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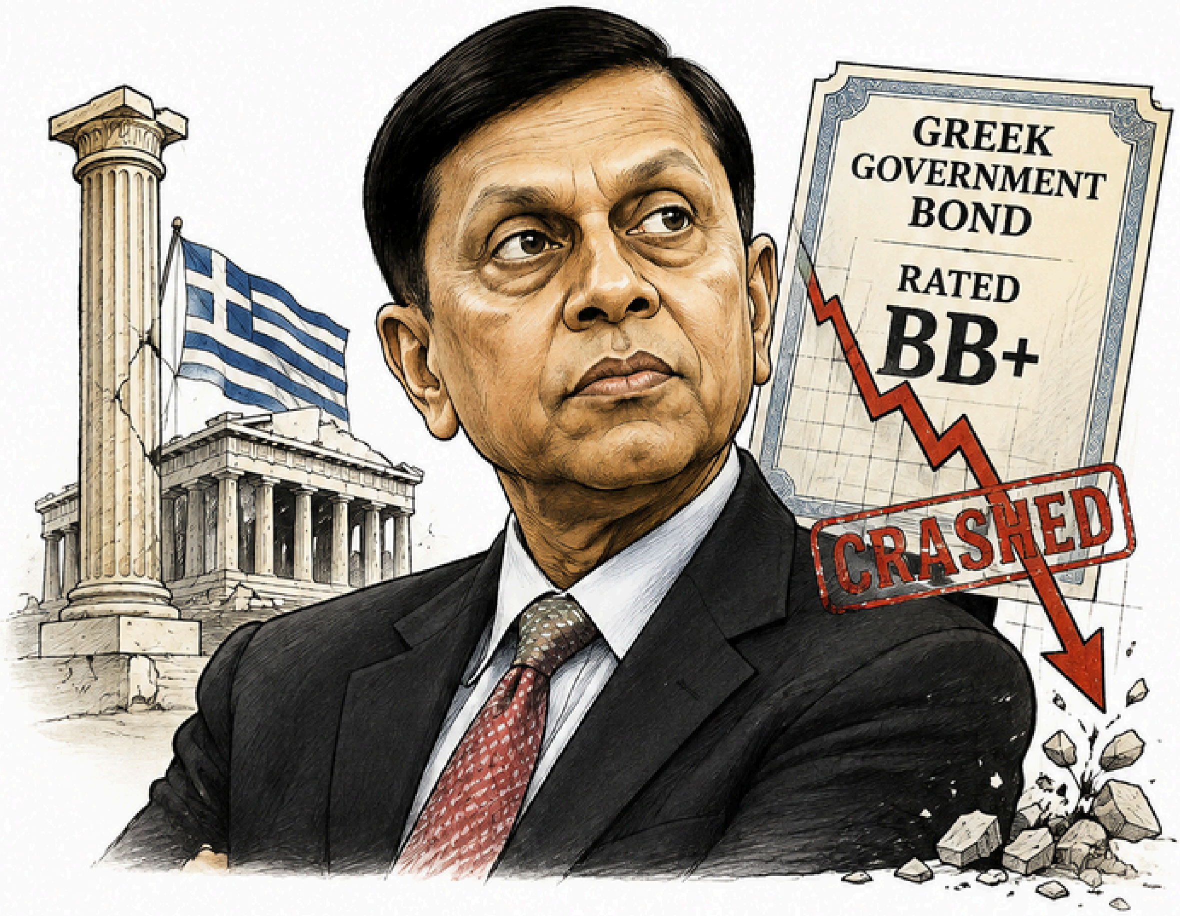
NEWSLINE
Daily by Faraz
"Questioning The Answers"

CABRAAL, THE GREEKS AND THE WONDERFUL GIFT OF HINDSIGHT



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CABRAAL, THE GREEKS AND THE WONDERFUL GIFT OF HINDSIGHT

The bonds were rated BB+. They later crashed. Fourteen years later, the question is whether Ajith Nivard Cabraal committed corruption - or simply made an investment decision which turned out badly.

Poor Ajith Nivard Cabraal. Not necessarily because he deserves our sympathy, but because the former Central Bank Governor appears to have suffered from a condition common to most human beings: he could not see the future.

At the time of the purchase, Fitch still rated Greek sovereign debt BB+. Was it a prediction of the catastrophe that followed.

The crisis subsequently deteriorated dramatically, Greece's ratings plunged and Sri Lanka lost a great deal of money. The State now alleges a loss exceeding Rs.1.84 billion and Cabraal stands before a three-judge Trial-at-Bar accused of corruption arising from the investment. He denies wrongdoing and remains innocent unless the prosecution proves otherwise.

Which brings us to the simple question at the heart of this extraordinary saga: what did Cabraal know then?

Knowing Greece was in financial difficulty is one thing. Knowing precisely what Greek bonds would be worth several months later is quite another. If Cabraal possessed information showing disaster was coming and nevertheless improperly caused public money to be invested, that is plainly serious. Produce the evidence and prove it.

But if the proposition is that Greece was risky, the bonds subsequently collapsed and therefore Cabraal should have known they would collapse, we appear to have discovered an exciting new qualification for Governor of the Central Bank: clairvoyance.

"Economics desirable. Financial experience essential. Crystal ball compulsory."

Hindsight, after all, is the world's most successful fund manager. It has never made a losing investment.

Curioser and Curioser:

There are other curiosities. Cabraal was not originally alone. Earlier proceedings over the Greek bonds involved other former Central Bank officials as well.

Those proceedings encountered legal difficulties and at one stage ended after a preliminary objection concerning the authority of the CIABOC Director General who had signed the indictment was upheld. That was a procedural ruling, not an acquittal on the merits. Further proceedings followed, other former officials were subsequently discharged, and today Cabraal stands alone.

One investment, several officials, several rounds of litigation - and now one Cabraal. Greek tragedy is beginning to resemble Agatha Christie.

There is also the inconvenient matter of an earlier Supreme Court judgment. The Greek bond investment was considered years ago in a fundamental-rights case.

That was not the criminal trial Cabraal faces today and cannot be treated as an acquittal of the present charges. But the Supreme Court declined to hold that the Monetary Board had acted arbitrarily, unreasonably or fraudulently in deciding to invest in the bonds.

That judgment cannot determine the present prosecution. Equally, it cannot simply disappear.

Perhaps the prosecution now possesses evidence that changes the picture completely. If so, let it be produced and tested. If Cabraal was corrupt, prove corruption. If he abused his office, prove it. If there is evidence demonstrating that this was something more sinister than a risky investment which subsequently went horribly wrong, put it before the judges.

Because governments make bad decisions. Central Banks make bad decisions. Ministers make bad decisions. Journalists occasionally make bad decisions too, although naturally considerably fewer. Sometimes those decisions cost enormous amounts of money.

But a bad decision is not automatically a crime, just as describing something as an investment decision cannot provide shelter for corruption. The difference is evidence.

The dangerous shortcut is altogether simpler: the investment lost money, therefore it was wrong; because it was wrong, somebody should have known; because somebody should have known, somebody must be a criminal.

That may make excellent politics. It is a rather more troublesome principle of criminal justice.

The Greeks gave the world democracy, philosophy, mathematics and tragedy. Sri Lanka may yet contribute something new: prosecution by hindsight.

Perhaps Cabraal should indeed have known in April what international rating agencies themselves would only conclude later. Perhaps every Central Bank Governor should.

In which case, next time the job becomes vacant, forget the economists and hire an astrologer.

Be that as it may, Cabraal requires neither sympathy nor political protection. He requires what every citizen standing before a criminal court is entitled to: a prosecution required to prove what he knew then, not what everybody knows now.

22A: BASL ASKS CHIEF JUSTICE TO STEP ASIDE

Bar Association raises the stakes in constitutional battle over extending judges' retirement ages, suggesting Chief Justice should recuse himself from hearing the challenges

The controversy over the proposed 22nd Amendment has moved into still more sensitive territory, with the Bar Association of Sri Lanka suggesting that Chief Justice Preethi Padman Surasena should recuse himself from hearing the petitions challenging the proposed constitutional changes.

The BASL filed a motion in the Supreme Court on Monday making the suggestion in relation to the challenges against the Bill, which seeks, among other things, to extend the retirement age of Supreme Court judges from 65 to 67 and Court of Appeal judges from 63 to 65.

The issue is particularly delicate because any extension, depending upon the legislation ultimately enacted and its application, could directly affect serving members of the superior judiciary.

The BASL has already taken a prominent position on the proposed amendment, warning earlier this month about the implications of changing judges' retirement ages and stressing the importance of protecting both judicial independence and public confidence in the administration of justice.

The latest intervention therefore takes the argument beyond whether Parliament possesses the constitutional authority to make the proposed changes. It raises the equally important question of whether justice must not only be independently administered, but must unmistakably be seen to be so.

The Supreme Court must now determine the constitutional challenges before it. The Government, meanwhile, has the parliamentary numbers to pass legislation requiring a two-thirds majority.

Whether it can do so without a referendum is precisely the question now before the Court.

For a Government elected overwhelmingly on a platform of changing Sri Lanka's political culture, 22A is rapidly becoming considerably more than an amendment about retirement ages.

The BASL motion was reported on August 25; its President and Secretary have also filed a Special Determination petition challenging the Bill.

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MANNAR: SRI LANKA GOES LOOKING FOR OIL - AGAIN

Government opens four offshore blocks covering nearly 34,000 square kilometres to international explorers in another attempt to turn Mannar's petroleum potential into commercial reality

Sri Lanka has formally opened a new international licensing round for oil and gas exploration in the Mannar Basin, offering four offshore blocks covering nearly 34,000 square kilometres to qualified international energy companies.

The Petroleum Development Authority says previous exploration has confirmed the existence of a working petroleum system in the basin, keeping alive the prospect that Sri Lanka may eventually develop commercially viable domestic oil or natural gas resources.

That "eventually" is important.

Sri Lanka has been discussing Mannar's hydrocarbon potential for years, and earlier exploration produced gas discoveries without producing the commercial energy industry once hoped for.

The new licensing round therefore represents another attempt to move the country from geological promise to actual investment, exploration and, if commercially viable reserves are established, production.

For Sri Lanka the attraction is obvious. A country which spends precious foreign exchange importing much of its energy would be transformed by a commercially significant domestic gas discovery.

Gas could potentially contribute to electricity generation while reducing exposure to imported fuels and volatile international energy prices.

But announcements are the easy part.

The real test will be whether the licensing terms attract serious international exploration companies prepared to commit the considerable capital required to establish what actually lies beneath the Mannar seabed.

Sri Lanka has spent long enough wondering whether it is sitting beside an energy prize.

It is time to find out.

The official licensing round, SL2026-01, was launched August 25 and covers four blocks totalling nearly 34,000 sq km.

DOLLY PARTON BIDS BYE BYE AT 80

Country music legend Dolly Parton has died at the age of 80, her family has announced on social media.

The Tennessee-born singer, songwriter and actress became one of the world's most recognisable entertainers during a career spanning nearly seven decades. Her best-known songs included Jolene, 9 to 5 and I Will Always Love You.

Beyond music, Parton was celebrated for her warmth, wit and philanthropy. Her Imagination Library distributed millions of free books to young children around the world.

Her husband of almost 60 years, Carl Dean, died in 2025. Parton had recently spoken publicly about continuing health difficulties.

She leaves behind an extraordinary musical legacy—and a place in popular culture few performers could ever hope to match. Be that as it may, the rhinestones may have dimmed, but the songs will endure.

PARLIAMENT'S VERY THIRSTY MOTOR CARS

Special audit raises serious questions over fuel allocations, official vehicles and millions of rupees in expenditure during the Eighth and Ninth Parliaments

A special audit into fuel and vehicle expenditure in Parliament has uncovered substantial irregularities involving allocations made to senior parliamentary office holders, raising fresh questions about the management of public money at the institution responsible for scrutinising everybody else's.

Among the findings attracting attention is fuel consumption associated with the office of Speaker during the Ninth Parliament.

The audit records average monthly consumption of 3,994 litres in 2023, rising to 6,122 litres in 2024, with expenditure reported at Rs.19.37 million and Rs.26.05 million respectively.

The Deputy Speaker's arrangements also came under scrutiny. According to the audit, 21,299 litres of fuel worth Rs.8.55 million were supplied during 2023 and 2024 for a private vehicle, in addition to fuel for three official vehicles attached to the office.

The report further identified fuel allocations exceeding prescribed limits for official vehicles.

The findings concern previous Parliaments and should not be converted into allegations of personal wrongdoing without establishing who authorised expenditure, under what rules it was provided and whether recipients themselves were responsible for any irregularity.

But those questions now require answers.

Sri Lankans have spent years being instructed about austerity, cost-reflective pricing, taxation and the need for the State to live within its means.

Parliament, which approves those taxes and debates those sacrifices, must surely be capable of explaining its own fuel bill.

Public accountability, like charity, might usefully begin at home.

The special audit covers the Eighth and Ninth Parliaments. The reported figures include 21,299 litres worth Rs.8.55 million for a private vehicle associated with the Deputy Speaker's office.

POWER: STORE THE SUN - BURN LESS FUEL

New renewable tariffs bring battery storage into the equation as regulator says reducing expensive thermal generation could help stabilise electricity prices

Sri Lanka's electricity regulator has approved new renewable-energy tariffs, including rates for battery storage, in a potentially important step towards solving one of the country's most frustrating energy problems: producing solar electricity when it is plentiful and needing electricity when the sun is no longer shining.

The Public Utilities Commission says greater reliance on renewable energy coupled with storage could also reduce Sri Lanka's dependence on thermal generation and help limit the fluctuations in electricity tariffs caused by fuel costs.

Battery storage changes the equation because surplus electricity generated by solar installations during daylight hours can be stored and released later when demand rises.

That is increasingly important as Sri Lanka expands rooftop and utility-scale solar generation. Without sufficient storage and grid flexibility, large quantities of renewable electricity arriving at the same time can themselves create difficulties for the power system.

The new tariff structure therefore goes beyond simply encouraging another round of solar panels. It begins attaching an economic value to storing renewable electricity and supplying it when the grid actually needs it.

The policy arrives as Sri Lanka also faces concern that El Niño conditions could increase electricity demand while placing pressure on hydroelectric generation.

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Sri Lanka has set itself a target of generating 70 percent of its electricity from renewable sources by 2030. Achieving that will require considerably more than ambitious percentages announced at conferences.

It will require generation, transmission and increasingly, storage.

The sun already sends Sri Lanka the fuel free of charge.

The trick is learning how to keep some of it for after dark.

PUCSL has approved the new renewable feed-in structure and battery-storage purchase rates, while separately arguing that reducing thermal generation would help stabilise tariffs.

22A: JUSTICE MUST ALSO BE SEEN

The controversy over judges' retirement ages has now reached the Supreme Court itself. Whatever the eventual decision, confidence in the process matters almost as much as the constitutional answer.

There are moments when the familiar maxim that justice must not merely be done but must manifestly be seen to be done becomes considerably more than an attractive quotation.

The controversy surrounding the proposed 22nd Amendment is one of them.

The Bar Association of Sri Lanka has now suggested that Chief Justice Preethi Padman Surasena should recuse himself from hearing the constitutional challenges to legislation proposing, among other things, to increase the retirement age of Supreme Court judges from 65 to 67 and Court of Appeal judges from 63 to 65.

The sensitivity is obvious.

The Chief Justice is due to retire under the existing constitutional arrangement in December. A change to the retirement age, depending upon its eventual wording and application, therefore raises questions which potentially touch serving members of the judiciary itself.

That does not mean a judge is incapable of deciding a constitutional question impartially merely because its consequences may affect the institution to which he or she belongs.

Judges routinely determine matters carrying consequences far beyond the litigants immediately before them.

But this is different enough to demand exceptional care.

Public confidence in the judiciary rests not merely upon actual independence but upon the appearance of independence. That principle protects judges as much as it protects litigants. Recusal should never become a weapon by which parties conveniently select the judges they would prefer. Equally, legitimate questions about apparent conflicts cannot simply be brushed aside because they are inconvenient.

The Government also bears responsibility.

It commands an enormous parliamentary majority. That gives it the constitutional ability to pursue significant reform, but numbers in Parliament are not a substitute for constitutional restraint. Indeed, overwhelming political power creates an even greater obligation to demonstrate that institutions are not being redesigned for the convenience of those presently occupying them.

There may be perfectly respectable arguments for extending judicial retirement ages. People live longer, professional careers have changed and experienced judges represent an enormous investment of institutional knowledge. Other jurisdictions retain senior judges considerably beyond Sri Lanka's present limits.

Then legislate for the future.

The controversy becomes considerably harder when constitutional change could benefit those already holding the offices whose tenure is being altered.

This is why the Supreme Court proceedings matter far beyond two additional years of judicial service.

Sri Lanka voted overwhelmingly for political change. But genuine change cannot simply mean replacing the people exercising power. It must mean changing the manner in which power is exercised.

Government must be beneath the Constitution. Parliament must be beneath the Constitution. And, however distinguished its members, the judiciary must also operate within the constitutional order it is entrusted to defend.

The Supreme Court will speak on 22A.

When it does, Sri Lanka must have confidence not merely in the answer, but in the process by which that answer was reached.

Be that as it may, the rule of law has one particularly inconvenient characteristic: it works best when nobody - government, Parliament or judge - is permitted to become the exception.

MANGALA SAMARAWEERA: THE POLITICIAN WHO DARED TO IMAGINE A DIFFERENT SRI LANKA

On the fifth anniversary of his death, the more important question is not how many offices Mangala Samaraweera occupied, but whether anything of lasting value remained after he left them

Mangala Samaraweera died from complications associated with COVID 19 on August 24, 2021. He was 65. Five years later, Sri Lanka has an opportunity to assess him beyond the warmth of friendship, the bitterness of political rivalry and the customary exaggeration that accompanies the death of a public figure.

Samaraweera served in Parliament for more than 30 years and held some of the most influential positions in government, including the portfolios of Foreign Affairs, Finance, Media, Posts and Telecommunications and Urban Development. Parliament's official record confirms more than three decades of legislative service.

But longevity is not itself an achievement. What, then, did Mangala actually do for Sri Lanka?

Perhaps his most tangible legacy was the modernisation of telecommunications. As Minister of Posts and Telecommunications under President Chandrika Kumaratunga, Samaraweera oversaw the partial privatisation of Sri Lanka Telecom and the entry of strategic investment and expertise from Japan's NTT. The process was controversial, but it helped transform an inefficient, waiting list driven telephone service into the foundation of a competitive modern communications industry.

Sri Lanka Telecom itself subsequently described the transaction as one of the country's most successful examples of privatisation. It was not Samaraweera's achievement alone, but he supplied the political leadership required to carry a difficult reform through. [Contemporary accounts](https://business today.lk/sri-lanka-telecom-in-perspective/?pdf=18111) record the sale of a 35 percent stake and the provision of shares to employees.

His second important contribution was to the idea of national reconciliation.

Samaraweera was instrumental in the Mothers' Front, which campaigned for information about those who disappeared during the violence of the late 1980s.

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Later, he promoted the Sudu Nelum movement, attempting to build public support in the South for a negotiated settlement to the ethnic conflict.

These initiatives did not deliver the reconciliation Sri Lanka still needs. Nevertheless, they represented something uncommon: a politician from Matara prepared to tell the Sinhala electorate that the grievances of Tamils and other minorities could not simply be dismissed.

As Foreign Minister after 2015, Samaraweera sought to repair relations with countries and institutions that had become increasingly critical of Sri Lanka. His diplomacy contributed to the restoration of European Union GSP Plus trade concessions and the lifting of the EU prohibition on Sri Lankan fisheries exports. These were not abstract diplomatic victories. They affected exporters, employment and access to one of Sri Lanka's most valuable markets. The Foreign Ministry documented the government's early negotiations to have the fisheries restrictions removed.

His approach to the United Nations Human Rights Council remains contested. Supporters argue that engagement reduced Sri Lanka's international isolation and created space for domestic reconciliation. Critics maintain that the government made commitments without sufficient national consultation. Both arguments deserve acknowledgement. Samaraweera, however, believed that sovereignty was strengthened by credibility and engagement, not by permanently shouting at the world.

As Finance Minister from 2017 to 2019, he inherited an economy burdened by debt, weak revenue and loss making state enterprises. He supported the new Inland Revenue framework, introduced a cost reflective fuel pricing formula and promoted Enterprise Sri Lanka and Gamperaliya.

The fuel formula was politically unpopular, but economically defensible. It attempted to prevent the Ceylon Petroleum Corporation from concealing the true cost of fuel through mounting public debt.

Treasury records confirm its introduction in May 2018 and show that cost reflective pricing contributed to an improvement in the corporation's financial performance. The Treasury's fiscal report recorded a CPC profit of approximately Rs 16 billion during the first four months of 2019.

Not every policy succeeded. Economic growth remained disappointing, the tax reforms caused considerable public resentment and many reconciliation promises were not fulfilled. Samaraweera was also a formidable partisan operator who participated fully in the combative politics of his time. He should not be converted retrospectively into a flawless statesman.

Be that as it may, his most significant contribution may have been moral rather than administrative.

He resisted the exploitation of race and religion even when such politics offered an easier road to popularity. He defended minority rights, challenged militarisation and spoke publicly for LGBTQ citizens when doing so carried political cost.

Even the JVP, while acknowledging its profound ideological differences with him, remembered that he did not employ racism or religious extremism for political advancement.

Mangala Samaraweera's Sri Lanka was outward looking, plural, socially liberal and economically modern. It remains unfinished.

Five years after his death, that may be the fairest measure of the man: not that he achieved everything he promised, but that he had the courage to imagine a country considerably better than the politics surrounding him.

PARLIAMENT: WHERE THE CARS MAY HAVE WORKED HARDER THAN THE MPS

A special audit has discovered some remarkably thirsty vehicles around Sri Lanka's Parliament. NewsLine pauses to admire the mileage.

Sri Lanka has spent years worrying about the cost of fuel.

We queued for it. We rationed it. We introduced QR codes for it. We borrowed dollars to buy it. We increased the price of it and then patiently explained to the public why using less of it would be good for everybody.

Meanwhile, somewhere around Parliament, the motor cars appear to have been extremely busy.

A special audit into fuel and vehicle expenditure during the Eighth and Ninth Parliaments has produced some rather magnificent numbers.

The audit records average monthly fuel consumption associated with the Speaker's office of 3,994 litres in 2023, rising to 6,122 litres in 2024.

Six thousand one hundred and twenty-two litres.
Per month.

We are not suggesting anything improper. Auditors exist precisely to establish what was authorised, what was used and whether expenditure complied with the rules.
But 6,122 litres deserves a moment of quiet national appreciation.

At ten kilometres per litre, that would theoretically propel a reasonably economical vehicle for more than 61,000 kilometres.
Every month.

Colombo to Jaffna is roughly 400 kilometres.

So, purely for amusement and certainly not as an allegation that anyone actually did it, there appears to have been enough fuel available for something approaching 150 Colombo-Jaffna journeys every month.

One hopes somebody at least enjoyed the scenery.

The Deputy Speaker's arrangements were not exactly running on fresh air either. The audit reportedly identified 21,299 litres of fuel worth Rs.8.55 million supplied during 2023 and 2024 for a private vehicle, alongside fuel for official vehicles attached to the office.

Again, there may be perfectly proper explanations.

Perhaps parliamentary democracy is considerably more fuel-intensive than we had realised.

The ordinary Sri Lankan, meanwhile, may be forgiven for remembering those wonderful days of the fuel queues, when obtaining ten litres involved patience, prayer, a QR code, several hours in the sun and occasionally developing a close personal relationship with the gentleman operating the petrol pump.

Still, every audit teaches us something.

This one appears to suggest that while the rest of Sri Lanka was learning fuel economy, parts of Parliament may have been pursuing a rather more ambitious programme of economic stimulus.

The MPs, of course, have frequently been accused of not going anywhere.

Their cars appear determined to prove otherwise.

Be that as it may, Parliament should provide a full explanation of the figures.

Preferably before somebody asks for the frequent-flyer miles.

SRI LANKA NEEDS AN OFCOM – BUT NOT ANOTHER GOVERNMENT CENSOR

Television, radio, newspapers, digital media and telecommunications have converged as never before. Sri Lanka's regulation has not.

It is time to consider one genuinely independent communications regulator - independent especially from the Government of the day.

A television station broadcasts a programme. A website streams it. Someone clips it for social media. A mobile telephone company carries it and thousands watch it on their phones without ever switching on a television set. So exactly who regulates what?

Welcome to communications in 2026, where technology has moved considerably faster than the people writing the rules.

Sri Lanka still approaches communications as though television is television, radio is radio, newspapers are

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newspapers and telephones are principally devices for making telephone calls. That world has disappeared.

What Sri Lanka should now seriously consider is a genuinely independent communications regulator broadly inspired by Britain's Ofcom model. Not an imitation of Britain, but a Sri Lankan institution designed for Sri Lankan conditions and answerable ultimately to the public rather than the Government.

Its remit could bring together oversight of broadcasting and telecommunications while creating a coherent regulatory framework capable of dealing with the digital communications age. Print and online news media must also have an appropriate place within that wider architecture, while preserving the fundamental distinction between legitimate regulation and government interference in journalism.

That distinction is critical. "Media regulation" can very quickly become a polite expression for regulating journalists whom governments find irritating.

An independent regulator should protect freedom of expression, not ration it. It should not decide whether an editorial was sufficiently complimentary to a Minister, whether a television interviewer asked an inconvenient question or whether a newspaper headline caused somebody in authority indigestion.

There are considerably more useful things for it to do.

Who actually owns our television and radio stations? Who ultimately controls them? Are frequencies and licences allocated fairly? Are consumers being treated properly by telephone and internet providers?

Are advertised broadband speeds remotely connected to what customers actually receive? Are complaints dealt with properly? Are dominant operators behaving fairly?

And when a customer spends half an afternoon listening to a recorded voice assuring them that "your call is important to us", there should be somewhere meaningful to go afterwards.

Telecommunications companies are no longer merely telephone companies. Their networks carry news, entertainment, banking, commerce, education and increasingly the everyday business of government itself. Their responsibilities to consumers have grown accordingly.

Yet Sri Lanka's communications oversight remains spread across different institutions, laws and regulatory traditions. Telecommunications has the TRCSL. Broadcasting has its licensing structures. Newspapers have the Press Council alongside voluntary self-regulation. Digital media inhabit an increasingly complicated world of their own.

The public, meanwhile, does not consume communications in government departments.

It consumes everything through one screen.

A Sri Lankan Ofcom could bring coherence to that system while maintaining an essential dividing line. Regulating spectrum, technical standards, competition, ownership transparency and consumer protection is one thing. Regulating what journalists are permitted to say is quite another.

The independence of such an institution would therefore matter more than its name.

Commissioners should not simply be selected by whichever Government happens to be in office. Appointments should be transparent, subject to independent scrutiny and made for fixed terms. Decisions should be published, finances open to examination and significant regulatory determinations subject to judicial review.

Most importantly, a Minister should not be able to telephone the regulator and obtain administratively what the Government could not obtain legally.

Sri Lanka has had enough experience with supposedly independent institutions to understand that printing "independent" on the letterhead does not necessarily make them so.

There is an economic argument too. Investors in broadcasting, telecommunications and digital services need predictable rules. They should know the requirements before investing rather than discovering them afterwards, preferably following twelve forms, six meetings and an introduction to somebody who knows somebody.

Consumers deserve similar certainty. Journalists deserve to know that the rules governing their profession will not change according to who is being investigated this week.

Britain's Ofcom is not perfect and Sri Lanka should not pretend otherwise. No institution exercising substantial regulatory power ever will be. But the underlying principle deserves serious examination: communications have converged and regulation must catch up.

Sri Lanka does not need another Ministry of Truth. It does not need a committee deciding what constitutes agreeable journalism. And it certainly does not need another institution into which retired favourites can be deposited with a chairman, several vehicles and, heaven forbid, another impressive fuel allowance.

What it needs is a transparent, powerful but properly constrained independent communications regulator capable of protecting consumers, promoting competition, defending freedom of expression and keeping government itself at arm's length.

The technology has changed. The audience has changed. The media have changed.

It is the regulatory architecture that is still buffering.

Be that as it may, if Sri Lanka creates its own Ofcom, the first people the new regulator must establish its independence from are not the journalists.

They are the politicians.

MAN FOUND DEAD IN PLANE LANDING GEAR COMPARTMENT AT GATWICK

An unidentified man found dead in the landing gear compartment of an Air Arabia flight at Gatwick Airport died from exposure to extreme cold and low oxygen levels, an inquest has heard.

The man's body was discovered by a ground engineer during routine checks after the aircraft arrived at Gatwick from Tangier, Morocco, on June 16.

The man was pronounced dead at the scene.

A post-mortem examination found that the cause of death was cardiac arrest, hypoxia, or low oxygen levels, and hypothermia, the inquest heard.

Coroner Joseph Turner told Horsham Coroner's Court on Tuesday (25) that conditions inside the aircraft's wheel compartment would have been extremely cold and that oxygen levels would have been low.

Turner, the West Sussex, Brighton and Hove area coroner, said he had reason to believe the death was "unnatural."

Gatwick Airport said emergency services attended an Air Arabia aircraft shortly after 11:30 a.m. on June 16 after an incident was identified following its arrival.

Sussex Police confirmed that a body had been found, while airport teams assisted police and the coroner.

The man's identity has not yet been established.

The inquest was adjourned until Feb. 24, 2027.

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