PARLIAMENT OF THE DEMOCRATIC SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF SRI LANKA

SRI LANKA BUREAU OF FOREIGN EMPLOYMENT
(Amendment)

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BILL

An Act to Amend the Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment Act, No. 21 of 1985; to mandate comprehensive pre-departure training for all registered workers, covering destination Cyber Laws, to Establish an Absolute Statutory Right to Repatriation and Emergency Payouts for Migrant Workers in Distress; to Mandate Proactive Legal Defense Protocols; and to Provide for Matters Connected Therewith or Incidental Thereto.

Presented by the by Hon. Faiszer Musthapha, PC, M.P on ……2026

(Published in the Gazette on …..)

Ordered by Parliament to be printed

AN ACT TO AMEND THE SRI LANKA BUREAU OF FOREIGN EMPLOYMENT ACT, NO. 21 OF 1985; TO MANDATE COMPREHENSIVE PRE-DEPARTURE TRAINING FOR ALL REGISTERED WORKERS, COVERING DESTINATION CYBER LAWS, TO ESTABLISH AN ABSOLUTE STATUTORY RIGHT TO REPATRIATION AND EMERGENCY PAYOUTS FOR MIGRANT WORKERS IN DISTRESS; TO MANDATE PROACTIVE LEGAL DEFENSE PROTOCOLS; AND TO PROVIDE FOR MATTERS CONNECTED THEREWITH OR INCIDENTAL THERETO.

BE IT ENACTED by the Parliament of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka as follows: —

1.This Act may be cited as the Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment (Amendment) Act, No…… of 2026 — Short title

2.This act shall come into operation on such date as the Minister may appoint by Order published in the *Gazette*. — date of operation.

3. The provisions of this Act shall apply to all the recruitments of Sri Lankans for employment outside Sri Lanka by private sector undertaking or a public corporation. — Application of provisions.

4. Section 15 of the Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment Act, No. 21 of 1985 (hereinafter referred to as the "principal enactment") is hereby amended by the addition immediately after paragraph *(o)* thereof, of the following new paragraph: — "*(oo)* to mandate comprehensive pre-departure training for all registered workers, covering destination cyber laws, cultural literacy, and specific legal provisions regarding social media use." — Amendment of section 15 of Act No. 21 of 1985.

5. The following new section is hereby inserted immediately after section 48 of the principal enactment and shall have effect as section 48A of that enactment: — Insertion of section 48 A to the principal enactment

48A. (1) Every registered Sri Lankan migrant worker shall have an absolute Statutory Right to State-Funded legal representation with immediate retainer of local counsel who is qualified to practice in host jurisdiction together with comprehensive cover of legal costs and State-Funded Safe Passage, legally binding the State to cover the full cost of economy class return air tickets, transit logistics, and emergency medical clearance when such worker is verified to

be in distress.

(2) For the purposes of subsection (1) objective triggers for 'distress' shall be legally defined as—

(i) non-payment of contractually agreed salary for three consecutive months;

(ii) documented physical, psychological, or sexual abuse;

(iii) premature or illegal contract cancellation by the foreign employer; or

(iv) outbreak of armed conflict, severe political unrest, or natural disasters in the host region."

Regulations

(3) The Minister may make regulations for the purpose of carrying out and giving effect to the provisions of this Act. Such regulations may provide for:

(i)The form, manner, and procedure for migrant workers in distress to apply for relief, state-funded legal representation, and safe passage.

(ii)The constitution, powers, and duties of a committee appointed by the Minister to review and determine such applications.

(iii) Every regulation made under this section shall be published in the *Gazette* and shall, as soon as convenient, be brought before Parliament for approval.

Sinhala text to prevail in case of inconsistency

6. In the event of any inconsistency between the Sinhala and Tamil texts of this Act, the Sinhala text shall prevail.