



## Dole Lanka terminates unethical contractor, Southern Force

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Dole Lanka, a subsidiary of Dole Asia Holdings, the world's largest producers and marketers of fresh fruits and vegetables, has terminated the contract with one of their labour outsourcing companies, Southern Force Ltd.

The decision was primarily made upon an inquiry that revealed that Southern Force had not made the EPF and ETF payments of their contracted labourers for many years although they had collected the same from Dole Lanka.

The inquiry was triggered when Southern Force showed reluctance to renew their contract with new conditions which demanded transparency in statutory payment records.

Furthermore several contract employees had made complaints that their statutory payments had been withheld by the Southern Force.

In this connection the Labour Department had filed two cases against Southern Force with the Wellawaya Magistrate's Court, in which they had admitted guilt and agreed on monthly payments to court in relation to unpaid EPF and ETF funds. Further investigations by Dole Lanka have revealed that the unpaid EPF and ETF payments by Southern Force over the years amounts to Rs 15 mn. Southern Force (Pvt) Ltd has not paid Value Added Tax (VAT) amounting to Rs 25 mn which was collected from Dole Lanka (Pvt) Ltd.

As a result, in keeping with best ethical practices, their international code of conduct and the labour laws of Sri Lanka, Dole Lanka was compelled to terminate their contract with Southern Force. However recognizing the valuable contribution made by the contracted labourers over the years and Dole Lanka's aspiration to empower the rural communities of Sri Lanka, the company has assured continuous employment for all labourers contracted through Southern Force via one of their other labour outsourcing companies. Over the years this company has been proven to be reliable in their dealings with Dole Lanka. This company also has a workforce of over 6000 people in different manufacturing & production organizations.

When inquired whether the employees would be impacted by a break in continuous employment due to the switch Dole Lanka Human Resources Head E. Abeywickrama said they have taken all necessary measures to draw the agreement with the new labour outsourcing company on the same day the previous contract with the Southern Force was terminated.

"This is to ensure that the gratuity and other statutory payments of the employees will be considered since the inception of service, with no break in continuous employment." He further stressed that critical measures have been made to reaffirm the job security of all their employees, contract or otherwise in line with the company's vision.

Dole Lanka is a subsidiary of Dole Asia Holdings Founded in Hawaii in 1851. Dole Asia Holdings is owned by Itochu Corporation.

Dole is one of the world's largest producers and marketers of high-quality fresh fruit and fresh vegetables with revenues of \$7.5 billion. The company does business in more than 70 countries and employs, on average, 20,000 full-time, regular employees and 7,000 full-time seasonal or temporary employees, worldwide.

Dole Lanka operates several agri-farms in Buttala, Demodara, Embilipitiya, Kuda Oya, and Mahiyanganaya spanning a total of 844 hectares.

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