



*(Ninth Parliament - Fifth Session)*

No. 11.]

## MINUTES OF PARLIAMENT

Wednesday, March 20, 2024 at 9.30 a.m.

### PRESENT :

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

**Hon. Angajan Ramanathan**, Deputy Chairperson of Committees

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

**Hon. Mahinda Amaraweera**, Minister of Agriculture and Plantation Industries

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

**Hon. Douglas Devananda**, Minister of Fisheries

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

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

**Hon. Kanchana Wijsekera**, Minister of Power and Energy

**Hon. M .U. M. Ali Sabry, PC**, Minister of Foreign Affairs

**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. 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. Sisira Jayakody, Attorney at Law**, State Minister of Indigenous Medicine  
**Hon. Anuradha Jayaratne**, State Minister of Justice and Prison Affairs  
**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. Anupa Pasqual**, State Minister of Social Empowerment  
**Hon. Jagath Pushpakumara**, State Minister of Foreign Employment Promotion  
**Hon. Shantha Bandara**, State Minister of Mass Media  
**Hon. Tharaka Balasuriya**, State Minister of Foreign Affairs  
**Hon. K. Kader Masthan**, State Minister of Rural Economy  
**Hon. Lohan Ratwatte**, State Minister of Plantation Industries and Mahaweli Development  
**Hon. (Dr.) Suren Raghavan**, State Minister of Higher Education  
**Hon. Shasheendra Rajapaksa**, State Minister of Irrigation and Water Supply  
**Hon. Janaka Wakkumbura**, State Minister of Provincial Councils, Local Government and Environment  
**Hon. Thenuka Vidanagamage**, State Minister of Urban Development and Housing  
**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. Kanaka Herath**, State Minister of Technology  
**Hon. D. B. Herath**, State Minister of Livestock Development

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**Hon. Amirthanathan Adaikkalanathan**  
**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. 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. Mahindananda Aluthgamage**  
**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. Gayantha Karunatilleka**  
**Hon. Sagara Kariyawasam, Attorney at Law**  
**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. 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. (Dr.) Nalaka Godahewa**  
**Hon. S. M. Chandrasena**  
**Hon. Nalin Bandara Jayamaha**  
**Hon. Piyankara Jayaratne**  
**Hon. Dayasiri Jayasekara**

**Hon. M. S. Thowfeek**  
**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. Wimalaweera Dissanayake**  
**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. Charles Nirmalanathan**  
**Hon. Kins Nelson**  
**Hon. Nimal Piyathissa**  
**Hon. (Prof.) G. L. Peiris**  
**Hon. Niroschan Perera**  
**Hon. K. Sujith Sanjaya Perera**  
**Hon. Johnston Fernando**  
**Hon. (Dr.) (Mrs.) Sudarshini Fernandopulle**  
**Hon. Jagath Priyankara**  
**Hon. (Mrs.) Muditha Prishanthi**  
**Hon. Rohana Bandara**  
**Hon. R. M. Ranjith Madduma Bandara**  
**Hon. Rishad Bathiudeen**  
**Hon. Sudath Manjula**  
**Hon. S. M. Marikkar**  
**Hon. Imran Maharroof**  
**Hon. Imthiaz Bakeer Markar**  
**Hon. S. M. M. Muszhaaraff, Attorney at Law**

**Hon. S. C. Muthukumarana**  
**Hon. Mohomad Muzammil**  
**Hon. Wasantha Yapabandara, Attorney at Law**  
**Hon. Patali Champika Ranawaka**  
**Hon. Nipuna Ranawaka**  
**Hon. (Ven.) Athuraliye Rathana Thero**  
**Hon. B. Y. G. Rathnasekara**  
**Hon. Kumarasiri Rathnayaka**  
**Hon. C. B. Rathnayake**  
**Hon. Keheliya Rambukwella**  
**Hon. Ishak Rahuman**  
**Hon. Harshana Rajakaruna**  
**Hon. Gunathilaka Rajapaksha**  
**Hon. Chamal Rajapaksa**  
**Hon. (Dr.) Thilak Rajapakshe**  
**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. Nayana Wasalathilake**  
**Hon. Eran Wickramaratne**  
**Hon. (Mrs.) Rajika Wickramasinghe**  
**Hon. C.V. Wigneswaran**  
**Hon. (Mrs.) Rohini Kumari Wijerathna**  
**Hon. M. W. D. Sahan Pradeep Withana**  
**Hon. Hesha Withanage**  
**Hon. Chandima Weerakkody, Attorney at Law**  
**Hon. Wimal Weerawansa**  
**Hon. D. Weerasingha**  
**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. Rauff Hakeem, Attorney at Law**  
**Hon. Kabir Hashim**  
**Hon. (Prof.) Charitha Herath**  
**Hon. Vijitha Herath**  
**Hon. Jayarathna Herath**  
**Hon. Samanpriya Herath**  
**Hon. Marjan Faleel**  
**Hon. A. H. M. Fowzie**  
**Hon. Field Marshal Sarath Fonseka**

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 Deputy Speaker took the Chair.**

Announcements by the Speaker: The Deputy Speaker made the following announcements:—

**I**

“I wish to inform Parliament that Hon. Speaker has received another copy of the petition filed at the Supreme Court under Article 121(1) of the Constitution in respect of the Bill titled ‘Penal Code (Amendment)’, in addition to the receipt of the 2 (two) petitions mentioned in my announcement dated 19 March 2024.”

**II**

“I wish to inform that the following Members have been nominated by the Committee of Selection to serve in the Ministerial Consultative Committee on Public Administration, Home Affairs, Provincial Councils & Local Government in terms of the provisions of Standing Order 112 of the Parliament and the motion agreed to by Parliament on 09 February 2024:—

Hon. J. C. Alawathuwala

Hon. Shan Vijayalal De Silva”

## III

“I wish to inform that the following Members have also been nominated by the Committee of Selection to serve in the Committee on Public Accounts, notwithstanding of the provisions of the Standing Order 119 of the Parliament and the motion agreed to by Parliament on 09 February 2024:—

Hon. Jayarathna Herath

Hon. (Dr.) Upul Galappaththi”

## IV

“I wish to inform that the Hon. Wasantha Yapabandara, Attorney-at-Law, Member of Parliament has also been nominated by the Committee of Selection to serve in the Committee on Public Enterprises, notwithstanding the provisions of the Standing Order 120 of Parliament and the motion agreed to by Parliament on 09 February 2024.”

## V

“I wish to inform that the Hon. Patali Champika Ranawaka has also been nominated by the Committee of Selection to serve in the Committee on Public Finance, notwithstanding the provisions of the Standing Order 121 of Parliament and the motion agreed to by Parliament on 09 February 2024.”

## VI

“I wish to inform that the Hon. Udayana Kirindigoda, Member of Parliament has also been nominated by the Committee of Selection to serve in the Committee on Ways and Means, notwithstanding the provisions of Standing Order 124 of the Parliament and the motion agreed to by Parliament on 09 February 2024.”

**2. Presentation of Papers: (1)** Minister of Urban Development and Housing presented the Annual Report of the Colombo Port City Economic Commission for the year 2021 and moved that this Report be referred to the Sectoral Oversight Committee on National Economic and Physical Plans.

Question put, and agreed to.

(2) Minister of Urban Development and Housing presented the Report on the submission of 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 Defence and the Institutions coming under its purview in the report of the Committee on Public Accounts which was presented to Parliament and moved that this Report be referred to the Committee on Public Accounts.

Question put, and agreed to.

(3) Minister of Urban Development and Housing presented the Report on the submission of 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 Government Factory in the reports of the Committee on Public Accounts which were presented to Parliament and moved that this Report be referred to the Committee on Public Accounts.

Question put, and agreed to.

(4) 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 Ceylon Fisheries Corporation of the Ministry of Fisheries in the report of the Committee on Public Enterprises which was presented to Parliament and moved that this Report be referred to the Committee on Public Enterprises.

Question put, and agreed to.

(5) Minister of Urban Development and Housing presented the Annual Report of the National Gem and Jewellery Authority for the year 2022 and moved that this Report be referred to the Sectoral Oversight Committee on Increasing Export of Goods & Services.

Question put, and agreed to.

(6) Minister of Urban Development and Housing presented the Report on the submission of 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 Foreign Affairs in the report of the Committee on Public Accounts which was presented to Parliament and moved that this Report be referred to the Committee on Public Accounts.

Question put, and agreed to.

(7) Minister of Buddhasasana, Religious and Cultural Affairs 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 Central Cultural Fund of the Ministry of Buddhasasana, Religious and Cultural Affairs in the report of the Committee on Public Enterprises which was presented to Parliament and moved that this Report be referred to the Committee on Public Enterprises.

Question put, and agreed to.

(8) Minister of Buddhasasana, Religious and Cultural Affairs presented the Report on the submission of 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 Buddhasasana, Religious and Cultural Affairs in the report of the Committee on Public Accounts which was presented to Parliament and moved that this Report be referred to the Committee on Public Accounts.

Question put, and agreed to.

(9) Minister of Power and Energy presented the Annual Report of the Lanka Electricity Company (Private) Limited for the year 2022 and moved that this Report be referred to the Sectoral Oversight Committee on Energy & Transport.

Question put, and agreed to.

**3. Presentation of Committee Reports: (1)** The Hon. W. D. J. Seneviratne, Attorney at Law, Chair of the Sectoral Oversight Committee on Just and Law-Abiding Society presented the Report of the Committee on Partition (Amendment) Bill which was referred to the said Committee.

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

(2) The Hon. (Dr.) Harsha de Silva, the Chair of the Committee on Public Finance presented the Report of the Committee on the Central Bank of Sri Lanka Salary Revision 2024-2026 which was referred to the said Committee.

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

#### **4. Presentation of Public Petitions:**

- (1) Hon. Prasanna Ranatunga presented —
  - (i) A petition dated 19.01.2024 from Mr. H.P. Wimalasiri of No.25/3, Bandarawaththa, Gatamanna, Beliaththa; and
  - (ii) A petition dated 18.12.2023 from Mr. U.W.A. Ruwan Chaminda of No. 22, Katuwalamulla, Ganemulla.
- (2) Hon. S. B. Dissanayake presented a petition dated 25.10.2023 from Mr. U.S.K. Kulasingha of No. 18/3, Vihara Mawatha, Katugastota.
- (3) Hon. K. Sujith Sanjaya Perera presented a petition dated 10.10.2023 from Mrs. M.G.N. Sandaruwini of No. 156/21/B, Mathale Road, Ukuwela.
- (4) Hon. Kumarasiri Rathnayaka presented a petition dated 14.11.2023 from Mr. S.K. Premasiri of No.21/9, Behethgabada Road, Monaragala.

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

**5. Sittings of the Parliament:** 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 5.30 p.m. Mr. Speaker shall adjourn the Parliament without question put.

Question put, and agreed to.

**6. Vote of No Confidence against Hon. Mahinda Yapa Abeywardane, the Speaker:** Order read for resuming; Adjourned debate on question (19<sup>th</sup> March, 2024),— Motion made and question proposed [P. 27/2024] that “Whereas, by allowing the government to adopt certain Clauses of the Bill titled Online Safety during the Committee of the whole Parliament of the said Bill contrary to the determination of the Supreme Court in respect of that Bill disregarding the strong objections raised by Members of Parliament of the opposition to the effect that some Clauses of the Bill concerned were being passed in contravention of the determination of the Supreme Court regarding the Bill;

Particularly,

(a) And whereas by allowing the passage of Clause 13 of the aforesaid Bill with a simple majority without incorporating the amendments specified in the determination of the Supreme Court, which had determined that the said Clause was inconsistent with Article 12 (1) of the Constitution and as such, should be passed with a special majority, and if it were to be passed with a simple majority, the amendments so specified should be effected;

(b) And whereas by allowing the passage of Clause 17 of the aforesaid Bill as it was with a simple majority while the Supreme Court had determined that the said Clause was inconsistent with the Constitution and hence should be passed with a special majority and while the Attorney-General had informed the Supreme Court that the Clause concerned would be removed during the Committee of the whole Parliament;

(c) And whereas by allowing the passage of Clauses 20, 33(6), 34(1) and 35(1) of the aforesaid Bill with a simple majority without incorporating the amendments specified in the determination of the Supreme Court, which had determined that the Clauses concerned were inconsistent with the Constitution and as such, should be passed with a special majority, and if they were to be passed with a simple majority, the amendments so specified should be effected;

(d) And whereas by allowing the passage of Clause 21 of the aforesaid Bill as it was with a simple majority without acting in pursuance of the assurance given by the Attorney-General to the Supreme Court that the amendments necessary to pass the Clause concerned with a simple majority would be moved during the Committee of the whole Parliament when the Supreme Court determined that the said Clause was inconsistent with the Constitution and hence should be passed with a special majority;

(e) And whereas by allowing the passage of Clause 22 of the Bill as it was with a simple majority, without incorporating the amendments specified in the determination of the Supreme Court, which had determined that the Clause concerned was inconsistent with the Constitution and as such, should be passed with a special majority, and if it was to be passed with a simple majority, the amendments so specified should be effected; and

(f) And whereas by allowing the passage of Clause 31 of the Bill as it was with a simple majority, without incorporating the amendments specified in the determination of the Supreme Court, which had determined that the Clause concerned was inconsistent with the Constitution and as such, should be passed with a special majority, and if it was to be passed with a simple majority, the amendments so specified should be effected;

And whereas it has been stated in the letter dated 08<sup>th</sup> February 2024, sent to the Speaker of Parliament by the Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka, confirming this, and pointing out that the Supreme Court determination has not been followed with pertinence to passing certain Clauses of the said Bill and therefore, that there are serious concerns regarding the fact whether the number of votes required to pass the Bill as it is, has been received in Parliament;

And whereas at the same time, whereas by allowing the Bill to be passed at the third reading without calling for a division, despite the request made by the Chief Opposition Whip calling for a division, at the third reading of the Online Safety Bill;

And whereas and by endorsing the certificate on the said Bill, ignoring the request made by a group of Opposition Members from the speaker at the special meeting of the Party Leaders which was held on the 01<sup>st</sup> of February 2024, not to endorse the Bill until it is seriously scrutinized, as certain Clauses have been passed by the government contravening the determination issued by the Supreme Court at the Committee of the whole Parliament of the Online Safety Bill;

And whereas, when the name for the post of Inspector-General of Police, recommended by the Hon. President was considered at the meeting of the Constitutional Council held on the 26<sup>th</sup> of February 2024, 4 members of the Constitutional Council voted for the appointment of that recommended person for the said post and 2 members voted against while 2 members abstained from voting and as such while the said recommended name for the post of Inspector-General of Police remained unapproved as per the provisions of the Constitution, the Speaker has unlawfully aided and abetted and sponsored the President to appoint the person recommended by the President to the post of Inspector-General of Police in an illegal and unconstitutional manner by stating in paragraph 4 of the letter dated 26<sup>th</sup> February 2024 that intimated to the President that:—

“However, as there are no provisions with regard to abstaining from voting at a meeting of the Constitutional Council as per Article 41(e) of the Constitution and if abstaining from voting is deemed as being opposed to, before the law and in relation to the aforementioned issue if it is deemed as a tie in voting as per Article 41(e)(5) of the Constitution, I hereby inform that I exercise my casting vote as the Chair.”

And whereas, the Speaker has acted in a manner in blatant violation of the Constitution in handling the affairs of Parliament;

And whereas, the Speaker has acted in a manner that public confidence in the supreme institutions of Parliament and the Constitutional Council would be eroded;

And whereas, the Speaker has blatantly violated the Standing Orders of Parliament;

And whereas, the Speaker has blatantly desecrated the independence and dignity of the office of the Speaker by clearly exhibiting that he acts partially;

And whereas, the Speaker who is bound to protect the rights and privileges of the Members of Parliament impartially, has himself violated the rights and privileges of Members of Parliament; and

And whereas, the Speaker has neglected to perform the functions and responsibilities of the office of the Speaker;

That this Parliament resolves that it has no confidence in Hon. Mahinda Yapa Abeywardane, the Speaker any longer.”

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

Question put and agreed to.

(At 11.35 a.m. Hon. Harshana Rajakaruna took the Chair.)

Hon. R. M. Ranjith Madduma Bandara, seconded by the Hon. Thushara Indunil Amarasekera moved,— That Hon. K. Sujith Sanjaya Perera do take the Chair.

Question put and agreed to.

(At 1.10 p.m. Hon. K. Sujith Sanjaya Perera took the Chair.)

The Minister of Justice, Prisons Affairs and Constitutional Reforms moved,— That Hon. Samanpriya Herath do take the Chair.

Question put and agreed to.

(At 2.46 p.m. Hon. Samanpriya Herath took the Chair.)

Hon. S. C. Muthukumarana, seconded by the Hon. M. Udayakumar moved,— That Hon. Jagath Samarawickrama do take the Chair.

Question put and agreed to.

(At 4.09 p.m. Hon. Jagath Samarawickrama took the Chair.)

And it being 5.30 p.m. the debate stood adjourned; debate to be resumed on Thursday, March 21, 2024.

**7. Adjournment:** And it being 5.30 p.m. Parliament was adjourned by the Presiding Member without Question put, pursuant to the Resolution of Parliament of this day.

Parliament adjourned accordingly until 9.30 a.m. on Thursday, March 21, 2024.