



*(Tenth Parliament - First Session)*

No. 131.]

## MINUTES OF PARLIAMENT

Wednesday, February 18, 2026 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

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**Hon. Dr. Harini Amarasuriya**, Prime Minister and Minister of Education, Higher Education and Vocational Education

**Hon. (Prof.) Chrishantha Abeysena**, Minister of Science and Technology

**Hon. Anura Karunathilaka**, Minister of Ports and Civil Aviation

**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. (Dr.) Anil Jayantha**, Minister of Labour and Deputy Minister of Finance and Planning

**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. (Dr.) Susil Ranasinghe**, Minister of Housing, Construction and Water Supply

**Hon. Bimal Rathnayake**, Minister of Transport, Highways and Urban Development and Leader of the House of Parliament

**Hon. Ananda Wijepala**, Minister of Public Security and Parliamentary Affairs

**Hon. K.V. Samantha Viddyarathna**, 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. (Dr.)(Ms.) Kaushalya Ariyaratne**, Deputy Minister of Mass Media

**Hon. Arkam Ilyas**, Deputy Minister of Power

**Hon. Namal Karunaratne**, Deputy Minister of Agriculture and Livestock

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

**Hon. Rathna Gamage**, Deputy Minister of Fisheries, Aquatic and Ocean Resources

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

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

**Hon. Nishantha Jayaweera**, Deputy Minister of Economic Development

**Hon. Mahinda Jayasinghe**, Deputy Minister of Labour

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

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

**Hon. Muneer Mullafer**, Deputy Minister of Religious and Cultural Affairs

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

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

**Hon. (Dr.) Hansaka Wijemuni**, Deputy Minister of Health

**Hon. Eranga Weeraratne**, Deputy Minister of Digital Economy

**Hon. Upali Samarasingha**, Deputy Minister of Cooperative Development

**Hon. T. B. Sarath**, Deputy Minister of Housing, Construction and Water Supply

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

**Hon. Aravinda Senarath**, Deputy Minister of Land and Irrigation

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

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

**Hon. Nalin Hewage**, Deputy Minister of Vocational Education

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**Hon. Roshan Akmeemana**

**Hon. Ajith Agalakada**

**Hon. Amirthanathan Adaikkalanathan**  
**Hon. Aboobucker Athambawa**  
**Hon. (Mrs.) Sagarika Athauda, Attorney at Law**  
**Hon. Hector Appuhamy**  
**Hon. Rohitha Abeygunawardhana**  
**Hon. U.P. Abeywickrama, Attorney at Law**  
**Hon. (Prof.) L.M. Abeywickrama**  
**Hon. (Dr.) Nihal Abeysinghe**  
**Hon. (Dr.) Ramanathan Archchuna**  
**Hon. J.C. Alawathuwala**  
**Hon. M.K.M. Aslam**  
**Hon. Lakshman Nipuna Arachchi**  
**Hon. Manjula Suraweera Arachchi**  
**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. (Mrs.) Chamindranee Kiriella, Attorney at Law**  
**Hon. Kathiravelu Shanmugam Kugathanan**  
**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. (Mrs.) M.A.C.S. Chathuri Gangani**  
**Hon. Lasith Bhashana Gamage**  
**Hon. Thilanka U. Gamage**  
**Hon. Ajantha Gammeddage**  
**Hon. Nihal Galappaththi**  
**Hon. (Dr.) Jagath Gunawardana**

**Hon. (Mrs.) Samanmali Gunasingha**  
**Hon. Ashoka Gunasena**  
**Hon. Kumara Jayakody**  
**Hon. Nalin Bandara Jayamaha**  
**Hon. Anuradha Jayaratne, Attorney at Law**  
**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. Kins Nelson**  
**Hon. Nandana Pathmakumara**  
**Hon. Aruna Panagoda**  
**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. Stepni Fernando**

**Hon. Kanthasamy Prabu**  
**Hon. Lal Premanath**  
**Hon. Rohana Bandara**  
**Hon. Padmasiri Bandara**  
**Hon. R. M. Ranjith Madduma Bandara**  
**Hon. Ravindra 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. Thahir Marrikkar**  
**Hon. K. Kader Masthan**  
**Hon. Imran Maharoof**  
**Hon. Chanaka Madugoda**  
**Hon. Ruwan Mapalagama**  
**Hon. (Dr.) Nandana Millagala**  
**Hon. Danushka Ranganath**  
**Hon. Sanjeeva Ranasingha**  
**Hon. R.M. Samantha Ranasinghe**  
**Hon. R.M. Gamini Rathnayake**  
**Hon. Manjula Sugath Rathnayaka**  
**Hon. Suranga Rathnayaka**  
**Hon. (Mrs.) A.M.M.M. Rathwaththe**  
**Hon. Thurairasa Ravikaran**  
**Hon. Mujibur Rahman**  
**Hon. Harshana Rajakaruna**  
**Hon. Namal Rajapaksa, Attorney at Law**  
**Hon. Sunil Rajapaksha**  
**Hon. Shanakiyan Rajaputhiran Rasamanickam**  
**Hon. (Mrs.) Hasara Liyanage, Attorney at Law**  
**Hon. (Mrs.) Deepthi Wasalage**  
**Hon. M.S. Abthul Wazeeth**

**Hon. Kanchana Welipitiya**  
**Hon. (Mrs.) Rohini Kumari Wijerathna**  
**Hon. R.G. Wijerathna**  
**Hon. Priyantha Wijerathna , Attorney at Law**  
**Hon. Ruwan Wijeweera**  
**Hon. Darmapriya Wijesinghe**  
**Hon. Chaminda Wijesiri**  
**Hon. Asitha Niroshana Egoda Vithana**  
**Hon. Athula Welandagoda**  
**Hon. Sivagnanam Shritharan**  
**Hon. Gnanamuththu Srineshan**  
**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. Kitnan Selvaraj**  
**Hon. Arjuna Sujeewa Senasinghe, Attorney at Law**  
**Hon. Rauff Hakeem, Attorney at Law**  
**Hon. Kabir Hashim**  
**Hon. (Dr.) M.L.A.M. Hizbullah**  
**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. 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 that I have endorsed the certificates on the Bills titled ‘Licensing of Container Depot Operators’, ‘Licensing of Shipping Agents, Freight Forwarders, Non-Vessel Operating Common Carriers and Container Operators (Amendment)’ and ‘Parliamentary Pensions (Repeal)’ on 17<sup>th</sup> of February 2026 in terms of the Article 79 of the Constitution of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka.”

**II**

“I wish to inform that the Hon. (Dr.) Upali Pannilage, Member of Parliament, has been appointed to serve in the Select Committee of Parliament to look into and Report to Parliament on the release of 323 Containers from the Port of Colombo without undergoing mandatory physical inspection and submit its proposals and recommendations in that regard in terms of the provisions of the Standing Order 106 of the Parliament, to fill the vacancy occurred due to the resignation of the Hon. Anura Karunathilaka, from the Membership of the Committee.”.

**2. Presentation of Papers:** (1) The Prime Minister and Minister of Education, Higher Education and Vocational Education presented —

- (i) Annual Report of the Vocational Training Authority of Sri Lanka for the year 2024; and
- (ii) Annual Report and Accounts of the Postgraduate Institute of English of the Open University of Sri Lanka for the year 2024

and moved that Report be referred to the Sectoral Oversight Committee on Education, Manpower and Human Capital .

Question put, and agreed to.

(2) The Minister of Transport, Highways and Urban Development presented the Annual Report of the 1990 Suwaseriya Foundation for the year 2024 and moved that Report be referred to the Sectoral Oversight Committee on Health, Media and Women's Empowerment.

Question put, and agreed to.

(3) The Minister of Transport, Highways and Urban Development presented the Report 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 Colombo Municipal Council in the report of the Committee on Public Accounts which was presented to Parliament and moved that Report be referred to the Committee on Public Accounts .

Question put, and agreed to.

**3. Presentation of Reports from Committees:** (1) Hon. Bimal Rathnayake, The Chair of the Ministerial Consultative Committee on Transport, Highways and Urban Development presented the report of the Ministerial Consultative Committee on Transport, Highways and Urban Development on the —

- (i) Regulations made by the Minister of Transport, Highways and Urban Development under Sections 44, 123, 124, 125, 126, 126B, 128, 132, 132A and 231 read with Section 237 of the Motor Traffic Act (Chapter 203) and published in the Gazette Extraordinary No. 2463/04 of 17<sup>th</sup> November 2025; and
- (ii) Regulations made by the Minister of Transport, Highways and Urban Development under Section 237 read with Section 126 of the Motor Traffic Act (Chapter 203) and published in the Gazette Extraordinary No. 2467/52 of 17<sup>th</sup> December 2025

which were referred to the Committee.

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

**4. Presentation of Public Petitions:**

- (1) Hon. Chaminda Lalith Kumara presented a petition dated 07.07.2025 from Mrs. M.D.N.D.P. Kumari of No 24, Maladeniya, Kithalawalana, Mirigama.
- (2) Hon. Chanaka Madugoda presented a petition dated 21.10.2025 from Mr. Ranasinghage Siripala of No 8/A, Gonagaha, Makevita, Ja-Ela.

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

**5. Privileges:** The Leader of the House of Parliament moved,— That the question of privilege arising out of the matters raised by the Hon. Riyas Farook, M.P. on 05<sup>th</sup> February, 2026 in Parliament to the effect that his privileges have been infringed, be referred to the Committee on Ethics and Privileges in terms of the provisions of Standing Order 118 of the Parliament.

Question put, and agreed to.

**6. Leave to introduce Bill :** Hon. Chamara Sampath Dasanayake seconded by Hon. Chanaka Madugoda moved,— That leave be granted to introduce the following Bill:—

“Bill to incorporate the Mahawilachchiya Education Centre for Children.”

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill accordingly read the first time and ordered to be printed.

The Bill stood referred under Standing Order 52(6) of the Parliament to the Minister of Education, Higher Education and Vocational Education for report.

**7. Order under the Special Commodity Levy Act (No. 1):** The Minister of Transport, Highways and Urban Development 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(3) of the Special Commodity Levy Act, No. 48 of 2007 and published in the Gazette Extraordinary No. 2464/14 of 25<sup>th</sup> November 2025, which was presented on 05.02.2026, be approved.

(At 12.01 p.m. the Deputy Speaker took the Chair.)

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

The Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports moved,— That Hon. (Mrs.) Sagarika Athauda, Attorney at Law do take the Chair.

Question put, and agreed to.

(At 1.32 p.m. Hon. (Mrs.) Sagarika Athauda, Attorney at Law took the Chair.)

(At 2.26 p.m. the Deputy Chairperson of Committees took the Chair.)

The Deputy Minister of Digital Economy moved,— That Hon. Lakshman Nipuna Arachchi do take the Chair.

Question put, and agreed to.

(At 3.24 p.m. Hon. Lakshman Nipuna Arachchi, Attorney at Law took the Chair.)

Question put, and agreed to.

**8. Order under the Special Commodity Levy Act (No. 2):** The Minister of Transport, Highways and Urban Development 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 5 of the Special Commodity Levy Act, No. 48 of 2007 and published in the Gazette Extraordinary No. 2465/16 of 04<sup>th</sup> December 2025, which was presented on 05.02.2026, be approved.

Question put, and agreed to.

**9. Order under the Special Commodity Levy Act (No. 3):** The Minister of Transport, Highways and Urban Development 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 Sections 2 and 5 of the Special Commodity Levy Act, No. 48 of 2007 and published in the Gazette Extraordinary No. 2469/12 of 31<sup>st</sup> December 2025, which was presented on 05.02.2026, be approved.

Question put, and agreed to.

**10. Resolution under the Customs Ordinance:** The Minister of Transport, Highways and Urban Development on behalf of the Prime Minister and Minister of Education, Higher Education and Vocational Education moved,— That the Resolution under Section 10 of the Customs Ordinance (Chapter 235) relating to Import Duties,

which was presented on 05.02.2026, be approved. (Gazette Extraordinary No. 2464/15 of 25<sup>th</sup> November 2025).

Question put, and agreed to.

**11. Regulations under the Motor Traffic Act (No. 1),** The Minister of Transport, Highways and Urban Development moved,— That the Regulations made by the Minister of Transport, Highways and Urban Development under Sections 44, 123, 124, 125, 126, 126B, 128, 132, 132A and 231 read with Section 237 of the Motor Traffic Act (Chapter 203) and published in the Gazette Extraordinary No. 2463/04 of 17<sup>th</sup> November 2025, which were presented on 06.02.2026, be approved.

Question put, and agreed to.

**12. Regulations under the Motor Traffic Act (No. 2),** The Minister of Transport, Highways and Urban Development moved,— That the Regulations made by the Minister of Transport, Highways and Urban Development moved,— That the Regulation made by the Minister of Transport, Highways and Urban Development under Section 237 read with Section 126 of the Motor Traffic Act (Chapter 203) and published in the Gazette Extraordinary No. 2467/52 of 17<sup>th</sup> December 2025, which were presented on 06.02.2026, be approved.

Question put, and agreed to.

**13. Adjournment (Establishment of a State Free from Bribery and Corruption) :** The Leader of the House of Parliament moved,— That this Parliament do now adjourn.

Question Proposed and debated.

The Minister of Transport, Highways and Urban Development moved,— That Hon. Kitnen Selvaraj do take the Chair.

Question put, and agreed to.

(At 5.08 p.m. Hon. Kitnen Selvaraj took the Chair.)

And it being past 5.30 p.m. Parliament was at 5.45 p.m. adjourned by the Presiding Member pursuant to the Resolution of Parliament this day.

Parliament adjourned accordingly until 9.30 a.m. on Thursday, February 19, 2026.