



(Tenth Parliament - First Session)

No. 53.]

MINUTES OF PARLIAMENT

Wednesday, May 21, 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. (Dr.) Chrishantha Abeysena, Minister of Science and Technology

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

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

Hon. Anton Jayakody, Deputy Minister of Environment

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

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. Sundaralingam Pradeep, Deputy Minister of Plantation and Community Infrastructure

Hon. Muneer Mulafter, 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. Upali Samarasingha, Deputy Minister of Cooperative Development

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

Hon. Ajith Agalakada

Hon. Aboobucker Athambawa

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

Hon. Hector Appuhamy

Hon. (Dr.) Nihal Abeysinghe

Hon. (Dr.) Ramanathan Archchuna

Hon. J.C. Alawathuwala

Hon. M.K.M. Aslam

Hon. Hesha Withanage Ankumbura Arachchi

Hon. Lakshman Nipuna Arachchi
Hon. Manjula Suraweera Arachchi
Hon. (Dr.)(Ms.) Kaushalya Ariyaratne
Hon. B. Ariyawansa
Hon. (Dr.) Najith Indika
Hon. K. Ilankumaran
Hon. M.S. Uthumalebbe
Hon. (Mrs.) Oshani Umanga
Hon. Gayantha Karunathilleka
Hon. Ravi Karunanayake
Hon. (Ms.) Krishnan Kalaichelvi
Hon. M. Nizam Kariapper, PC
Hon. Upul Kithsiri
Hon. (Mrs.) Chamindrane Kiriella, Attorney at Law
Hon. Kathiravelu Shanmugam Kugathan
Hon. Wasantha Pushpa Kumara
Hon. Chaminda Lalith Kumara
Hon. Sarath Kumara, Attorney at Law
Hon. (Mrs.) Nilanthi Kottahachchi, Attorney at Law
Hon. Kaveenthiran Kodeeswaran
Hon. Lasith Bhashana Gamage
Hon. Thilanka U. Gamage
Hon. (Mrs.) Nilusha Lakmali Gamage
Hon. Chathura Galappaththi
Hon. Nihal Galappaththi
Hon. Ajith Gihan
Hon. (Dr.) Jagath Gunawardana
Hon. (Mrs.) Samanmali Gunasingha
Hon. Ashoka Gunasena
Hon. D. V. Chanaka
Hon. Gayan Janaka
Hon. Ruwanthilaka Jayakody
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. Mayilvaganam Jegatheeswaran
Hon. Rajeevan Jeyachandramoorthy
Hon. M.A.M. Thahir
Hon. (Dr.) Sellaththamby Thilaganathan
Hon. (Mrs.) Anushka Thilakarathne, Attorney at Law
Hon. Chandana Thennakoon
Hon. Jeevan Thondaman
Hon. Chamara Sampath Dasanayake
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. W. H. M. Dharmasena
Hon. Susantha Kumara Nawarathna
Hon. (Prof.) Sena Nanayakkara
Hon. Kins Nelson
Hon. Nandana Pathmakumara
Hon. Nimal Palihena
Hon. Nishantha Perera
Hon. Ajith P. Perera
Hon. K. Sujith Sanjaya Perera
Hon. G.G. Ponnambalam
Hon. Chithral Fernando, Attorney at Law
Hon. Kanthasamy Prabu
Hon. Rohana Bandara
Hon. Nanda Bandara
Hon. Padmasiri Bandara
Hon. Ravindra Bandara
Hon. Rishad Bathiudeen
Hon. Sudath Balagalla
Hon. (Dr.) S. Sri Bayanandarajah
Hon. E.M. Basnayaka

Hon. Wijesiri Basnayake
Hon. Sunil Biyanwila
Hon. Lieutenant Commander (Rtd.) Prageeth Madhuranga
Hon. Jagath Manuwarna
Hon. S.M. Marikkar
Hon. K. Kader Masthan
Hon. Imran Maharroof
Hon. Chanaka Madugoda
Hon. Ruwan Mapalagama
Hon. (Dr.) Nandana Millagala
Hon. Ismail Muththu Mohamed
Hon. Danushka Ranganath
Hon. Sanjeeva Ranasingha
Hon. R.M. Samantha Ranasinghe
Hon. Sunil Rathnasiri
Hon. R.M. Gamini Rathnayake
Hon. Manjula Sugath Rathnayaka
Hon. Suranga Rathnayaka
Hon. (Mrs.) A.M.M.M. Rathwaththe
Hon. Asoka Sapumal Ranwala
Hon. Thurairasa Ravikaran
Hon. Mujibur Rahman
Hon. Harshana Rajakaruna
Hon. Manoj Rajapaksha
Hon. Sunil Rajapaksha
Hon. Shanakiyan Rajaputhiran Rasamanickam
Hon. Waruna Liyanage
Hon. (Mrs.) Hasara Liyanage, Attorney at Law
Hon. (Mrs.) Rohini Kumari Wijerathna
Hon. R.G. Wijerathna
Hon. Priyantha Wijerathna , Attorney at Law
Hon. Darmapriya Wijesinghe
Hon. (Mrs.) Hiruni Wijesinghe, Attorney at Law
Hon. Asitha Niroshana Egoda Vithana
Hon. Dilip Wedaarachchi
Hon. Athula Welandagoda

Hon. Sivagnanam Shritharan
Hon. (Dr.) Pathmanathan Sathiyalingam
Hon. Thilina Samarakoon
Hon. (Dr.) Nishantha Samaraweera
Hon. (Ms.) Ambika Samivel
Hon. (Dr.) Elayathamby Srinath
Hon. Shantha Pathma Kumara Subasingha
Hon. Dewananda Suraweera
Hon. Chandana Sooriyaarachchi
Hon. Major General (Rtd.) G.D. Sooriyabandara
Hon. Kitnan Selvaraj
Hon. Rauff Hakeem, Attorney at Law
Hon. (Dr.) M.L.A.M. Hizbullah
Hon. Chandima Hettiaratchi
Hon. Champika Hettiarachchi
Hon. Dinindu Saman Hennayake
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 announcement:—

“Representation, legislation, and control and oversight of public funds are the major functions of a Member of Parliament as a people’s representative in a country where representative democracy prevails and the role that can be performed through the process of representation is quite significant.

As such, in performing the role of representation as a people's representative, various methods of obtaining solutions through the executive by drawing the attention of the legislature on common matters and issues related to public, and major ones among them are Questions for Oral Answers, Questions not for Oral Answers, Questions at the Adjournment of the House, Motions at the Adjournment of the House as well as 'Questions asked by the Leader of the Opposition of Parliament or a leader of a recognized political party at the end of the Questions for Oral Answer in Parliament regarding a matter of public importance after giving due notice to the relevant Minister' in terms of the provisions of Standing Order 27(2) of Parliament.

I wish to make a clarification as the Speaker of Parliament regarding the issues that arose in Parliament on numerous occasions regarding the questions presented under the provisions of Standing Order 27(2) and especially, the situation that arose in this regard in Parliament on 09.05.2025 and inform this House of my ruling in this regard.

The objective of the opportunity made available to the Leader of the Opposition of Parliament and leaders of political parties through Standing Order 27(2) is obtaining answers by short notice given to the Minister in charge of the subject regarding a specific matter of public importance and as such, it is essential that the question concerned 'shall be of public importance' and it is also essential to be of such nature that answers can be given at short notice.

At the same time, it is considered here essential that the content of such a question shall be confined to a subject based on a specific matter and shall fall under the purview of one single Minister.

The objective of conveying the question before 12.00 noon to the Minister in charge of the subject, according to a long-prevailing tradition, is also to have the space for obtaining answers expeditiously.

However, it has been observed that most questions which have been raised under this provision since the inception of the Tenth Parliament have consisted of many sub-questions outside the qualification of 'public importance', seeking answers with detailed data, have not been confined to the purview of one single Minister, and have been repetitions of the same type of questions.

In addition, I wish to point out that I have observed that, although there is no provision to ask supplementary questions upon these questions in terms of the provisions of the Standing Orders, requests are made for clarifications, which reflect the form of supplementary questions, and attempts are made to ask questions in the form of requests for clarifications by Members of Parliament other than the leader of the party who presented the question.

I wish to state further that most questions asked in this manner can be presented in the form of Questions for Oral Answers, Questions not for Oral Answers, questions to be presented at the adjournment and motions to be presented at the adjournment.

In the circumstances, it is a constantly seen situation that an inordinately long time is spent for asking the question properly, giving the answer, raising the supplementary questions and answering them, resulting in the said business not being completed within

the time allotted for it and causing constraints to the day-to-day main business of the house, resulting in reduction of time allocated for speakers to make speeches.

This matter regarding the questions asked under Standing Order 27(2) was subjected to discussion at length before the Committee on Parliamentary Business at its meeting held on 21.03.2025 as well and it was decided to deal with it according to the provisions of the Standing Orders, prevailing traditions and Speaker's rulings and upon the common agreement between the government and the opposition.

Nevertheless, presenting such questions without following the provisions concerned and traditions have caused many problems in terms of time management and wish to stress that there is a serious need to confine the questions raised under Standing Order 27(2) to its provisions.

Therefore, I request the party leaders to take into account all the associated circumstances and observe the provisions referred to above in raising questions under Standing Order 27(2) and I wish to inform the House further that the questions that are posed circumventing the provisions concerned will be dealt with in accordance with Standing Orders.

As such, these matters are brought to the attention of all the party leaders who present these questions and I fervently expect the full cooperation of yours in order to conduct the business of the House without any hindrance in accordance with Standing Orders."

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

- (i) Special Audit Report on Advance Payment for Import of 15,000 Dairy Cattle under Step II of the Phase III of the Project; and
- (ii) Special Audit Report on the formality, effectiveness of 6 programmes implemented by the National Youth Services Council during the period from January to August 2024 under the theme of Rescuing Youth from Pressure and the compliance with the key objectives of the Council

of the Tenth Installment of the Report of the Auditor-General 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 Speaker presented the Report of the Auditor-General on the Performance Evaluation of the 'Api Wenuwen Api' Fund of the Eighth Installment of the Report of the Auditor-General 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.

(3) The Prime Minister and Minister of Education, Higher Education and Vocational Education presented the Annual Report and Annual Financial Statement of the Institute of Human Resource Advancement of the University of Colombo for the year 2022 and moved that this Report be referred to the Sectoral Oversight Committee on Education, Manpower and Human Capital.

Question put, and agreed to.

(4) The Minister of Transport, Highways, Ports and Civil Aviation presented the Annual Reports of the Lakdiva Engineering Company (Pvt) Ltd for the years 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019 and 2020 and moved that those Reports be referred to the Sectoral Oversight Committee on Infrastructure and Strategic Development.

Question put, and agreed to.

(5) The Deputy Minister of Health and Mass Media presented the Annual Report of the Sri Lanka Ayurvedic Drugs Corporation for the year 2023 and moved that this Report be referred to the Sectoral Oversight Committee on Health, Media and Women's Empowerment.

Question put, and agreed to.

(6) The Minister of Transport, Highways, Ports and Civil Aviation presented the Annual Report of the Lanka Phosphate Limited for the year 2023/2024 and moved that this Report be referred to the Sectoral Oversight Committee on Economic Development and International Relations.

Question put, and agreed to.

(7) The Minister of Science and Technology presented the Annual Report of the National Research Council of Sri Lanka for the year 2021 and moved that this Report be referred to the Sectoral Oversight Committee on Science, Technology and Digital Transformation.

Question put, and agreed to.

3. Presentation of Public Petitions:

(1) Hon. Thilanka U. Gamage presented —

- (i) A petition dated 26.02.2025 from Mrs. A.K. Suneetha of Kalingawatta, Nawala, Nakiyadeniya;
- (ii) A petition dated 10.02.2025 from Mr. K.G. Bandupema of 'Jayasanka', Baddegama South, Baddegama; and
- (iii) A petition dated 10.02.2025 from Mr. S.K.W. Jayasekara of Goda Aramba Goda, Maha Hengoda, Baddegama.

(2) Hon. (Mrs.) Thushari Jayasingha, Attorney at Law presented a petition dated 10.02.2025 from Mr. R.M. Wijesundara of No. 5/1/C, Nugedawatta, Hamangoda Road, Katugasthota.

(3) Hon. Sujeewa Dissanayake presented a petition dated 01.12.2024 from Mr. A.G.S. Abeywardhana of Indulgoda Kanda, Kurunegala.

(4) Hon. Nandana Pathmakumara presented —

- (i) A petition dated 18.02.2025 from Ms. H. Priyadarshani Keerthisinghe of No. 83, Rambukkana, Bandaragama;
- (ii) A petition dated 10.02.2025 from Mr. M. D. Dhanapala of No. 622/02, Kithulawa, Kalutara South;

- (iii) A petition dated 12.02.2025 from Mr. M. F. S. Fernando of No. 21/18, Aruna Mawatha, Nagoda, Kalutara; and
- (iv) A petition dated 27.01.2025 from Mrs. R. H. Siriyalatha of No. 422/A, 'Laksiri', Ratiyalagoda, Aruggoda, Alubomulla.
- (5) Hon. Sudath Balagalla presented a petition dated 23.01.2025 from Mr. Indunil Umesh Dissanayaka of No. 114/2, 'Indunil', Heel Oya Road, Kinigama, Bandarawela.
- (6) Hon. Manoj Rajapaksha presented —
 - (i) A petition dated 02.02.2025 from Mr. H.P. Rajapaksha of Kahapolewatta, Uruladeniya, Dewalegama, Kegalle; and
 - (ii) A petition dated 16.02.2025 from Mr. N. D. Karunarathna of No. D/143, Weralugollawaththa, Alawwa.
- (7) Hon. (Mrs.) Hasara Liyanage, Attorney at Law presented a petition dated 03.12.2024 from Mr. Jagamuni Chaminda Sanjeeva of No. 29, Kapu Ela Road, Randombe, Ambalangoda.

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

4. Order under the Finance Act: The Minister of Urban Development, Construction and Housing on behalf of 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 2(1) of the Finance Act, No. 25 of 2003 and published in the Gazette Extraordinary No. 2421/30 of 31st January 2025, which was presented on 08.05.2025, be approved.

(At 10.46 a.m. the Deputy Speaker took the Chair.)

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

The Hon. Muneer Mulaffer, seconded by Hon. (Mrs.) Nilusha Lakmali Gamage moved,—That Hon. Ajith Gihan do take the Chair.

Question put, and agreed to.

(At 2.43 p.m. Hon. Ajith Gihan took the Chair.)

The Hon. Sunil Rajapaksha, seconded by Hon. (Mrs.) Hasara Liyanage, Attorney at Law moved,—That Hon. Chandima Hettiaratchi do take the Chair.

Question put, and agreed to.

(At 4.01 p.m. Hon. Chandima Hettiaratchi took the Chair.)

Question put, and agreed to.

5. Notification under the Finance Act: The Minister of Urban Development, Construction and Housing on behalf of 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 19 read with Section 51 of the Finance Act, No. 35 of 2018 relating to Luxury Tax on Motor Vehicles and published in the Gazette Extraordinary No. 2421/41 of 31st January 2025, which was presented on 08.05.2025, be approved.

Question put, and agreed to.

6. Adjournment: The Leader of the House of Parliament moved,— That this Parliament do now adjourn.

Question put, and agreed to; Parliament was at 5.03 p.m. adjourned by the Presiding Member until 9.30 a.m. on Thursday, May 22, 2025.