was held to provide advice and solutions regarding the progress of each branch and the administrative issues that have arisen in the course of carrying out the works of the branches.

The Deputy Labour Commissioners in charge of the zones made necessary arrangements to conduct progress review meetings in the District and Sub-Labour Offices relevant to their zones to review the progress made in the first, second and third quarters of the year 2024.

A committee comprising officers of the Department was formed by the Zonal Deputy Labour Commissioners to prepare a methodology for monitoring the progress of District Labour Offices and Sub-Labour Offices and recommendations were obtained. Accordingly, progress monitoring is planned to commence in the year 2025 as per the recommendations given.

At the same time, a committee consisting of officers of the department was formed by the head office to prepare a formal methodology for reviewing the progress of the regional offices. Discussions were being held by the committee by the end of 2024 and it is planned to take further steps during the year 2025 as per the recommendations of the committee.

2.6.14 Financial management

The Department took steps to utilize the provisions allocated to the Department through the annual budget for the year 2024 to achieve the relevant objectives efficiently and effectively, in accordance with government policies.

Accordingly, as of 31.12.2024, 99.51% of the provisions allocated for recurrent expenditure and 22.52% of the provisions allocated for capital expenditure have been utilized to achieve financial management targets.

Table 2.25 - Recurrent and Capital Expenditure as on 31.12.2024

	Allocations for the year 2024 (Rs.)	Additional allocations received (Rs.)	Expenditure as on 31.12.2024 (Rs.)	Actual expenditure as a percentage of allocations.
Recurrent expenditure	2,895,981,140	127,000,000	3,008,102,293	99.51 %
Capital expenditure	1,396,000,000	7,925,000	316,149,882	22.52 %

Although fifty building repair activities were planned to be implemented under capital expenditure, due to the shortage of engineers and technical officers related to technical work at the Department of Labour, those tasks had to be carried out by external institutions and due to the delay in preparing the bills of quantities and quotation calling documents by those institutions, there was a significant delay in the activities related to building repairs, resulting in a lack of progress in spending the provisions for capital expenditure in the year 2024.

As a solution to this problem, it is planned to select a suitable consulting firm in 2025, following the prescribed procurement process, and carry out these activities in a more efficient manner.

2.7. Department of Manpower and Employment

2.7.1. Career guidance, maintaining labour market information and public employment services

The Department of Manpower and Employment implements various programmes for the development and management of the country's human resource.

- **Career Guidance Programmes conducted during the year**

Educating Grade 9 students

This programme is conducted with the aim of identifying the child's intellectual abilities and future goals based on the Multiple Intelligence Test, selecting the most suitable subject categories, and thereby providing accurate guidance for the G.C.E (O/L) examination.

From 01.01.2024 to 31.12.2024, 1,572 programmes have been conducted islandwide for 57,778 school children.

Educating Ordinary Level students

This programme is conducted with the aim of assisting students choose their A/L subject area according to their abilities and interests, identifying future career goals, and providing guidance on alternative education or alternative career requirements. It includes providing guidelines for selecting A/L subjects identifying the interests and abilities, and for achieving educational goals.

From 01.01.2024 to 31.12.2024, 2,174 programmes have been conducted islandwide for 71,477 school children.

Educating Advanced Level students

This programme is implemented with the aim of providing guidance to school children who are aligned with the more competitive education system, helping them to develop the necessary mental strength to enter the future world of work through intervention or personality development, by creating self-assessment of themselves and planning their life goals.

This provides an understanding of self-assessment and personal identity, setting life goals, and accessing higher education, vocational training courses, and employment after leaving the school.

From 01.01.2024 to 31.12.2024, 1,381 programmes have been held islandwide for 51,335 school children.

In addition, 19,927 referrals for training and 55,264 individual career guidance sessions have been provided.

- **Job Creation, promotion and public employment services programmes**

Table 2.26 - Progress in implementation of job creation, promotion and public employment services programmes – Dep.of Manpower and Employment.

Activity	No. of beneficiaries
Registration of job seekers	74,451
Job vacancy registration	54,194
Referring job seekers to jobs	67,515
Providing employments to job seekers	11,520
Creating entrepreneurs and self-employed individuals	523

Table 2.27 - Progress in conducting District Job Fairs and Regional Job Fairs - Dep.of Manpower and Employment.

Programme	No. of proposed programmes	No. of programmes in operation	No. of beneficiaries
District Job Fair and Career Fair	25	25	7,412
Regional Job Fairs and Career Fairs	100	133	15,442

- **Labour market information and research programmes**

Green job opportunities and job profiles in Sri Lanka

The Department of Manpower and Employment is an institution that operates with the objective of facilitating the coordination between labour demand and supply in order to build an efficient and productive labour market and increase employment.

The sustainable development of Sri Lanka's abundant energy sources such as solar energy, wind, tidal and biofuels will increase the trend of green job creation. The

department has decided to conduct a thematic study on green job opportunities and job profiles that support the proposed green economy. For this, the focus has also been on the expected trends in global economic trends.

This study will gather basic data to identify the components included in the curricula of universities and higher education institutions, identify green jobs in the Sri Lankan labour market and sectors where green jobs can be created in the future, identify the qualifications and skills required for green jobs, and identify the benefits received at the organizational level (salary, promotions, etc.).

The information revealed by this study will be leveraged to educate teachers, school students, job seekers, career counselors, micro and small scale entrepreneurs, parents, and the general public through field officers of the department.

A survey on 30 institutions with green job opportunities has been conducted and data collection has been completed. Data analysis has been completed and the report is being prepared. This research was conducted under the supervision of Professor Sunil Chandrasiri.

Study on the compliance of employment of small and medium-scale enterprises with the criteria decent work

The Department of Manpower and Employment is conducting a study on the implementation of the principles of decent work in the private sector. It has been decided to conduct the study based on the small and medium-scale enterprises, which have not received much attention. This is because about 58% of employment in Sri Lanka belongs to the informal sector. The study broadly refers to the qualities of freedom, equity, safety, and human dignity in that sector. Under this, the general awareness of decent work and its components, the number of decent work concepts that are applied in practice, and the extent to which these concepts are implemented in the informal sector are studied extensively.

Although this study was expected to be conducted by a professional research team at a university, since no bidders applied, data was collected by departmental officials. The research was conducted under the supervision of Professor Sunil Chandrasiri, and the final report is being prepared.

Study on the employability of the differently abled community in Sri Lanka

The Sri Lankan population is estimated to be around 20.3 million. Of this number, it is estimated that around 10% suffer from some form of disability. People vary depending on the nature of their disability. A percentage of this group that can be employed, can be identified and if they can be employed, the cost of caring for them can be minimized and they can contribute to the national production. The solutions utilized to care for the disabled in the national economy can also be diminished.

Therefore, this pilot study is to conduct a survey by selecting a random sample of the Gampaha district to obtain and report information on the attitudes, aptitudes and training needs for employment based on the disabled community. This study will be

conducted by departmental officers. This survey has been completed and a final report has been prepared.

Analysis of vacancies in newspapers

The vacancies collected by the Department's Public Employment Service from August and distributed to all District Employment Service Centers for job matching are classified according to a recognized standard methodology. These information are to be analyzed and planned to compile and report information on labour market trends, i.e. demand trends. This report has been prepared.

Gathering information on job matching to promote and make public employment services more efficient

In order to submit proposals to ensure that the services provided to employers and job seekers by the Public Employment Service Center of the Department of Manpower and Employment are provided with maximum efficiency, the Labour Market Information and Research Unit of the department is expected to conduct a study on the vacancies received by the institution, the jobs anticipated by job seekers and their attitudes towards those jobs. This report has been prepared.

- **Other special programmes**

Providing practical experience for A/L students to enter the world of work with skills

In the Sri Lankan school education system, only a very small percentage of students are admitted to government universities after completing their A-levels. Every year, 120,000 children enter the world of work without any skill development. In particular, choosing vocational education should not be a decision made based on failing examinations. However, if the importance of joining the world of work with skills is understood during school education, students who do not qualify for higher education after school will be encouraged to choose a vocational course.

During the year 2023, several pilot projects were executed in the North Eastern regions and an analysis of the opinions received from the students participated, revealed that the majority of them did not have sufficient knowledge about vocational training opportunities. Accordingly, with the aim of making G.C.E. A/L students understand the importance of obtaining vocational training before entering the world of work practically, the Department of Manpower and Employment carried out 23 of these programmes at the district level in the year 2024 and the number of beneficiaries was 1,692.

Implementing programmes to integrate the youth population in Sri Lanka who are not engaged in employment, education or training (NEET) into the active labour force.

A survey covering 25 districts has identified 3528 beneficiaries with the aim of integrating the youth population of Sri Lanka who are not engaged in employment, education or training into the active labor force. These 6 programmes were

implemented with the aim of creating a productive labour force by integrating those beneficiaries into the active labour force, and the number of beneficiaries is 304.

Implementing youth empowerment programmes

This programme is being conducted to reduce the unemployment gap in Sri Lanka by establishing a strong young team with leadership and creativity in every village to effectively face future challenges. The two-day programme will be held on the first day to instill an optimistic attitude towards the future in these young people, create self-motivation to enter the world of work and provide an understanding of the world of work, and on the second day, an opportunity is provided to observe internationally/locally recognized institutions with the aim of providing these young people with live experience of the world of work. 97 programmes were held this year and the number of beneficiaries is 3,609.

Project to promote the employment of differently abled people

This is done through the project to promote the employment of persons with disabilities in collaboration with the Department of Social Services. This year, 8 programmes were held, with 309 beneficiaries.

Implementing job generation promotion programmes

With the aim of generating new employment opportunities, this programme was implemented by identifying the unique needs of the districts of the island and targeting young people who are interested in starting their own businesses by selecting one sector (export sector, local market products, fisheries, digital marketing, etc.). This programme was conducted this year and the number of beneficiaries was 792.

Digital Entrepreneurship and Skills Development Programme

This programme introduced marketing platforms such as digital marketing, online marketing, and e-commerce and developed knowledge for job-seeking youth and youth with qualifications for entrepreneurship development. 6 programmes were held this year, benefiting 224 beneficiaries. It is expected that this programme will cover all 25 districts of the island by 2025.

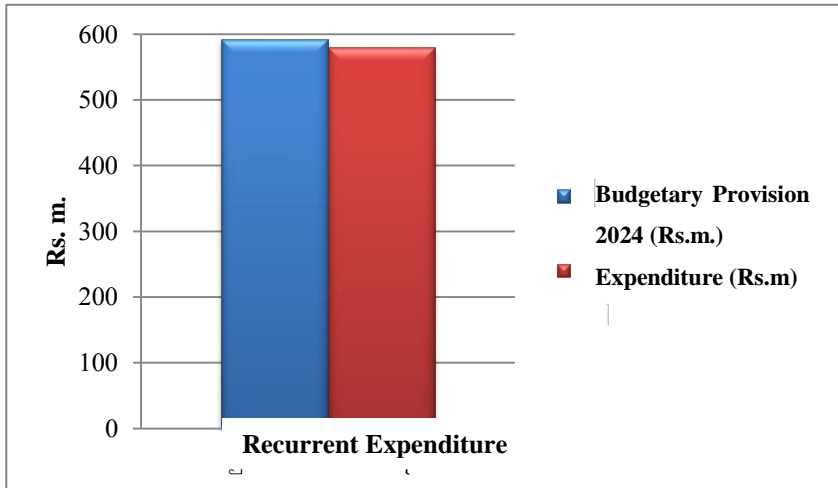
2.7.2. Financial progress

Table 2.28 - Recurrent and Capital Expenditures as on 31.12.2024

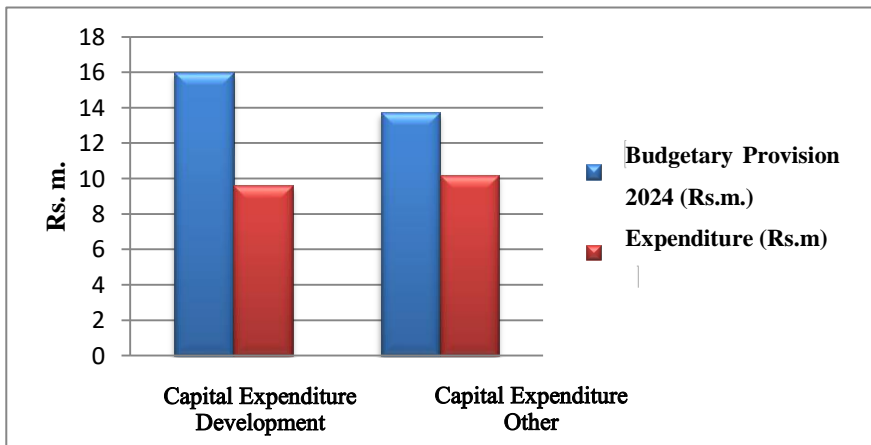
Item	2024 Budgetary provision (Rs.m)	Addition Provision (Rs.m)	FR	Total allocation for 2024 (Rs.m)	Expenditure (Rs.m)	Remaining allocations (Rs.m)	Percentage (%)
Recurrent expenditure	573.000	25.640	(5.725)	592.915	580.091	12.824	97%
Capital expenditure (1+2)	24.000	-	5.725	29.725	19.829	9.896	66%

1.Development	16.000	-		16.000	9.612	6.388	60%
2.Other	8.000	-	5.725	13.725	10.217	3.508	74%
Total	597.000	25.640		622.640	599.920	22.720	96%

Graph 2.5 – Budgetary allocations and expenditure – Dep. Of Manpower and Employment



Graph 2.6 – Development and other expenditure – Dep. Of Manpower and Employment



2.8. The National Institute of Labour Studies

2.8.1. Educating tripartite partners for better industrial relations

- **Education in labour law, industrial relations, and human resource development**

The National Institute of Labour Studies conducts courses in the three main subject areas of Labour Law and Industrial Relations, Human Resource Management and Workplace Productivity to achieve its objectives. The institute is currently working to provide these courses in all three languages as a quality service to clients in the public

and private sectors. These courses are held in the form of diplomas and short-term courses, certificate courses and training workshops.

Diploma courses

Table 2.29 - Details of Diplomas conducted under long-term training programmes

	Name of the diploma	No. of courses
1	Industrial Relations and Labour Law – Sinhala Medium	1
2	Industrial Relations and Labour Law - English Medium	1
3	Human Resource Management - Sinhala Medium	1
4	Human Resource Management – Tamil Medium	2
5	Public Procurement and Contract Administration	1
6	Professional Diploma in Workplace Productivity	2
7	Diploma in Practical Applications of Labour Law	1

Certificate courses

With the aim of developing the knowledge, skills and attitudes of public, semi-government and private sector officials, ten-day certificate courses and advanced certificate courses are conducted in each subject area covering Labour Laws and Industrial Relations, Human Resource Management, Office Management, Procurement, Internal Audit, English, Sinhala, and Tamil languages. The number of courses conducted is 30.

Table 2.30 - Details of Certificate Courses

Name of the certificate course	No. of courses conducted
Labour Migration and General Administration	21
Industrial Relations and Labour Law	4
Human Resource Management	1
Public Procurement	1
Office Management	1
Health Management	2

Short term training courses

The National Institute of Labour Studies conducts one-day, two-day, three-day and five-day short-term courses at the Training Centre of the Institute of Labour Studies and at the relevant workplaces for the target groups upon the request of the client institutions. Accordingly, the number of courses conducted at the Training Centre of the Institute of Labour Studies is 43. The number of courses conducted upon the request of the client institutions is 25.

Table 2.31 - Details of Certificate Courses

Name of the course	No. of courses conducted
Office Management	24
Industrial Relations and Labour Law	8
Public Procurement	1
Trainer Training Programmes	1
Soft Skills Development	2
Capacity Development	7

Courses conducted upon the request of the client institutions

Various ministries, departments, corporations and boards request the institute to prepare a training course that suits their institutional requirements. Taking into account those requests, the institute visits those institutions and conduct training courses with specific course content. Accordingly, a description of the training programmes conducted at the request of such institutions in the year 2024 (Tailor made programmes) is given below. A total of 25 programmes have been conducted and 1018 people have been trained.

Table 2.32- Details of courses conducted upon the request of the client institutions

Name of the programme	No. of programmes conducted
Office Management	9
Industrial Relations and Labour Law/ Human Resource Management	3
Group Activities and Employee Motivation	2
Training Programmes for Efficiency Bar Examinations	11

Role of the Examination Division

The National Institute of Labour Studies has been conducting examinations upon the requests of public sector corporations and statutory bodies as well as private sector institutions for many years. Under this, examinations for staff recruitment, efficiency bar examinations, evaluations and service promotion are conducted based on the institutional requirement. Furthermore, examinations related to diploma and certificate courses conducted by the institute are also conducted and these examinations are conducted with professionalism while protecting the confidentiality of these examinations and providing prompt service to the clients.

Table 2.33 - Details of examinations conducted

Name of the programme	No. of examinations	No. of applicants
Efficiency Bar Examinations	26	656
Recruitment Examination	3	779
Total	29	1435

Table 2.34 – Financial progress

	Annual Budget	Monthly Budget	4th Quarter Budget 30.11.2024	4th Quarter Actual 30.11.2024
<u>Income</u>				
Training	60,800,000.00	5,066,666.67	55,733,333.33	53,423,300.85
Exam	10,000,000.00	833,333.33	9,166,666.67	4,419,536.25
FD	11,000,000.00	916,666.67	10,083,333.33	9,218,729.62
Total	81,800,000.00	6,816,666.67	74,983,333.33	67,061,566.72
<u>Expenditure</u>				
Personnel Emoluments	18,758,525.00	1,563,210.42	17,195,314.58	17,022,760.00
Program Activities	21,000,000.00	1,750,000.00	19,250,000.00	23,360,405.04
Travelling Expenses	750,000.00	62,500.00	687,500.00	486,742.34
Supplies & Consumable Items	5,000,000.00	416,666.67	4,583,333.33	3,092,035.11
Maintenance	4,800,000.00	400,000.00	4,400,000.00	4,488,190.84
Contractual Services	6,800,000.00	566,666.67	6,233,333.33	6,782,522.69
Other Operating Expenses	2,959,000.00	246,583.33	2,712,416.67	2,330,530.50
	60,067,525.00	5,005,627.08	55,061,897.92	57,563,186.52
Surplus/ (Deficit)	21,732,475.00	1,811,039.58	19,921,435.42	9,498,380.20

2.9. National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health

2.9.1. Enhancing occupational safety and health

To mitigate the occupational accidents in workplaces, the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) conducts diploma courses, certificate courses, and various courses on occupational safety and health for the training of occupational safety officers, and conducts environmental measurements for safety and health in the workplace and conducts assessments to identify risks. The progress of the programmes carried out by the institute up to September 30, 2024 is as follows.

- **Special programmes**

Table 2.35 - Special programmes conducted by the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health – From 01.01.2024 to 31.12.2024.

Serial No.	Programmes conducted from 01.01.2024- to 31.12.2024	Duration
01	Higher National Diploma in Occupational Safety and Health (English)	<u>Batch 01</u> This Higher National Diploma course, which commenced in 2023, was completed in 2024.
02	National Diploma in Occupational Safety and Health (English)	<u>Batch 26</u> Commenced on October 08, 2023 and completed on October 28, 2024.
		<u>Batch 27</u> Commenced on May 04, 2024 and is scheduled to be completed in May 2025.
		<u>Batch 28</u> Commenced on September 01, 2024 and is scheduled to be completed in August 31, 2025.
03	National Diploma in Occupational Safety and Health (Sinhala)	<u>Batch 04</u> Commenced on June 02, 2024 and is scheduled to be completed in June 2025.
04	Certificate Course in Occupational Safety and Health	<u>Batch 52</u> Commenced on January 05, 2024 and completed on June 30, 2024.
		<u>Batch 53</u> Commenced on February 28, 2024 and completed on April 22, 2024.
		<u>Batch 54</u> Commenced on June 30, 2024 and completed on September 30, 2024.
		<u>Batch 55</u> Commenced on July 12, 2024 and completed on October 26, 2024.
05	Foundation course in Occupational Safety and Health	<u>Batch 10</u> Commenced on August 02, 2024 and completed on November 08, 2024.

06	Environmental Management course for Executive Grade Officers	<u>Batch 04</u> Commenced on July 03, 2024 and completed on August 31, 2024.
07	Occupational Safety Certificate Course (Caregiver Programme) for nurses associated with Surado Campus Private Institute	<u>Batch 12</u> Conducted on January 18,19,29, 2024 and February 03, 2024. <u>Batch 13</u> Conducted on March 05,10,12, 2024. <u>Batch 14</u> Conducted on May 02,03, 2024 and June 02, 2024. <u>Batch 15</u> Conducted on July 27,28, 2024 and August 04, 2024. <u>Batch 16</u> Conducted on September 06,07, and 29,2024. <u>Batch 17</u> Conducted on October 27, and November 02, 2024.
08	A three-day Occupational Safety and Health Programme for hospital nursing staff	Conducted on three days of March 12,13,14, 2024.
09	Conducting of National Diploma in Occupational Safety and Health (English) for Sri Lankan students to pursue a degree in Safety Engineering from the University of Changshin, South Korea.	<u>Batch 01</u> Commenced on September 12, 2024. <u>Batch 02</u> Commenced on December 16, 2024.

Higher National Diploma in Occupational Safety and Health (English Medium)

This Higher National Diploma Course was introduced to enhance the knowledge of occupational safety and health of students who have successfully completed the Diploma and to provide specialist knowledge in the relevant field. The course was completed by March 2024.

National Diploma in Occupational Safety and Health (English Medium)

The National Occupational Safety and Health Institute is responsible for the national responsibility of producing safety officers, who are the necessary human resources, with the aim of creating safe workplaces in Sri Lanka. The theoretical knowledge required by safety officers is provided to them through the lectures and the institute is constantly working to provide them with the necessary practical knowledge by visiting the workplaces. Similarly, their knowledge is tested through evaluation reports, presentations, etc. and through examinations and diploma certificates are awarded to suitable students. After following this course, it is a qualification for foreign employment and students who have successfully completed the course are already employed in the country and overseas.

Table 2.36- Information on National Diplomas in Occupational Safety and Health (English Medium)

Batch	Estimated amount (Rs. m.)	Duration	Expected financial target from the course (Rs.m.)
Batch 26	4.31.00	October 2023 - October 2024	6.29
Batch 27	7.45	May 2024 - May 2025	2.33
Batch 28	6.29	September 2024 - August 2025	2.33

Diploma in National Occupational Safety and Health (Sinhala medium)

In order to fulfill the national responsibility of producing health and safety officers who are required to create safe workplaces in Sri Lanka, the Diploma in National Occupational Safety and Health is conducted in Sinhala. Through this course, the institute provides the necessary theoretical knowledge to the health and safety officers through lectures and it constantly works to provide them with the necessary practical knowledge by visiting the workplaces. Moreover, their knowledge is tested through evaluation reports, presentations, etc. and through examinations and diploma certificates are awarded. The 04th batch was started in the year 2024.

Table 2.37 - National Diploma in Occupational Safety and Health (Sinhala medium)

Batch	Estimated amount (Rs. m.)	Duration	Expected financial target from the course (Rs.m.)
Batch 04	3.56	June 2024 – June 2025	1.46

Certificate Course in Occupational Safety and Health

In 2024, the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health successfully completed the 52nd, 53rd, 54th, and 55th batch certificate courses. These courses have played a crucial role in reducing the risk of workplace accidents by equipping participants with essential training in occupational safety and health. The program is designed to produce highly skilled safety officers, who are in demand by both local and multinational companies. Many of the trained officers are currently employed across various industries, where their expertise has significantly contributed to fostering safer working environments. This course is open to anyone who has passed the Advanced Level and has a keen interest in advancing their knowledge in occupational safety and health.

Table 2.38- Occupational Safety and Health Certificate Course (Sinhala Medium)

Batch	Estimated amount (Rs. m.)	Physical progress	Financial progress (Rs.m.)
Batch 52	2	January 2024 - June 2024	1.49
Batch 53	1.8	February 2024 - April 2024	1.54
Batch 54	1.85	June 2024 - September 2024	1.39
Batch 55	2.06	July 2024 - October 2024	1.44

Foundation Course in Occupational Safety and Health

This course is designed for those interested in occupational safety and health. The institute also provide placements to those who successfully complete it. The aim is to employ students who have completed their O/L and A/L examinations and to direct them to the occupational safety field.

Table 2.39 - Foundation Course in Occupational Safety and Health

Batch	Estimated amount (Rs. m.)	Physical progress	Financial progress (Rs.m.)
Batch 10	0.21	August 2024 - November 2024	0.23

- **Environmental Management Course for Executive Grade Officers**

This course was first launched in 2020 and is aimed at in-service management. The 3rd batch has commenced by now.

Table 2.40 - Environmental Management Course for Executive Grade Officers

Batch	Estimated amount (Rs. m.)	Physical progress	Financial progress (Rs.m.)
Batch 03	0.65	Successfully completed by 18 executive grade officers.	0.83

Table 2.41 - Progress in conducting special programmes

Programme	Estimated amount (Rs. m.)	Physical progress	Financial progress (Rs.m.)
Covering the scope of Occupational Safety and Security in the Care givers course conducted by Surado Campus .	2.66	This course has been successfully completed by 330 students.	2.6
Conducting a three-day programme on occupational safety and health for hospital nursing staff	0.48	This course has been successfully completed by 31 nurses.	0.79

• **Projects**

- I. The National Occupational Safety and Health Policy was developed in 2024, drawing on the valuable insights and suggestions of professionals from diverse fields. Over 200 professionals participated in the programme, which was held on February 13th and 14th, 2024, at the Renuka Hotel.
- II. A National Occupational Safety and Health Policy Awareness Programme on OSH Policy Development, a project carried out by the International Labour Organization, was held in the districts of Galle, Hatton, and Nuwaraeliya in October 2024. These were held at the District Estate Superintendent's Offices with the participation of the Estate Superintendents of the relevant districts. Over 150 Estate Superintendents participated in it.



Image 2.3 - Awareness programmes conducted to develop the National Occupational Safety and Health Policy



Image 2.4- The programme to finally announce the National Occupational Safety Policy was held on June 7th and July 31st, 2024



Image 2.5- A workshop to educate and train professionals on Work at Height (TOT) was held in collaboration with the Ericsson institute on 04th, 05th and 06th August 2024. Over 50 officers involved in the field participated in this.

Special achievements

- I. In 2023, the institute was able to enter into an agreement with Changshin University in South Korea for the national task of preparing the necessary arrangements for Sri Lankan students to study a Safety Engineering degree at that university. As an initial step in 2024, 25 students were selected and given the opportunity to follow the institution's Occupational Safety and Health National Diploma and plans were made to direct them to the degree course.
- II. The initial opportunity was given to seven (07) students who met the qualifications and obtained visas. Through this, Sri Lankan students have the opportunity to acquire professional skills under the E-7 category and have also agreed to complete their degree course with a 50% discount. Sri Lankan students are expected to enjoy Korean job opportunities with 10-year permits in South Korea.
- III. In 2024, arrangements were being made for twenty-five (25) students who had completed the National Occupational Safety and Health Course and fulfilled the A/L qualifications, to pursue a Safety Engineering degree at Changshin University in Korea.
- IV. To prevent accidents in the workplace and create a safe workplace for employees, a certified environmental measurement survey and risk assessment programme will be carried out throughout the year 2025. In addition, the institution

plans to conduct training in the future according to the requests received from the factories. A certificate will be provided for this. This will help the factories to be recognized in the international market. Thus, through international recognition, the opportunity to obtain orders from foreign buyers grows.

Programmes

National Occupational Safety and Health Conference 2024

The National Occupational Safety and Health Conference 2024 was held on November 28, 2024, as part of the National Occupational Safety Week celebrations. The event took place at the Shangri-La Hotel on Thursday, November 28, 2024, under the patronage of the Minister of Labour, Hon. Anil Jayantha Fernando, and the Deputy Minister of Labour, Hon. Mahinda Jayasinghe. The conference's theme was “Climate Changing,” and numerous local and international speakers delivered lectures during the event.

This conference was attended by over 500 businesses, managers and occupational safety officers representing the employer side, and was held based on the concept of occupational safety to create a safe and healthy labour force.



Photograph 2.6- The National Occupational Safety and Health conference 2024

Occupational Safety and Health Diploma Certificate Award Ceremony 2024

The Diploma and Certificate Awarding Ceremony for Occupational Safety Officers was held on Thursday, the November 28, 2024 at 6:00 p.m. at the Shangri-La Hotel.



Image 2.7- The Diploma and Certificate Awarding Ceremony for Occupational Safety and Health

2.9.2. Financial progress achieved through operational income sources implemented by the institution

Table 2.42 - Financial progress achieved through operational income sources as per the financial statements closed as on 31.12.2024

Task	Income
Medical Examination	1,861,715.00
Environmental Measurement Survey	18,729,602.00
Certificate Courses and Diploma Courses	34,537,050.00
The provision of services through other agreements	11,612,500.00
Other revenue interests	31,387,225.00
Total	98,837,356.00

2.10. The Office of the Commissioner for Workmen's Compensation

2.10.1. Payment of compensation for occupational accidents

The **Office of the Commissioner for Workmen's Compensation** pays compensation to workmen who sustain injuries in the course of employment, who suffer from diseases contracted due to the nature of the employment and to dependents of workmen who die due to accidents in workplaces. The information regarding the number of accidents reported and the number of compensation paid are as follows.

- Number and of institutions that have paid amount of Rs. 2 million and above as compensation, started in the year 2024.

No. of Institution	Amount (Rs.m.)
14	85,790,185.00

- Number of fatal and non-fatal cases that initiated in 2024 and completed in the same year
 - Cases that ended in court - 86
 - Cases that ended at the office level without going to court – 74
- Time analysis of case files concluded between 01.01.2024 to 31.12.2024
 - Number of cases initiated in the year 2024 and concluded in the same year - 160
 - Number of cases in previous years – 233

Table 2.43- Number of cases filed as on 31.12.2024

Number of cases to be taken up for hearing on 01.01.2024	422
Number of cases instituted from 01.01.2024 to 31.12.2024 (Fatal - 145 and Non-Fatal - 244)	389
Total number of cases pending as on 31.12.2024	811
Number of cases completed between 01.01.2024 to 31.12.2024	418
Number of cases pending as on 31.12.2024	<u>393</u>

2.11. The Shrama Vasana Fund

2.11.1. Promotion of worker welfare programmes

Shrama Vasana Fund conducts welfare programmes for uplifting the living standard of the labour community. Eye clinics, medical camps, scholarships and school equipment for children of deceased workers, technical education for livelihood assistance and other welfare activities are carried out island-wide as part of these welfare programmes.

- **Awareness programmes**

The primary objective of establishing the Shrama Vasana Fund is to promote the welfare of employees. Looking back over the past few years, it has become clear that most of the industrial accidents in Sri Lanka have occurred due to negligence of employees and failure to use safety equipment. For these reasons, as a precautionary measure to prevent accidents, factories that have had accidents and dangerous conditions reported in recent years were identified and training workshops and awareness programmes on safe working were conducted by engineers with knowledge of the matter.

Furthermore, awareness programmes were conducted through experienced resource persons in the field with the aim of raising awareness about labour laws, as well as the elusive situations that arise for employees and institution owners.

These awareness programmes were very successful, as employees and the employer community were made aware of labour laws, and awareness programmes on occupational safety and health also assisted in mitigating industrial accidents.

In 2024, 25 awareness programmes were conducted covering the entire island, directly benefiting approximately 1,000 employees.

- **Educational Aid Programmes**

With the aim of providing relief to working families in the face of the prevailing economic situation in the country, this programme provides educational assistance to the children of selected low-income working families, covering all the Divisional Secretariats of all the districts of Sri Lanka.

School equipment kits were provided to 28,983 children.



Image 2.8: School equipment distribution programmes conducted by Shrama Vasana Fund

- **Fatal-Accident Scholarship Programmes**

These programmes are implemented for the children of workers who died or became completely disabled due to accidents in factories in Sri Lanka.

Beneficiaries are identified based on information obtained through the Factory Inspector Engineers and Office of the Commissioner for Workmen's Compensation about industrial accidents that occur in a factory, site or workplace. Children of workers who died or became completely disabled (from pre-school education to university education, i.e. between the ages of 3-25) who are studying are eligible for this, and a savings deposit of Rs. 50,000 and educational equipment are provided to these children.

As a part of this programme, benefits have been provided to 18 scholarship recipients in the year 2024.

- **Legal Aid Programmes**

This programme is implemented to provide relief to employees in cases where private sector employees have been unfairly dismissed, when institutions are closed without prior notice, and when a complaint has been filed at the presence of the Commissioner for Workmen's Compensation.

As a part of this programme, benefits have been provided to 06 people using provisions allocated as per the action plan in the year 2024.

- **Conducting Medical Camps**

Providing relief to employees who are victims of occupational diseases is another key objective of the Shrama Vasana Fund. These groups are selected from the employees who work under hazardous environmental conditions that can cause occupational diseases and medical camps are conducted targeting such groups accordingly.

This helps to assess the health status of employees, identify those genuinely affected by occupational diseases, and protect individuals at risk of developing such conditions in the future.

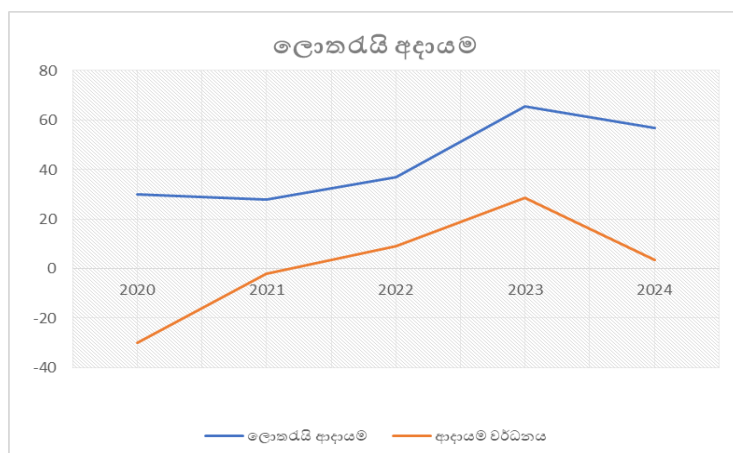
Table 2.44- Financial progress of programmes conducted during 2024

Programme Type	The allocated amount (Rs. m.)	The amount spent	Percentage
Awareness Programmes	1.44	0.32	22%
Educational Aid Programmes	Special projects - 100	66	66%
	General- 12.5	6.7	54%
Fatal-Accident Scholarship Programmes	5.6	1.13	20%
Legal Aid Programmes	1	0.14	14%
Conducting Medical Camps	0.42	0.24	58%

Table 2.45 - Physical progress of programmes conducted during 2024

Programme	No. of programmes conducted	No. of beneficiaries
Awareness Programmes	19	550
Educational Aid Programmes	Special projects - 24	28983
	General- 04	309
Fatal-Accident Scholarship Programmes	1	18
Legal Aid Programmes	1	6
Conducting Medical Camps	1	180

Graph 2.7 - Lottery Revenue - 2020 to 2024



3. Future Plans and Programmes of the Ministry

The Ministry bears a timely responsibility to establish legal provisions that foster an employer-employee friendly atmosphere within a decent work environment, aligned with current national and international socio-economic dynamics. To cultivate a productive labour force and promote amicable employer-employee relations, existing labour laws and regulations will be amended to comply with ratified international labour conventions while reflecting the country's evolving socio-economic landscape and the demands of the current world of work. The Ministry remains dedicated to safeguarding the rights and enhancing the welfare of the workforce. Accordingly, the Ministry and its affiliated institutions have formulated their future plans based on the following key considerations.

- Government Policy Statement “A Rich Country - A Beautiful Life!”
- Vision, Mission and Objectives of the Ministry
- Duties and functions assigned to the Ministry by the Gazette Extraordinary No. 2412/08 dated 25/11/2024.
- Sustainable Development Goals relevant to the scope of the Ministry
- Matters included in the international conventions and agreements that Sri Lanka has recognized and agreed to in the labour sector.

3.1. Ministry of Labour

3.1.1. Strengthening the legal framework related to the labour sector

It is acknowledged that there is an urgent need to streamline and remove the complexities within the laws, making them pertinent to the current work environment and ensuring benefits for all stakeholders.

Accordingly, with the approval of the Cabinet of Ministers, an Employment Bill has been drafted, addressing existing discrepancies between the Acts and incorporating flexible service conditions. This draft has been assigned to a committee to review its alignment with new government policies. Based on the recommendations of the particular committee, the draft will be revised with the necessary changes and submitted to the approval of the Cabinet of Ministers.

The National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health Act is expected to be amended to foster a culture of occupational safety in Sri Lanka. The aim is to establish a safe, healthy, and occupational hazard-free work environment. This initiative seeks to develop the necessary human resources to maintain a safe and healthy workforce, while also creating opportunities for income generation.

3.1.2. Safeguarding the employer-employee rights amidst globalization and open economic policies

At present, employers bear the responsibility for providing unemployment and maternity benefits. It is essential to transition towards an insurance system for these benefits and the Ministry will collaborate with stakeholders to develop the necessary legal framework for this transition. Furthermore, given the inefficacy of the current mechanisms for addressing workers' social security needs, consideration will be given to implement a pension scheme for the private sector, an insurance scheme for occupational accidents, and expanding social security coverage to the informal sector. Enhancing social security involves coordination with numerous government agencies. By taking steps to work collaboratively with these agencies, it is anticipated that social security coverage will be both improved and expanded.

Efforts are underway to boost female participation in the workforce, which has remained at 31% for decades. To address this, the proposed labour law amendment will introduce essential legal provisions related to workplace discrimination, violence, and the establishment of flexible work environments to enhance female participation. Recognizing that the current employer-based system for providing maternity benefits negatively impacts female workforce participation, the introduction of a maternity insurance scheme will further support increasing female labor participation.

3.1.3. Decent work programme

With the assistance of the International Labour Organization, preparations have commenced for a five-year National Decent Work Programme for 2025–2030. This programme aims to streamline labour policies in consultation with trade unions and employers. Additionally, efforts are being made to ratify the C188 Convention on Fishing, which will enhance decent working conditions for the fishing community. This ratification is expected to be completed by the end of 2025.

3.2. Department of Labour

Aligning with government policies to develop the Digital Public Infrastructure for digital governance in Sri Lanka, plans are in place to assess the digitalization needs of the Department of Labour. With technical assistance from a suitable consultancy firm, transformative changes will be implemented in the Department's processes and systems. This initiative aims to provide clients with more convenient and efficient services without any hindrance.

Steps will be taken to further enhance the social security of employees in Sri Lanka's private and semi-government sectors. This includes promoting employer registration and ensuring that employees are registered as members of the Employees' Provident Fund within 30 days of commencing employment. In 2025, plans are in place to implement timely amendments to the Employees' Provident Fund benefit claim

application forms and improve data entry processes in data systems. These changes aim to make the Employees' Provident Fund benefit payment system more convenient and simplified for clients. A study is expected to be conducted to determine whether the remaining retirement benefits for members who obtain 30% pre-benefits from the Employees' Provident Fund and housing loans will be sufficient for them to comfortably live out their retirement years when they receive their final benefits.

Enhancing the awareness of employers and employees in factories about occupational safety and health will contribute to reducing accidents and occupational diseases in the industrial sector. Consequently, in 2025, it is planned to implement occupational safety and health awareness programmes, particularly targeting employers and employees in the informal sector, where the risk of accidents is higher.

Sri Lanka is dedicated to eradicating all forms of child labour by 2025, in accordance with UN Sustainable Development Goal 8.7. To achieve this, it is crucial to educate not only employers, employees, and government officials, but also the entire public at the grassroots level about the importance of preventing child labour. To achieve this goal, appropriate measures will be taken to identify instances of child labour in the informal sector by collaborating with the Community Police Committee mechanism of the Police Department. Additionally, pledges will be obtained from employers in formal sectors, ensuring their institutions do not employ child labour. Awareness will also be raised about child labour in high-risk sectors such as tourism and small and medium-scale enterprises. In 2025, a study will be conducted on child activities in the Western Province, building on the initial study carried out in the Colombo District in 2024. The aim is to identify the causes of child labour.

The Department of Labour aims to enhance organizational productivity by fostering a conducive working environment that ensures industrial peace between employers and employees in private and semi-government institutions across the island. Consequently, in 2025, regional awareness programmes will be implemented for employers and employees in institutions throughout the island. These programmes will promote social dialogue to improve employer-employee relationships and increase awareness of labor laws among both parties.

Individuals who wish to submit any type of labour complaint to the Department of Labour are now provided with the opportunity to do so efficiently through the online Complaint Management System. This system also facilitates the monitoring of the progress in resolving the complaints. In the year 2025, actions will be taken to further streamline and fortify this system. This initiative is intended to ensure that the rights accorded to employees by labour laws are effectively upheld.

3.3. Department of Manpower and Employment

The following activities are to be implemented by this department in the year 2025 to achieve the objectives of formulating a national human resources and employment policy, resolving structural unemployment issues, providing guidance to determine the right career direction targeting the labour market, preparing manpower plans, development and forecasting, and developing informal and underprivileged groups.

- Organizing district and regional job fairs is expected to equip job seekers with essential employment guidance, skill development resources, and tailored support to enhance their career readiness and opportunities.
- To enhance service standards for job seekers and self-employed individuals in selected informal employment sectors, various programmes will be implemented. These initiatives will provide the necessary knowledge and guidance on job dignity and product quality. Accordingly, person-centered career guidance will be offered, along with referrals for obtaining NVQ certificates through RPL methods. Additionally, the necessary guidance will be provided for networking in business sectors. These programmes are expected to be implemented at the rural level, targeting small groups.
- Employers' conferences are organized with the primary goal of fostering strong relationships between the Department and the employers who provide services. These conferences aim to facilitate service exchange and mutual benefits. Scheduled to be held in 2025, these conferences will cover all 9 provinces.
- Career guidance services aim to support school dropouts, NEET beneficiaries, differently abled persons, and youth. These services focus on promoting self-employment by selecting registered job seekers with suitable skills and interests for self-employment or entrepreneurship development. Guidance programmes are then implemented to foster self-employment and entrepreneurship, and direct the aforementioned groups towards income generation processes.
- Job seekers are registered through the Department's job fair and at the District/Divisional Secretariat levels. These individuals are registered online via a Google Form, and their information is entered into the Department's database, maintained in a Google Sheet. Employment agencies and existing vacancies are also registered, facilitating the referral of job seekers for appropriate employment opportunities accordingly. Among the registered job seekers, individuals of suitable age and capability for vocational training rather than immediate employment will be identified and coordinated with vocational training centers. It is expected that at least 100 beneficiaries from each Divisional Secretariat will be referred to these training institutions. Additionally, the most suitable training programmes will be introduced to them through career guidance services.

3.4. National Institute of Labour Studies

Programmes aimed at the qualitative development of Sri Lankan labour force will be implemented. These programmes will focus on developing and promoting labour studies, conducting research, and offering courses in this field. Collaboration will be sought with government-recognized local training institutions and foreign training institutions. Currently, only certificate and diploma courses in labour studies are being offered. Preliminary discussions with state universities and international universities are planned to upgrade the diploma course to a degree programme.

Courses to be commenced in future.

- Diploma course in General Management and Labour Migration to enhance the standard of agencies providing foreign employment services
- Awareness programmes and training courses to empower tea plantation workers and the labour force of factories located in investment promotion zones

To further sustain the National Institute of Labour Studies through self-financing, plans are in place to establish new lecture hall facilities. The aim is to make courses more accessible to the public by leveraging new technological methods and ensuring convenience for trainees. These efforts will be conducted in the main districts. Additionally, targeted training programs will be identified and implemented for both the public and private sectors.

Space within the Labour Secretariat building will be allocated for the establishment of laboratory facilities for the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health. Consequently, in the year 2025, the National Institute of Labour Studies, currently housed within the Labour Secretariat building, is planned to be relocated to the "Mehewara Piyesa" building.

3.5. National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health

To minimize accidents and illnesses at worksites, particularly in small and medium-scale enterprises, a Self-Learning Platform will be developed and introduced to industries by 2025. This system will leverage innovative technology to protect employees from occupational accidents and illnesses that may occur at the worksites.

A formal system is also to be introduced to implement occupational safety and health policies in industries and to obtain data on accidents and occupational diseases.

Arrangements are being made for twenty-five (25) students who passed the G.C.E. Advanced Level in 2024 and completed the National Occupational Safety and Health Course to pursue a Safety Engineering degree at Changshin University in Korea in 2025. To promote National Occupational Safety Week and raise awareness of its

purpose, the National Occupational Safety Week and the National Occupational Safety and Health Conference - 2025 are scheduled for the second week of November. Additionally, to recognize businesses and institutions dedicated to employee occupational safety, the National Occupational Safety Awards Ceremony is planned for mid-November 2025.

3.6. Shrama Vasana Fund

In 2025, special focus will be placed on safeguarding the occupational safety, rights, and job security of low-income employees. Further, programmes will be implemented to ensure the welfare of employees and their dependents. Accordingly, to safeguard the working community, several programmes will be implemented. These initiatives include providing medical assistance to employees in hazardous work environments, conducting scholarship programmes for the children of workers who have died or been completely disabled due to factory accidents in Sri Lanka, and offering legal aid to employees in cases of unfair dismissal in the private sector or when institutions are closed without prior notice. An allocation of Rs. 48.52 million has been designated for the implementation of these initiatives in 2025. Simultaneously, arrangements are being made to formalize an agreement between Shrama Vasana Fund and the National Lottery Board.