



(Ninth Parliament - Fourth Session)

No. 41.]

MINUTES OF PARLIAMENT

Tuesday, July 18, 2023 at 9.30 a.m.

PRESENT :

Hon. Mahinda Yapa Abeywardana, Speaker

Hon. Ajith Rajapakse, Deputy Speaker and the Chair of Committees

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. Tiran Alles, Minister of Public Security

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. Nimal Siripala de Silva, Attorney at Law, Minister of Ports, Shipping and
Aviation

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. (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. Roshan Ranasinghe, Minister of Sports and Youth Affairs and Minister of
Irrigation

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 Wijesekera, Minister of Power and Energy

Hon. Sajith Premadasa, Leader of the Opposition in Parliament

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. Sivaneshathurai Santhirakanthan, State Minister of Rural Road Development

Hon. D. V. Chanaka, State Minister of Power and Energy

Hon. Sisira Jayakody, Attorney at Law, State Minister of Indigenous Medicine

Hon. Premitha Bandara Tennakoon, State Minister of Defence

Hon. Chamara Sampath Dasanayake, State Minister of Primary Industries

Hon. Piya Nishantha De Silva, State Minister of Fisheries

Hon. Mohan Priyadarshana De Silva, Attorney at Law, State Minister of Agriculture

Hon. Rohana Dissanayaka, State Minister of Sports and Youth Affairs

Hon. Anupa Pasqual, State Minister of Social Empowerment

Hon. Jagath Pushpakumara, State Minister of Foreign Employment Promotion

Hon. Arundika Fernando, State Minister of Urban Development and Housing

Hon. Ashoka Priyantha, State Minister of Home Affairs

Hon. Shantha Bandara, State Minister of Mass Media

Hon. Tharaka Balasuriya, State Minister of Foreign Affairs

Hon. Vijitha Berugoda, State Minister of Private Education

Hon. Lohan Ratwatte, State Minister of Plantation Industries

Hon. (Dr.) Suren Raghavan, State Minister of Higher Education

Hon. Shasheendra Rajapaksa, State Minister of Irrigation

Hon. Janaka Wakkumbura, State Minister of Provincial Councils and Local Government

Hon. S. Viyalanderan, State Minister of Trade

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. Selvam Adaikkalanathan

Hon. A. L. M. Athaullah

Hon. Kapila Athukorala
Hon. (Mrs.) Thalatha Athukorala, Attorney at Law
Hon. Sampath Athukorala
Hon. Hector Appuhamy
Hon. Rohitha Abegunawardhana
Hon. Wajira Abeywardana
Hon. Ashok Abeysinghe
Hon. (Dr.) (Ms.) Harini Amarasuriya
Hon. Thushara Indunil Amarasena
Hon. Mayadunna Chinthaka Amal
Hon. Thavaraja Kalai Arasan
Hon. J. C. Alawathuwala
Hon. Dullas Alahapperuma
Hon. Mahindananda Aluthgamage
Hon. Thisakutti Arachchi
Hon. U. K. Sumith Udukumbura
Hon. M. Udayakumar
Hon. (Dr.) Major Pradeep Undugoda
Hon. Sanjeeva Edirimanna
Hon. Akila Ellawala
Hon. Lalith Ellawala
Hon. Selvarajah Kajendren
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. K. P. S. Kumarasiri
Hon. Velu Kumar
Hon. Karunadasa Kodithuwakku
Hon. Nalaka Bandara Kottegoda
Hon. Mano Ganesan
Hon. Udaya Gammanpila
Hon. (Dr.) Upul Galappaththi

Hon. (Mrs.) Kokila Gunawardene
Hon. Yadamini Gunawardena
Hon. (Dr.) Nalaka Godahewa
Hon. S. M. Chandrasena
Hon. Milan Jayathilake
Hon. Nalin Bandara Jayamaha
Hon. Piyanakara Jayaratne
Hon. (Dr.) Kavinda Heshan Jayawardhana
Hon. (Prof.) Channa Jayasumana
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. Anura Dissanayaka
Hon. Duminda Dissanayake
Hon. S. B. Dissanayake
Hon. (Mrs.) Manjula Dissanayake
Hon. Mayantha Dissanayake
Hon. Sarathi Dushmantha
Hon. (Major) Sudarshana Denipitiya
Hon. Isuru Dodangoda
Hon. Premnath C. Dolawatte, Attorney at Law
Hon. W. H. M. Dharmasena
Hon. H. Nandasena
Hon. (Dr.) Gayashan Nawananda
Hon. Asanka Navarathna
Hon. Vasudeva Nanayakkara
Hon. Charles Nirmalanathan
Hon. Kins Nelson
Hon. Buddhika Pathirana
Hon. Nimal Piyathissa
Hon. Niroshan Perera
Hon. K. Sujith Sanjaya Perera
Hon. G. G. Ponnambalam
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. Rishad Bathiudeen
Hon. Sudath Manjula
Hon. S. M. Marikkar
Hon. Imran Maharoof
Hon. Imthiaz Bakeer Markar
Hon. Ajith Mannapperuma
Hon. S. M. M. Muszhaaraff, Attorney at Law
Hon. Mohomad Muzammil
Hon. Anura Priyadharshana Yapa, Attorney at Law
Hon. Wasantha Yapabandara, Attorney at Law
Hon. Patali Champika Ranawaka
Hon. Nipuna Ranawaka
Hon. (Ven.) Athuraliye Rathana Thero
Hon. Kumarasiri Rathnayaka
Hon. C. B. Rathnayake
Hon. Ishak Rahuman
Hon. Harshana Rajakaruna
Hon. Gunathilaka Rajapaksha
Hon. Chamal Rajapaksa
Hon. Namal Rajapaksa, Attorney at Law
Hon. Mahinda Rajapaksa
Hon. Upul Mahendra Rajapaksha
Hon. (Dr.) V. Radhakrishnan
Hon. M. Rameshwaran
Hon. Shanakiyan Rajaputhiran Rasamanickam
Hon. Nimal Lanza
Hon. Waruna Liyanage
Hon. Gamini Lokuge
Hon. Gamini Waleboda
Hon. Eran Wickramaratne
Hon. (Mrs.) Rajika Wickramasinghe
Hon. C.V. Wigneswaran

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. Wimal Weerawansa
Hon. Jayantha Weerasinghe, PC
Hon. D. Weerasingha
Hon. Weerasumana Weerasinghe
Hon. (Dr.) Sarath Weerasekera
Hon. Sivagnanam Shritharan
Hon. Jagath Samarawickrama
Hon. Jayantha Samaraweera
Hon. Rajavarothiam Sampanthan
Hon. Dharmalingam Sithadthan
Hon. Maithreepala Sirisena
Hon. M. A. Sumanthiran
Hon. Jagath Kumara Sumithraarachchi
Hon. Vadivel Suresh
Hon. W. D. J. Seneviratne, Attorney at Law
Hon. (Dr.) Rajitha Senarathne
Hon. Rauff Hakeem, Attorney at Law
Hon. H. M. M. Harees
Hon. Abdul Haleem
Hon. Kabir Hashim
Hon. (Prof.) Charitha Herath
Hon. Vijitha Herath
Hon. Jayarathna Herath
Hon. Samanpriya Herath
Hon. Marjan Faleel
Hon. A. H. M. Fowzie

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 in terms of the provisions of Article 79 of the Constitution of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, I have endorsed the certificate on the Bill titled ‘Carriage by Air (Amendment)’ on 14th July 2023.”

II

“I wish to inform Parliament that in addition to the petition I have announced on 07th July 2023, I have also received the copies of another five petitions filed at the Supreme Court under Article 121(1) of the Constitution in respect of the Bill titled ‘Ayurveda (Amendment)’, and copies of five petitions filed at the Supreme Court under Article 121(1) of the Constitution in respect of each Bill titled ‘Pradeshiya Sabha (Amendment)’, ‘Urban Councils (Amendment) and ‘Municipal Councils (Amendment)’ separately.”

2. Presentation of Papers : (1) The Minister of Urban Development and Housing presented the—

- (i) Mid — Year Fiscal Position Report for the year 2023; and
- (ii) Regulations made by the Minister of Finance, Economic Stabilization and National Policies 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), 6 and 14 of the aforesaid Act and published in the Gazette Extraordinary No. 2336/45 of 14th June 2023.

and moved that those Report and the Regulations be referred to the Committee on Public Finance.

Question put, and agreed to.

(2) The Education Minister presented the Annual Report of the Postgraduate Institute of Management of the University of Sri Jayewardenepura for the year 2021 and moved that the Report be referred to the Sectoral Oversight Committee on Education.

Question put, and agreed to.

(3) The Hon. Minister of Transport and Highways and Minister of Mass Media presented the —

- (i) Performance Report of the Department of Posts for the year 2022; and
- (ii) Annual Performance Report of the Ministry of Mass Media for the year 2022.

and moved that those Reports be referred to the Sectoral Oversight Committee on Media, Youth, Heritage and New Citizen.

Question put, and agreed to.

(4) The Minister of Urban Development and Housing presented the Rules made by the incorporated Council of Legal Education with the concurrence of the Minister of Justice, Prisons Affairs and Constitutional Reforms under Section 7 of the Incorporated Council of Legal Education Ordinance (Chapter 276) and published in the Gazette Extraordinary No. 2332/02 of 15th May 2023 and moved that those Rules be referred to the Ministerial Consultative Committee on Justice, Prisons Affairs and Constitutional Reforms.

Question put, and agreed to.

(5) The Minister of Urban Development and Housing presented the Annual Report of the Sri Lanka Institute of Textile and Apparel for the year 2020 and moved that the Report be referred to the Sectoral Oversight Committee on National Economic and Physical Plans.

Question put, and agreed to.

(6) The Hon. Minister of Labour and Foreign Employment presented the Annual Reports of the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health for the years 2020 and 2021 and moved that those Reports be referred to the Sectoral Oversight Committee on Education.

Question put, and agreed to.

(7) The Minister of Urban Development and Housing presented the Performance Report of the Sri Lanka Police for the year 2022 and moved that the Report be referred to the Sectoral Oversight Committee on National Security.

Question put, and agreed to.

(8) The Minister of Urban Development and Housing presented the—

- (i) Annual Report of the Lanka Sathosa Limited for the year 2020; and
- (ii) Performance Report and Annual Accounts of the Measurement Units, Standards and Services Department for the year 2021.

and moved that those Reports be referred to the Sectoral Oversight Committee on National Economic and Physical Plans.

Question put, and agreed to.

3. Presentation of Reports from Committees : (1) The Hon. Vidura Wickramanayaka, the Chair of the Ministerial Consultative Committee on Buddhasasana Religious and Cultural Affairs presented the Report of the said Committee on —

- (i) Annual Report of Galle Heritage Foundation for the year 2019;
- (ii) Annual Report and Financial Statement of the Tower Hall Theatre Foundation for the year 2020; and

(iii) Annual Reports of the Buddhasasana Fund for the years 2016 and 2017 which were referred to the Committee.

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

(2) The Minister of Education on behalf of the Hon. Gamini Lokuge, Chair of the Committee on Public petitions presented the Eighth Report of the Committee on Public Petitions for the First Session of the Ninth Parliament.

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

(3) The Hon. (Dr.) Sarath Weerasekara, the Chair of the Sectoral Oversight Committee on National Security presented the Report of the said Committee on —

- (i) Annual Report of the Rakna Arakshaka Lanka Ltd for the year 2017/2018;
 - (ii) Annual Report of the Rakna Arakshaka Lanka Ltd for the year 2018/2019; and
 - (iii) Annual Report of the Rakna Arakshaka Lanka Ltd for the year 2019/2020
- which were referred to the Committee.

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

(4) The Hon. (Dr.) Harsha de Silva, the Chair of the Committee on Public Finance presented the Report of the said Committee on —

- (i) Central Bank of Sri Lanka Bill;
 - (ii) Banking (Special Provisions) Bill;
 - (iii) Resolution under the Revenue Protection Act, No.19 of 1962; and
 - (iv) Regulations under the Imports and Exports (Control) Act, No. 1 of 1969
- which were referred to the said Committee.

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

4. Presentation of Public Petitions :

- (1) Hon. Anura Dissanayaka presented a petition dated 01.04.2023 from Mr. M. P. Jayasekara of Near 29th Post, Kalamulla, Kalutara.
- (2) Hon. Nimal Lanza presented a petition dated 10.03.2023 from Mr. B. Jayasiri of No 93, Lumbini Mawatha, Dalugama, Kelaniya.
- (3) Hon. (Dr.) Gayashan Nawananda presented a petition dated 24.05.2023 from Mr. Gallage Jinapriya of No 33/11 A, Glen Fall Road, Nuwara Eliya.
- (4) Hon. Nimal Piyathissa presented a petition dated 23.05.2023 from Mr. H. S. Senevirathna of No. 311/A, Ogastawatta, Kandy.

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

5. Contempt of a Court, Tribunal or Institution : The Minister of Education on behalf of the Minister of Justice, Prisons Affairs and Constitutional Reforms presented,— “Bill to provide for the uniform application of the law relating to the contempt of a court, tribunal or institution; to provide for the procedure in punishing the contempt of a court, tribunal or institution; and to provide for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

The Bill was ordered to be read a second time on Tuesday, August 08th, 2023, be printed and be referred to the Sectoral Oversight Committee on Just and Law-Abiding Society.

6. 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 2023, the hours of sitting of Parliament on this day shall be 9.30 a.m. to 5.30 p.m.. At 1.30 p.m. Standing Order 8(5) of the Parliament shall operate. At 5.30 p.m. Mr. Speaker shall adjourn the Parliament without question put.

Question put and, agreed to.

7. 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 : The Leader of the House of Parliament moved,— That notwithstanding the provisions of Standing Order 101 of the Parliament and the resolutions adopted by Parliament on 12th May 2023 and 09th June 2023, the 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, shall consist of Twenty Three (23) Members of Parliament to be appointed by the Speaker.

Question put and, agreed to.

8. Select Committee of Parliament to Investigate Causes for Financial Bankruptcy declared by the Government and to Report to Parliament and Submit its Proposals and Recommendations in this regard : The Leader of the House of Parliament moved,— That notwithstanding the provisions of Standing Order 101 of the Parliament and the resolutions adopted by Parliament on 19th January 2023 and 20th June 2023, the Select Committee of Parliament to Investigate Causes for Financial Bankruptcy declared by the Government and to Report to Parliament and Submit its Proposals and Recommendations in this regard, shall consist of Seventeen (17) Members of Parliament to be appointed by the Speaker.

Question put and, agreed to.

9. Leave to introduce Bill : Hon. Eran Wickramaratne seconded by Hon. Heshu Withanage moved,—That leave be granted to introduce the following Bill:—

“Bill to amend the Special Commodity Levy Act, No. 48 of 2007.”

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 Finance, Economic Stabilization and National Policies.

(At. 11.36 a.m. Deputy Speaker took the Chair.)

10. Resolution under the Customs Ordinance : The Minister of Education on behalf of the Prime Minister and Minister of Public Administration, Home Affairs, Provincial Councils and Local Government moved,— That the Resolution under Section 10 of the Customs Ordinance (Chapter 235) relating to Import Duties, which was presented on 05.07.2023, be approved.

(Gazette Extraordinary No. 2325/07 of 28th March 2023)

Question put and, agreed to.

11. Regulations under the Imports and Exports (Control) Act : The Minister of Education on behalf of the Prime Minister and Minister of Public Administration, Home Affairs, Provincial Councils and Local Government moved,—That the Regulations made by the Minister of Finance, Economic Stabilization and National Policies 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. 2335/26 of 09th June 2023, which were presented on 06.07.2023, be approved.

Question put and, agreed to.

12. Select Committee of Parliament to investigate into the matters relating to the Election Commission in respect of the incidents of infringement of privileges of the Members of Parliament and of the Parliament and to make suitable recommendations in that regard : Hon. D. Weerasinghe seconded by Hon. Lalith Varna Kumara moved,—Whereas the Election Commission consisting of Mr. N. G. Punchihewa (Chairman), Mr. S. B. Divaratne, Mr. M. M. Mohamed, Mr. K. P. P. Pathirana and Ms. P. S. M. Charles was appointed on 03rd December 2020;

And whereas the Election Commission is responsible to Parliament under Article 104B (3) of the Constitution;

And whereas by Article 30(4) of the Twenty First Amendment to the Constitution the members of the Commission have ceased to hold office and are exercising and discharging of powers and functions of the transitional members;

And whereas on 18th January 2023 the Election Commission purported to call nominations for the Local Authorities Elections;

And whereas two members of the Commission decided to fix 09th March 2023 as the date of polling and claimed to have obtained the consent of the other three members;

And whereas the Secretary to the Ministry of Finance, Economic Stabilization and National Policies has filed an Affidavit in Court stating that it would be challenging to find funds for holding such an election in March 2023;

And whereas there is a question of whether the Commission itself is satisfied that all preconditions for holding such an election are fulfilled;

And whereas on 25th January 2023 Ms. P. S. M. Charles, member of the Commission tendered her resignation to the President;

And whereas the Commission has failed to report to Parliament which is responsible for public finance on issues that have arisen on Local Authorities Elections; and

And whereas if the privileges of the Members of Parliament and of the Parliament have been infringed, it should be investigated into and suitable recommendations in that regard should be made;

This Parliament resolves that a Select Committee of Parliament be appointed to investigate into the matters relating to the Election Commission in respect of the incidents of infringement of privileges of the Members of Parliament and of the Parliament and to make suitable recommendations in that regard.

2. (a) that the Chair and Members of the Committee shall be appointed by the Speaker; and
(b) that in terms of the provisions of Standing Order 101 of Parliament, the Committee shall consist of seven (07) 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 one (01) month from the first meeting of the Committee or within such further period as Parliament may grant.

Question put and, agreed to.

11. Adjournment (Difficulties Faced by Palestinian People) : The Leader of the House of Parliament moved,— That this Parliament do now adjourned.

Question proposed and, debated.

The State Minister of Foreign Affairs moved,—That Hon. Samanpriya Herath do take the Chair.

Question put, and agreed to.

(At 2.07 p.m. Hon. Samanpriya Herath took the Chair.)

The State Minister of Foreign Affairs moved ,—That Hon. Velu Kumar do take the Chair.

Question put, and agreed to.

(At 2.59 p.m. Hon. Velu Kumar took the Chair.)

Question put and agreed to; At 5.10 p.m. Parliament adjourned by the Presiding Member until 9.30 a.m. on Wednesday, July 19, 2023.