

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS
OF THE 69th SITTING OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF THE FIRST
SESSION (2020-2023) OF THE TWELFTH PARLIAMENT OF GUYANA HELD
AT 2.00 P.M.
ON MONDAY, 11TH DECEMBER, 2023,
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 (Absent)

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

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

/...2

***Non-Elected Member**

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. Collin D. Croal, M.P. (Region No. 1 – Barima/Waini), 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. Susan M. Rodrigues, M.P. (Region No. 4 – Demerara/Mahaica), Minister within the
Ministry of Housing and Water

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

/...3

***Non-Elected Member**

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. (Absent)

Hon. Dr. Jennifer R.A. Westford, M.P. (Absent)

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
(Absent – on leave)

*Hon. Vikash Ramkissoon, M.P., Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry of Agriculture
(Absent- on leave)

Hon. Bhagmattie Veerasammy, M.P.

Hon. Nandranie Coonjah, M.P. (Region No. 2 – Pomeroon/Supenaam)

MEMBERS OF THE OPPOSITION (32)

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

Hon. Aubrey Norton M.P., Leader of the Opposition

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

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

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

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

Hon. Geeta Chandan-Edmond, M.P.

Hon. Sherod A. Duncan, M.P.

Hon. Volda A. Lawrence, M.P. (Absent))

/...4

***Non-Elected Member**

4.

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

Hon. Christopher A. Jones, M.P., Opposition Chief Whip

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

Hon. Amanza O.R. Walton-Desir, M.P.

Hon. Coretta A. McDonald, A.A., M.P.

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

Hon. Vincent P. Henry, M.P.

Hon. Dr. Karen Cummings, M.P.

Hon. Tabitha J. Sarabo-Halley, M.P.

Hon. Natasha Singh-Lewis, M.P.

Hon. Annette N. Ferguson, M.P. (Absent)

Hon. Juretha V. Fernandes, M.P.

Hon. David A. Patterson, M.P.

Hon. Ronald Cox, M.P. (Region No. 1 – Barima/Waini)

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

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

Hon. Haimraj B. Rajkumar, M.P.

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

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

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

Hon. Beverley Alert, M.P. (Region No. 4 – Demerara/Mahaica) (Virtual-Participation)

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

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. Dr. Asha Kissoon, M.P., Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly (Virtual-Participation)

5.

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 2.20 a.m.

PRAYERS

The Clerk led in Prayers.

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER-

The Speaker made the following announcements:

(1) Death of Five Servicemen of the Guyana Defence Force

The Speaker extended condolences to Hon. Dr. Jennifer Westford, M.P., on the death of her husband. He also extended condolences to the families of the other servicemen and wished the two survivors a speedy recovery.

(2) Death of Former Members of Parliament Mr. Samuel Rudolph Insanally and Mr. Dalchand

The Speaker informed Members that Mr. Samuel Rudolph Insanally and Mr. Dalchand passed away.

Thereafter, a minute's silence was observed as a mark of respect for the fallen heroes and late Mr. Samuel Rudolph Insanally and Mr. Dalchand.

PRESENTATION OF PAPERS AND REPORTS-

(1) By the Speaker of the National Assembly:

- (i) Report of the Auditor General to the National Assembly on the Public Accounts of Guyana and on the Accounts of Ministries, Departments and Regions for the fiscal year ended 31st December, 2022.

(Circulated)

- (ii) Performance Audit Report on an Assessment of the Ministry of Education's Hinterland School Feeding Programme.

(Circulated)

- (iii) Performance Audit Report on the Implementation of the International Health Regulations (2005).

(Circulated)

- (iv) Performance Audit Report on a Review of the Ministry of Labour's Occupational Safety and Health Inspection Process.

(Circulated)

(2) By the Prime Minister:

Annual Report of the Public Utilities Commission for the year 2022.

(Circulated)

(3) By the Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Governance:

- (i) Annual Report of the Women and Gender Equality Commission for the years 2021 – 2022.

(Circulated)

6.

- (ii) Audited Financial Statements of the Integrity Commission for the years ended 31st December, 2020 and 2021.

(Circulated)

- (iii) Annual Report of the Ethnic Relations Commission for the year 2022.

(Circulated)

- (iv) Audited Financial Statements of the Integrity Commission for the year ended 31st December, 2022.

(Circulated)

(4) the Senior Minister in the Office of the President with Responsibility for Finance:

- (i) Mid-Year Report 2023.

(Circulated)

- (ii) Government Notice No. 4/2023, regarding Notification Receipts of all petroleum revenues paid into the Natural Resource Fund during the period 1st July, 2023 to 30th September, 2023.

(Circulated)

- (iii) Agreement on Support to the Poultry Sector between the Government of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana and Republic Bank (Guyana) Limited, signed on 19th September, 2023.

(Circulated)

7.

- (iv) Agreement on Support to the Poultry Sector between the Government of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana and Citizens Bank Guyana Inc., signed on 31st October, 2023.

(Circulated)

- (v) Agreement on Support to the Poultry Sector between the Government of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana and Demerara Bank Limited, signed on 21st August, 2023.

(Circulated)

- (vi) Agreement on Support to the Poultry Sector between the Government of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana and Guyana Bank for Trade & Industry Limited, signed on 14th September, 2023.

(Circulated)

- (vii) Financial Paper No. 4/2023 – Supplementary Estimates (Current and Capital) - Advances made from the Contingency Fund totalling \$1,899,647,334 for the period 2023-10-01 to 2023-12-08.

(Circulated)

- (viii) Financial Paper No. 5/2023 – Supplementary Estimates (Current and Capital) totalling \$24,044,095,908 for the period ending 2023-12-31.

(Circulated)

The Senior Minister in the Office of the President with Responsibility for Finance, named Thursday, 14th December, 2023, for the consideration of the Financial Papers.

8.

(5) By the Minister of Public Works:

Audited Financial Statement of the Guyana Civil Aviation Authority for the year ended 31st December, 2019.

(Circulated)

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE-

For Written Replies

1. **OVERSEAS VISITS BY HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRESIDENT, DR. MOHAMED IRFAAN ALI**

Member Asking: Ms. Annette Ferguson, M.P.

Minister Answering: The Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Governance

Can the Hon. Gail Teixeira, MP, Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Governance, inform the National Assembly of the countries visited by His Excellency, the President, Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali from August 2, 2020 to May 17, 2023, and the costs associated with each visit?

(Notice Paper No. 281 (Q211 Opp.211) published on 2023-06-09)

Answer:

See **Appendix (1)** for the answer to the above question.

2. **OVERSEAS VISITS BY VICE-PRESIDENT, HON. BHARRAT JAGDEO, M.P.**

Member Asking: Ms. Annette Ferguson, M.P.

Minister Answering: The Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Governance

Can the Hon. Gail Teixeira, Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Governance, inform the National Assembly of the countries visited by Vice-President, Hon. Bharrat Jagdeo, M.P. from August 2, 2020 to May 17, 2023, and the costs associated with each visit?

(Notice Paper No. 282 (Q212 Opp.212) published on 2023-06-09)

9.

Answer:

See **Appendix (2)** for the answer to the above question.

3. BENEFITS DERIVED FROM OVERSEAS VISITS BY HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRESIDENT, DR. MOHAMED IRFAAN ALI AND VICE-PRESIDENT, HON. BHARRAT JAGDEO, M.P.

Member Asking: Ms. Annette Ferguson, M.P.

Minister Answering: The Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Governance

Can the Hon. Gail Teixeira, Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Governance, inform the National Assembly how Guyana and Guyanese benefitted from these overseas visits by His Excellency the President, Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali and Vice-President, Hon. Bharrat Jagdeo, MP?

(Notice Paper No. 283 (Q213 Opp.213) published on 2023-06-09)

Answer:

See **Appendix (3)** for the answer to the above question.

4. MUNICIPALITIES THAT RECEIVED SUBVENTIONS FROM THE GOVERNMENT

Member Asking: Mrs. Tabitha Sarabo-Halley, M.P.

Minister Answering: The Minister within the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development

Can the Hon. Minister inform this House of the names of the Municipalities that received subventions (in the form of cash transfer) from the Ministry of Local Government for the years 2020, 2021, 2022, and up to June 2023? Please state the amounts for each by year?

(Notice Paper No. 311 (Q236 Opp.236) published on 2023-10-30)

10.

Answer:

See **Appendix (4)** for the answer to the above question.

5. MUNICIPALITIES THAT DID NOT RECEIVE SUBVENTIONS FROM THE GOVERNMENT

Member Asking: Mrs. Tabitha Sarabo-Halley, M.P.

Minister Answering: The Minister within the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development

Can the Hon. Minister inform this House of the names of the municipalities that did not receive subvention (in the form of cash transfer) from the Ministry of Local Government for the years 2020, 2021, 2022, and up to June 2023?

(Notice Paper No. 312 (Q237 Opp.237) published on 2023-10-30)

Answer:

See **Appendix (5)** for the answer to the above question.

6. THE TOTAL NUMBER OF BIRTHS REGISTERED IN GUYANA BY THE GENERAL REGISTER OFFICE

Member Asking: Mrs. Amanza Walton-Desir, M.P.

Minister Answering: The Minister of Home Affairs

Can the Minister indicate the total number of births, by region, registered in Guyana by the General Register Office, for the period August 2021 to June 2023?

(Notice Paper No. 316 (Q241 Opp.241) published on 2023-10-30)

Answer:

See **Appendix (6)** for the answer to the above question.

7. THE TOTAL NUMBER OF LATE REGISTRATION PROCESSED IN GUYANA BY THE GUYANA REGISTER OFFICE

Member Asking: Mrs. Amanza Walton-Desir, M.P.

Minister Answering: The Minister of Home Affairs

Can the Minister indicate the total number of late registrations, by region, processed by the Guyana Register Office for the period August 2021 to June 2023?

(Notice Paper No. 317 (Q242 Opp.242) published on 2023-10-30)

Answer:

See **Appendix (7)** for the answer to the above question.

8. THE NUMBER OF VISITORS' VISAS ISSUED

Member Asking: Mrs. Amanza Walton-Desir, M.P.

Minister Answering: The Minister of Home Affairs

Can the Minister indicate the number of visitors' visas issued on arrival for the period 1st September 2020 to 30th June, 2023, and the total number per nationality?

(Notice Paper No. 318 (Q243 Opp.243) published on 2023-10-30)

Answer:

See **Appendix (8)** for the answer to the above question.

9. THE NUMBER OF EMPLOYMENT VISAS ISSUED

Member Asking: Mrs. Amanza Walton-Desir, M.P.

Minister Answering: The Minister of Home Affairs

Can the Minister indicate the number of employment visas issued for the period 1st September 2020 to 30th June, 2023 and the total number per nationality?

(Notice Paper No. 319 (Q244 Opp.244) published on 2023-10-30)

12.

Answer:

See **Appendix (9)** for the answer to the above question.

10. THE NUMBER OF STUDENT VISAS ISSUED

Member Asking: Mrs. Amanza Walton-Desir, M.P.

Minister Answering: The Minister of Home Affairs

Can the Minister indicate the number of student visas issued for the period 1st September 2020 to 30th June 2023 and the total number per nationality.

(Notice Paper No. 320 (Q245 Opp.245) published on 2023-10-30)

Answer:

See **Appendix (10)** for the answer to the above question.

STANDING ORDER NO. 22(10)

In accordance with Standing Order No. 22(10) Question 11 and 12 below were **deferred:**

For Oral Replies

11. *MECHANISM IN PLACE TO FACILITATE A 100% CENSUS SURVEY

Member Asking: Ms. Annette Ferguson, M.P.

Minister Answering: The Senior Minister in the Office of the President with
Responsibility for Finance

The Guyana National Population and Housing Census 2022 was launched on August 22, 2022, and the National Assembly approved the sum of \$2B via Supplementary Paper on August 8, 2022.

*Can the Hon. Senior Minister inform the National Assembly whether arrangements are in place to facilitate or accommodate persons who were not at home, at the time visits were made by enumerators?

(Notice Paper No. 288 (Q218 Opp.218) published on 2023-06-09)

13.

12. *NUMBER OF ENUMERATORS AND STIPEND PAID FOR CENSUS 2022

Member Asking: Ms. Annette Ferguson, M.P.

Minister Answering: The Senior Minister in the Office of the President with
Responsibility for Finance

The Guyana National Population and Housing Census 2022 was launched on August 22, 2022, and the National Assembly approved the sum of \$2B via Supplementary Paper on August 8, 2022.

*Can the Hon. Senior Minister, inform the National Assembly of the total number of enumerators and the stipend paid to each enumerator for Census 2022?

(Notice Paper No. 289 (Q219 Opp.219) published on 2023-06-09)

**13. *MODERNIZATION OF INSTITUTIONAL AND LEGISLATIVE
FRAMEWORKS ASSOCIATED WITH MIGRATION IN GUYANA**

Hon. Tabitha Sarabo-Halley, M.P., asked the Minister of Home Affairs the following question:

*Can the Hon. Minister state whether the government has taken any steps to modernize the institutional and legislative framework associated with migration in Guyana since 2020?

(Notice Paper No. 303 (Q228 Opp.228) published on 2023-10-30)

Thereafter, the Minister of Home Affairs replied.

Hon. Tabitha Sarabo-Halley, M.P., asked the Minister of Home Affairs supplementary questions.

Thereafter, the Minister of Home Affairs replied.

14. *REGISTERED VENEZUELAN MIGRANTS IN GUYANA

Hon. Tabitha Sarabo-Halley, M.P., asked the Minister of Home Affairs the following question:

*Can the Hon. Minister inform this House of the number of registered Venezuelan migrants in Region #9 as of June 16, 2023, and in the other Regions as of July 11, 2023?

(Notice Paper No. 304 (Q229 Opp.229) published on 2023-10-30)

Thereafter, the Minister of Home Affairs replied.

Hon. Tabitha Sarabo-Halley, M.P., asked the Minister of Home Affairs supplementary questions.

Thereafter, the Minister of Home Affairs replied.

Hon. Juretha Fernandes, M.P., asked the Minister of Home Affairs a supplementary question.

Thereafter, the Minister of Home Affairs replied.

Hon. Vincero Jordan, M.P., asked the Minister of Home Affairs supplementary questions.

Thereafter, the Minister of Home Affairs replied.

Hon. Amanza Walton-Desir, M.P., asked the Minister of Home Affairs supplementary questions.

Thereafter, the Minister of Home Affairs replied.

15. *SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED TO CITIZENS THROUGH THE GOAL AND GROW INITIATIVES

Hon. Tabitha Sarabo-Halley, M.P., asked the Minister of Labour the following question:

*Can the Hon. Minister state whether there has been any collaboration among the Ministry of Labour, the Ministry of Education, and the Ministry of Public Service to ensure that the scholarships being given to train, retrain or upskill our citizens through the GOAL and GROW initiatives are relevant to the skills needed in the short-medium term?

(Notice Paper No. 305 (Q230 Opp.230) published on 2023-10-30)

Thereafter, the Minister of Home Affairs replied.

Hon. Tabitha Sarabo-Halley, M.P., asked the Minister of Home Affairs supplementary questions.

Thereafter, the Minister of Home Affairs replied.

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS, INCLUDING POLICY STATEMENTS-

(1) Steps taken by the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela against Guyana

The Prime Minister made a statement on the steps taken by the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela against Guyana.

(2) Death of Five Servicemen of the Guyana Defence Force

The Prime Minister made a statement on the death of five servicemen of the Guyana Defence Force, Brigadier (Ret'd) Gary Beaton, Colonel Michael Shahoud, Lieutenant Colonel Michael Charles, Lieutenant Colonel Sean Welcome and Staff Sergeant Jason Khan. He extended condolences to the families of the deceased. He also wished the two survivors, Lieutenant Andio Crawford, and Corporal Dwayne Jackson a speedy recovery.

PERSONAL EXPLANATIONS-

President's Visit to St. Vincent and the Grenadines

The Leader of the Opposition made a statement on the President's visit to St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

Honouring the Two Survivors (Servicemen) of the Helicopter Crash

The Minister of Education made a statement re. Honouring the two survivors of the helicopter crash.

Withdrawal of some Members of the Opposition

At 4.27 p.m., some of the Members of the Opposition withdrew from the Chamber.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS-

Presentation and First Readings

(1) ARBITRATION BILL 2023 – Bill No. 18/2023

The Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs, on behalf of the Government, moved the first reading of the following Bill, which was read the first time:

A BILL intituled AN ACT to facilitate domestic and international arbitrations by encouraging the use of arbitration as a method of resolving disputes; and for connected purposes.

(Circulated)

17.

(2) CRIMINAL PROCEDURE (PLEA DISCUSSION, PLEA AGREEMENT AND ASSISTANCE AGREEMENT) BILL 2023 – Bill No. 19/2023

The Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs, on behalf of the Government, moved the first reading of the following Bill, which was read the first time:

A BILL intituled AN ACT to establish a system of plea discussions and plea agreements in criminal procedure and for matters connected thereto.

(To be Circulated)

ADJOURNMENT

At 4.30 p.m., on a motion by the Prime Minister, the Assembly was adjourned to 10.00 a.m. on Thursday, 14th December, 2023.



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

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

11th December, 2023.