



(Tenth Parliament - First Session)

No. 44.]

MINUTES OF PARLIAMENT

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

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

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.) Upali Pannilage, Minister of Rural Development, Social Security and Community Empowerment

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

Hon. Sunil Handunnetti, Minister of Industry and Entrepreneurship Development

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. Eranga Gunasekara, Deputy Minister of Youth Affairs

Hon. Anton Jayakody, Deputy Minister of Environment

Hon. R.M. Jayawardhana, Deputy Minister of Trade, Commerce and Food Security

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

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

Hon. Sundaralingam Pradeep, Deputy Minister of Plantation and Community Infrastructure

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

Hon. Eranga Weeraratne, Deputy Minister of Digital Economy

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

Hon. Nalin Hewage, Deputy Minister of Vocational Education

Hon. Rohitha Abeygunawardhana

Hon. (Prof.) L.M. Abeywickrama

Hon. Heshan Withanage Ankumbura Arachchi

Hon. Lakshman Nipuna Arachchi

Hon. Manjula Suraweera Arachchi

Hon. (Dr.) Najith Indika

Hon. Gayantha Karunathilleka

Hon. Ravi Karunanayake

Hon. (Ms.) Krishnan Kalaichelvi

Hon. M. Nizam Kariapper, PC

Hon. Upul Kithsiri

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. Ajith Gihan

Hon. (Mrs.) Samanmali Gunasingha

Hon. Ashoka Gunasena

Hon. D. V. Chanaka

Hon. Ruwanthilaka Jayakody

Hon. Nalin Bandara Jayamaha
Hon. Anuradha Jayaratne
Hon. Dilith Jayaweera
Hon. (Mrs.) Thushari Jayasingha, Attorney at Law
Hon. T.K. Jayasundara
Hon. Dayasiri Jayasekara, Attorney at Law
Hon. (Mrs.) Anushka Thilakarathne, Attorney at Law
Hon. Chandana Thennakoon
Hon. Sugath Wasantha de Silva
Hon. (Dr.) Harsha de Silva
Hon. Thanura Dissanayake
Hon. Dharmapriya Dissanayake
Hon. Sujeewa Dissanayake
Hon. Susantha Dodawatta, Attorney at Law
Hon. Susantha Kumara Nawarathna
Hon. Nandana Pathmakumara
Hon. Aruna Panagoda
Hon. Nimal Palihena
Hon. Nishantha Perera
Hon. K. Sujith Sanjaya Perera
Hon. Lal Premanath
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. S.M. Marikkar
Hon. Chanaka Madugoda
Hon. Ruwan Mapalagama
Hon. Faiszer Musthapha, PC
Hon. Ismail Muththu Mohamed

Hon. Danushka Ranganath
Hon. Sunil Rathnasiri
Hon. R.M. Gamini Rathnayake
Hon. Manjula Sugath Rathnayaka
Hon. (Mrs.) A.M.M.M. Rathwaththe
Hon. Mujibur Rahman
Hon. Harshana Rajakaruna
Hon. Kanchana Welipitiya
Hon. R.G. Wijerathna
Hon. Priyantha Wijerathna , Attorney at Law
Hon. Darmapriya Wijesinghe
Hon. (Mrs.) Hiruni Wijesinghe, Attorney at Law
Hon. Chaminda Wijesiri
Hon. Asitha Niroshana Egoda Vithana
Hon. Dilip Wedaarachchi
Hon. Athula Welandagoda
Hon. Sivagnanam Shritharan
Hon. Fasmin Sharif
Hon. Thilina Samarakoon
Hon. (Dr.) Nishantha Samaraweera
Hon. (Dr.) Elayathamby Srinath
Hon. Shantha Pathma Kumara Subasingha
Hon. Dewananda Suraweera
Hon. Chandana Sooriyaarachchi
Hon. Aravinda Senarath
Hon. Kitnan Selvaraj
Hon. Arjuna Sujeewa Senasinghe, Attorney at Law
Hon. Chandima Hettiaratchi
Hon. Champika Hettiarachchi
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
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 announcements:—

I

“I wish to inform this House that the Committee on Parliamentary Business held on 15 March 2025 approved the proposal at its meeting to establish the Parliamentary Caucus for Youth for the Tenth Parliament.”

II

“I wish to explain to this House regarding several complaints I have received through various means about the distressing situations that have arisen with regard to individuals and social and ethnic groups owing to controversial and contemptuous statements that have been made and are being made using demeaning words by the Hon. (Dr.) Ramanathan Archchuna, Member of Parliament, against individuals, groups and various organizations both within and outside this House, particularly on social media.

I wish to inform this House that various parties, including various persons, various social groups and religious groups and people’s representatives from both the government and the opposition have personally complained to me to express their deep displeasure concern and regret over the disgraceful, indecent, and controversial statements made by the Hon. (Dr.) Ramanathan Archchuna targeting various individuals including women as well as various social and religious groups and many requests have already been made that appropriate action be taken by me as the head of this august assembly against such acts.

I, as the Speaker, express my grave displeasure over degrading statements of this type concerning the persons who cannot appear in this House and reply, as well as targeting other people’s representatives, various other outside social and religious organizations including different community groups and ethnicities, using words so degrading enough to cause profound injury to their personal lives, by using the privileges one is entitled to especially as a Member of Parliament representing this august assembly.

I wish to emphasize that these degrading and indecent statements made by a person, as a Member of Parliament representing this august assembly, makes a grave blemish on and causes a disgrace to the supremacy of the institution. Moreover, I wish to state that such statements severely impinge on national unity and reconciliation.

Even though I have warned the Member of Parliament concerned on numerous occasions in different ways to refrain from making statements of this type, I observe that the Member of Parliament concerned has failed to show that he heeds such advice and behaves himself accordingly.

I would like to particularly emphasize that such acts, which are being committed by this Member, are totally contrary to and inconsistent with the provisions of the Standing Orders of Parliament, provisions of the Parliament (Powers and Privileges) Act and the provisions of the Code of Ethics of the Members of Parliament as well as the hallowed traditions of Parliament that have prevailed for a long time.

Having carefully studied and considered the statements that Hon. (Dr.) Ramanathan Archchuna has continued to make, and having taken into account the threats posed by such statements to national harmony and reconciliation, I, in terms of the powers vested in me as the Speaker of Parliament under the Standing Orders of Parliament, do hereby order that action be taken to suspend all statements made by Hon. (Dr.) Ramanathan Archchuna in Parliament on 20th and 21st of March 2025, on 08th, 09th and 10th of April 2025, and on 06th, 07th and 08th of May 2025 from being broadcast live on all audio and video channels and on all social media.

In addition, I would like to further inform this House that steps will be taken to expunge from the Hansard records, as opportune, all such statements with contemptuous, indecent and mean remarks made by the Member concerned.

Furthermore, I would also like to state that attention will be made on lifting this temporary suspension, considering the contents of the speeches and the statements made by the Member during the period of suspension on the live broadcast.”

2. Presentation of Papers: (1) The Prime Minister and Minister of Education, Higher Education and Vocational Education presented the Annual Report of the University of Vocational Technology for the year 2023 and moved that this Report be referred to the Sectoral Oversight Committee on Education, Manpower and Human Capital.

Question put, and agreed to.

(2) The Minister of Public Security and Parliamentary Affairs presented the Annual Report of the National Dangerous Drugs Control Board for the year 2023 and moved that this Report be referred to the Sectoral Oversight Committee on Governance, Justice and Civil Protection.

Question put, and agreed to.

3. Presentation of Public Petitions:

(1) Hon. (Dr.) Harsha de Silva presented—

- (i) A petition dated 10.02.2025 from Mr. H. A. Samanpriya Rodrigo of No. 137/3, Raja Maha Vihara Road, Mirihana, Kotte; and
- (ii) A petition dated 07.01.2025 from Mrs. W. A. I. Wimarshani Mihirani De Silva of No. 72, Ananda Coomaraswami Mawatha, Colombo 07.

- (2) Hon. Chandana Thennakoon presented a petition dated 10.12.2024 from Mr. D. M. Wijesinghe of No. 91, Mailewa, Thambuththa, Galgamuwa.
- (3) Hon. Ruwan Mapalagama presented a petition dated 23.01.2025 from Mr. U. G. P. M. Udalamaththa of No. 72/4/D, De Seram Place, Yakkala Road, Gampaha.

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

4. Ministerial Consultative Committees: The Leader of the House of Parliament moved,— That notwithstanding the provisions of the Standing Order 112 of the Parliament and the motion agreed to by Parliament on 06 December 2024, as decided by the Committee of Selection on 15 March 2025, each Ministerial Consultative Committee shall consist of Cabinet Minister in charge of the relevant subject as the Chair, State Minister, Deputy Minister and twenty nine (29) other Members of Parliament to be nominated by the Committee of Selection to serve during the First Session of the Tenth Parliament.

Question put, and agreed to.

5. Legislative Standing Committee: The Leader of the House of Parliament moved,— That notwithstanding the provisions of the Standing Order 113 of the Parliament and the motion agreed to by Parliament on 06 December 2024, as decided by the Committee of Selection on 15 March 2025, the Legislative Standing Committee shall consist of the Deputy Speaker as the Chair, the Deputy Chairperson of Committees and fifteen (15) other Members to be nominated by the Committee of Selection to serve during the First Session of the Tenth Parliament.

Question put, and agreed to.

6. Committee on Parliamentary Business: The Leader of the House of Parliament moved,— That notwithstanding the provisions of the Standing Order 115 of the Parliament and the motion agreed to by Parliament with amendments on 06 December 2024, as decided by the Committee of Selection on 15 March 2025, the Committee on Parliamentary Business shall consist of the Speaker as the Chair, the Deputy Speaker, the Deputy Chairperson of Committees, the Leader of the House of Parliament, the Leader of the Opposition in Parliament, the Chief Government Whip, the Chief Opposition Whip and twenty (20) other Members to be nominated by the Committee of Selection to serve during the First Session of the Tenth Parliament.

Question put, and agreed to.

7. Committee on Standing Orders: The Leader of the House of Parliament moved,— That notwithstanding the provisions of the Standing Order 116 of the Parliament and the motion agreed to by Parliament on 06 December 2024, as decided by the Committee of Selection on 15 March 2025, the Committee on Standing Orders shall consist of the Speaker as the Chair, the Deputy Speaker, the Deputy Chairperson of Committees and ten (10) other Members to be nominated by the Committee of Selection to serve during the First Session of the Tenth Parliament.

Question put, and agreed to.

8. House Committee: The Leader of the House of Parliament moved,— That notwithstanding the provisions of the Standing Order 117 of the Parliament and the motion agreed to by Parliament on 06 December 2024, as decided by the Committee of Selection on 15 March 2025, the House Committee shall consist of the Speaker as the Chair and fifteen (15) other Members to be nominated by the Committee of Selection to serve during the First Session of the Tenth Parliament.

Question put, and agreed to.

9. Committee on Ethics and Privileges: The Leader of the House of Parliament moved,— That notwithstanding the provisions of the Standing Order 118 of the Parliament and the motion agreed to by Parliament on 06 December 2024, as decided by the Committee of Selection on 15 March 2025, the Committee on Ethics and Privileges shall consist of eighteen (18) Members to be nominated by the Committee of Selection to serve during the First Session of the Tenth Parliament.

Question put, and agreed to.

10. Committee on Public Accounts: The Leader of the House of Parliament moved,— That notwithstanding the provisions of the Standing Order 119 of the Parliament and the motion agreed to by Parliament on 06 December 2024, as decided by the Committee of Selection on 15 March 2025, the Committee on Public Accounts shall consist of thirty one (31) Members to be nominated by the Committee of Selection to serve during the First Session of the Tenth Parliament.

Question put, and agreed to.

11. Committee on Public Enterprises: The Leader of the House of Parliament moved,— That notwithstanding the provisions of the Standing Order 120 of the Parliament and the motion agreed to by Parliament on 06 December 2024, as decided by the Committee of Selection on 15 March 2025, the Committee on Public Enterprises shall consist of thirty one (31) Members to be nominated by the Committee of Selection to serve during the First Session of the Tenth Parliament.

Question put, and agreed to.

12. Committee on Public Finance: The Leader of the House of Parliament moved,— That notwithstanding the provisions of the Standing Order 121 of the Parliament and the motion agreed to by Parliament on 06 December 2024, as decided by the Committee of Selection on 15 March 2025, the Committee on Public Finance shall consist of eighteen (18) Members to be nominated by the Committee of Selection to serve during the First Session of the Tenth Parliament.

Question put, and agreed to.

13. Committee on Ways and Means: The Leader of the House of Parliament moved,— That notwithstanding the provisions of the Standing Order 124 of the Parliament and the motion agreed to by Parliament on 06 December 2024, as decided by the Committee of Selection on 15 March 2025, the Committee on Ways and Means shall consist of twenty three (23) Members to be nominated by the Committee of Selection to serve during the First Session of the Tenth Parliament.

Question put, and agreed to.

14. Committee on Public Petitions: The Leader of the House of Parliament moved,— That notwithstanding the provisions of the Standing Order 125 of the Parliament and the motion agreed to by Parliament on 06 December 2024, as decided by the Committee of Selection on 15 March 2025, the Committee on Public Petitions shall consist of twenty nine (29) Members to be nominated by the Committee of Selection to serve during the First Session of the Tenth Parliament.

Question put, and agreed to.

15. Committee on High Posts: The Leader of the House of Parliament moved,— That notwithstanding the provisions of the Standing Order 127 of the Parliament and the motion agreed to by Parliament on 06 December 2024, as decided by the Committee of Selection on 15 March 2025, the Committee on High Posts shall consist of nineteen (19) Members to be nominated by the Committee of Selection.

Question put, and agreed to.

16. Backbencher Committee: The Leader of the House of Parliament moved,— That notwithstanding the provisions of the Standing Order 129 of the Parliament and the motion agreed to by Parliament on 06 December 2024, as decided by the Committee of Selection on 15 March 2025, the Backbencher Committee shall consist of the Chief Government Whip, the Chief Opposition Whip, eight (08) Backbenchers from the Government and eight (08) Backbenchers from the Opposition to be nominated by the Committee of Selection to serve during the First Session of the Tenth Parliament.

Question put, and agreed to.

17. Appropriation Bill—(Twenty Fourth Allotted Day): Considered in the Committee.

(In the Committee)

The Speaker took the Chair.

Head 116

Programme 01 (Recurrent Expenditure)

Hon. Mujibur Rahman, proposed that the Programme be reduced by Rs. 10/-.

(At 11.09 a.m. the Deputy Speaker took the Chair.)

(At 1.00 p.m. the Deputy Chairperson of Committees took the Chair.)

(At 3.54 p.m. the Hon. Kitnan Selvaraj took the Chair.)

(At 5.38 p.m. Hon. Aravinda Senarath took the Chair.)

Question put, and negatived.

Question that the sum of Rs. 471,000,000 for Head 116, Programme 01 (Recurrent Expenditure), be inserted in the Schedule, put, and agreed to.

Programme 01 (Capital Expenditure)

Question that the sum of Rs. 33,000,000 for Head 116, Programme 01 (Capital Expenditure), be inserted in the Schedule, put, and agreed to.

Programme 02 (Recurrent Expenditure)

Question that the sum of Rs. 747,000,000 for Head 116, Programme 02 (Recurrent Expenditure), be inserted in the Schedule, put, and agreed to.

Programme 02 (Capital Expenditure)

Question that the sum of Rs. 102,000,000 for Head 116, Programme 02 (Capital Expenditure), be inserted in the Schedule, put, and agreed to.

Head 295

Programme 01 (Recurrent Expenditure)

Question that the sum of Rs. 301,000,000 for Head 295, 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 295, Programme 01 (Capital Expenditure), be inserted in the Schedule, put, and agreed to.

Head 297

Programme 01 (Recurrent Expenditure)

Question that the sum of Rs. 105,000,000 for Head 297, Programme 01 (Recurrent Expenditure), be inserted in the Schedule, put, and agreed to.

Head 298

Programme 01 (Recurrent Expenditure)

Question that the sum of Rs. 232,800,000 for Head 298, Programme 01 (Recurrent Expenditure), be inserted in the Schedule, put, and agreed to.

Head 299

Programme 01 (Recurrent Expenditure)

Question that the sum of Rs. 84,200,000 for Head 299, Programme 01 (Recurrent Expenditure), be inserted in the Schedule, put, and agreed to.

Head 300

Programme 01 (Recurrent Expenditure)

Question that the sum of Rs. 112,000,000 for Head 300, Programme 01 (Recurrent Expenditure), be inserted in the Schedule, put, and agreed to.

Programme 01 (Capital Expenditure)

Question that the sum of Rs. 205,000,000 for Head 300, Programme 01 (Recurrent Expenditure), be inserted in the Schedule, put, and agreed to.

Ministry of Trade, Commerce, Food Security and Co-operative Development

The Minister of Trade, Commerce, Food Security and Co-operative Development on behalf of the Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development proposed an amendment to leave out line 12 in page 19 and substitute the following:—

“Capital 497,000,000”

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 301

The Minister of Trade, Commerce, Food Security and Co-operative Development on behalf of the Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development proposed an amendment to leave out line 10 in page 20 and substitute the following:—

“Programme 01 Operational Activities 88,000,000 126,100,000”

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 302**Programme 01 (Recurrent Expenditure)**

Question that the sum of Rs. 26,000,000 for Head 302, Programme 01 (Recurrent Expenditure), be inserted in the Schedule, put, and agreed to.

Programme 01 (Capital Expenditure)

Question that the sum of Rs. 900,000 for Head 302, Programme 01 (Capital Expenditure), be inserted in the Schedule, put, and agreed to.

Whereupon the Minister of Public Administration, Provincial Councils and Local Government 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 Thursday, March 20, 2025.

18. Adjournment (Impact of Public Administration Circular No. 19/2022 on the Public Service): The Minister of Public Administration, Provincial Councils and Local Government 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 Thursday, March 20, 2025, pursuant to the Resolution of Parliament on 21st February, 2025.