

Unethical contractor terminated by Dole Lanka

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Dole Lanka Ltd. – a subsidiary of Dole Asia Holdings Pte., the world’s largest producers and marketers of high-quality fresh fruits and fresh vegetables – recently terminated the contract with one of its labour outsourcing companies, Southern Force Ltd.

The decision was primarily made upon an inquiry that revealed that Southern Force had not made the EPF/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/ETF funds.

Further investigations by Dole Lanka have revealed that the unpaid EPF/ETF payments by Southern Force over the years amounts to approximately Rs. 15 million. Southern Force has also not paid Value Added Tax (VAT) amounting to approximately Rs. 25 million, which was collected from Dole Lanka.

As a result, in keeping with best ethical practices, its international code of conduct and the labour laws of Sri Lanka, Dole Lanka was compelled to terminate its contract with Southern Force.

However recognising 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 its other labour outsourcing companies. Over the years this company has been proven to be reliable in its dealings with Dole Lanka. This company also has a workforce of over 6,000 people in different manufacturing and production organisations.

When inquired whether the employees would be impacted by a break in continuous employment due to the switch E. Abeywickrama, Head of Human Resources, Dole Lanka, strongly emphasised: “We 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 Pte. Ltd. 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 approximately \$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.

With approximately 130 bases in 65 countries, ITOCHU Corporation, one of the leading sogoshosha, is engaged in domestic trading, import/export, and overseas trading of various products. It primarily sources products from the Philippines, Japan, China and Sri Lanka. Dole produces bananas, pineapples, papayas and avocados on more than 45,000 hectares of land in the Philippines alone and also sources these products through associated producers or independent growing arrangements.

Dole Lanka operates several Agri-farms in Sri Lanka, located in Buttala, Demodara, Embilipitiya, Kuda Oya, and Mahiyanganaya spanning a total of 844 hectares. The company provides direct as well as indirect means of employment and sustenance to many rural Sri Lankans in these areas.



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Dole Lanka - Did anyone know that Dole is destroying Sri Lanka? Has anyone visited their sites and checked the surroundings? Not even wild animals consume their crops.... Obviously, instincts of wild animals are better than that of ours. Dole uses up all our water, which has taken thousands of years to fill and spray the land with pesticides and fungicides destroying the entire eco system. When will we learn and differentiate good from bad? Sri Lankans have wonderful techniques and mechanisms to grow but we always prefer to cherish the hand me downs of the British.....

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