



(Tenth Parliament - First Session)

No. 40.]

MINUTES OF PARLIAMENT

Friday, March 14, 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. (Dr.) Chrishantha Abeysena, Minister of Science and Technology

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

Hon. Kumara Jayakody, Minister of Energy

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

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

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

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. K.V. Samantha Viddyarathna, Minister of Plantation and Community Infrastructure

Hon. Sajith Premadasa, Leader of the Opposition in Parliament

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

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

Hon. Eranga Gunasekara, Deputy Minister of Youth Affairs

Hon. Mahinda Jayasinghe, Deputy Minister of Labour

Hon. Major General (Rtd.) Aruna Jayasekera, Deputy Minister of Defence

Hon. Sugath Thilakaratne, Deputy Minister of Sports
Hon. Gamagedara Dissanayake, Deputy Minister of Buddhasasana, Religious and Cultural Affairs
Hon. Sundaralingam Pradeep, Deputy Minister of Plantation and Community Infrastructure
Hon. Muneer Mulaffer, Deputy Minister of National Integration
Hon. (Dr.) Susil Ranasinghe, Deputy Minister of Land and Irrigation
Hon. Eranga Weeraratne, Deputy Minister of Digital Economy
Hon. Upali Samarasingha, Deputy Minister of Cooperative Development
Hon. (Dr.) Harshana Suriyapperuma, Deputy Minister of Finance and Planning
Hon. (Dr.) Madhura Senevirathna, Deputy Minister of Education and Higher Education
Hon. Arun Hemachandra, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Employment

Hon. Ajith Agalakada
Hon. Aboobucker Athambawa
Hon. U.P. Abeywickrama, Attorney at Law
Hon. (Dr.) Ramanathan Archchuna
Hon. J.C. Alawathuwala
Hon. Heshu Withanage Ankumbura Arachchi
Hon. (Dr.)(Ms.) Kaushalya Ariyaratne
Hon. (Dr.) Najith Indika
Hon. Arkam Ilyas
Hon. M.S. Uthumalebbe
Hon. (Mrs.) Oshani Umanga
Hon. Gayantha Karunathilleka
Hon. Ravi Karunanayake
Hon. (Ms.) Krishnan Kalaichelvi
Hon. M. Nizam Kariapper, PC
Hon. (Mrs.) Nilanthi Kottahachchi, Attorney at Law
Hon. Mano Ganesan
Hon. Ajith Gihan
Hon. (Dr.) Jagath Gunawardana
Hon. (Mrs.) Samanmali Gunasingha
Hon. D. V. Chanaka

Hon. Nalin Bandara Jayamaha
Hon. Anuradha Jayaratne
Hon. (Dr.) Kavinda Heshan Jayawardhana
Hon. Dilith Jayaweera
Hon. Kosala Nuwan Jayaweera
Hon. Dayasiri Jayasekara, Attorney at Law
Hon. Jeevan Thondaman
Hon. Chamara Sampath Dasanayake
Hon. Sugath Wasantha de Silva
Hon. Palani Thigambaram
Hon. Dharmapriya Dissanayake
Hon. Susantha Dodawatta, Attorney at Law
Hon. W. H. M. Dharmasena
Hon. Mohamed Sali Naleem
Hon. Kins Nelson
Hon. Nishantha Perera
Hon. Ajith P. Perera
Hon. K. Sujith Sanjaya Perera
Hon. G.G. Ponnambalam
Hon. Stepni Fernando
Hon. Lal Premanath
Hon. Nanda Bandara
Hon. Ravindra Bandara
Hon. Wijesiri Basnayake
Hon. S.M. Marikkar
Hon. K. Kader Masthan
Hon. Chanaka Madugoda
Hon. Ruwan Mapalagama
Hon. (Dr.) Nandana Millagala
Hon. Danushka Ranganath
Hon. Sanjeeva Ranasingha
Hon. R.M. Gamini Rathnayake
Hon. Thurairasa Ravikaran
Hon. Mujibur Rahman
Hon. Harshana Rajakaruna

Hon. Sunil Rajapaksha
Hon. (Dr.) V.S. Radhakrishnan
Hon. Shanakiyan Rajaputhiran Rasamanickam
Hon. R.G. Wijerathna
Hon. (Mrs.) Hiruni Wijesinghe, Attorney at Law
Hon. Chaminda Wijesiri
Hon. Asitha Niroshana Egoda Vithana
Hon. Jagath Vithana
Hon. Fasmin Sharif
Hon. Dinindu Saman
Hon. Thilina Samarakoon
Hon. (Dr.) Nishantha Samaraweera
Hon. (Ms.) Ambika Samivel
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. (Dr.) M.L.A.M. Hizbullah
Hon. Chandima Hettiaratchi
Hon. Champika Hettiarachchi
Hon. (Ms.) Lakmali Hemachandra, Attorney at Law
Hon. Riyas Farook

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:—

“I wish to inform Parliament that I have received a copy of a petition filed in the Supreme Court under Article 121(1) of the Constitution in respect of the Bill titled ‘Value Added Tax (Amendment)’.”

2. Presentation of Papers: (1) The Prime Minister and Minister of Education, Higher Education and Vocational Education presented the Annual Report of the Buddhist and Pali University of Sri Lanka for the year 2023 and moved that this Report be referred to the Relevant Sectoral Oversight Committee.

Question put, and agreed to.

(2) The Minister of Health and Mass Media presented the Annual Report of the Gem and Jewellery Research and Training Institute for the year 2023 and moved that this Report be referred to the Relevant Sectoral Oversight Committee.

Question put, and agreed to.

(3) The Minister of Energy presented the Annual Report of the Lanka Electricity Company (Private) Limited for the year 2023 and moved that this Report be referred to the Relevant Sectoral Oversight Committee.

Question put, and agreed to.

(4) The Minister of Health and Mass Media presented the Reports on the 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 Labour and Foreign Employment and the institutions coming under its purview in the reports of the Committee on Public Accounts which were presented to Parliament and moved that those Reports be referred to the Committee on Public Accounts.

Question put, and agreed to.

(5) The Minister of Environment presented the Annual Report of the Marine Environment Protection Authority for the year 2022 and moved that this Report be referred to the Relevant Sectoral Oversight Committee.

Question put, and agreed to.

3. Presentation of Public Petitions:

(1) Hon. K.V. Samantha Vidyaratna presented —

- (i) A petition dated 30.01.2025 from Mr. J.M. Senadheera of No. 10-A, Sri Rathanapala Mawatha, Kailagoda, Badulla; and
- (ii) A petition dated 16.02.2025 from Mr. R. M. Gunasena of Kosgolla, Kirinda, Pattiyagedara.

(2) Hon. Mujibur Rahman presented a petition dated 16.02.2025 from Mr. S. K. Kiriella of No. 5/4, Nungamuwa, Pallewela.

(3) Hon. Harshana Rajakaruna presented a petition dated 21.11.2024 from Mr. Terance Priyantha Thirimanna of No. 131/14, Mudungoda, Gampaha.

(4) Hon. (Dr.)(Ms.) Kaushalya Ariyaratne presented a petition dated 05.01.2025 from Mrs. J. K. M. Darshini of No. 259/2 E, Kahanthota Road, Hokandara North, Malabe.

(5) Hon. Dewananda Suraweera presented a petition dated 27.01.2025 from Mrs. G. J. Chamalka De Silva of No. 63/T/1, Kalalgoda Road, Pannipitiya.

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

4. Appropriation Bill—(Twentieth Allotted Day): Considered in the Committee.*(In the Committee)*

The Speaker took the Chair.

Head 135

Programme 01 (Recurrent Expenditure)

Hon. Gayantha Karunathilleka, proposed that the Programme be reduced by Rs. 10/-.

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

(At 1.30 p.m. the Deputy Chairperson of Committees took the Chair.)

(At 3.23 p.m. Hon. (Dr.)(Ms.) Kaushalya Ariyaratne took the Chair.)

(At 5.07 p.m. Hon. Sanjeewa Ranasingha took the Chair.)

(At 5.47 p.m. the Speaker took the Chair.)

Question put, and negatived.

Ministry of Plantation and Community Infrastructure

The Minister of Plantation and Community Infrastructure on behalf of the Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development proposed an amendment to leave out line 3 in page 31 and substitute the following:—

“Capital 12,038,000,000”

Question that the amendment be agreed to, put, and agreed to.

Question that the Clause as amended, stand part of the Schedule, put, and agreed to.

Question that the sum of Rs. 1,702,000,000 for Head 135, Programme 01 (Recurrent Expenditure), be inserted in the Schedule, put, and agreed to.

Programme 01 (Capital Expenditure)

Question that the sum of Rs. 69,000,000 for Head 135, Programme 01 (Capital Expenditure), be inserted in the Schedule, put, and agreed to.

The Minister of Plantation and Community Infrastructure on behalf of the Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development proposed an amendment to leave out line 7 in page 31 and substitute the following:—

“Programme 02 Development Activities 3,183,000,000 11,019,000,000”

Question that the amendment be agreed to, put, and agreed to.

Question that the Clause as amended, stand part of the Schedule, put, and agreed to.

Head 293

Programme 02 (Recurrent Expenditure)

Question that the sum of Rs. 423,000,000 for Head 293, Programme 02 (Recurrent Expenditure), be inserted in the Schedule, put, and agreed to.

Programme 02 (Capital Expenditure)

Question that the sum of Rs. 545,000,000 for Head 293, Programme 02 (Capital Expenditure), be inserted in the Schedule, put, and agreed to.

Head 337

Programme 02 (Recurrent Expenditure)

Question that the sum of Rs. 142,000,000 for Head 337, Programme 02 (Recurrent Expenditure), be inserted in the Schedule, put, and agreed to.

Programme 02 (Capital Expenditure)

Question that the sum of Rs. 405,000,000 for Head 337, Programme 02 (Capital Expenditure), be inserted in the Schedule, put, and agreed to.

Whereupon the Minister of Plantation and Community Infrastructure proposed that the Chair do report progress and ask leave to sit again.

Question put, and agreed to.

Committee report progress; to sit again on Saturday, March 15, 2025.

5. Annual Reports of the Elkaduwa Plantation Limited (2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016 and 2017): The Minister of Plantation and Community Infrastructure moved,— That the Annual Reports of the Elkaduwa Plantation Limited 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016 and 2017 together with the observations of the Auditor-General for the years ended 31.12.2012, 31.12.2013, 31.12.2014, 31.12.2015, 31.12.2016 and 31.12.2017 respectively and presented on 23.11.2023 under Section 151 of the Companies Act, No. 07 of 2007, be approved.

Question put, and agreed to.

6. Annual Report of the Sri Lanka State Plantation Corporation (2017): The Minister of Plantation and Community Infrastructure moved,— That the Annual Report of the Sri Lanka State Plantation Corporation 2017 together with the observations of the Auditor-General for the year ended 31.12.2017 and presented on 24.11.2023 under Section 15 of the Sri Lanka State Plantation Corporation Act, No. 4 of 1958, be approved.

Question put, and agreed to.

7. Annual Report of the Sri Lanka State Plantation Corporation (2018): The Minister of Plantation and Community Infrastructure moved,— That the Annual Report of the Sri Lanka State Plantation Corporation 2018 together with the observations of the Auditor-General for the year ended 31.12.2018 and presented on 24.11.2023 under Section 15 of the Sri Lanka State Plantation Corporation Act, No. 4 of 1958, be approved.

Question put, and agreed to.

8. Annual Report of the Sri Lanka State Plantation Corporation (2019): The Minister of Plantation and Community Infrastructure moved,— That the Annual Report of the Sri Lanka State Plantation Corporation 2019 together with the observations of the Auditor-General for the year ended 31.12.2019 and presented on 24.11.2023 under Section 15 of the Sri Lanka State Plantation Corporation Act, No. 4 of 1958, be approved.

Question put, and agreed to.

9. Annual Report of the Sri Lanka State Plantation Corporation (2020): The Minister of Plantation and Community Infrastructure moved,— That the Annual Report of the Sri Lanka State Plantation Corporation 2020 together with the observations of the Auditor-General for the year ended 31.12.2020 and presented on 09.02.2024 under Section 15 of the Sri Lanka State Plantation Corporation Act, No. 4 of 1958, be approved.

Question put, and agreed to.

10. Annual Report of the Kalubowitiyana Tea Factory Limited (2020/2021): The Minister of Plantation and Community Infrastructure moved,— That the Annual Report of the Kalubowitiyana Tea Factory Limited 2020/2021 together with the observations of the Auditor-General for the year ended 31.03.2021 and presented on 24.08.2023 under Section 14 of the Finance Act, No. 38 of 1971, be approved.

Question put, and agreed to.

11. Annual Report of the Tea Research Institute of Sri Lanka (2020): The Minister of Plantation and Community Infrastructure moved,— That the Annual Report of the Tea Research Institute of Sri Lanka 2020 together with the observations of the Auditor-General for the year ended 31.12.2020 and presented on 23.01.2024 under Section 16 of the Tea Research Board Act, No. 52 of 1993, be approved.

Question put, and agreed to.

12. Annual Report of the Tea Research Institute of Sri Lanka (2021): The Minister of Plantation and Community Infrastructure moved,— That the Annual Report of the Tea Research Institute of Sri Lanka 2021 together with the observations of the Auditor-General for the year ended 31.12.2021 and presented on 23.01.2024 under Section 16 of the Tea Research Board Act, No. 52 of 1993, be approved.

Question put, and agreed to.

13. Annual Report of the Tea Small Holdings Development Authority (2022): The Minister of Plantation and Community Infrastructure moved,— That the Annual Report of the Tea Small Holdings Development Authority 2022 together with the observations of the Auditor-General for the year ended 31.12.2022 and presented on 09.01.2024 of the Tea Small Holdings Development Act, No. 35 of 1975, be approved.

Question put, and agreed to.

14. Annual Report of the Sri Lanka Tea Board (2022): The Minister of Plantation and Community Infrastructure moved,— That the Annual Report of the Sri Lanka Tea Board 2022 together with the observations of the Auditor-General for the year ended 31.12.2022 and presented on 09.01.2024 under the Sri Lanka Tea Board Law, No. 14 of 1975, be approved.

Question put, and agreed to.

15. Adjournment (Control of Potato Imports During Potato Harvesting Season): The Minister of Women and Child Affairs moved,— That this Parliament do now adjourn.

Question proposed, and debated.

Question put, and agreed to; Parliament was at 6.24 p.m. adjourned by the Speaker until 9.30 a.m. on Saturday, March 15, 2025 pursuant to the Resolution of Parliament on 21st February, 2025.