

PRESS RELEASE

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CENTRAL BANK OF SRI LANKA

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Provision of Banking Services Amidst the COVID-19 Outbreak

The Central Bank of Sri Lanka (CBSL) upon obtaining approval/consent of the Director General of Health Services and the Inspector General of Police has already requested licensed commercial banks and licensed specialised banks (licensed banks) to carry out essential banking services, strictly adhering to all relevant safety measures and guidelines issued by the relevant authorities in providing banking services, under ongoing travel restrictions during the COVID-19 outbreak.

Having observed the recent communications/notices published by licensed banks on provision of banking services, CBSL has reiterated the need for all licensed banks to make necessary arrangements to provide uninterrupted banking services, complying with the following:

- (i) Bank branches shall only be opened to provide essential services such as trade financing, treasury operations, clearing activities, payment of pensions/salaries, responding to other urgent requests/inquiries of customers, etc.;
- (ii) Considering the staff health and safety when deploying them to serve in branches, the number of staff permitted to report to work in branches shall be limited to 15 per branch;
- (iii) Staff shall report to work on a roster basis, or the branches shall only be opened on specified days taking note of specific requirements of customers of each branch ;
- (iv) Branch Managers shall obtain prior approval of the nearest Police Station for the travel of the relevant staff;

Further, licensed banks are required to:

- Publish notices informing the general public how essential banking services can be obtained;
- Take adequate measures to keep the banks' customers informed of the contact details for obtaining essential banking services during this challenging period, including display of contact details of branch staff at the branch and Hot-line numbers considering the various preferred modes of transacting;
- Ensure that the customer inquiries are answered and resolved expeditiously; and
- Continue to facilitate banking services through electronic / digital channels, including over 6,100 Automated Teller Machines (ATMs), Cash Deposit Machines and mobile banking vehicles.

CBSL requests the public to extend their cooperation to licensed banks by using online payment services/instruments for their day-to-day transactions to the extent possible and to contact the relevant bank branches only for obtaining the essential banking services during this challenging time.