

# ComBank Joins Sri Lanka Army

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Left image: Dharma Dheerasinghe, Chairman, Commercial Bank and Army Commander Lieutenant General Shavendra Silva at the exchanging of the agreement. Right, top and bottom: senior representatives of the Bank and the Army at the presentation and the agricultural machinery and equipment donated to the 'Thuru Mithuru Nawa Ratak' project.

Commercial Bank has announced a partnership with Sri Lanka Army to financially support the second phase of the 'Thuru Mithuru Nawa Ratak' initiative designed to transform Sri Lanka into a country self-sufficient in essential food. The second phase entails cultivating 125 acres of land with the involvement of 150 low-income farming families to grow various crops in line with national requirements under the close supervision of the Security Forces Headquarters of the Central Province. The Sri Lanka Army will provide the necessary facilities and skills, and disseminate knowledge regarding effective cultivation to encourage these families to cultivate their own lands and help build domestic agronomy. The funds donated by Commercial Bank CSR Trust will go towards the purchase of agricultural machinery as well as equipment including hand tractors, mini cultivators, mini rotary slashers, and a tine tiller; irrigation facilities such as ten 1,000 liter water tanks and nine water pumps and 620kgs of carrot, bean and maize seeds.

Commenting on the Bank's involvement in this initiative, S Renganathan, the Managing Director, Commercial Bank said: "Commercial Bank has been one of the largest supporters of micro and SME in the agrarian sphere through the Bank's Agriculture and Micro Finance

Units because we believe this sector is the backbone of the rural economy of Sri Lanka. By funding this initiative of Sri Lanka Army, we are now part of a greater plan to propel Sri Lanka towards food security and self- sufficiency. This aligns well with our aspirations for the country.”

The ‘Thuru Mithuru Nawa Ratak’ is a macro level program initiated by the Chief of Defense Staff as well as the Commander of the Sri Lanka Army Lieutenant General Shavendra Silva.

It is headed by Chief of Staff of Sri Lanka Army Major General Jagath S Gunawardena. It seeks to promote domestic agriculture by means of distributing seeds and plants to stimulate an agricultural renaissance by cultivating lands with the support of military bases across the island. The project is implemented under three phases. First phase involved Sri Lanka Army cultivating over 1,500 acres within army camps. Upon the completion of phase two, which is supported by the Bank, the third phase would entail the Sri Lanka Army acquiring crown lands across the island to further expand cultivation.