



(Tenth Parliament - First Session)

No. 172.]

MINUTES OF PARLIAMENT

Friday, August 07, 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

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

Hon. K.D. Lal Kantha, Minister of Agriculture, Livestock, Land and Irrigation

Hon. Ramalingam Chandrasekar, Minister of Fisheries, Aquatic and Ocean Resources

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 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. 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. (Dr.)(Ms.) Kaushalya Ariyaratne, Deputy Minister of Mass Media

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 Urban Development

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. 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. 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 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. 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

Hon. Ajith Agalakada

Hon. Amirthanathan Adaikkalanathan

Hon. Aboobucker Athambawa
Hon. Hector Appuhamy
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. B. Ariyawansa
Hon. (Dr.) Najith Indika
Hon. K. Ilankumaran
Hon. M.S. Uthumalebbe
Hon. (Mrs.) Oshani Umanga
Hon. Gayantha Karunathilleka
Hon. Ravi Karunanayake
Hon. Upul Kithsiri
Hon. (Mrs.) Chamindranee Kiriella, Attorney at Law
Hon. Kathiravelu Shanmugam Kugathanan
Hon. Chaminda Lalith Kumara
Hon. Sarath Kumara, Attorney at Law
Hon. Kaveenthiran Kodeeswaran
Hon. Thilanka U. Gamage
Hon. Ajantha Gammeddage
Hon. Chathura Galappaththi
Hon. Ajith Gihan
Hon. (Dr.) Jagath Gunawardana
Hon. Ashoka Gunasena
Hon. Gayan Janaka
Hon. Kumara Jayakody
Hon. Nalin Bandara Jayamaha
Hon. Anuradha Jayaratne, Attorney at Law
Hon. (Dr.) Kavinda Heshan Jayawardhana
Hon. Dilith Jayaweera
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. Jeevan Thondaman
Hon. Chamara Sampath Dasanayake
Hon. Sugath Wasantha de Silva
Hon. (Dr.) Harsha de Silva
Hon. Thanura 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. 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. Amila Prasad
Hon. Lal Premanath
Hon. Rohana Bandara
Hon. R. M. Ranjith Madduma Bandara
Hon. Ravindra Bandara
Hon. E.M. Basnayaka
Hon. Wijesiri Basnayake
Hon. (Dr.) Sandaruwan Madarasinghe
Hon. Lieutenant Commander (Rtd.) Prageeth Madhuranga
Hon. Jagath Manuwarna
Hon. S.M. Marikkar
Hon. K. Kader Masthan
Hon. Imran Maharoof
Hon. Chanaka Madugoda
Hon. Ruwan Mapalagama

Hon. (Dr.) Nandana Millagala
Hon. Faiszer Musthapha, PC
Hon. Danushka Ranganath
Hon. R.M. Samantha Ranasinghe
Hon. R.M. Gamini Rathnayake
Hon. Suranga Rathnayaka
Hon. (Mrs.) A.M.M.M. Rathwaththe
Hon. Asoka Sapumal Ranwala
Hon. Thurairasa Ravikaran
Hon. Mujibur Rahman
Hon. Manoj Rajapaksha
Hon. Sunil Rajapaksha
Hon. (Dr.) V.S. Radhakrishnan
Hon. Shanakiyan Rajaputhiran Rasamanickam
Hon. Waruna Liyanage
Hon. Nayana Wasalathilaka
Hon. M.S. Abthul Wazeeth
Hon. Kanchana Welipitiya
Hon. (Mrs.) Rohini Kumari Wijerathna
Hon. Darmapriya Wijesinghe
Hon. (Mrs.) Hiruni Wijesinghe, Attorney at Law
Hon. Chaminda Wijesiri
Hon. Asitha Niroshana Egoda Vithana
Hon. Jagath Vithana
Hon. Dilip Wedaarachchi
Hon. Athula Welandagoda
Hon. Sivagnanam Shritharan
Hon. Gnanamuththu Srineshan
Hon. (Dr.) Pathmanathan Sathiyalingam
Hon. Thilina Samarakoon
Hon. (Ms.) Ambika Samivel
Hon. Shantha Pathma Kumara Subasingha
Hon. Dewananda Suraweera
Hon. Chandana Sooriyaarachchi
Hon. Major General (Rtd.) G.D. Sooriyabandara
Hon. Kitnan Selvaraj

Hon. Arjuna Sujeewa Senasinghe, Attorney at Law

Hon. (Dr.) Janaka Senarathna

Hon. Rauff Hakeem, Attorney at Law

Hon. Kabir Hashim

Hon. Chandima Hettiaratchi

Hon. Champika Hettiarachchi

Hon. (Ms.) Lakmali Hemachandra, Attorney at Law

Hon. Dinesh Hemantha

Hon. (Mrs.) Geetha Herath, Attorney at Law

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 announcement:—

“I wish to inform Parliament that I have received a copy of petition filed at the Supreme Court in terms of the Article 121(1) of the Constitution in respect of the Bill titled ‘Chartered Institute of Media Professionals of Sri Lanka’.”

2. Presentation of Papers: (1) The Minister of Health and Mass Media presented the Regulations made by the Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development under Section 20 read with Section 14 of the Imports and Exports (Control) Act, No. 1 of 1969 as amended by Acts, No. 48 of 1985 and No. 28 of 1987 and published in the Gazette Extraordinary No. 2496/38 of 10th July 2026 and moved that those Regulations be referred to the Committee on Public Finance.

Question put, and agreed to.

(2) The Minister of Health and Mass Media presented the —

- (i) 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 Ministry of Education, Higher Education and Vocational Education in the Report of the Committee on Public Accounts which was presented to Parliament; and
- (ii) 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 Department of Technical Education and Training in the Report of the Committee on Public Accounts which was presented to Parliament

and moved that those Reports be referred to the Committee on Public Accounts.

Question put, and agreed to.

(3) The Minister of Health and Mass Media presented the Annual Report of the Associated Newspapers of Ceylon Limited for the year 2023 and moved that the Report be referred to the Sectoral Oversight Committee on Health, Media and Women's Empowerment.

Question put, and agreed to.

(4) The Minister of Health and Mass Media presented the —

- (i) Annual Report of the Palmyrah Development Board for the year 2023; and
- (ii) Annual Report of the Coconut Cultivation Board for the year 2024

and moved that those Reports be referred to the Sectoral Oversight Committee on Environment, Agriculture and Resource Sustainability.

Question put, and agreed to.

(5) The Minister of Buddhasasana, Religious and Cultural Affairs presented the Performance Report of the Ministry of Buddhasasana, Religious and Cultural Affairs for the year 2025 and moved that the Report be referred to the Sectoral Oversight Committee on Education, Manpower and Human Capital.

Question put, and agreed to.

3. Presentation of Reports from Committees: The Hon. (Dr.) Nihal Abeysinghe, The Chair of the Sectoral Oversight Committee on Health, Media and Women's Empowerment presented the Report of the said Committee on "Charter for Ensuring Patients' Safety and Wellbeing".

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

4. Presentation of Public Petitions:

- (1) Hon. Hector Appuhamy presented a petition dated 12.07.2025 from Mrs. P.M. Shehani Kaushalya of Ganankate, Welpalla.

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

(At 11.47 a.m. the Deputy Speaker took the Chair.)

5. Promotion of Export Agriculture (Amendment): The Minister of Health and Mass Media on behalf of the Minister of Agriculture, Livestock, Land and Irrigation presented,— Bill to amend the Promotion of Export Agriculture Act, No. 46 of 1992.

The Bill was ordered to be read a second time on Friday, August 21st, 2026, be printed and be referred to the Sectoral Oversight Committee on Environment, Agriculture and Resource Sustainability.

6. Business of the Parliament: The Minister of Health and Mass Media on behalf of the Leader of the House of Parliament moved,— That the proceedings on Item Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 appearing on the Order Paper be exempted at this day's sitting from the provisions of Standing Order 24(2) of the Parliament.

Question put, and agreed to.

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

7. Promoting self-sufficiency in milk production: Hon. Kanthasamy Prabu, seconded by Hon. Kitnan Selvaraj moved,— That this Parliament resolves that a National Dairy Development Policy be implemented by the Government to achieve self-sufficiency in milk production, by improving breed access and veterinary services, expanding fodder cultivation, strengthening farmer training and infrastructure, providing incentives to dairy farmers, promoting public-private partnerships, and encouraging research in dairy development, and a mechanism be devised for the relevant Ministries to coordinate with provincial councils and farmer groups, and the relevant Committee of Parliament to monitor implementation and recommend further action, whereas country currently relies on dairy imports, leading to significant foreign exchange loss, and farmers face issues such as limited access to good breeds, veterinary care, fodder, and infrastructure, and whereas addressing these challenges would enhance food security, create rural jobs, and reduce dependency on imports. (P. 72/2025)

Question put, and agreed to.

8. Developing a programme to protect the mangrove ecosystem: Hon. Hector Appuhamy, seconded by Hon. Amirthanathan Adaikkalanathan moved,— That this Parliament resolves that a programme should be developed to protect the mangrove ecosystem which is extremely important for environmental balance and the fishing industry. (P. 94/2025)

The Minister of Environment moved,— That Hon. Kitnan Selvaraj do take the Chair.

Question put, and agreed to.

(At 2.02 p.m. Hon. Kitnan Selvaraj took the Chair.)

Question put, and agreed to.

9. Formulation of a system to stop the ripening of fruits using chemicals: Hon. Dayasiri Jayasekara, Attorney at Law, seconded by Hon. Gayantha Karunathilleka moved,— That this Parliament resolves that a formal system be developed to stop the practice of ripening fruits using chemicals, which is being carried out by unscrupulous businessmen with the aim of making profits while destroying the future of the country, whereas unripe fruits are artificially caused to ripen using chemicals and are sold in the Sri Lankan fruit market instead of naturally ripened fruits, whereas imported fruits are also sold after being artificially ripened using chemicals, and whereas these fruits are mostly consumed by children. (P. 81/2025)

Question put, and agreed to.

10. Formulation of a National Policy and Methodology for the Wildlife Management in Sri Lanka: Hon. Susantha Kumara Nawarathna, seconded by Hon. Upul Kithsiri moved,— That this Parliament resolves that a practical and modern policy and methodology be formulated and implemented, whereas Sri Lanka is internationally recognized as a country with high biodiversity, whereas due to deforestation, human encroachment, illegal wildlife trade, and escalating human-wildlife conflicts, both these wildlife as well as human lives are lost in large numbers annually, whereas the formulation of a National Wildlife Management Policy through new policies and plans is a sustainable development objective, and whereas this would result in protection of animal habitats, reduction of human-wildlife conflicts, and improvement of the economic status and social life of the farming communities. (P. 88/2025)

Question put, and agreed to.

11. Expanding the railway line from Batticaloa to Pottuvil or the railway line from Matara to Kalmunai: Hon. M.S. Uthumalebbe, seconded by Hon. M.S. Abthul Wazeeth moved,— That this Parliament resolves that steps should be taken to expand the railway line from Batticaloa to Pottuvil or the railway line from Matara to Kalmunai since a large number of people in the Batticaloa, Ampara and Moneragala Districts will benefit from the expansion of the railway line from Batticaloa to Pottuvil and the expansion of the railway line from Matara to Kalmunai. (P. 78/2025)

Question put, and agreed to.

(At 4.13 p.m. the Deputy Chairperson of Committees took the Chair.)

12. Establishment of a Commission to Investigate the Unilateral and Forced Cremation of the Remains of Deceased Muslims During the COVID-19 Pandemic: Hon. Imran Maharoof, seconded by Hon. Mujibur Rahman moved,— That this Parliament resolves that a Commission be established to investigate the number of bodies of Muslims that were unilaterally and forcibly cremated contrary to the guidelines of the World Health Organization during the COVID-19 Pandemic, to investigate the names and addresses of the victims who were so cremated, to inquire into the background that led to the forced cremation of the said dead bodies, to assess the mental state of the relatives of the victims who were so cremated, and to investigate steps to be taken against government officials including politicians who acted contrary to the said guidelines in support of such cremations. (P. 80/2025)

Question put, and agreed to.

13. Establishment of a special Development Fund dedicated to reduce regional disparities in development: Hon. Shanakiyan Rajaputhiran Rasamanickam, seconded by Hon. (Dr.) Pathmanathan Sathiyalingam moved,— That this Parliament resolves that the Government of Sri Lanka should take steps to; establish a National Development Fund for lagging regions such as Northern Province, Eastern Province, Monaragala District, and Nuwara Eliya District, to mobilize contributions from government, bilateral and multilateral partners, private investors, and philanthropic donors, with a target size of USD 250 million over a 10+2 year programme tenure; deploy the Fund strategically to revive rural livelihoods through agriculture, fisheries, and cottage industries, to develop infrastructure for promoting employment and women's socio-economic empowerment, to activate idle assets and support SMEs and cooperatives, to invest in renewable energy and other commercially viable ventures, to initiate capacity building and educating women and youth; facilitate the establishment of a Technical Assistance Facility (TAF) to build local capacity, close viability gaps in investments, and ensure effective and transparent utilization of funds; ensure gender inclusivity across all investment areas, with measurable targets to promote women's participation in economic activities and decision-making; mandate relevant Ministries, Provincial Councils, and local authorities to coordinate with the Fund to ensure equitable regional coverage, accountability, and sustainability in project implementation, by considering the establishment of the Fund an urgent national measure towards inclusive growth, reconciliation, and sustainable development of Sri Lanka, whereas these lagging regions are continuing to face severe economic deprivation due to the effects of the protracted civil conflict and historical neglect over the past decades; whereas the present economic crisis has further aggravated these disparities, placing disproportionate burdens on the livelihoods of the people in these lagging regions; and whereas it is necessary to establish a dedicated national initiative to address these concerns, with the objective of promoting equitable growth, sustainable development, and gender empowerment in economically deprived areas. (P. 93/2025)

Question put, and agreed to.

14. Adjournment: The Minister of Environment moved,— That this Parliament do now adjourn.

And it being past 5.30 p.m. Parliament was at 5.52 p.m. adjourned by the Deputy Chairperson of Committees pursuant to the Resolution of Parliament this day.

Parliament adjourned accordingly until 9.30 a.m. on Tuesday, August 18th, 2026.