



(Ninth Parliament - Fourth Session)

No. 104.]

MINUTES OF PARLIAMENT

Friday, January 12, 2024 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. (Dr.) Bandula Gunawardana, Minister of Transport and Highways and
Minister of Mass Media

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

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

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. Kanchana Wijsekera, Minister of Power and Energy

Hon. Sajith Premadasa, Leader of the Opposition in Parliament

Hon. Ranjith Siyambalapitiya, Non Cabinet Minister of State Plantation
Enterprises Reforms and State Minister of Finance

Hon. Lasantha Alagiyawanna, State Minister of Transport

Hon. A. Aravindh Kumar, State Minister of Education

Hon. Sivanesathurai Santhirakanthan, State Minister of Rural Road Development

Hon. Premalal Jayasekara, State Minister of Ports and Aviation

Hon. Premitha Bandara Tennakoon, State Minister of Defence

Hon. Chamara Sampath Dasanayake, State Minister of Primary Industries

Hon. Ashoka Priyantha, State Minister of Home Affairs

Hon. K. Kader Masthan, State Minister of Rural Economy

Hon. S. Viyalanderan, State Minister of Trade

Hon. Shehan Semasinghe, State Minister of Finance

Hon. Indika Anuruddha Herath, State Minister of Power and Energy

Hon. D. B. Herath, State Minister of Livestock Development

Hon. A. L. M. Athaullah

Hon. Kapila Athukorala

Hon. Sampath Athukorala

Hon. Tissa Attanayake

Hon. Hector Appuhamy

Hon. Wajira Abeywardana

Hon. Ashok Abeysinghe

Hon. Thushara Indunil Amarasena

Hon. Mayadunna Chinthaka Amal

Hon. J. C. Alawathuwala

Hon. Dullas Alahapperuma

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. Udayana Kirindigoda

Hon. Lalith Varna Kumara

Hon. Gevindu Cumaratunga

Hon. K. P. S. Kumarasiri

Hon. Velu Kumar

Hon. (Dr.) Upul Galappaththi

Hon. (Mrs.) Kokila Gunawardene
Hon. Yadamini Gunawardena
Hon. (Dr.) Nalaka Godahewa
Hon. Milan Jayathilake
Hon. Nalin Bandara Jayamaha
Hon. (Dr.) Kavinda Heshan Jayawardhana
Hon. Dayasiri Jayasekara
Hon. M. S. Thowfeek
Hon. Shan Vijayalal De Silva
Hon. (Dr.) Harsha de Silva
Hon. Anura Dissanayaka
Hon. (Mrs.) Manjula Dissanayake
Hon. Mayantha Dissanayake
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. Charles Nirmalanathan
Hon. Kins Nelson
Hon. Buddhika Pathirana
Hon. Nimal Piyathissa
Hon. Niroschan Perera
Hon. K. Sujith Sanjaya Perera
Hon. G. G. Ponnambalam
Hon. (Mrs.) Muditha Prishanthi
Hon. Rohana Bandara
Hon. R. M. Ranjith Madduma Bandara
Hon. S. M. Marikkar
Hon. Seyed Ali Zahir Moulana
Hon. Imthiaz Bakeer Markar
Hon. Ajith Mannapperuma
Hon. Mohomad Muzammil
Hon. Wasantha Yapabandara, Attorney at Law

Hon. B. Y. G. Rathnasekara
Hon. Ali Sabri Raheem
Hon. Ishak Rahuman
Hon. Harshana Rajakaruna
Hon. Gunathilaka Rajapaksha
Hon. Chamal Rajapaksa
Hon. (Dr.) Thilak Rajapakshe
Hon. Upul Mahendra Rajapaksha
Hon. Gamini Lokuge
Hon. Gamini Waleboda
Hon. Nayana Wasalathilake
Hon. Eran Wickramaratne
Hon. (Mrs.) Rajika Wickramasinghe
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. Weerasumana Weerasinghe
Hon. Dilip Wedaarachchi
Hon. Jayantha Samaraweera
Hon. Maithreepala Sirisena
Hon. Jagath Kumara Sumithraarachchi
Hon. Vadivel Suresh
Hon. (Dr.) Rajitha Senarathne
Hon. Rauff Hakeem, Attorney at Law
Hon. Kabir Hashim
Hon. (Prof.) Charitha Herath
Hon. Samanpriya Herath

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. Wasalathilaka Gedara Nayana Priyankara Wasalathilaka, Member of Parliament in Badulla 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 announcements:-

I

“In terms of Standing Order 113(2) of Parliament, I have nominated the following Co-opted Members to serve in the Legislative Standing Committee for the consideration of the ‘Penal Code (Amendment)’ Bill :-

Hon. Jeevan Thondaman
Hon. Tharaka Balasuriya
Hon. Anuradha Jayaratne
Hon. (Mrs.) Diana Gamage
Hon. Buddhika Pathirana
Hon. Mohomad Muzammil
Hon. (Mrs.) Muditha Prishanthi
Hon. Gevindu Cumaratunga”

II

“A motion may be moved to refer the question of privilege raised by the Hon. Patali Champika Ranawaka, M.P. in Parliament on 07th November 2023 to the Committee on Ethics and Privileges.”

3. Presentation of Papers: (1) The Speaker presented the First Installment – Parts XXXVIII and XXXIX and Fourth Installment – Parts XIX, XX and XXI 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 Report do lie upon the **Table** and be printed.

(2) The Speaker presented the Tenth Installment – Part V of the Special Audit Report of the Auditor-General on Installation of Safety Systems for Railway Level Crossing in Sri Lanka in terms of Article 154(6) of the Constitution of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka.

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

(3) The Speaker presented the Second Installment – Parts XXXVII and XXXVIII, Third Installment – Part XVII and Ninth Installment – Parts XX and XXI 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 Report do lie upon the **Table** and be printed.

(4) The Speaker presented the Eighth Installment – Part V of the Audit Report of the Auditor-General on the Performance of Utilization of Bus Fleet of Sri Lanka Transport Board at Maximum Capacity in terms of Article 154(6) of the Constitution of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka.

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

(5) The Minister of Education presented the Annual Report and Accounts of the Postgraduate Institute of Indigenous Medicine of the University of Colombo for the year 2022 and moved that, this Report be referred to the Sectoral Oversight Committee on Education.

Question put, and agreed to.

(6) The Minister of Urban Development and Housing presented the Regulations made by the Minister of Justice, Prison Affairs and Constitutional Reforms with the concurrence of the Chief Justice under Section 61 read with Section 60 of the Judicature Act, No. 2 of 1978 and published in the Gazette Extraordinary No. 2362/67 of 14th December 2023 and moved that those Regulations be referred to the Ministerial Consultative Committee on Justice, Prisons Affairs and Constitutional Reforms.

Question put, and agreed to.

(7) The Minister of Urban Development and Housing presented the Report on the Submission of observations and steps taken in terms of the Standing Order 120(4) of the Parliament with regard to the matters mentioned on National Youth Services Council and Sri Lanka Youth Services (Pvt) Limited of the Ministry of Sports and Youth Affairs in the report of the Committee on Public Enterprises which was presented to Parliament and moved that, the Report be referred to the Committee on Public Enterprises.

Question put, and agreed to.

(8) The Minister of Urban Development and Housing presented the Annual Report of the National Water Supply and Drainage Board for the year 2022 and moved that the Report be referred to the Sectoral Oversight Committee on Environment, Natural Resources & Sustainable Development.

Question put, and agreed to.

4. Presentation of Reports from Committees : The Hon.(Dr.) Harsha de Silva, the Chair of the Committee on Public Finance presented the Report of the Committee on the Regulations under Section 24 of the Board of Investment of Sri Lanka Law, No. 4 of 1978 which were referred to the said Committee.

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

5. Presentation of Public Petitions :

- (1) Hon. Wimalaweera Dissanayake presented a petition dated 28.09.2023 from Mr. A.L.M. Mukthar of No. 541A/1, Waterboard Road, Sainthamaruthu - 14.
- (2) Hon. Buddhika Pathirana presented a petition dated 17.08.2023 from Mr. Marimuthu Ganeshan of No. 56, Uratiyagahawatta, Kengalla.

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

6. Business of the Parliament: The Leader of the House of Parliament moved,— That the proceedings on Item Nos. 1, 2 and 3 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.

7. 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 the time period granted to 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, as specified in the Resolution passed by Parliament on 06th October 2023 be extended up to 18th April 2024 in terms of Standing Order 102 of the Parliament, as the Committee needs further time to report its observations to Parliament.

Question put, and agreed to.

8. Select Committee of Parliament to study the practical problems and difficulties in relation to preparation for the proposed 'Business Ready (B-READY) Index' in Sri Lanka and make its proposals and recommendations: The Leader of the House of Parliament moved,— That the time period granted to the Select Committee of Parliament to study the practical problems and difficulties in relation to preparation for the proposed 'Business Ready (B-READY) Index' in Sri Lanka and make its proposals and recommendations as specified in the Resolution passed by Parliament on 16th November 2023 be extended up to 22th April 2024 in terms of Standing Order 102 of the Parliament as the Committee needs further time to report its observations to Parliament.

Question put, and agreed to.

(At 10.49 a.m. Deputy Speaker took the Chair.)

9. Strict regulation of microfinance institutions and leasing companies:

Hon. (Mrs.) Kokila Gunawardene, seconded by Hon. Gamini Waleboda moved,— That this Parliament resolves that necessary action be taken by the Government to strictly regulate microfinance institutions and leasing companies as the urban and rural community is shattered by the actions of the microfinance institutions, and whereas a large number of families that obtained loans due to the inducement of such institutions on microfinance and leasing facilities are traumatized, and whereas the interest rates of those institutions are at different levels, and whereas people who fail to pay lease installments are subjected to various harassments and violations. (P.22/2023)

Question put, and agreed to.

10. Educating the public on the nutritious value of traditional, local rice varieties:

Hon. Buddhika Pahthirana, seconded by Hon. Kins Nelson moved,— That this Parliament resolves that the Government should prepare and implement a national level programme to educate the public on the nutritious value of the traditional, local rice varieties available in the Sri Lankan market at present, of the new rice varieties consumed at present, and of the varieties of rice that should be consumed by people with various diseases, and also to provide facilities for farmers to cultivate those varieties of paddy. (P.10/2023)

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

Question put, and agreed to.

11. Establishment of Tea small holding system in place of Tea Industry:

Hon. Velu Kumar, seconded by Hon. Sajith Premadasa moved,— That this Parliament resolves that, as Sri Lankan tea plantation is of twofold like Tea estates and tea Small holdings, measures should be taken to transform tea estates system to tea small holdings and make the estate workers the owners of such tea Small holdings in order to develop the same since the estate tea plantations system is failing. (P.46/2023)

The Non Cabinet Minister of State Plantation Enterprises Reforms and State Minister of Finance moved,—That Hon. Weerasumana Weerasinghe do take the Chair.

Question put, and agreed to.

(At 2.21 p.m. Hon. Weerasumana Weerasinghe took the Chair.)

Question put, and agreed to.

12. Adjournment : The Leader of the House of Parliament moved,— That this Parliament do now adjourned.

Question put and agreed to; Parliament was at 3.13 p.m. adjourned by the Presiding Member until 9.30 a.m. on Tuesday, January 23, 2024.