



*(Tenth Parliament - First Session)*

No. 22.]

## MINUTES OF PARLIAMENT

Wednesday, February 19, 2025 at 9.30 a.m.

### PRESENT :

**Hon. (Dr.) Jagath Wickramaratne**, Speaker

**Hon. (Dr.) Rizvie Salih**, Deputy Speaker and the Chair of Committees

**Hon. (Mrs.) Hemali Weerasekara**, Deputy Chairperson of Committees

---

**Hon. Dr. Harini Amarasuriya**, Prime Minister and Minister of Education, Higher Education and Vocational Education

**Hon. (Prof.) A.H.M.H. Abayarathna**, Minister of Public Administration, Provincial Councils and Local Government

**Hon. Chrishantha Abeysena**, Minister of Science and Technology

**Hon. Anura Karunathilaka**, Minister of Urban Development, Construction and Housing

**Hon. K.D. Lal Kantha**, Minister of Agriculture, Livestock, Land and Irrigation

**Hon. Sunil Kumara Gamage**, Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports

**Hon. Ramalingam Chandrasekar**, Minister of Fisheries, Aquatic and Ocean Resources

**Hon. Kumara Jayakody**, Minister of Energy

**Hon. (Dr.) Nalinda Jayatissa**, Minister of Health and Mass Media and Chief Government Whip

**Hon. (Prof.) Anil Jayantha**, Minister of Labour and Deputy Minister of Economic Development

**Hon. Harshana Nanayakkara, Attorney at Law**, Minister of Justice and National Integration

**Hon. (Dr.) Dammika Patabendi**, Minister of Environment

**Hon. (Dr.) Upali Pannilage**, Minister of Rural Development, Social Security and Community Empowerment

**Hon. (Mrs.) Saroja Savithri Paulraj**, Minister of Women and Child Affairs

**Hon. Bimal Rathnayake**, Minister of Transport, Highways, Ports and Civil Aviation and Leader of the House of Parliament

**Hon. Ananda Wijepala**, Minister of Public Security and Parliamentary Affairs

**Hon. K.V. Samantha Vidyarathna**, Minister of Plantation and Community Infrastructure

**Hon. Wasantha Samarasinghe**, Minister of Trade, Commerce, Food Security and Cooperative Development

**Hon. (Dr.) Hiniduma Sunil Senevi**, Minister of Buddhasasana, Religious and Cultural Affairs

**Hon. Sunil Handunnetti**, Minister of Industry and Entrepreneurship Development

**Hon. Vijitha Herath**, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Employment and Tourism

**Hon. Sajith Premadasa**, Leader of the Opposition in Parliament

**Hon. Chathuranga Abeysinghe**, Deputy Minister of Industry and Entrepreneurship Development

**Hon. Namal Karunaratne**, Deputy Minister of Agriculture and Livestock

**Hon. Janitha Ruwan Kodithuwakku**, Deputy Minister of Ports and Civil Aviation

**Hon. Rathna Gamage**, Deputy Minister of Fisheries, Aquatic and Ocean Resources

**Hon. Eranga Gunasekara**, Deputy Minister of Youth Affairs

**Hon. Mahinda Jayasinghe**, Deputy Minister of Labour

**Hon. Gamagedara Dissanayake**, Deputy Minister of Buddhasasana, Religious and Cultural Affairs

**Hon. Wasantha Piyathissa**, Deputy Minister of Rural Development, Social Security and Community Empowerment

**Hon. Muneer Mulafter**, Deputy Minister of National Integration

**Hon. (Dr.) Susil Ranasinghe**, Deputy Minister of Land and Irrigation

**Hon. Sunil Watagala, Attorney at Law**, Deputy Minister of Public Security and Parliamentary Affairs

**Hon. (Dr.) Hansaka Wijemuni**, Deputy Minister of Health and Mass Media

**Hon. T. B. Sarath**, Deputy Minister of Housing

**Hon. (Dr.) Namal Sudarshana**, Deputy Minister of Women and Child Affairs

**Hon. (Dr.) Harshana Suriyapperuma**, Deputy Minister of Finance and Planning

**Hon. P. Ruwan Senarath**, Deputy Minister of Provincial Councils and Local Government

**Hon. Arun Hemachandra**, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Employment

**Hon. Nalin Hewage**, Deputy Minister of Vocational Education

---

**Hon. Ajith Agalakada**

**Hon. Amirthanathan Adaikkalanathan**

**Hon. Aboobucker Athambawa**  
**Hon. Hector Appuhamy**  
**Hon. U.P. Abeywickrama, Attorney at Law**  
**Hon. (Dr.) Nihal Abeysinghe**  
**Hon. (Dr.) Ramanathan Archchuna**  
**Hon. J.C. Alawathuwala**  
**Hon. M.K.M. Aslam**  
**Hon. Heshu Withanage Ankumbura Arachchi**  
**Hon. (Dr.)(Ms.) Kaushalya Ariyaratne**  
**Hon. B. Ariyawansa**  
**Hon. (Dr.) Najith Indika**  
**Hon. Arkam Ilyas**  
**Hon. M.S. Uthumalebbe**  
**Hon. Gayantha Karunathilleka**  
**Hon. Ravi Karunanayake**  
**Hon. M. Nizam Kariapper, PC**  
**Hon. (Mrs.) Chamindrane Kiriella, Attorney at Law**  
**Hon. Kathiravelu Shanmugam Kugathan**  
**Hon. Wasantha Pushpa Kumara**  
**Hon. Sarath Kumara, Attorney at Law**  
**Hon. (Mrs.) Nilanthi Kottahachchi, Attorney at Law**  
**Hon. Kaveenthiran Kodeeswaran**  
**Hon. Lasith Bhashana Gamage**  
**Hon. Chathura Galappaththi**  
**Hon. Ajith Gihan**  
**Hon. (Dr.) Jagath Gunawardana**  
**Hon. D. V. Chanaka**  
**Hon. Gayan Janaka**  
**Hon. Anuradha Jayaratne**  
**Hon. (Dr.) Kavinda Heshan Jayawardhana**  
**Hon. Dilith Jayaweera**  
**Hon. Kosala Nuwan Jayaweera**  
**Hon. T.K. Jayasundara**  
**Hon. Dayasiri Jayasekara, Attorney at Law**  
**Hon. Mayilvaganam Jegatheeswaran**

**Hon. Rajeevan Jeyachandramoorthy**  
**Hon. M.A.M. Thahir**  
**Hon. (Dr.) Sellaththamby Thilaganathan**  
**Hon. Chamara Sampath Dasanayake**  
**Hon. Sugath Wasantha de Silva**  
**Hon. (Dr.) Harsha de Silva**  
**Hon. Palani Thigambaram**  
**Hon. Thanura Dissanayake**  
**Hon. Susantha Dodawatta, Attorney at Law**  
**Hon. W. H. M. Dharmasena**  
**Hon. Mohamed Sali Naleem**  
**Hon. Susantha Kumara Nawarathna**  
**Hon. (Prof.) Sena Nanayakkara**  
**Hon. Kins Nelson**  
**Hon. Aruna Panagoda**  
**Hon. Nimal Palihena**  
**Hon. Ajith P. Perera**  
**Hon. K. Sujith Sanjaya Perera**  
**Hon. G.G. Ponnambalam**  
**Hon. Chithral Fernando, Attorney at Law**  
**Hon. Stepni Fernando**  
**Hon. Kanthasamy Prabu**  
**Hon. Amila Prasad**  
**Hon. Rohana Bandara**  
**Hon. Nanda Bandara**  
**Hon. Padmasiri Bandara**  
**Hon. R. M. Ranjith Madduma Bandara**  
**Hon. Ravindra Bandara**  
**Hon. Wijesiri Basnayake**  
**Hon. Jagath Manuwarna**  
**Hon. S.M. Marikkar**  
**Hon. Imran Maharoof**  
**Hon. Ruwan Mapalagama**  
**Hon. (Dr.) Nandana Millagala**  
**Hon. Ismail Muththu Mohamed**  
**Hon. Danushka Ranganath**

**Hon. Sanjeewa Ranasingha**  
**Hon. Sunil Rathnasiri**  
**Hon. R.M. Gamini Rathnayake**  
**Hon. Suranga Rathnayaka**  
**Hon. Asoka Sapumal Ranwala**  
**Hon. Thurairasa Ravikaran**  
**Hon. Mujibur Rahman**  
**Hon. Harshana Rajakaruna**  
**Hon. Namal Rajapaksa, Attorney at Law**  
**Hon. Sunil Rajapaksha**  
**Hon. (Dr.) V.S. Radhakrishnan**  
**Hon. Shanakiyan Rajaputhiran Rasamanickam**  
**Hon. (Mrs.) Deepthi Wasalage**  
**Hon. (Mrs.) Rohini Kumari Wijerathna**  
**Hon. R.G. Wijerathna**  
**Hon. Priyantha Wijerathna , Attorney at Law**  
**Hon. Ruwan Wijeweera**  
**Hon. Darmapriya Wijesinghe**  
**Hon. (Mrs.) Hiruni Wijesinghe, Attorney at Law**  
**Hon. Asitha Niroshana Egoda Vithana**  
**Hon. Jagath Vithana**  
**Hon. Dilip Wedaarachchi**  
**Hon. Athula Welandagoda**  
**Hon. Sivagnanam Shritharan**  
**Hon. Gnanamuththu Srineshan**  
**Hon. Fasmin Sharif**  
**Hon. (Dr.) Pathmanathan Sathiyalingam**  
**Hon. Dinindu Saman**  
**Hon. Thilina Samarakoon**  
**Hon. (Dr.) Nishantha Samaraweera**  
**Hon. (Ms.) Ambika Samivel**  
**Hon. (Dr.) Elayathamby Srinath**  
**Hon. Dewananda Suraweera**  
**Hon. Chandana Sooriyaarachchi**  
**Hon. Major General (Rtd.) G.D. Sooriyabandara**  
**Hon. Arjuna Sujeewa Senasinghe, Attorney at Law**

**Hon. (Dr.) Janaka Senarathna**

**Hon. Rauff Hakeem, Attorney at Law**

**Hon. Kabir Hashim**

**Hon. Chandima Hettiaratchi**

**Hon. Champika Hettiarachchi**

**Hon. (Ms.) Lakmali Hemachandra, Attorney at Law**

Mrs. Kushani Rohanadeera, Secretary-General of Parliament

Mr. Chaminda Kularatne, Chief of Staff and Deputy Secretary-General of Parliament

Mr. Hansa Abeyrathne, Assistant Secretary-General

**Parliament met pursuant to adjournment. The Speaker took the Chair.**

**1. Announcements by the Speaker:** The Speaker made the following announcement:—

“As per the requests made by Hon. Ravi Karunanayake, Hon. Dayasiri Jayasekara, Attorney at Law, Hon. Ajith P. Perera, Hon. (Dr.) V.S. Radhakrishnan, Hon. (Dr.) Pathmanathan Sathiyalingam and Hon. M. Nizam Kariapper, PC on 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2025, with regard to the breach of Privilege of Members of Parliament in allocating seats in the Committees of Parliament disproportionately to the opposition Members. I, as the Speaker of Parliament carried out a study on this particular matter and decided to disclose my stance to this august Assembly as I promised on 5<sup>th</sup> February 2025.

I would like to enumerate the descriptive decision as follows:

- 1 Since I am the custodian of this august Assembly, who represents both the Government and the Opposition, I always maintain my impartiality in carrying out the Business of Parliament.
- 2 In accordance with the Parliament (Powers and Privileges) Act, no breach of Privilege has been committed since no particular Clause of that Act has clearly emphasized the matter that the Hon. Members raised regarding the Committee representation.
- 3 Considering the fact that the composition of the Committees in previous Parliaments - 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> Parliaments - both parties (the Government and the Opposition) had agreed to increase the number of Members from both sides regardless of the Standing Orders in compromise with both the government and the opposition.

Furthermore, I have observed that the number of seats in some Committees, especially the Committee on Parliamentary Business and the Ministerial Consultative Committees, have increased with the discretion of both parties of the 10<sup>th</sup> Parliament as well.

4. The book titled 'Practice and Procedure of Parliament (with particular reference to the Lok Sabha)' by M.N. Kaul and S.L. Shukdher has overtly mentioned that –

'A Parliamentary Committee is appointed or elected by the House or nominated by the Speaker'. It further elaborates that appointment, term of office, functions and main lines of procedure for conducting Business of the Committees are regulated under the provisions of the rules and the directions of the Speaker. Therefore, the Speaker had to follow the Standing Orders in order to form those Committees in taking such decisions.

Page number 775 of the aforementioned book further explains that Members are appointed or elected to a Parliamentary Committee by the House on a Motion made and adopted or nominated by the Speaker. Thus, he has to adhere to a set of written rules as to how the procedure should strictly be followed with the purview of Standing Orders in order to maintain his neutrality and impartiality.

Page number 776 of the book has articulated that 'Members to specified Parliamentary Committees may be nominated by the Speaker after consultation with the Leader of the House and the Leaders of the Opposition parties and the groups in the House'.

Therefore, it is up to the House to take a compromised decision after negotiating with each Party in this House.

5. The book 'Treatise on the Law, Privileges, Proceedings and Usage of Parliament' by Erskine May has clearly articulated that in nominating Members, the Committee of Selection is directed to have regard to their qualifications and to the composition of the House. Thus, the Committee of Selection will always ensure that Committees reflect the party-political composition of the House. Furthermore, it is explained in general there is no limit to the number of Members who may be nominated to a Committee. Committees may be enlarged by the addition of Members appointed in the same way as those originally nominated.

Therefore, in formulating the equation for this composition with regard to the Committees, I am not in a position to breach the fundamentals of the Standing Orders of Parliament. If any Party needs to exceed the recommended number of Members in a Committee, the decision should be taken in compromise with each stakeholder.

6. Finally, I would like to request you to get together as the Government and the Opposition parties in order to discuss this issue at length as to how these allocations can be increased in a compromised manner.

Furthermore, I endorse that no Privilege of Members of Parliament has been violated since no clause of the aforementioned Act regarding powers and privileges has clearly mentioned it.

7. I urge you to understand the gravity of this problem and take this matter seriously in order to preserve Parliamentary democracy."

**2. Presentation of Papers:** (1) The Minister of Health and Mass Media presented the Annual Report and Statement of Accounts of the Sri Lanka Press Council for the year 2022 and moved that this Report and Statement of Accounts be referred to the Ministerial Consultative Committee on Health and Mass Media.

Question put, and agreed to.

(2) The Minister of Agriculture, Livestock, Land and Irrigation presented the Annual Report of the Central Engineering Consultancy Bureau for the year 2023 and moved that this Report be referred to the Ministerial Consultative Committee on Agriculture, Livestock, Land and Irrigation.

Question put, and agreed to.

(3) The Minister of Environment presented the Report on the Submission of observations and steps taken in terms of the Standing Order 119(4) of the Parliament with regard to the matters mentioned on the Ministry of Environment in the report of the Committee on Public Accounts which was presented to Parliament and moved that this Report be referred to the Committee on Public Accounts.

Question put, and agreed to.

(4) The Minister of Buddhasasana, Religious and Cultural Affairs presented the Annual Performance Report of the Department of National Archives for the year 2023 and moved that this Report be referred to the Ministerial Consultative Committee on Buddhasasana, Religious and Cultural Affairs.

Question put, and agreed to.

**3. Presentation of Public Petitions:**

(1) Hon. J.C. Alawathuwala presented—

- (i) A petition dated 07.12.2024 from Mr. D.M.R. Rajasinghe of No. 143, Aarampowaththa, Mawathagama;
- (ii) A petition dated 19.12.2024 from Mr. M.P. Gunarathna of No. 09, Walikambura, Mawathagama;
- (iii) A petition dated 28.12.2024 from Mr. M.R.S. Rahman of No. 56, Kandy Road, Paragahadeniya, Weuda; and
- (iv) A petition dated 10.01.2025 from Mrs. R.M.Anulawathi of Gongahawatta, Mipitiya, Dodamgaslanda.

(2) Hon. Imran Maharoof presented—

- (i) A petition dated 03.12.2024 from Mr. A.L.M. Mukthar of No. 541A/1, Water Supply Road, Saindamarudu - 14; and
- (ii) A petition dated 03.12.2024 from Mr. M.A. Wimalasena of Sena Prabath, No. 268, Kandekubura, Galagedara.

(3) Hon. Amila Prasad presented a petition dated 01.12.2024 from Mrs. K.A. Ranjani Kusumalatha of Polwaththa, Kotadeniyawa.

- (4) Hon. Nanda Bandara presented—
- (i) A petition dated 02.12.2024 from Mr. J.M.S.D.S. Bandara of No. D-78, Ruwandeniya, Dewanagala; and
  - (ii) A petition dated 18.11.2024 from Mr. K.M. Dasanayake of Etambalanda, Udamakadawara, Hingula.
- (5) Hon. (Dr.) Nandana Millagala presented a petition dated 16.12.2024 from Mr. M. Wilmat Perera of Kotuwe Gedara, Wee Oya, Yatiyanthota.
- (6) Hon. (Mrs.) Deepthi Wasalage presented a petition dated 11.12.2024 from Mr. A. Sundaralingam of No. 23/13, Wariyapola Road, Matale.
- (7) Hon. Darmapriya Wijesinghe presented—
- (i) A petition dated 26.11.2024 from Mr. H.P.W. Jayasekara of No. 66/04, Kurunduwaththa, Webadagalla, Nittambuwa;
  - (ii) A petition dated 05.12.2024 from Mrs. M.K. Mala Dharmasiri of No. 329/A, Mudungoda, Gampaha;
  - (iii) A petition dated 26.11.2024 from Mr. R.S.S.H.M.H. Dharmapala Herath of No. 46/2, Panawallanda, Pallewela;
  - (iv) A petition dated 29.11.2024 from Mr. S.A. Solitha Subhasinghe of No. 27/1, Jayabima, Kadirana South, Negambo;
  - (v) A petition dated 03.12.2024 from Mr. W. A. A. D. Pushpakumara of No. 80/7, Walaliyadda, Ellakkala; and
  - (vi) A petition dated 01.12.2024 from Mr. W. A. A. K. Ajith Wickramasinghe of No. 64, Borukgamuwa, Pallewela.

The Petitions stood referred under Standing Order 30(10) of the Parliament, to the Committee on Public Petitions.

**4. Appropriation Bill—(Second Allotted Day):** Order read for resuming adjourned debate on question (17<sup>th</sup> February 2025),—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Question again proposed, and debate resumed.

(At 11.00 a.m. the Deputy Speaker took the Chair.)

(At 1.00 p.m. the Deputy Speaker took the Chair.)

(At 2.30 p.m. the Deputy Chairperson of Committees took the Chair.)

The Deputy Minister of Public Security and Parliamentary Affairs moved,—That Hon. (Prof.) Sena Nanayakkara do take the Chair.

Question put, and agreed to.

(At 4.12 p.m. Hon. (Prof.) Sena Nanayakkara took the Chair.)

And it being 6.30 p.m. the debate stood adjourned; debate to be resumed on Thursday, February 20, 2025.

**5. Adjournment:** And it being 6.30 p.m. Parliament was adjourned by the Presiding Member without Question put, pursuant to the Resolution of Parliament on this day.

Parliament adjourned accordingly until 9.30 a.m. on Thursday, February 20, 2025, pursuant to the Resolution of Parliament on 06<sup>th</sup> February, 2025.