



(Tenth Parliament - First Session)

No. 42.]

MINUTES OF PARLIAMENT

Monday, March 17, 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. (Dr.) 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. Kumara Jayakody, Minister of Energy

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

Hon. (Dr.) 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 Vidyaratna, 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. Rathna Gamage, Deputy Minister of Fisheries, Aquatic and Ocean Resources

Hon. Eranga Gunasekara, Deputy Minister of Youth Affairs

Hon. (Dr.) Prasanna Gunasena, Deputy Minister of Transport and Highways

Hon. Anton Jayakody, Deputy Minister of Environment

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

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

Hon. Muneer Mulaffer, Deputy Minister of National Integration

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. (Dr.) Madhura Senevirathna, Deputy Minister of Education and Higher Education

Hon. Nalin Hewage, Deputy Minister of Vocational Education

Hon. (Mrs.) Sagarika Athauda, Attorney at Law

Hon. Rohitha Abeygunawardhana

Hon. (Prof.) L.M. Abeywickrama

Hon. J.C. Alawathuwala

Hon. Hessa Withanage Ankumbura Arachchi

Hon. Lakshman Nipuna Arachchi

Hon. (Dr.)(Ms.) Kaushalya Ariyaratne

Hon. M.S. Uthumalebbe
Hon. Gayantha Karunathilleka
Hon. Ravi Karunanayake
Hon. (Ms.) Krishnan Kalaichelvi
Hon. Upul Kithsiri
Hon. (Mrs.) Chamindranee Kiriella, Attorney at Law
Hon. Kathiravelu Shanmugam Kugathan
Hon. (Mrs.) M.A.C.S. Chathuri Gangani
Hon. Lasith Bhashana Gamage
Hon. Thilanka U. Gamage
Hon. (Mrs.) Nilusha Lakmali Gamage
Hon. Ajantha Gammeddage
Hon. Nihal Galappaththi
Hon. (Mrs.) Samanmali Gunasingha
Hon. Ashoka Gunasena
Hon. D. V. Chanaka
Hon. Ruwanthilaka Jayakody
Hon. Nalin Bandara Jayamaha
Hon. (Dr.) Kavinda Heshan Jayawardhana
Hon. Dilith Jayaweera
Hon. (Mrs.) Thushari Jayasingha, Attorney at Law
Hon. T.K. Jayasundara
Hon. Dayasiri Jayasekara, Attorney at Law
Hon. Chandana Thennakoon
Hon. Chamara Sampath Dasanayake
Hon. Sugath Wasantha de Silva
Hon. (Dr.) Harsha de Silva
Hon. Palani Thigambaram
Hon. Thanura Dissanayake
Hon. Sujeewa Dissanayake
Hon. Susantha Dodawatta, Attorney at Law
Hon. Susantha Kumara Nawarathna
Hon. (Prof.) Sena Nanayakkara
Hon. Kins Nelson
Hon. Nandana Pathmakumara

Hon. Aruna Panagoda
Hon. Nimal Palihena
Hon. Nishantha Perera
Hon. Ajith P. Perera
Hon. K. Sujith Sanjaya Perera
Hon. Lal Premanath
Hon. Rohana Bandara
Hon. Nanda Bandara
Hon. Sudath Balagalla
Hon. (Dr.) S. Sri Bavanandarajah
Hon. E.M. Basnayaka
Hon. Wijesiri Basnayake
Hon. Sunil Biyanwila
Hon. (Dr.) Sandaruwan Madarasinghe
Hon. Lieutenant Commander (Rtd.) Prageeth Madhuranga
Hon. Jagath Manuwarna
Hon. Imran Maharoof
Hon. Chanaka Madugoda
Hon. Ruwan Mapalagama
Hon. Faiszer Musthapha, PC
Hon. Asoka Sapumal Ranwala
Hon. Thurairasa Ravikaran
Hon. Mujibur Rahman
Hon. Harshana Rajakaruna
Hon. Manoj Rajapaksha
Hon. Sunil Rajapaksha
Hon. (Mrs.) Hasara Liyanage, Attorney at Law
Hon. Kanchana Welipitiya
Hon. (Mrs.) Rohini Kumari Wijerathna
Hon. Darmapriya Wijesinghe
Hon. (Mrs.) Hiruni Wijesinghe, Attorney at Law
Hon. Asitha Niroshana Egoda Vithana
Hon. Fasmin Sharif
Hon. (Dr.) Elayathamby Srinath
Hon. Shantha Pathma Kumara Subasingha
Hon. Chandana Sooriyaarachchi

Hon. Major General (Rtd.) G.D. Sooriyabandara
Hon. Arjuna Sujeewa Senasinghe, Attorney at Law
Hon. Rauff Hakeem, Attorney at Law
Hon. (Dr.) M.L.A.M. Hizbullah
Hon. Chandima Hettiaratchi
Hon. (Ms.) Lakmali Hemachandra, Attorney at Law
Hon. Dinesh Hemantha
Hon. (Mrs.) Geetha Herath, Attorney at Law
Hon. Bhagya Sri Herath, Attorney at Law
Hon. Muhammad Faizal

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 announcements:—

I

“I wish to inform Parliament that I have received a copy of another petition on 15th March 2025 which had been filed in the Supreme Court under Article 121(1) of the Constitution in respect of the Bill titled ‘Value Added Tax (Amendment)’, in addition to the receipt of the Petition mentioned in my announcement dated 14th March 2025.”

II

“Honorable Members, I wish to inform you that the ‘Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the establishment and maintenance of places of unlawful detention and torture chambers at the Batalanada Housing scheme’ tabled by the Honorable Minister of Transport, Highways, Ports and Civil Aviation during the Ministerial Statement made by him on 14th March 2025 has been printed and kept on your table for your reference.”

2. Presentation of Papers: (1) The Minister of Health and Mass Media presented the Annual Report of the Postgraduate Institute of Humanities and Social Sciences of the University of Peradeniya for the year 2022 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 Central Engineering Services (Pvt) Ltd for the year 2023 and moved that this Report be referred to the relevant Sectoral Oversight Committee.

Question put, and agreed to.

3. Presentation of Reports from Committees: The Hon. (Dr.) Madhura Senevirathna, Member of the Committee on behalf of the Chair of the Ministerial Consultative Committee on Education, Higher Education and Vocational Education presented the Report of the Committee on —

- (i) Annual Report of the University of Ruhuna for the year 2022;
- (ii) Annual Report of the Swamy Vipulananda Institute of Aesthetic Studies of the Eastern University of Sri Lanka for the year 2022;
- (iii) Annual Report of the Eastern University of Sri Lanka for the year 2022; and
- (iv) Annual Report of the Postgraduate Institute of Agriculture of the University of Peradeniya for the year 2023

which were referred to the Committee.

Ordered that the said Report do lie upon the **Table**.

4. Presentation of Public Petitions:

- (1) Hon. Rathna Gamage presented—
 - (i) A petition dated 20.01.2025 from Mr. M.K. Dewapriya of Ambassador Defence Division, Third Floor, Musthapa Building, Colombo 14; and
 - (ii) A petition dated 15.02.2024 from Mrs. Sudanthi Miranda Samaranayaka of Near 65th Post, Karawegoda, Dodandoova.
- (1) Hon. Lasith Bhashana Gamage presented —
 - (i) A petition dated 20.01.2025 from Mrs. K.M. Hettiarachchi of no. 600/3, Thalgaswala Road, Thuduwegedara, Ragama; and
 - (ii) A petition dated 07.02.2025 from Mrs. M.R.A. Morayas of No. 74/7 A, Indigolla, Gampaha.
- (1) Hon. Asitha Niroshana Egoda Vithana presented a petition dated 15.01.2025 from Mr. Hikkaduwege Jeewa Indika Fernando of No. 382/3, 'Shyamali', Nandana Mawatha,, Hunupitiya, Wattala.

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

5. Sectoral Oversight Committees: The Leader of the House of Parliament moved,— Seven (07) Sectoral Oversight Committees be appointed as follows to function in accordance with the provisions of the Standing Order 111 of the Parliament:—

- 1. Sectoral Oversight Committee on Economic Development and International Relations
- 2. Sectoral Oversight Committee on Infrastructure and Strategic Development

3. Sectoral Oversight Committee on Education, Manpower and Human Capital
4. Sectoral Oversight Committee on Health, Media and Women's Empowerment
5. Sectoral Oversight Committee on Environment, Agriculture and Resource Sustainability
6. Sectoral Oversight Committee on Science, Technology and Digital Transformation
7. Sectoral Oversight Committee on Governance, Justice and Civil Protection

Each Sectoral Oversight Committee shall consist of twelve (12) Members of Parliament to be nominated by the Committee of Selection. The quorum of each Sectoral Oversight Committee shall be three (03) Members.

6. Appropriation Bill—(Twenty Second Allotted Day): Considered in the Committee.

(In the Committee)

The Speaker took the Chair.

Head 101

Programme 01 (Recurrent Expenditure)

Hon. Kins Nelson, proposed that the Programme be reduced by Rs. 10/-.

(At 10.50 a.m. the Deputy Speaker took the Chair.)

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

(At 3.31 p.m. the Deputy Chairperson of Committees took the Chair.)

(At 4.49 p.m. Hon. (Prof.) Sena Nanayakkara took the Chair.)

Question put, and negatived.

Ministry of Buddhasasana, Religious and Cultural Affairs

The Minister of Buddhasasana, Religious and Cultural Affairs on behalf of the Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development proposed an amendment to leave out line 17 in page 10 and substitute the following:—

“Recurrent 8,600,000,000”

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. 640,000,000 for Head 101, Programme 01 (Recurrent Expenditure), be inserted in the Schedule, put, and agreed to.

Programme 01 (Capital Expenditure)

Question that the sum of Rs. 109,000,000 for Head 101, Programme 01 (Capital Expenditure), be inserted in the Schedule, put, and agreed to.

The Minister of Buddhasasana, Religious and Cultural Affairs on behalf of the Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development proposed an amendment to leave out line 4 in page 11 and substitute the following:—

“Programme 02 Development Activities 1,650,000,000 2,076,000,000”

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 201

Programme 01 (Recurrent Expenditure)

Question that the sum of Rs. 129,000,000 for Head 201, Programme 01 (Recurrent Expenditure), be inserted in the Schedule, put, and agreed to.

Programme 01 (Capital Expenditure)

Question that the sum of Rs. 8,000,000 for Head 201, Programme 01 (Capital Expenditure), be inserted in the Schedule, put, and agreed to.

Programme 02 (Recurrent Expenditure)

Question that the sum of Rs. 1,708,000,000 for Head 201, Programme 02 (Recurrent Expenditure), be inserted in the Schedule, put, and agreed to.

Programme 02 (Capital Expenditure)

Question that the sum of Rs. 125,000,000 for Head 201, Programme 02 (Capital Expenditure), be inserted in the Schedule, put, and agreed to.

Head 202

Programme 02 (Recurrent Expenditure)

Question that the sum of Rs. 179,000,000 for Head 202, Programme 02 (Recurrent Expenditure), be inserted in the Schedule, put, and agreed to.

Programme 02 (Capital Expenditure)

Question that the sum of Rs. 31,000,000 for Head 202, Programme 02 (Capital Expenditure), be inserted in the Schedule, put, and agreed to.

Head 203

Programme 02 (Recurrent Expenditure)

Question that the sum of Rs. 208,000,000 for Head 203, Programme 02 (Recurrent Expenditure), be inserted in the Schedule, put, and agreed to.

Programme 02 (Capital Expenditure)

Question that the sum of Rs. 62,000,000 for Head 203, Programme 02 (Capital Expenditure), be inserted in the Schedule, put, and agreed to.

Head 204

Programme 02 (Recurrent Expenditure)

Question that the sum of Rs. 253,000,000 for Head 204, Programme 02 (Recurrent Expenditure), be inserted in the Schedule, put, and agreed to.

Programme 02 (Capital Expenditure)

Question that the sum of Rs. 47,000,000 for Head 204, Programme 02 (Capital Expenditure), be inserted in the Schedule, put, and agreed to.

Head 205

Programme 01 (Recurrent Expenditure)

Question that the sum of Rs. 114,000,000 for Head 205, Programme 01 (Recurrent Expenditure), be inserted in the Schedule, put, and agreed to.

Programme 01 (Capital Expenditure)

Question that the sum of Rs. 21,000,000 for Head 205, Programme 01 (Capital Expenditure), be inserted in the Schedule, put, and agreed to.

Head 206

Programme 01 (Recurrent Expenditure)

Question that the sum of Rs. 160,000,000 for Head 206, Programme 01 (Recurrent Expenditure), be inserted in the Schedule, put, and agreed to.

Programme 01 (Capital Expenditure)

Question that the sum of Rs. 12,000,000 for Head 206, Programme 01 (Capital Expenditure), be inserted in the Schedule, put, and agreed to.

Programme 02 (Recurrent Expenditure)

Question that the sum of Rs. 797,000,000 for Head 206, Programme 02 (Recurrent Expenditure), be inserted in the Schedule, put, and agreed to.

Programme 02 (Capital Expenditure)

Question that the sum of Rs. 631,000,000 for Head 206, Programme 02 (Capital Expenditure), be inserted in the Schedule, put, and agreed to.

Head 207

Programme 01 (Recurrent Expenditure)

Question that the sum of Rs. 341,000,000 for Head 207, Programme 01 (Recurrent Expenditure), be inserted in the Schedule, put, and agreed to.

Programme 01 (Capital Expenditure)

Question that the sum of Rs. 25,000,000 for Head 207, Programme 01 (Capital Expenditure), be inserted in the Schedule, put, and agreed to.

Programme 02 (Recurrent Expenditure)

Question that the sum of Rs. 1,706,000,000 for Head 207, Programme 02 (Recurrent Expenditure), be inserted in the Schedule, put, and agreed to.

Programme 02 (Capital Expenditure)

Question that the sum of Rs. 448,000,000 for Head 207, Programme 02 (Capital Expenditure), be inserted in the Schedule, put, and agreed to.

Head 208

Programme 01 (Recurrent Expenditure)

Question that the sum of Rs. 98,000,000 for Head 208, Programme 01 (Recurrent Expenditure), be inserted in the Schedule, put, and agreed to.

Programme 01 (Capital Expenditure)

Question that the sum of Rs. 30,000,000 for Head 208, Programme 01 (Capital Expenditure), be inserted in the Schedule, put, and agreed to.

Programme 02 (Recurrent Expenditure)

Question that the sum of Rs. 333,000,000 for Head 208, Programme 02 (Recurrent Expenditure), be inserted in the Schedule, put, and agreed to.

Programme 02 (Capital Expenditure)

Question that the sum of Rs. 319,000,000 for Head 208, Programme 02 (Capital Expenditure), be inserted in the Schedule, put, and agreed to.

Head 209

Programme 01 (Recurrent Expenditure)

Question that the sum of Rs. 168,000,000 for Head 209, Programme 01 (Recurrent Expenditure), be inserted in the Schedule, put, and agreed to.

Programme 01 (Capital Expenditure)

Question that the sum of Rs. 10,000,000 for Head 209, Programme 01 (Capital Expenditure), be inserted in the Schedule, put, and agreed to.

Programme 02 (Recurrent Expenditure)

Question that the sum of Rs. 116,000,000 for Head 209, Programme 02 (Recurrent Expenditure), be inserted in the Schedule, put, and agreed to.

Programme 02 (Capital Expenditure)

Question that the sum of Rs. 1,471,000,000 for Head 209, Programme 02 (Capital Expenditure), be inserted in the Schedule, put, and agreed to.

Head 160

Programme 01 (Recurrent Expenditure)

Question that the sum of Rs. 1,012,000,000 for Head 160, Programme 01 (Recurrent Expenditure), be inserted in the Schedule, put, and agreed to.

Programme 01 (Capital Expenditure)

Question that the sum of Rs. 85,000,000 for Head 160, Programme 01 (Capital Expenditure), be inserted in the Schedule, put, and agreed to.

Programme 02 (Recurrent Expenditure)

Question that the sum of Rs. 1,704,000,000 for Head 160, Programme 02 (Recurrent Expenditure), be inserted in the Schedule, put, and agreed to.

Programme 02 (Capital Expenditure)

Question that the sum of Rs. 908,000,000 for Head 160, Programme 02 (Capital Expenditure), be inserted in the Schedule, put, and agreed to.

Head 283

Programme 01 (Recurrent Expenditure)

Question that the sum of Rs. 2,500,000,000 for Head 283, Programme 01 (Recurrent Expenditure), be inserted in the Schedule, put, and agreed to.

Programme 01 (Capital Expenditure)

Question that the sum of Rs. 1,280,000,000 for Head 283, Programme 01 (Capital Expenditure), be inserted in the Schedule, put, and agreed to.

Head 284

Programme 01 (Recurrent Expenditure)

Question that the sum of Rs. 5,324,000,000 for Head 284, Programme 01 (Recurrent Expenditure), be inserted in the Schedule, put, and agreed to.

Programme 01 (Capital Expenditure)

Question that the sum of Rs. 406,000,000 for Head 284, Programme 01 (Capital Expenditure), be inserted in the Schedule, put, and agreed to.

Head 291

Programme 01 (Recurrent Expenditure)

Question that the sum of Rs. 419,000,000 for Head 291, Programme 01 (Recurrent Expenditure), be inserted in the Schedule, put, and agreed to.

Programme 01 (Capital Expenditure)

Question that the sum of Rs. 382,000,000 for Head 291, Programme 01 (Capital Expenditure), be inserted in the Schedule, put, and agreed to.

Head 294

Programme 02 (Recurrent Expenditure)

Question that the sum of Rs. 741,000,000 for Head 294, Programme 02 (Recurrent Expenditure), be inserted in the Schedule, put, and agreed to.

Programme 02 (Capital Expenditure)

Question that the sum of Rs. 167,000,000 for Head 294, Programme 02 (Capital Expenditure), be inserted in the Schedule, put, and agreed to.

Head 322

Programme 02 (Recurrent Expenditure)

Question that the sum of Rs. 834,000,000 for Head 322, Programme 02 (Recurrent Expenditure), be inserted in the Schedule, put, and agreed to.

Programme 02 (Capital Expenditure)

Question that the sum of Rs. 278,000,000 for Head 322, Programme 02 (Capital Expenditure), be inserted in the Schedule, put, and agreed to.

Whereupon the Minister of Transport, Highways, Ports and Civil Aviation 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 Tuesday, March 18, 2025.

7. Annual Report of the Galle Heritage Foundation (2021): The Minister of Transport, Highways, Ports and Civil Aviation on behalf of the Minister of Buddhasasana, Religious and Cultural Affairs moved,— That the Annual Report of the Galle Heritage Foundation 2021 together with the observation of the Auditor-General as prepared for the year ended 31.12.2021 and presented on 06.12.2023 under Section 16 of Part III of the Galle Heritage Foundation Act, No. 7 of 1994, be approved.

Question put, and agreed to.

8. Adjournment (Necessity of Drafting a New Constitution): The Leader of the House of Parliament moved,— That this Parliament do now adjourn.

Question proposed, and debated.

And it being 6.30 p.m. Parliament was adjourned by the Presiding Member without Question put.

Parliament adjourned accordingly until 9.30 a.m. on Tuesday, March 18, 2025, pursuant to the Resolution of Parliament on 21st February, 2025.