

Unused state land will be used for cultivation - President

NIRUSHI WIMALAWEERA
in Killinochchi

President Maithripala Sirisena yesterday said that a most opportune moment has dawned to develop the country with all countries in the world extending their friendship and support to Sri Lanka.

The President was speaking at the inauguration of the National Programme on Local Food Production, held at Iranamadu yesterday.

The President in his speech emphasised on the importance of further strengthening local capacities when it come to food production.

The President pointed out that over 80 per cent of the requirement of chilies,soya, cowpea and green gram is currently being imported.

He said that over Rs.6 billion was spent on importation of food in 2014. "When this happens, the farmers can never get rid of their debt burden," he said. The President emphasised that Sri Lanka should



President Maithripala Sirisena yesterday inaugurated the national programme on Local Food Production from Waddakachchi in Killinochchi. Picture shows the President operating a paddy planting machine. Minister Daya Gamage is also in the picture. Picture by Sudath Malaweera

not import food crops from foreign countries when Sri Lanka possess the ability and capacity to produce them locally.

President Sirisena stated that every state owned land which is not been utilised for cultivations has to be used to grow food crops.

He said the home garden cultivation is a key feature

of this national programme which is carried out not only by the Department of Agriculture and the Presidential Secretariat, but, with the involvement of other private and public stakeholders.

He noted that people should cultivate the habit of growing food crops in their home gardens for their day to day consump-

tion. President Sirisena requested the people, who enjoy the freedom and democracy under this new government, to unite irrespective of race, religion and caste differences to eliminate poverty in our country.

The program which was inaugurated in Killinochchi district yesterday, will be implemented through out the country in the future. The aim of the programme is to achieve self sufficiency in food crops that can be grown in the country.

The President on the occasion also distributed ownership deeds for 613 acres of land in the Killinochchi and Mullaitivu districts, previously used by the military, to their original owners and to the relevant institutions.

President Sirisena also made an observation tour of the Vocational Training Centre being built in the Iranamadu area with financial assistance from Germany.

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