

Establishment of an Independent Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIBSL) in Sri Lanka

The government is in the process of establishing an Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau of Sri Lanka (AAIBSL) to honour the international obligations and adjust internal aviation administrative measures in conformity with standards and recommended practices applicable internationally.

For this purpose, a Cabinet paper was presented by Hon. Nimal Siripala de Silva (M.P), Minister of Transport and Civil Aviation.

It is proposed that a bureau for the Aircraft Accident and Incident Investigation Authority is established in Sri Lanka under the direct supervision of the Ministry in charge of the subject of Civil Aviation, with the objectives, powers and functions as stipulated in the “**Model Aircraft Accident and Incident Investigation Authority**” which is developed by ICAO for the guidance of States.

In 1948 Sri Lanka ratified the Convention on International Civil Aviation which was signed at Chicago in 1944 (Chicago Convention) and became a member of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO). Consequently Sri Lanka has an obligation to regulate country’s civil aviation activities in conformity with the provisions in the Chicago Convention and nineteen (19) Annexes thereto which defines the applicable international standards relating to various technical, operational and environmental matters involving civil aviation.

Pursuant to Annex-13 “Aircraft Accident and Incident Investigation” to the Convention on International Civil Aviation, each Member State is required to establish an independent organization for the conduct of investigations into aircraft accidents and incidents that come within the jurisdiction of the State.

In order to realize the above objective of the investigation, ICAO requires the Member States to establish a State Authority with sufficient autonomy and financial strength for effective conduct of the investigations, consistent with the provisions of Annex 13.

ICAO has further emphasized that Accident and Incident Investigation Authority must be functionally independent (separate) from other State aviation organizations, particularly the civil aviation authority responsible for regulation and safety oversight in the State.

Presently, pursuant to the Civil Aviation Act No.14 of 2010, it is the Civil Aviation Authority of Sri Lanka which is responsible for the conduct of investigation into aircraft accident and incidents that comes within the purview of Sri Lanka.

Hence, the Minister has sought Cabinet approval to draft the legislation needed for the establishment of the Aircraft accident Investigation Bureau of Sri Lanka (AAIBSL) in line with the ICAO Model Aircraft Accident and Incident Investigation Authority, which was granted.

The budgetary provisions required for the functioning of the proposed AAIBSL may be allocated from the National Budget under the Ministry in charge of the subject of Civil Aviation or from Civil Aviation Authority of Sri Lanka up to a ceiling of Rs. 50 million per annum.