



(Ninth Parliament - Fourth Session)

No. 24.]

MINUTES OF PARLIAMENT

Friday, May 12, 2023 at 9.30 a.m.

PRESENT :

Hon. Mahinda Yapa Abeywardana, Speaker

Hon. Angajan Ramanathan, Deputy Chairperson of Committees

Hon. Dinesh Gunawardena, Prime Minister and Minister of Public Administration,
Home Affairs, Provincial Councils and Local Government

Hon. Naseer Ahamed, Minister of Environment

Hon. (Dr.) Bandula Gunawardana, Minister of Transport and Highways and Minister
of Mass Media

Hon. Jeevan Thondaman, Minister of Water Supply and Estate Infrastructure
Development

Hon. Douglas Devananda, Minister of Fisheries

Hon. Manusha Nanayakkara, Minister of Labour and Foreign Employment

Hon. (Dr.) Ramesh Pathirana, Minister of Plantation Industries and Minister of
Industries

Hon. Nalin Fernando, Minister of Trade, Commerce and Food Security

Hon. (Dr.) Susil Premajayantha, Attorney at Law, Minister of Education and Leader
of the House of Parliament

Hon. Prasanna Ranatunga, Minister of Urban Development and Housing and Chief
Government Whip

Hon. Keheliya Rambukwella, Minister of Health

Hon. (Dr.) Wijeyadasa Rajapakshe, PC, Minister of Justice, Prisons Affairs and
Constitutional Reforms

Hon. (Mrs.) Pavithradevi Wanniarachchi, Attorney at Law, Minister of Wildlife
and Forest Resources Conservation

Hon. Vidura Wikramanayaka, Minister of Buddhasasana, Religious and Cultural
Affairs

Hon. Kanchana Wijsekera, Minister of Power and Energy

Hon. Sajith Premadasa, Leader of the Opposition in Parliament

Hon. (Dr.) (Mrs.) Seetha Arambepola, State Minister of Health

Hon. Lasantha Alagiyawanna, State Minister of Transport
Hon. (Mrs.) Geetha Samanmale Kumarasinghe, State Minister of Women and Child Affairs
Hon. A. Aravindh Kumar, State Minister of Education
Hon. (Mrs.) Diana Gamage, State Minister of Tourism
Hon. Siripala Gamalath, State Minister of Highways
Hon. Sivanesathurai Santhirakanthan, State Minister of Rural Road Development
Hon. D. V. Chanaka, State Minister of Power and Energy
Hon. Premitha Bandara Tennakoon, State Minister of Defence
Hon. Mohan Priyadarshana De Silva, Attorney at Law, State Minister of Agriculture
Hon. Rohana Dissanayaka, State Minister of Sports and Youth Affairs
Hon. Sanath Nishantha, State Minister of Water Supply
Hon. Anupa Pasqual, State Minister of Social Empowerment
Hon. Jagath Pushpakumara, State Minister of Foreign Employment Promotion
Hon. Ashoka Priyantha, State Minister of Home Affairs
Hon. Shantha Bandara, State Minister of Mass Media
Hon. K. Kader Masthan, State Minister of Rural Economy
Hon. Shasheendra Rajapaksa, State Minister of Irrigation
Hon. Janaka Wakkumbura, State Minister of Provincial Councils and Local Government
Hon. Thenuka Vidanagamage, State Minister of Urban Development and Housing
Hon. Ranjith Siyambalapitiya, State Minister of Finance
Hon. Shehan Semasinghe, State Minister of Finance
Hon. Indika Anuruddha Herath, State Minister of Power and Energy
Hon. Kanaka Herath, State Minister of Technology
Hon. D. B. Herath, State Minister of Livestock Development

Hon. A. L. M. Athaullah
Hon. Kapila Athukorala
Hon. (Mrs.) Thalatha Athukorala, Attorney at Law
Hon. Tissa Attanayake
Hon. Hector Appuhamy
Hon. Wajira Abeywardana
Hon. Ashok Abeysinghe
Hon. (Dr.) (Ms.) Harini Amarasuriya
Hon. Mayadunna Chinthaka Amal
Hon. Thavaraja Kalai Arasan
Hon. J. C. Alawathuwala

Hon. Thisakutti Arachchi
Hon. U. K. Sumith Udukumbura
Hon. M. Udayakumar
Hon. Sanjeeva Edirimanna
Hon. Akila Ellawala
Hon. Govindan Karunakaram
Hon. Gayantha Karunatilleka
Hon. Sagara Kariyawasam, Attorney at Law
Hon. Faizal Cassim
Hon. Jayantha Ketagoda
Hon. Lakshman Kiriella, Attorney at Law
Hon. Udayana Kirindigoda
Hon. Lalith Varna Kumara
Hon. Gevindu Cumaratunga
Hon. Velu Kumar
Hon. Karunadasa Kodithuwakku
Hon. Nalaka Bandara Kottegoda
Hon. Mano Ganesan
Hon. Udaya Gammanpila
Hon. (Dr.) Upul Galappaththi
Hon. Udayakantha Gunathilaka
Hon. (Mrs.) Kokila Gunawardene
Hon. Yadamini Gunawardena
Hon. Milan Jayathilake
Hon. Nalin Bandara Jayamaha
Hon. (Dr.) Kavinda Heshan Jayawardhana
Hon. Dayasiri Jayasekara
Hon. M. S. Thowfeek
Hon. Kulasingam Dhileeban
Hon. Janaka Bandara Thennakoon
Hon. Shan Vijayalal De Silva
Hon. (Dr.) Harsha de Silva
Hon. Wimalaweera Dissanayake
Hon. Sarathi Dushmantha
Hon. (Major) Sudarshana Denipitiya
Hon. Isuru Dodangoda
Hon. Premnath C. Dolawatte, Attorney at Law

Hon. W. H. M. Dharmasena
Hon. (Dr.) Gayashan Nawananda
Hon. Asanka Navarathna
Hon. Vasudeva Nanayakkara
Hon. Charles Nirmalanathan
Hon. Kins Nelson
Hon. S. Noharathalingam
Hon. Buddhika Pathirana
Hon. Nimal Piyathissa
Hon. (Prof.) G. L. Peiris
Hon. Niroshan Perera
Hon. K. Sujith Sanjaya Perera
Hon. Johnston Fernando
Hon. (Dr.) (Mrs.) Sudarshini Fernandopulle
Hon. (Mrs.) Muditha Prishanthi
Hon. Uddika Premarathne
Hon. Rohana Bandara
Hon. R. M. Ranjith Madduma Bandara
Hon. (Prof.) Ranjith Bandara
Hon. Sudath Manjula
Hon. Imran Maharoof
Hon. Imthiaz Bakeer Markar
Hon. Ajith Mannapperuma
Hon. S. M. M. Muszhaaraff, Attorney at Law
Hon. Mohomad Muzammil
Hon. Wasantha Yapabandara, Attorney at Law
Hon. Patali Champika Ranawaka
Hon. Nipuna Ranawaka
Hon. B. Y. G. Rathnasekara
Hon. Ishak Rahuman
Hon. Harshana Rajakaruna
Hon. Gunathilaka Rajapaksha
Hon. (Dr.) Thilak Rajapakshe
Hon. Namal Rajapaksa, Attorney at Law
Hon. Mahinda Rajapaksa
Hon. Upul Mahendra Rajapaksha
Hon. (Dr.) V. Radhakrishnan

Hon. M. Rameshwaran
Hon. Gamini Lokuge
Hon. Gamini Waleboda
Hon. Eran Wickramaratne
Hon. (Mrs.) Rajika Wickramasinghe
Hon. C.V. Wigneswaran
Hon. (Mrs.) Rohini Kumari Wijerathna
Hon. Chaminda Wijesiri
Hon. M. W. D. Sahan Pradeep Withana
Hon. Madhura Withanage, Attorney at Law
Hon. Hesha Withanage
Hon. Chandima Weerakkody, Attorney at Law
Hon. Jayantha Weerasinghe, PC
Hon. D. Weerasingha
Hon. Weerasumana Weerasinghe
Hon. (Dr.) Sarath Weerasekera
Hon. Sivagnanam Shritharan
Hon. Jagath Samarawickrama
Hon. Jayantha Samaraweera
Hon. Dharmalingam Sithadthan
Hon. Maithreepala Sirisena
Hon. Jagath Kumara Sumithraarachchi
Hon. Vadivel Suresh
Hon. W. D. J. Seneviratne, Attorney at Law
Hon. Rauff Hakeem, Attorney at Law
Hon. Kabir Hashim
Hon. (Prof.) Charitha Herath
Hon. Samanpriya Herath
Hon. Marjan Faleel
Hon. A. H. M. Fowzie

Mr. Dhammika Dasanayake, Secretary-General of Parliament

Mrs. Kushani Rohanadeera, Chief of Staff and Deputy Secretary-General of Parliament

Mr. Tikiri K. Jayathilake, Assistant Secretary-General

Mr. Hansa Abeyrathne, Assistant Secretary-General

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

1. Announcement by the Speaker: The Speaker made the following Announcement:—

“I wish to inform Parliament that I have received another copy of a petition filed at the Supreme Court under Article 121(1) of the Constitution in respect of the Bill entitled ‘Anti-corruption’, in addition to the receipt of a Petition and the four petitions mentioned in my announcements dated 09th May 2023 and 11th May 2023 respectively. “

2. Presentation of Reports from Committees : (1) The Hon. Manusha Nanayakkara, the Chair of the Ministerial Consultative Committee on Labour and Foreign Employment presented the Report of the said Committee on —

- (i) Annual Report of the National Institute of Occupational Safety & Health for the year 2019;
- (ii) Annual Report of the Shrama Vasana Fund for the year 2018;
- (iii) Annual Reports of the Shrama Vasana Fund for the years 2019 and 2020;
- (iv) Annual Report of the Employees’ Provident Fund for the year 2020;
- (v) Annual Report of the Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment for the year 2020; and
- (vi) Annual Report of the Shrama Vasana Fund for the year 2021

which were referred to the Committee.

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

(2) The Hon. Namal Rajapaksa, Attorney at Law, Chair of the Sub-Committee of Ninth Parliament of the National Council on identifying the priorities in formulation of short, medium and long term national policies presented its First Interim Report that was presented to the National Council by the Sub- Committee on identifying the priorities in formulation of short, medium and long term national policies.

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

(3) The Hon. Madhura Withanage, Attorney at Law, Member of the Committee on Public Finance presented the Report of the said Committee on Resolution under the Local Treasury Bills Ordinance which was referred to the said Committee.

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

(4) The Hon. (Mrs.) Kokila Gunawardene, Member of the Committee on Public Finance presented the Report of the said Committee on Aswesuma Welfare Benefit Payment Scheme under the Welfare Benefits Act, No. 24 of 2002 which was referred to the said Committee.

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

3. Presentation of Public Petitions:

- (1) Hon. Kabir Hashim presented a petition dated 29.09.2022 from Mr. Jayanath Kuruppu of No. 9/2, 3rd Lane, Saman Mawatha, Galawilawaththa, Homagama.
- (2) Hon. R. M. Ranjith Madduma Bandara presented —
 - (i) a petition dated 10.01.2023 from Mr. Lasantha Pradeep Kumara Vincent of No. 33/56, Water View, Dampe, Madapatha; and
 - (ii) a petition dated 29.03.2023 from Mr. U. P. Sirinayake of No.22, Agaradaguru Mawatha, Kerawalapitiya, Hendala, Wattala.
- (3) Hon. Nipuna Ranawaka presented —
 - (i) a petition dated 01.02.2022 from Mr. Ananda Abeywickrama of Udahagedara, Sri Revatha Mawatha, Weherahena, Matara;
 - (ii) a petition dated 20.10.2022 from Mr. Bandula Pathirana of No. 26, Pasa Mawatha, Rahula Road, Matara;
 - (iii) a petition dated 20.03.2022 from Mr. Chameera Nadun Gamage of ‘Nadun Uyana’, Ruppawatta, Henegama, Akuressa;
 - (iv) a petition dated 06.12.2022 from Mr. J. A. Nihal of No. 74, Nawariyan watta, Polhena, Matara;
 - (v) a petition dated 13.03.2023 from Mr. R. P. Lakshman of ‘Sadeeka’, Dampella, Thelijjawila;
 - (vi) a petition dated 20.09.2022 from Mr. Shanthasiri Wickremarathna of No. 10, Mahaweedia, Dikwella; and
 - (vii) a petition dated 19.12.2022 from Mr. W. R. P. Dissanayake of ‘Damsewana’, Kotawila, Kamburugamuwa, Matara.

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

4. Business of the Parliament (No.1): The Minister of Urban Development and Housing on behalf of the Leader of the House of Parliament moved,— That the Government Business shall have precedence this day.

Question put, and agreed to.

5. Business of the Parliament (No.2): The Minister of Urban Development and Housing on behalf of the Leader of the House of Parliament moved,—That the proceedings on Item Nos. 25 and 27 of Public Business appearing on the Order Paper be exempted at this day’s sitting from the provisions of Standing Order 27 of the Parliament.

Question put, and agreed to.

6. Sitzings of the Parliament : The Minister of Urban Development and Housing on behalf of 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 2023, the hours of sitting of Parliament on this day shall be from 9.30 a.m. to 6.00 p.m.. At 6.00 p.m. Mr. Speaker shall adjourn the Parliament without question put.

Question put, and agreed to.

7. Resolution under the Local Treasury Bills Ordinance : The Minister of Urban Development and Housing on behalf of the Prime Minister and Minister of Public Administration, Home Affairs, Provincial Councils and Local Government moved,—That this Parliament resolves that a sum not exceeding Rs. 1,000,000,000,000 (Rupees One Thousand Billion) may, in addition to sums authorized by the resolutions in that behalf, be borrowed by the issue in Sri Lanka, of Sri Lanka Government Treasury Bills and that, for such purpose, the Minister of Finance, Economic Stabilization and National Policies be granted all requisite authority under Section 2(1) of the Local Treasury Bills Ordinance (Chapter 417).

Question put, and agreed to.

8. Aswesuma Welfare Benefit Payment Scheme under the Welfare Benefits Act : The Minister of Urban Development and Housing on behalf of the Prime Minister and Minister of Public Administration, Home Affairs, Provincial Councils and Local Government moved,— That the Aswesuma Welfare Benefit Payment Scheme made by the Minister of Finance, Economic Stabilization and National Policies under Section 9 of the Welfare Benefits Act, No. 24 of 2002, relating to Welfare Benefits and published in the Gazette Extraordinary No. 2328/13 of 21st April 2023, which was presented on 26.04.2023, be approved.

The State Minister of Finance moved,—That Hon. (Mrs.) Kokila Gunawardene do take the Chair.

Question put, and agreed to.

(At 11.04 a.m. Hon. (Mrs.) Kokila Gunawardene took the Chair.)

Hon. R. M. Ranjith Madduma Bandara seconded by Hon. Vasudeva Nanayakkara moved,—That Hon. Uddika Premarathne do take the Chair.

Question put, and agreed to.

(At 1.04 p.m. Hon. Uddika Premarathne took the Chair.)

(At 1.26 p.m. Deputy Chairperson of Committees took the Chair.)

Hon. Sanjeeva Edirimanna seconded by Hon. Akila Ellawala moved,—That Hon. Wasantha Yapabandara, Attorney at Law do take the Chair.

Question put, and agreed to.

(At 3.16 p.m. Hon. Wasantha Yapabandara, Attorney at Law took the Chair.)

Hon. Akila Ellawala seconded by Hon. Isuru Dodangoda moved,—That Hon. (Major) Sudarshana Denipitiya do take the Chair.

Question put, and agreed to.

(At 3.42 p.m. Hon. (Major) Sudarshana Denipitiya took the Chair.)

The Minister of Health moved,—That Hon. Weerasumana Weerasinghe do take the Chair.

Question put, and agreed to.

(At 5.17 p.m. Hon. Weerasumana Weerasinghe took the Chair.)

Question put, and agreed to.

9. Select Committee of Parliament to investigate into and to make suitable recommendations relating to the disasters caused by New Diamond and X-press Pearl Vessels in the Maritime Zone of Sri Lanka : Hon. Sanjeeva Edirimanna seconded by Hon. Jayantha Ketagoda moved,— Whereas the catastrophe caused by New Diamond and X-press Pearl Vessels has caused a huge damage to the marine ecosystem and aquatic species of Sri Lanka during the last few years;

And whereas Environmentalists have expressed views to the effect that the impact of both these disasters will affect for several more years;

And whereas it is noted that a controversial discussion on various interventions and weaknesses caused during the accidents and aftermath of them has cropped up again in the society and several deals between the vessel's insurance companies and the incidents with names of several individuals related to those deals have been disclosed in and outside the House of Parliament by a number of Members of Sri Lankan Parliament and media had given an extensive publicity for those revelations;

And whereas we, as representatives of the people thoroughly believe that the truth behind these incidents should be disclosed; and

This Parliament resolves that a Select Committee of Parliament be appointed to investigate into and to make suitable recommendations relating to the disasters caused by New Diamond and X-press Pearl Vessels in the Maritime Zone of Sri Lanka.

2. (a) that the Chair and Members of the Committee shall be appointed by the Speaker; and
- (b) that notwithstanding the provisions of Standing Order 101 of Parliament, the Committee shall consist of fifteen (15) Members.
3. That the Committee shall have the power to—
 - (a) fix its quorum;
 - (b) summon any person to appear before it, to require any person to procure any document or record, to procure and receive all such evidence, written or oral, as the Committee may think it necessary for the fullest consideration of the matters referred to above;

- (c) obtain the services of specialists and experts in the relevant fields to assist the Committee; and
- (d) make interim reports from time to time and to sit notwithstanding any adjournment or prorogation of Parliament.

4. The Committee shall present its report to Parliament within a period of two months (02) from the first meeting of the Committee or within such further period as Parliament may grant.

Question put, and agreed to.

10. Adjournment : And it being past 6.00 p.m. Parliament was at 6.13 p.m. adjourned by the Presiding Member without Question put, pursuant to the Resolution of Parliament this day.

Parliament adjourned accordingly until 9.30 a.m. on Tuesday, May 23, 2023.