



(Ninth Parliament - Fourth Session)

No. 65.]

MINUTES OF PARLIAMENT

Tuesday, October 17, 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. Mahinda Amaraweera, Minister of Agriculture

Hon. Manusha Nanayakkara, Minister of Labour and Foreign Employment

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

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

Hon. Keheliya Rambukwella, Minister of Health

Hon. (Dr.) Wijeyadasa Rajapakse, 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. Sivanethurai 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. Piyal 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. 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. Tharaka Balasuriya, State Minister of Foreign Affairs
Hon. Vijitha Berugoda, State Minister of Piriven Education
Hon. K. Kader Masthan, State Minister of Rural Economy
Hon. Prasanna Ranaweera, State Minister of Small and Medium Enterprises Development
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. Thenuka Vidanagamage, State Minister of Urban Development and Housing
Hon. S. Viyalanderan, State Minister of Trade
Hon. Ranjith Siyambalapitiya, 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. Sampath Athukorala
Hon. Tissa Attanayake
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. Govindan Karunakaram
Hon. Gayantha Karunatileka
Hon. Sagara Kariyawasam, Attorney at Law
Hon. Faizal Cassim
Hon. Jayantha Ketagoda
Hon. Lakshman Kiriella, Attorney at Law
Hon. Lalith Varna Kumara
Hon. Gevindu Cumaratunga
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. Udayakantha Gunathilaka
Hon. (Mrs.) Kokila Gunawardene
Hon. Yadamini Gunawardena
Hon. S. M. Chandrasena

Hon. Milan Jayathilake
Hon. Nalin Bandara Jayamaha
Hon. Piyanakara Jayaratne
Hon. (Dr.) Kavinda Heshan Jayawardhana
Hon. (Prof.) Channa Jayasumana
Hon. Kulasingam Dhileeban
Hon. Shan Vijayalal De Silva
Hon. (Dr.) Harsha de Silva
Hon. S. B. Dissanayake
Hon. (Mrs.) Manjula Dissanayake
Hon. Mayantha Dissanayake
Hon. Sarathi Dushmantha
Hon. Isuru Dodangoda
Hon. Premnath C. Dolawatte, Attorney at Law
Hon. W. H. M. Dharmasena
Hon. (Dr.) Gayashan Nawananda
Hon. Asanka Navarathna
Hon. Charles Nirmalanathan
Hon. S. Noharathalingam
Hon. Nimal Piyathissa
Hon. (Prof.) G. L. Peiris
Hon. Dilan Perera
Hon. Niroschan Perera
Hon. K. Sujith Sanjaya Perera
Hon. Johnston Fernando
Hon. (Dr.) (Mrs.) Sudarshini Fernandopulle
Hon. (Mrs.) Muditha Prishanthi
Hon. Rohana Bandara
Hon. R. M. Ranjith Madduma Bandara
Hon. (Prof.) Ranjith Bandara
Hon. S. M. Marikkar
Hon. Seyed Ali Zahir Moulana
Hon. Imran Maharoof
Hon. Imthiaz Bakeer Markar
Hon. Ajith Mannapperuma
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. Ali Sabri Raheem

Hon. Ishak Rahuman

Hon. Harshana Rajakaruna

Hon. Gunathilaka Rajapaksha

Hon. Chamal Rajapaksa

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. Shanakiyan Rajaputhiran Rasamanickam

Hon. Nimal Lanza

Hon. Gamini Lokuge

Hon. Gamini Waleboda

Hon. Eran Wickramaratne

Hon. (Mrs.) Rajika Wickramasinghe

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. Dilip Wedaarachchi

Hon. Sivagnanam Shritharan

Hon. Jagath Samarawickrama
Hon. Jayantha Samaraweera
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. H. M. M. Harees
Hon. (Prof.) Charitha Herath
Hon. Jayarathna Herath
Hon. Marjan Faleel
Hon. A. H. M. Fowzie

Mrs. Kushani Rohanadeera, Secretary-General of Parliament

Mr. Chaminda Kularathne, 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. Official Oath or Affirmation by new Member : Hon. Ali Zahir Moulana, Member of Parliament for Batticaloa Electoral District, made and subscribed the Affirmation required by Law and signed the Book at the Table.

2. Announcements by the Speaker : The Speaker made the following Announcement:—

I

“I wish to inform this House that a vacancy in the Membership of this Parliament has been occurred with effect from the 06th of October 2023 in terms of the provisions of Article 99(13)(a) of the Constitution, since the petition filed in the Supreme Court by the Hon. Naseer Ahamed, Member of Parliament elected from Batticaloa Electoral District representing Sri Lanka Muslim Congress, against his expulsion from that party, was dismissed by the Supreme Court determination delivered on 06th October.”

II

“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 ‘Ayurveda (Amendment)’ on 09th October 2023.”

III

“I wish to inform Parliament that in addition to the copies of four petitions that I have announced on 04th and 06th October 2023, I have received the copies of thirty more petitions filed at the Supreme Court under Article 121(1) of the Constitution in respect of the Bill titled ‘Online Safety’.”

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

- (i) Ninth Installment – Part XL of the Report of the Auditor-General for the Financial Year 2019;
- (ii) Third Installment – Part XX and Ninth Installment – Part XXXII of the Report of the Auditor-General for the Financial Year 2021; and
- (iii) Second Installment – Parts XVII, XVIII and XIX, Third Installment – Parts IX and X and Ninth Installment – Parts V and VIII of the Report of the Auditor-General for the Financial Year 2022

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 Minister of Urban Development and Housing presented the Supplementary Estimate No. 01 of 2023 and moved that the Supplementary Estimate be referred to the Committee on Public Finance.

Question put, and agreed to.

(3) The Minister of Urban Development and Housing presented the Performance Report and Accounts of the Title Insurance Fund for the year 2022 and moved that the Report be referred to the Sectoral Oversight Committee on An Open & Accountable Government.

Question put, and agreed to.

(4) The Minister of Urban Development and Housing presented the Annual Performance Report of the Department of Community Based Corrections for the year 2022 and moved that the Report be referred to the Sectoral Oversight Committee on Just and Law-Abiding Society.

Question put, and agreed to.

(5) The Minister of Plantation Industries and Minister of Industries presented the Annual Report of the Tea Shakthi Fund for the year 2014 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 Minister of Urban Development and Housing presented the Annual Report of the National Youth Services Council for the year 2021 and moved that the Report be referred to the Sectoral Oversight Committee on Media, Youth, Heritage and New Citizen.

Question put, and agreed to.

4. Presentation of Reports from Committees : The Hon. Madhura Withanage, Attorney at Law, Member of the Committee on behalf of the Hon. (Dr.) Harsha de Silva, the Chair of the Committee on Public Finance presented the Report of the Committee on —

- (i) Resolution under the Customs Ordinance (Chapter 235);
- (ii) Orders under the Excise Ordinance;
- (iii) Orders under the Excise (Special Provisions) Act, No. 13 of 1989;
- (iv) Orders under the Finance Act, No. 25 of 2003;
- (v) Notifications under the Finance Act, No. 35 of 2018;
- (vi) Order under the Sri Lanka Export Development Act, No. 40 of 1979; and
- (vii) Regulations under the Imports and Exports Control Act, No. 1 of 1969

which were referred to the said Committee.

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

5. Presentation of Public Petitions :

- (1) Hon. (Dr.) Gayashan Nawananda presented a petition dated 15.03.2023 from Mr. P. G. N. Rohitha Samarawickrama of Liyangolla Junction, Dombagahawela.
- (2) Hon. Madhura Withanage, Attorney at Law presented —
 - (i) a petition dated 21.07.2023 from Mr. E. K. K. Dinesh of No. C/33, Bandaranayakapura, Rajagiriya; and
 - (ii) a petition dated 23.02.2023 from Mr. M. L. Wijerathna Perera of No. 110, Cemetery Road, Thalpathpitiya, Nugegoda.

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

6. Office for National Unity and Reconciliation : The Minister of Urban Development and Housing on behalf of the Minister of Justice, Prisons Affairs and Constitutional Reforms presented,— Bill to provide for the establishment of the Office for National Unity and Reconciliation, in order to ensure and promote national unity and reconciliation in Sri Lanka; to set out the powers, duties and functions thereof and to provide for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

The Bill was ordered to be read a second time on Tuesday, November 07, 2023, be printed and be referred to the Sectoral Oversight Committee on Reconciliation and National Unity.

7. 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, the hours of sitting of Parliament on this day shall be 9.30 a.m. to 12.30 p.m. and 1.00 p.m. to 5.30 p.m.. At 10.30 a.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.

8. Select Committee of Parliament to investigate into the allegations levelled by the programme telecast by the “Channel 4” of Britain on the Easter Sunday suicide bomb attack : The Hon. (Dr.) Major Pradeep Undugoda, seconded by the Hon. Udayakantha Gunathilaka moved,—Whereas the Easter Sunday suicide bomb attack of 21st April 2019 which claimed the lives of 269 people and wounded over 500 people caused a colossal impact on the economy of this country and probed at various levels including a Presidential Commission of Inquiry to inquire into the said attack;

Whereas the programme telecast by the “Channel 4” Television channel of Britain on the 05th of September 2023 titled “Sri Lanka’s Easter Bombings– Dispatches” has alleged that senior Intelligence Officers of the Army and some politicians have had connections with the terrorists who unleashed the said suicide attack which took place on 21.04.2019;

Whereas the then Attorney General, Dappula De Livera, P.C. has stated at a discussion with “News First” on the 17th May 2021, when his retirement was around the corner that a huge conspiracy was behind this attack and even though Naufer Moulavi was one of the main figures and the group leader of this conspiracy, it cannot be exactly opined that he was the mastermind of the attack and that though Saharan Hashim decided to carry out the attack he is only one individual involved in the conspiracy, despite the fact that he had direct access to all investigation materials, Investigation reports, evidence and other such information;

Accordingly, there arises reasonable doubts that the then Attorney General, Dappula De Livera, P.C., has got some information that has not been revealed so far regarding the Easter Sunday attack, and whereas his statements and the facts based on which such statements were made have to be properly disclosed; and

Whereas Hon. Shanakiyan Rajaputhiran Rasamanickam, MP, addressing the Parliament on 08.09.2023 after the release of the “Channel 4” video, levelled an allegation against judges and officials of various capacities regarding this incident by presenting an video recording, and the YouTuber named Ajith Dharmapala, too, has spread various controversial facts among the society stating the names of various persons;

This Parliament resolves that a Select Committee of Parliament be appointed to inquire into whether there are facts which reveal that the officials and politicians, against whom accusations are levelled by the aforesaid “Channel 4” programme and by other parties, have had relationships or had conspired with the terrorists who launched the suicide attacks or regarding any action or inaction, and to study the investigations that have been carried out so far by the Sri Lanka Police, and to report to Parliament.

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 Eleven (11) 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.

9. Balapitiya Sri Rahularama Purana Viharastha Samanera Akalpa Sangwardena Bikshu Vidyalaya (Incorporation) Bill : Order for consideration read.

Bill, as amended in the Legislative Standing Committee Considered.

The Minister of Urban Development and Housing moved,— That the amendments made by the Legislative Standing Committee be agreed to.

Question put, and agreed to.

The Minister of Urban Development and Housing moved,— That the Bill as amended, be now read the third time.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill, as amended, accordingly read the third time and passed.

10. Sri Lanka Baptist Sangamaya (Incorporation) (Amendment) Bill : Order for Second Reading read.

The Minister of Urban Development and Housing moved,— That the Bill be now read a second time.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill accordingly read a second time and referred by the Speaker to the Legislative Standing Committee under Standing Order 53(3) of the Parliament.

11. Adjournment (Mechanism for Implementation of Recommendations of Committee on Public Accounts Celebrating its Centenary): The Minister of Urban Development and Housing moved,— That this Parliament do now adjourn.

Question proposed, and debated.

(At 11.37 a.m. Deputy Speaker took the Chair.)

(At 1.00 p.m. Deputy Chairperson of Committees took the Chair.)

The State Minister of Tourism moved,—That Hon. Harshana Rajakaruna, do take the Chair.

Question put, and agreed to.

(At 2.09 p.m. Hon. Harshana Rajakaruna took the Chair.)

Hon. (Dr.) Upul Galappaththi, seconded by Hon. (Dr.) Thilak Rajapakshe moved,— That Hon. K. P. S. Kumarasiri, do take the Chair.

Question put, and agreed to.

(At 2.50 p.m. Hon. K. P. S. Kumarasiri took the Chair.)

Question put, and agreed to; At 4.38 p.m. Parliament was adjourned by the Presiding Member until 9.30 a.m. on Wednesday, October 18, 2023.