

Technology-based society elements in National Policy Framework *Vistas of Prosperity & Splendour*

20 February 2020 | Colombo

About this presentation

- ICT may be fitted into a silo, but digital is everywhere
- There is a chapter entitled “A Technology Based Society” but digital technology-based actions are found throughout the document
- Using filters of COHERENCE and IMPLEMENTABILITY, **important and illustrative initiatives have been selected** for presentation
- More detail can be provided on request

Policy making via manifesto

- Manifestos are made in opaque black boxes by anonymous persons
 - They are good in patches
 - Quality depends on how much knowledge the person writing that section possessed
- Ideally, good policies, especially those that involve multiple actors, would be open to input, especially from direct stakeholders; this would yield
 - Superior quality of information
 - Greater buy in from stakeholders
- Strong justification for revisiting manifesto commitments once in government
 - Quality of input for state processes tends to be superior to those for party processes

Promoting exports of Software and Business/Knowledge Process Outsourcing



Proposed actions

- Make USD 3 Mn (sic) worth export industry by 2025 by developing Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) & Knowledge Process Outsourcing (KPO)
- Support local entrepreneurs develop software for international market
- Increase number of software engineers and programmers to 300,000 by 2025
- Set up IT centers and BPO centers in connecting cities
- Encourage local software engineers and IT designers to develop software locally instead of importing

Comments

- Broadly consulted IT Sector Strategy exists as part of 2018-22 National Export Strategy
 - Target is USD 2 billion in exports by 2022; have to assume USD 3 million by 2025 is a typo
- Significant export promotion work underway under IT Sector Strategy of National Export Strategy
- Efforts to provide IT sector jobs in regions have mostly failed
- EDB put out a tender for a tech park in Jaffna with Indian support in 2019; worth completing
- Major BPO activity in Wayamba Province, but again, unclear what government can do except provide space
- Much software being currently developed locally; government procurement may be the lever

Importance of stable policies with industry buy-in



- National Export Strategy 2018-2022 has identified IT and BPO sector as one of 6 priority sectors
- Sector sub-strategy is owned by industry, including (perhaps unrealistic) targets
- Committees have been at work; funds have been allocated; ICTA has been implementing
- New EDB Chair has announced NES implementation will continue unchanged
- Good if people who wrote the manifesto had studied what was being done

The foundations: “Establish Digitally Inclusive Sri Lanka”

Proposed actions

- Establish a country wide high-speed optical data transmission system and a high speed 5G Mobile Broadband System to facilitate data transmission
- Introduce a mobile & digital payment system to handle all financial transactions
- Place a cross border e-commerce and International e-payment system
- Introduce new legislation to ensure data protection, cyber security and Intellectual Property Rights
- Establish a patent system so that [agriculture] researchers could patent their innovations

Comments

- An optical fiber backhaul network, built by SLT, already exists; only required action is effective access regulation to allow others to use it
- No reason to get fixated on 5G, still unproven; what is needed is effective spectrum management so the frequencies can be cleared & assigned
- Barrier to mobile payments is regulator, acting as cartel manager
- Unclear how GoSL can establish cross-border e-commerce and payment systems by itself
- Personal data protection & cyber security legislation ready
- Comprehensive IP legislation requires a lot of work

Close to citizens: “Citizen-centric digital government for the convenience of citizens”

Proposed actions

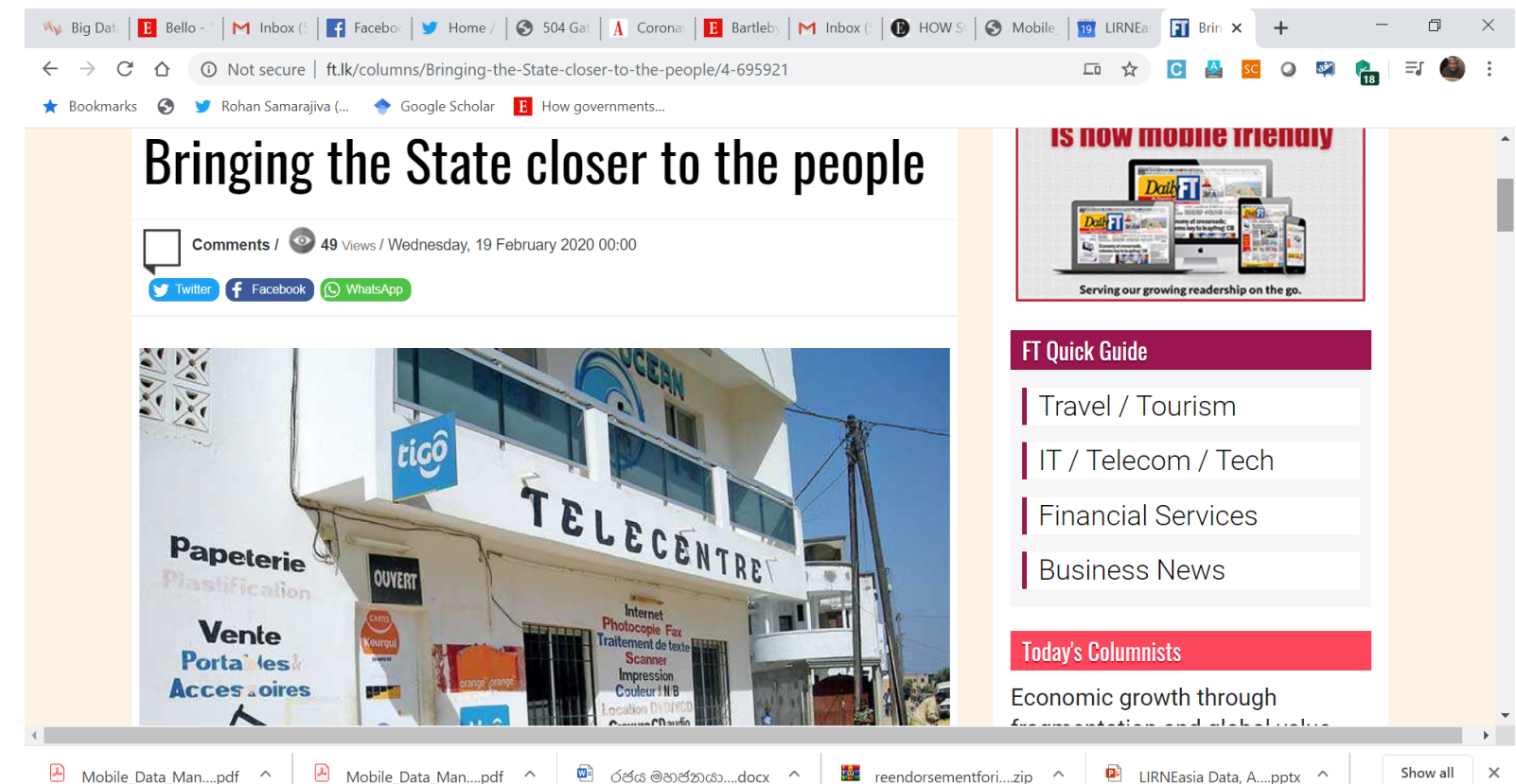
- Establish nine Citizen Service Centers to adopt new technologies for public service delivery (ID cards, passports, driving license etc.)
- Establish one people-centric center in each GN division - to accommodate the Grama Niladhari, Samurdhi Development Officers, Agricultural Research & Production Officer and Family Health Officers - to provide services such as: internet facilities for youth, e-library, children's center, smart teaching room & technical service center.

Comments

- Recognizes that most Sri Lankans are wary of directly accessing services over their smartphones; seeks to provide “bridgital” services close to citizen
 - But in some cases citizens have reasons to come to Colombo as evidenced by decline in passport applications from regions
- Do we really need 14,000+ service centers that will among other things serve as e-libraries & telecenters?
 - What have we learned from worldwide and our own experience with telecenters?
 - Who will support these centers (at the high point, there were less than 1000 nenasalas)? How will they be funded?

What does “close” to citizens mean in the 21st Century?

- Mobile-first government services when 50%+ of 15-65 population has access to Internet through smartphones?
- Services available through websites?
- Services enabled by IT systems but accessible through multiple modes, including through counters, kiosks and the Internet?
 - Should the counters be in provincial capitals (9); district secretariats (25); DSD offices (331); or GN divisions (14,000+)?
 - Decentralization of service delivery, unless backed up by strong online systems and a government Virtual Private Network can create inefficiencies & delays



Op-ed in Daily FT of 19 Feb 2020 for more detail

Tech for efficiency in government and to eliminate corruption: Courts and welfare

Proposed actions

- Restructure court system to expedite criminal cases in courts
- Introduce digital technology to improve coordination between judicial system & related agencies
- New advanced equipment and processes to monitor criminals in prison
- Restructure all the Samurdhi using modern technology

Comments

- Studies completed, consultations conducted, and plans made to digitalize entire court system in stages, not just criminal cases
 - More pending cases in District and Magistrate's Courts than in High Courts
- Coordination between related agencies can be added
- Surveillance within prisons is new
- Ongoing and almost completed efforts to improve entire social welfare system, not just Samurdhi

Law's delays: More cases pending at yearend 2018 than at yearend 2017 other than in C of Appeal & Children's MC

Court	No.of Cases Brought forward from Year 2017	No. of Cases Filed in 2018	No. of Cases Concluded in 2018	No. of Pending cases as at 31. 12.2018
Supreme Court	4,033	1,877	1,579	4,331
Court of Appeal	4,923	1,473	2,345	4,051
Civil Appeal High Court	5,914	3,188	2,841	6,261
Commercial High Court	6,093	1,716	1,499	6,310
High Courts (Criminal)	17,449	12,900	11,966	18,383
Special High Court Trial at Bar		3		3
District Court	196,745	77,654	58,544	215,855
Magistrate's Court	460,933	897,357	839,084	519,206
Children Magistrate's Court	1,280	213	273	1,220
Total	697,370	996,381	918,131	775,620

Making Sri Lanka an innovation hub

Proposed actions

- Maximize use of innovative measures in
 - Internet of Things (IoT)
 - Artificial Intelligence (AI)
 - Biotechnology
 - Robotics
 - Augmented Reality
 - Cloud Computing
 - Nanotechnology
 - 3D printing

Comments

- Very broad commitment that will have to be operationalized through actions such as
 - Prioritization and coordination (e.g., IoT must be articulated with AI and spectrum/fiberization policies)
 - National Digital Policy is urgently needed
 - New funding mechanisms for research and development learning from ITI, SLINTEC and NIFS models
 - Long-term stable funding & institutional commitments to research & implementation agencies
 - Ensuring laws, such as data protection, do not hinder innovation