

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**  
**MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS**  
**OF THE 18<sup>TH</sup> SITTING OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF THE FIRST**  
**SESSION (2020-2021) OF THE TWELFTH PARLIAMENT OF GUYANA HELD**  
**AT 10.00 A.M.**  
**ON THURSDAY, 11<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY, 2021**  
**IN THE DOME OF THE ARTHUR CHUNG CONFERENCE CENTRE,**  
**LILIENDAAL, GREATER GEORGETOWN**

**MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (71)**

**Speaker (1)**

\*Hon. Manzoor Nadir, M.P., Speaker of the National Assembly

**MEMBERS OF THE GOVERNMENT (38)**

**Peoples Progressive Party Civic (38)**

**Prime Minister (1)**

Hon. Brigadier (Ret'd) Mark A. Phillips, M.S.S., M.P., Prime Minister

**Vice-President (1)**

Hon. Bharrat Jagdeo, M.P., Vice-President

**Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs (1)**

Hon. Mohabir A. Nandlall, S.C., M.P., Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs

**Senior Ministers (17)**

Hon. Gail Teixeira, M.P. (Region No. 7 – Cuyuni/Mazaruni), Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Governance and Government Chief Whip

Hon. Hugh H. Todd, M.P. (Region No. 4 – Demerara/Mahaica), Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Co-operation

\*Hon. Dr. Ashni K. Singh, M.P., Senior Minister in the Office of the President with Responsibility for Finance (Virtual-Participation)

Hon. Bishop Juan A. Edghill, M.S., J.P., M.P., Minister of Public Works

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**\*Non-Elected Member**

2.

Hon. Dr. Frank C. S. Anthony, M.P., Minister of Health

Hon. Priya D. Manickchand, M.P. (Region No. 3 – Essequibo Islands/West Demerara),  
Minister of Education

\*Hon. Brindley H.R. Benn, M.P., Minister of Home Affairs

Hon. Zulfikar Mustapha, M.P. (Region No. 6 – East Berbice/Corentyne), Minister of  
Agriculture

Hon. Pauline R.A. Campbell-Sukhai, M.P., Minister of Amerindian Affairs

Hon. Joseph L.F. Hamilton, M.P., Minister of Labour

Hon. Vickram O. Bharrat, M.P., Minister of Natural Resources

\*Hon. Oneidge Walrond, M.P., Minister of Tourism, Industry and Commerce

Hon. Nigel D. Dharamlall, M.P. (Region No. 2 – Pomeroon/Supenaam), Minister of Local  
Government and Regional Development

Hon. Collin D. Croal, M.P. (Region No. 1 – BarimaWaini), Minister of Housing and Water

Hon. Vindhya V. H. Persaud, M.S., M.P. (Region No. 4 – Demerara/Mahaica), Minister of  
Human Services and Social Security

Hon. Charles S. Ramson, M.P., Minister of Culture, Youth and Sport

Hon. Sonia S. Parag, M.P., Minister of the Public Service

**Junior Ministers (4)**

Hon. Warren K.E. McCoy, M.P., Minister within the Office of the Prime Minister

Hon. Deodat Indar, M.P., Minister within the Ministry of Public Works

Hon. Anand Persaud, M.P., Minister within the Ministry of Local Government and Regional  
Development

Hon. Susan M. Rodrigues, M.P. (Region No. 4 – Demerara/Mahaica), Minister within the  
Ministry of Housing and Water

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**\*Non-Elected Member**

3.

**Other Members (14)**

Hon. Dharamkumar Seeraj, M.P.

Hon. Alister S. Charlie, M.P. (Region No. 9 – Upper Takutu/Upper Essequibo)

Hon. Dr. Vishwa D.B. Mahadeo, M.P. (Region No. 6 – East Berbice/Corentyne)

Hon. Sanjeev J. Datadin, M.P.

Hon. Seepaul Narine, M.P.

Hon. Yvonne Pearson-Fredericks, M.P.

Hon. Dr. Bheri S. Ramsaran, M.P.

Hon. Dr. Jennifer R.A. Westford, M.P.

Hon. Faizal M. Jaffarally, M.P. (Region No. 5 – Mahaica/Berbice)

Hon. Dr. Tandika S. Smith, M.P. (Region No. 3 - Essequibo Islands/West Demerara)

Hon. Lee G.H. Williams, M.P.

\*Hon. Sarah Browne, M.P., Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry of Amerindian Affairs

\*Hon. Vikash Ramkissoon, M.P., Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry of Agriculture

Hon. Bhagmattie Veerasammy, M.P.

**MEMBERS OF THE OPPOSITION (32)**

**(i) A Partnership For National Unity + Alliance For Change (APNU/AFC) (31)**

Hon. Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Joseph F. Harmon, M.S.M., M.P., Leader of the Opposition (Virtual-Participation)

Hon. Khemraj Ramjattan, M.P. (Absent)

Hon. Roysdale A. Forde, S.C., M.P. (Absent)

Hon. Raphael G.C. Trotman, M.P., (Absent)

Hon. Dawn Hastings-Williams, M.P. (Region No. 7 – Cuyuni/Mazaruni) (Absent)

Hon. Dr. Nicolette O. Henry, M.P.

Hon. Dr. Karen R.V. Cummings, M.P.

Hon. Tabitha J. Sarabo-Halley, M.P. (Absent)

Hon. Geeta Chandan-Edmond, M.P. (Virtual Participation)

Hon. Christopher A. Jones, M.P., Opposition Chief Whip (Virtual Participation)

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**\*Non-Elected Member**

4.

Hon. Annette N. Ferguson, M.P. (Virtual Participation)

Hon. David A. Patterson, M.P. (Absent)

Hon. Coretta A. McDonald, A.A., M.P. (Absent)

Hon. Catherine A. Hughes, M.P. (Region No. 4 – Demerara/Mahaica) (Absent)

Hon. Haimraj B. Rajkumar, M.P. (Absent)

Hon. Amanza O.R. Walton-Desir, M.P. (Absent)

Hon. Natasha Singh-Lewis, M.P. (Absent)

Hon. Sherod A. Duncan, M.P.

Hon. Juretha V. Fernandes, M.P.

Hon. Vincent P. Henry, M.P.

Hon. Ronald Cox, M.P. (Region No. 1 – BarimaWaini)

Hon. Shurwayne F.K. Holder, M.P. (Region No. 2 – Pomeroon/Supenaam)

Hon. Ganesh A. Mahipaul, M.P. (Region No. 3 – Essequibo Islands/West Demerara)

Hon. Nima N. Flue-Bess, M.P. (Region No. 4 – Demerara/Mahaica) (Virtual Participation)

Hon. Maureen A. Philadelphia, M.P. (Region No. 4 – Demerara/Mahaica) (Virtual Participation)

Hon. Deonarine Ramsaroop, M.P. (Region No. 4 – Demerara/Mahaica) (Absent)

Hon. Vincerooy H. Jordan, M.P., (Region No. 5 – Mahaica/Berbice)

Hon. Dineshwar N. Jaiprashad, M.P. (Region No. 6 – East Berbice/Corentyne)

Hon. Richard E. Sinclair, M.P. (Region No. 8 –Potaro/Siparuni)

Hon. Jermaine A. Figueira, M.P. (Region No. 10 – Upper Demerara/Upper Berbice)(Absent)

Hon. Devin L. Sears, M.P. (Region No. 10 – Upper Demerara/Upper Berbice)

**A New and United Guyana, Liberty and Justice Party and The New Movement (ANUG, LJP & TNM) (1)**

Hon. Lenox R. O'Dell Shuman, M.P., Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly

**Officers (2)**

Mr. Sherlock E. Isaacs, A.A., Clerk of the National Assembly

Ms. Hermina Gilgeours, Deputy Clerk of the National Assembly

### **COMMENCEMENT OF SITTING**

The Sitting commenced at 10.14 a.m.

### **PRAYERS**

The Clerk led in Prayers.

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER-**

The Speaker made the following announcements:

#### **(1) Members of Parliament Training Programme**

“Hon Members, first, let me thank the Clerk and the Staff of the Parliament Office for conducting the Hybrid Training Programme for Members of Parliament that was held two days ago, here in the Dome of the Arthur Chung Conference Centre. This activity is normally held at the very beginning of a new Session of Parliament. Just after the end and passage of the 2020 budget many members asked about such training for MPs. The challenge was programming it”.

The Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) would normally conduct a session after an election in member states – in fact, such a session will be held by the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association for the Members of the new Parliament in Trinidad and Tobago. The Parliamentary Management Committee looked at combining these two activities but accommodating all the parties was difficult.

This training was most effectively conducted by the Clerk and his staff. We are grateful to them for their efforts and thank them for these contributions. Honourable Members today is a unique one for the Parliament.

#### **(2) Address by His Excellency the President, Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali**

The Speaker informed Members that His Excellency the President, Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali, would address the National Assembly during the course of the Sitting.

6.

**PRESENTATION OF PAPERS AND REPORTS-**

The Minister of Public Works, on behalf of the Senior Minister in the Office of the President with Responsibility for Finance, presented the:

Loan Contract No. 5201/BL-GY dated January 22, 2021 between the Co-operative Republic of Guyana and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) for an amount of US\$34,000,000.00.

This Loan aims to support the execution of a policy-based reform programme aimed at strengthening the efficiency and effectiveness of public policy and fiscal management in response to the health and economic crisis caused by COVID-19 in Guyana, through the design and implementation of effective and fiscally responsible policy measures.

(Circulated)

**REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES-**

By the Speaker of the National Assembly (Chairman of the Committee of Selection):

Minutes of Proceedings of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Meeting of the Committee of Selection held on Wednesday, 27<sup>th</sup> January, 2021.

(Circulated)

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE-**

**For Written Reply**

**COVID-19 CASH GRANT**

**Member Asking:**                      **Mr. Haimraj Rajkumar, M.P.**

**Minister Answering:**                      **The Minister of Human Services and Social Security**

Can the Minister provide a report, interim or final of the audit completed as of January 15, 2021, and state which Regions and Communities that have benefited from the Cash Grant, which remain and the value of distribution thus far?

(Notice Paper No. 33 (Q17 Opp.17) published on 2021-01-20)

7.

**ANSWER**

The \$25,000 cash grant for the COVID-19 Relief and Support Programme has two phases. The first phase is not yet completed as Region Four is still ongoing. Once this is completed, an interim audit will be done on phase one of the programme. When the second phase, which includes pink slip has been completed, a final audit of the entire COVID-19 Relief Programme will be conducted.

Please see below response on the number of households by Regions which have been completed as at 6<sup>th</sup> February, 2021. As indicated before, Region Four is still ongoing:

<b>REGIONS</b>	<b># OF GRANTS DISTRIBUTED</b>	<b>VALUE OF GRANTS DISTRIBUTED</b>
Region 1	8,124	203,100,000
Region 2	13,675	341,875,000
Region 3	44,095	1,102,375,000
Region 4	83,502	2,087,550,000
Region 5	20,856	521,400,000
Region 6	35,009	875,225,000
Region 7	7,052	176,300,000
Region 8	3,064	76,600,000
Region 9	7,503	187,575,000
Region 10	13,996	349,900,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>236,876</b>	<b>5,921,900,000</b>

**INTRODUCTION OF BILLS-**

In accordance with Standing Order No. 68, the Minister of Human Services and Social Security moved that the Adoption of Children (Amendment) Bill 2020 – Bill No. 15 of 2020, be withdrawn.

8.

**ADOPTION OF CHILDREN (AMENDMENT) BILL 2021 – Bill No. 3 of 2021**

The Minister of Human Services and Social Security, on behalf of the Government, presented the following Bill, which was read the first time:

A BILL intituled AN ACT to amend the Adoption of Children Act.

**PUBLIC BUSINESS**

**GOVERNMENT BUSINESS**

**BILLS – Second Readings**

**ITEM 1 - LAW REFORM COMMISSION (AMENDMENT) BILL 2020 – Bill No. 11/2020 published on 2020-11-20**

The Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs moved the second reading of the following Bill:

A BILL intituled AN ACT to amend the Law Reform Commission Act.

**(Read a first time on 2020-12-23)**

The following Members spoke to the motion:

Hon. Alister Charlie, M.P.

Hon. Lenox Shuman, M.P., Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly

Hon. Sanjeev Datadin, M.P.

Hon. Sonia Parag, M.P., Minister of the Public Service

Thereafter, the Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs replied.

The Bill was then read a second time.

Assembly resolved itself into Committee to consider the Bill clause by clause.



**In Committee**

**Clause 1** was passed as printed.

**Clause 2** was passed as printed.

**Clause 3** was passed as printed.

**Clause 4**

Mr. Alistair Charlie, M.P., and seconded by Mr. Lee Williams, M.P., moved the following amendments which were put and carried:

“4(1) “In paragraph (v), by deleting the word ‘and’.

“In paragraph (vi), by substituting the ‘full-stop’ with a ‘semi-colon’.

By inserting after paragraph (vi), a new paragraph (vii) as follows-

“Cap. 29:01 (vii) the National Toshias’ Council established under the Amerindian Act”.”

**Clause 4** was then passed as amended.

**Clause 5** was passed as printed.

**Assembly resumed**

On a motion by the Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs, the Law Reform Commission (Amendment) Bill 2020– Bill No.11/2020 was read a third time and passed as amended.

**ITEM 2 - DECEASED PERSONS ESTATES’ ADMINISTRATION (AMENDMENT)**  
**BILL 2020 – Bill No. 12/2020 published on 2020-11-10**

The Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs moved the second reading of the following Bill:

10.

A BILL intituled AN ACT to amend the Deceased Persons Estates' Administration Act.

**(Read a first time on 2020-12-23)**

The following Members spoke to the motion:

Hon. Sonia Parag, M.P., Minister of the Public Service

Hon. Priya Manickchand, M.P., Minister of Education

### **SUSPENSION OF SITTING**

At 12.26 p.m., the Sitting was suspended for refreshments.

### **RESUMPTION OF SITTING**

At 1.31 p.m., the Sitting was resumed.

Assembly resumed the debate on the Bill.

Hon. Seepaul Narine, M.P., also spoke to the motion.

Thereafter, the Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs replied.

The Bill was then read a second time.

Assembly resolved itself into Committee to consider the Bill clause by clause.

### **In Committee**

**Clause 1** was passed as printed.

**Clause 2** was passed as printed.

**Clause 3**

Hon. Mohabir Nandlall, S.C., M.P., Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs moved the following amendments which were put and carried:

1. “By substituting for the marginal note the following-

“Procedure to withdraw money from bank.””

2. “(a) In section 20(1), by replacing that subsection with the following-

“(1) Notwithstanding the provision of this Act, a manager of a bank may pay to a claimant a sum of money which does not exceed seven hundred and fifty thousand dollars from the deceased person’s savings bank account-”;

(b) In section 20(1)(a), by inserting after the words ‘letters of administration’ the words ‘or probate’; and

- (c) In section 20(1)(a), by substituting for that paragraph the following-

“(b) upon the application in writing by any person claiming to be the surviving spouse or heir on intestacy of the deceased depositor died intestate or in the case where the deceased died testate, the executor.””

Clause 3 was then passed as amended.

**Clause 4**

Hon. Mohabir Nandlall, S.C., M.P., Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs moved the following amendments which were put and carried:

“By substituting for clause 4 the following-

Section 25 of the Principal Act is amended as follows-

- (1) In subsection (1), by inserting after the words ‘letters of administration’ the words ‘or probate’;

- (2) In subsection (1) (b), by substituting for the words “one thousand” the words “seven hundred and fifty thousand”;

12.

(3) In subsection (1)(d) by substituting the ‘full stop’ for a ‘semi-colon’; and

(4) By inserting after subsection (1)(d), the following paragraph as paragraph (e) –

‘the total value of the net estate of the deceased does not exceed seven hundred and fifty thousand dollars.’.”

Clause 4 was then passed as amended.

### **Assembly resumed**

On a motion by the Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs, the Deceased Persons Estates’ Administration (Amendment) Bill 2020– Bill No.12/2020 was read a third time and passed as amended.

### **SUSPENSION OF SITTING**

At 1.40 p.m., the Sitting was suspended to await the arrival of His Excellency the President.

### **RESUMPTION OF SITTING**

At 2.12 p.m., the Sitting was resumed.

### **ARRIVAL OF THE PRESIDENT**

The President entered the Chamber and took his place on the Dais.

### **REMARKS BY THE SPEAKER**

The Speaker of the National Assembly made the following remarks:

“Your Excellency, the President of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana, Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali, Madam First Lady Arya Ali, Honourable Members, your Honour Madam Chancellor, Yvonne Cummings, Madam Chief Justice Roxanne George-Wiltshire, Excellencies of the Diplomatic Corps, esteemed judges, distinguished members of our society and special invitees, fellow citizens present and those joining us via social media, Good afternoon and welcome to the National Assembly.

To their Excellencies of the Peoples Republic of China and the Chinese people I say

**‘Gong Xi Fa Cai, Happy Lunar New Year!’**

I wish everyone riches in this year of the Ox. Representing strength and sustainability.

Honourable Members, by virtue of Article 51 of the Constitution of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana, “There shall be a Parliament of Guyana, which shall consist of the President and the National Assembly.” Article 65 subsection (1) further goes on to say that “Subject to the Provisions of this Constitution, Parliament may make laws for the peace, order and good government of Guyana”.

Parliament may be deemed as being the Legislative Arm of Government with traditional functions such as representing the electorate, making laws, and overseeing the government by way of hearings, committees and inquiries (the act of Members being able to table questions to other Members usually on the other side of the House). In a democratic society, Members of Parliament are nominated by their respective political parties, however, it is the electorate, meaning in lay man’s terms, the citizens and people of Guyana, who elect their representatives by the simple act of placing their respective ballots in a National Election. The intention of Chapter 1:03 of the Laws of Guyana titled the Representation of the People Act is ‘to make provisions for the election of members of the National Assembly under a system of proportional representation’.

Today Honourable members, amongst us is a man who not only served as an elected Member of Parliament, who sat on both the Government’s and Opposition’s sides of the House, as Chair of the Public Accounts Committee, and Co-Chair of the Economic Services Committee. His progression includes sitting as a Member of the National Assembly to that of a Minister of Government holding portfolios such as Housing and Water and Tourism and at separate times, performing the functions of President and Prime Minister.

Having been continuously gaining the confidence of and being elected by the citizens of Guyana to serve them for some 15 years and counting, his experiences, qualifications and leadership skills have spoken for itself to the People and electorate of democratic Guyana. During his tenure in this Honourable House commencing in 2006 culminating in 2020 wherein of August the said year, he was elected, by the majority of the People of Guyana to serve as their tenth President.

While the President does not sit in the National Assembly as an elected member therein, Article 67 of the Constitution stipulates in subsection (1) that “The President may at any time attend and address the National Assembly”. Further, subsection (2) states that “The President may send messages to the National Assembly and any such message shall be read, at the first convenient Sitting of the National Assembly after it is received, the Prime Minister or by any other Minister designated by the President”.

A Presidential address in Parliament is an extraordinary event which has been historically documented since March 31<sup>st</sup>, 1970 almost fifty years ago when the then and first of Guyana, the Late H.E. President Arthur Chung addressed the National Assembly. This tradition continued through the decades which includes the ninth President, His Excellency David Granger addressing the 11<sup>th</sup> Parliament.

Therefore, it follows that today Honourable Members, this House is honoured to be addressed by the man who has made history as being the first Muslim President of this country. It is my distinguished honour to introduce to you, his Excellency, the Tenth President of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana, Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali in his first address in the said capacity to this Twelfth National Assembly. Honourable Members, special invitees, the People of Guyana, I introduce to you, His Excellency, Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali.”

### **WELCOME TO THE PRESIDENT**

The Speaker welcomed the President and invited him to address the Assembly.

**ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT**

His Excellency the President, Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali addressed the Assembly, in accordance with Article 63(1) of the Constitution.

**THANKS TO THE PRESIDENT**

The Speaker, on behalf of the Members of the Assembly and himself, thanked His Excellency for his address.

**SUSPENSION OF SITTING**

At 3.33 p.m., the Sitting was suspended for the departure of the President.

**RESUMPTION OF SITTING**

At 4.49 p.m., the Sitting was resumed.

**BILLS – Second Reading**

**ITEM 3 - SMALL BUSINESS (AMENDMENT) BILL 2020 – Bill No. 13/2020**  
**published on 2020-11-10**

The Minister of Tourism, Industry and Commerce moved the second reading of the following Bill:

A BILL intituled AN ACT to amend the Small Business Act.

**(Read a first time on 2020-12-23)**

The following Members spoke to the motion:

Hon. Deodat Indar, M.P., Minister within the Ministry of Public Works

Hon. Joseph Hamilton, M.P., Minister of Labour

Hon. Nigel D. Dharamlall, M.P., Minister of Local Government and Regional Development

16.

Hon. Charles S. Ramson, M.P., Minister of Culture, Youth and Sport

Thereafter, the Minister of Tourism, Industry and Commerce replied.

The Bill was then read a second time.

Assembly resolved itself into Committee to consider the Bill clause by clause.

**In Committee**

**Clause 1 to 3** were passed as printed.

**Assembly resumed**

On a motion by the Minister of Tourism, Industry and Commerce, the Small Business (Amendment) Bill 2020– Bill No.13/2020 was read a third time and passed as printed.

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**ITEM 4 - HIRE-PURCHASE BILL 2020 – Bill No. 14/2020 published on 2020-11-10**

The Minister of Tourism, Industry and Commerce moved that the following Bill be referred to a Special Select Committee:

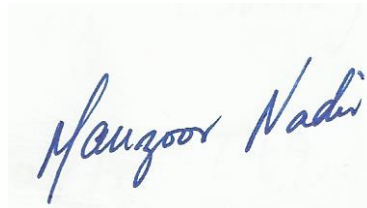
A BILL intituled AN ACT to make provision for the regulation of hire-purchase, credit sale and conditional sale agreements; and for related purposes.

**(Read a first time on 2020-12-23)**



**ADJOURNMENT**

At 6.25 p.m., on a motion by the Prime Minister, the Assembly was adjourned to 2.00 p.m. on Friday, 12<sup>th</sup> February, 2020.



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**HON. MANZOOR NADIR, M.P.,**  
**Hon. Speaker of the National Assembly**

**PARLIAMENT OFFICE,  
Public Buildings,  
Brickdam,  
Georgetown.**

**11<sup>th</sup> February, 2021.**