



(Tenth Parliament - First Session)

No. 45.]

MINUTES OF PARLIAMENT

Thursday, March 20, 2025 at 9.30 a.m.

PRESENT :

Hon. (Dr.) Jagath Wickramaratne, Speaker

Hon. (Dr.) Rizvie Salih, Deputy Speaker and the Chair 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. 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. (Dr.) Dammika Patabendi, Minister of Environment

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

Hon. Mahinda Jayasinghe, Deputy Minister of Labour

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

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. Sundaralingam Pradeep, Deputy Minister of Plantation and Community Infrastructure

Hon. Muneer Mulafter, Deputy Minister of National Integration

Hon. (Prof.) Ruwan Ranasinghe, Deputy Minister of Tourism

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

Hon. Eranga Weeraratne, Deputy Minister of Digital Economy

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

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

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

Hon. Nalin Hewage, Deputy Minister of Vocational Education

Hon. Ajith Agalakada

Hon. Aboobucker Athambawa

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

Hon. (Prof.) L.M. Abeywickrama

Hon. (Dr.) Nihal Abeysinghe

Hon. J.C. Alawathuwala

Hon. Hesha Withanage Ankumbura Arachchi

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

Hon. (Dr.) Najith Indika

Hon. Gayantha Karunathilleka

Hon. Ravi Karunanayake
Hon. (Ms.) Krishnan Kalaichelvi
Hon. M. Nizam Kariapper, PC
Hon. Upul Kithsiri
Hon. Sarath Kumara, Attorney at Law
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. Nalin Bandara Jayamaha
Hon. Dilith Jayaweera
Hon. Kosala Nuwan 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. Sujeewa Dissanayake
Hon. Susantha Dodawatta, Attorney at Law
Hon. Susantha Kumara Nawarathna
Hon. (Prof.) Sena Nanayakkara
Hon. Nandana Pathmakumara
Hon. Nimal Palihena
Hon. Nishantha Perera
Hon. Ajith P. Perera
Hon. K. Sujith Sanjaya Perera
Hon. Lal Premanath

Hon. Nanda Bandara
Hon. Ravindra Bandara
Hon. Sudath Balagalla
Hon. E.M. Basnayaka
Hon. Wijesiri Basnayake
Hon. Sunil Biyanwila
Hon. (Dr.) Sandaruwan Madarasinghe
Hon. Lieutenant Commander (Rtd.) Prageeth Madhuranga
Hon. Jagath Manuwarna
Hon. Ruwan Mapalagama
Hon. Faiszer Musthapha, PC
Hon. Sunil Rathnasiri
Hon. Manjula Sugath Rathnayaka
Hon. (Mrs.) A.M.M.M. Rathwaththe
Hon. Namal Rajapaksa, Attorney at Law
Hon. Manoj Rajapaksha
Hon. Sunil Rajapaksha
Hon. (Dr.) V.S. Radhakrishnan
Hon. Shanakiyan Rajaputhiran Rasamanickam
Hon. (Mrs.) Hasara Liyanage, Attorney at Law
Hon. Kanchana Welipitiya
Hon. Priyantha Wijerathna , Attorney at Law
Hon. Darmapriya Wijesinghe
Hon. (Mrs.) Hiruni Wijesinghe, Attorney at Law
Hon. Asitha Niroshana Egoda Vithana
Hon. Athula Welandagoda
Hon. Sivagnanam Shritharan
Hon. Gnanamuththu Srineshan
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. Rauff Hakeem, Attorney at Law

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

Hon. Riyas Farook

Mrs. Kushani Rohanadeera, Secretary-General of Parliament

Mr. Hansa Abeyrathne, Assistant Secretary-General

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

1. Presentation of Papers: (1) The Speaker presented the—

- (i) Fourth Installment – Part XXIX of the Report of the Auditor-General for the Financial Year 2022; and
- (ii) First Installment – Parts XXVIII and XXIX and Fourth Installment – Parts XX and XXI and Sixth Installment – Parts XXVI, XXVII, XXVIII and XXIX of the Report of the Auditor-General for the Financial Year 2023

in terms of Article 154(6) of the Constitution of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka.

Ordered that the said Reports do lie upon the **Table** and be printed.

(2) The Minister of Public Administration, Provincial Councils and Local Government presented the Annual Report of the National Human Resources Development Council of Sri Lanka 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) The Minister of Health and Mass Media presented the Order made by the Minister of Justice and National Integration under Section 7(2) of the Code of Criminal Procedure (Special Provisions) Act, No. 2 of 2013, and published in the Gazette Extraordinary No. 2418/28 of 08th January 2025 and moved that this Order be referred to the Ministerial Consultative Committee on Justice and National Integration.

Question put, and agreed to.

(4) The Minister of Environment presented the Annual Reports of the Sri Lanka Climate Fund (Pvt) Limited for the years 2020 and 2021 and moved that those Reports be referred to the Sectoral Oversight Committee on Environment, Agriculture and Resource Sustainability.

Question put, and agreed to.

2. Presentation of Reports from Committees: The Hon. (Dr.) Harsha de Silva, the Chair of the Committee on Public Finance presented the Report of the Committee on —

- (i) Excise Notification No. 01/2025 under Section 22 of the Excise Ordinance (Chapter 52) regarding Excise Duty on Liquor;
- (ii) Order under Section 3 of the Excise (Special Provisions) Act, No. 13 of 1989;
- (iii) Order under Section 5 of the Special Commodity Levy Act, No. 48 of 2007;
- (iv) Order under Sections 2 and 5 of the Special Commodity Levy Act, No. 48 of 2007;
- (v) Protocol Amending the Agreement Between the Government of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka and the Government of the Republic of India for the Avoidance of Double Taxation and the prevention of Fiscal Evasion with respect to Taxes on Income under Section 75(1) of Inland Revenue Act, No. 24 of 2017; and
- (vi) Inland Revenue (Amendment) Bill

which were referred to the Committee.

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

3. Presentation of Public Petitions:

- (1) Hon. (Mrs.) Samanmali Gunasingha presented —
 - (i) A petition dated 19.12.2024 from Mrs. I. N. Weligama of No. 62, Ebert Lane, Kaldamulla, Moratuwa; and
 - (ii) A petition dated 25.12.2024 from Mrs. S. M. N. Senanayaka of No. 16, 9th Lane, Jambugasmulla Mawatha, Nugegoda.
- (2) Hon. Ashoka Gunasena presented a petition dated 02.02.2025 from Mr. Swarna Moorthi Ranathunga of Kurunegala Road, Dambadeniya.
- (3) Hon. Darmapriya Wijesinghe presented a petition dated 08.01.2025 from Mrs. Padma Malini Mahagamarachchi of No. 96/1, Vijaya Road, Gampaha.

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

4. Sittings of the Parliament: The Leader of the House of Parliament moved,— That notwithstanding the provisions of Standing Order 8 of the Parliament and the motion agreed to by Parliament on 21st February 2025, the hours of sitting of Parliament on this day shall be 9.30 a.m. to 12.30 p.m. and 1.00 p.m. to 8.00 p.m.. At 8.00 p.m. Mr. Speaker shall adjourn the Parliament.

Question put, and agreed to.

5. Appropriation Bill—(Twenty Fifth Allotted Day): Considered in the Committee.

(In the Committee)

The Speaker took the Chair.

Head 102

Programme 01 (Recurrent Expenditure)

Hon. (Dr.) Harsha de Silva, proposed that the Programme be reduced by Rs. 10/-.

(At 10.53 a.m. Hon. (Dr.)(Ms.) Kaushalya Ariyaratne took the Chair.)

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

(At 1.56 p.m. Hon. Aravinda Senarath took the Chair.)

(At 3.18 p.m. the Hon. Kitnan Selvaraj took the Chair.)

(At 4.50 p.m. the Speaker took the Chair.)

Question put, and negatived.

The Minister of Rural Development, Social Security and Community Empowerment moved,—That the debate be now adjourn.

Question put, and agreed to.

Debate to be resumed on Friday, March 21, 2025.

6. Regulation under the Finance Act: The Prime Minister and Minister of Education, Higher Education and Vocational Education moved,— That the Regulation made by the Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development under Section 12 of the Finance Act, No. 12 of 2013 read together with the provisions of the Finance Act, No. 12 of 2012 and published in the Gazette Extraordinary No. 2411/56 of 22nd November 2024, which was presented on 14.02.2025, be approved.

Question put, and agreed to.

7. Resolution under the Inland Revenue Act: The Prime Minister and Minister of Education, Higher Education and Vocational Education moved,— That this Parliament resolves that the Protocol entered on 16th December 2024 amending the Agreement between the Government of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka and the Government of the Republic of India for the avoidance of Double Taxation and the Prevention of Fiscal Evasion with respect to Taxes on Income, under Section 75(1) of Inland Revenue Act, No. 24 of 2017 and passed by the Parliament on 26th July 2013 and published in the Gazette Extraordinary No. 1828/9 dated 17th September 2013, which was presented on 20.02.2025, be approved.

Question put, and agreed to.

8. Regulations under the Regulation of Insurance Industry Act: The Prime Minister and Minister of Education, Higher Education and Vocational Education moved,— That the Regulations made by the Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development under Section 112 read with Section 16 of the Regulation of Insurance Industry Act, No. 43 of 2000 and published in the Gazette Extraordinary No. 2415/79 of 22nd December 2024, which were presented on 22.02.2025, be approved.

Question put, and agreed to.

9. Regulations under the Imports and Exports (Control) Act (No. 1): The Prime Minister and Minister of Education, Higher Education and Vocational Education moved,— That the Regulations made by the Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development under Section 20 of the Imports and Exports (Control) Act, No. 1 of 1969 amended by Acts, No. 48 of 1985 and No. 28 of 1987 read with Sections 4(1) and 14 of the aforesaid Act and published in the Gazette Extraordinary No. 2421/04 of 27th January 2025, which were presented on 25.02.2025, be approved.

Question put, and agreed to.

10. Regulations under the Imports and Exports (Control) Act (No. 2): The Prime Minister and Minister of Education, Higher Education and Vocational Education moved,— That the Regulations made by the Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development under Section 20 of the Imports and Exports (Control) Act, No. 1 of 1969 amended by Acts, No. 48 of 1985 and No. 28 of 1987 read with Sections 4(1) and 14 of the aforesaid Act and published in the Gazette Extraordinary No. 2421/44 of 31st January 2025, which were presented on 25.02.2025, be approved.

Question put, and agreed to.

11. Notification under the Excise Ordinance: The Prime Minister and Minister of Education, Higher Education and Vocational Education moved,— That the Notification made by the Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development under Section 22 of the Excise Ordinance (Chapter 52) as amended from time to time, regarding Excise Duty on Liquor, and published in the Gazette Extraordinary No. 2418/42 of 10th January 2025, which was presented on 27.02.2025, be approved.

(Excise Notification No. 01/2025)

Question put, and agreed to.

12. Order under the Excise (Special Provisions) Act: The Prime Minister and Minister of Education, Higher Education and Vocational Education moved,— That the Order made by the Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development under Section 3 of the Excise (Special Provisions) Act, No. 13 of 1989, relating to Excise Duty and published in the Gazette Extraordinary No. 2418/43 of 10th January 2025, which was presented on 27.02.2025, be approved.

Question put, and agreed to.

13. Order under the Special Commodity Levy Act (No. 1): The Prime Minister and Minister of Education, Higher Education and Vocational Education moved,— That the Order made by the Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development under Sections 2 and 5 of the Special Commodity Levy Act, No. 48 of 2007, relating to Special Commodity Levy and published in the Gazette Extraordinary No. 2417/20 of 31st December 2024, which was presented on 06.03.2025, be approved.

Question put, and agreed to.

14. Order under the Special Commodity Levy Act (No. 2): The Prime Minister and Minister of Education, Higher Education and Vocational Education moved,— That the Order made by the Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development under Section 5 of the Special Commodity Levy Act, No. 48 of 2007, relating to Special Commodity Levy and published in the Gazette Extraordinary No. 2421/03 of 27th January 2025, which was presented on 06.03.2025, be approved.

Question put, and agreed to.

15. Annual Report of the Rajarata University of Sri Lanka (2021): The Prime Minister and Minister of Education, Higher Education and Vocational Education moved,— That the Annual Report of the Rajarata University of Sri Lanka 2021 together with the observations of the Auditor-General for the year ended 31.12.2021 and presented on 05.07.2023 under Section 110 of the Universities Act, No. 16 of 1978, be approved.

Question put, and agreed to.

16. Annual Report of the Ceylon Petroleum Storage Terminals Limited (CPSTL) (2021): The Minister of Energy moved,— That the Annual Report of the Ceylon Petroleum Storage Terminals Limited (CPSTL) 2021 together with the observations of the Auditor-General for the year ended 31.12.2021 and presented on 13.12.2023 in terms of Section 2(1) of the Conversion of Public Corporation or Government Owned Business Undertaking into Public Companies Act, No. 23 of 1987 under the Companies Act, No. 17 of 1982, be approved.

Question put, and agreed to.

17. Annual Report of the Ceylon Petroleum Storage Terminals Limited (CPSTL) (2022): The Minister of Energy moved,— That the Annual Report of the Ceylon Petroleum Storage Terminals Limited (CPSTL) 2022 together with the observations of the Auditor-General for the year ended 31.12.2022 and presented on 05.03.2024 in terms of Section 2(1) of the Conversion of Public Corporation or Government Owned Business Undertaking into Public Companies Act, No. 23 of 1987 under the Companies Act, No. 17 of 1982, be approved.

Question put, and agreed to.

18. Annual Report of the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health

(2020): The Minister of Labour moved,— That the Annual Report of the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health 2020 together with the observations of the Auditor-General for the year ended 31.12.2020 and presented on 18.07.2023 under Section 18 of the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health Act, No. 38 of 2009, be approved.

Question put, and agreed to.

19. Annual Report of the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health

(2021): The Minister of Labour moved,— That the Annual Report of the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health 2021 together with the observations of the Auditor-General for the year ended 31.12.2021 and presented on 18.07.2023 under Section 18 of the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health Act, No. 38 of 2009, be approved.

Question put, and agreed to.

20. Inland Revenue (Amendment) Bill: Order for Second Reading read.

The Minister of Labour and Deputy Minister of Economic Development on behalf of the Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development moved,— That the Bill be now read a second time.

(At 6.03 p.m. the Deputy Speaker took the Chair.)

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill accordingly read a second time.

The Minister of Labour and Deputy Minister of Economic Development on behalf of the Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development moved,— That the Bill be referred to a Committee of the whole Parliament.

Question put, and agreed to.

Parliament immediately resolved itself into Committee.

(In the Committee)

The Deputy Speaker took the Chair.

Clauses 1 to 6 were agreed to.

Enacting Clause and Title

Question that the Enacting Clause and Title stand part of the Bill, put, and agreed to.

Bill reported without Amendments.

The Minister of Labour and Deputy Minister of Economic Development on behalf of the Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development moved,— That the Bill be now read the third time.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill, accordingly read the third time and passed.

21. Adjournment: The Prime Minister and Minister of Education, Higher Education and Vocational Education moved,— That this Parliament do now adjourn.

Question put, and agreed to; Parliament was at 7.13 p.m. adjourned by the Deputy Speaker until 9.30 a.m. on Friday, March 21, 2025 pursuant to the Resolution of Parliament on 21st February, 2025.