

Imported canned fish temporarily suspended

Updated: January 18, 2024 2:16 pm SL Time

Minister of Fisheries Douglas Devananda instructed the Director General of Fisheries Department Mr. Susantha Kahawaththa to suspend the issuance of prior-approval temporarily, for the import of canned fish with effect from 11-01-2024. In order to uplift local Canned Fish industry.

During the discussion between the Minister of Fisheries and the Representatives from the Association of Canned Fish Producers held recently at the Ministry of Fisheries, the representatives put forward many issues faced by them.

The main issue faced by them was the difficulty in selling local canned fish as the result of the large-scale import of Canned fish from foreign countries during the past few months. They further stated that they had to increase the price of Canned Fish as the result of the imposition of VAT tax for local canned fish with effect from the 1st of January, 2024. Although they are capable of producing canned fish locally to meet the demand of the local market, they have observed a tendency to import a large stock of canned fish during the past few months, and as the result of this import their industry has been affected.

The representatives further pointed out that the price of the imported canned fish is cheaper than the locally produced canned fish. They are unable to sell their products for the same price as the result of increased VAT and Cess Tax and they would be compelled to close down their factories.

The Minister instructed the Director General of Fisheries Department to suspend the issuance of Prior- Approval for the import of canned fish, further temporarily and instructed the secretary to Ministry of Fisheries to explore the possibility to impose an additional tax on the canned fish that had been imported already.

The Minister further instructed the Director General of Fisheries Department to provide opportunity for Canned Fish producers to import required fish canning, during the period when the price of fish goes up in the country, and provided solutions to many other issues of the Canned Fish Producers.

The Minister also instructed the officials to observe market price of fish and supply frequently, in order to prevent inconveniences to consumers.

Many higher officials including the Secretary to the Ministry Ms. Kumari Somarathne, Director General of Fisheries Department Susantha Kahawaththa, and the Additional Secretaries to the Ministry of Fisheries Mrs. Anusha Gokula and Dhammika Ranathunga attended the event.