



NEWSLINE

Daily by Faraz



**"Questioning
The Answers"**



IN AMERICA, AN ATTACK ON ONE NEWSROOM BECAME A FIGHT FOR ALL. **WHY NOT HERE?**



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IN AMERICA, AN ATTACK ON ONE NEWSROOM BECAME A FIGHT FOR ALL. WHY NOT HERE?

When the White House excluded CNN, MS NOW and Politico, competing American news organisations did not treat it merely as somebody else's problem. Television networks that compete fiercely for viewers acted together because the principle at stake - whether a government may punish journalists for unfavourable reporting - was larger than any single newsroom. There was a marked absence of narcissism.

NEWSLINE

The United States media industry is hardly one harmonious family. CNN and Fox News occupy markedly different political and editorial territory. ABC, CBS and NBC compete for audiences, advertising and access. Yet when the Trump administration barred journalists from CNN, MS NOW and Politico from the White House, the response extended beyond the three organisations directly targeted.

The affected organisations launched a joint legal challenge, arguing that the withdrawal of access amounted to retaliation for constitutionally protected reporting. The White House Correspondents' Association condemned the action and demanded that access be restored. *Associated Press* and *Reuters* reported that the dispute had become a broader test of press freedom rather than simply an argument over three press passes.

More significantly, the television press pool reportedly acted collectively. Major networks including organisations that ordinarily compete with and criticise CNN suspended elements of their pool coverage after CNN was removed from an assignment. Their message was simple: a government should not be permitted to decide which established news organisation receives access according to whether it approves of that organisation's reporting.

That was not a “joint enterprise” in the legal sense. It was something much more valuable in democratic terms: institutional solidarity.

The American networks did not have to agree with CNN's editorial position. They did not have to endorse every CNN report, defend every presenter or abandon their commercial rivalry.

They merely recognised that if the government could remove one newsroom today because it disliked its coverage, every newsroom could face the same treatment tomorrow.

The contrast with Sri Lanka is uncomfortable. And in Sri Lanka the people trust that their - not the - media will be mindful of the beast they are creating.

Sri Lankan television networks, newspapers and digital platforms have all experienced political pressure in different forms. Journalists have been threatened, questioned, assaulted, sued, dismissed, quietly dropped even or subjected to organised campaigns of intimidation. Media institutions have faced restrictions on access, regulatory pressure and attempts to influence editorial decisions.

Yet the response is too often fragmented. One network's difficulty becomes another network's opportunity. Commercial rivalry, political alignment and ownership interests frequently determine whether an attack on journalism is treated as a national press-freedom issue or quietly ignored.

There are professional associations and individual journalists who speak courageously. Statements are sometimes issued and protests occasionally organised. But Sri Lanka rarely sees its major broadcasters act together with the speed, visibility and institutional force demonstrated by the American television pool.

Part of the explanation lies in ownership. Many Sri Lankan media organisations are linked to wider commercial interests whose relationships with governments matter. Part lies in political positioning: an attack on a rival newsroom may be viewed differently when that newsroom is perceived to support the opposing political camp. Part lies in the intense competition for advertising, access and audience share.

But these explanations do not excuse the failure. They describe precisely why stronger collective safeguards are necessary.

Press freedom is not protected only by constitutional language, legislation or court judgments. It is also protected by the knowledge that targeting one journalist or newsroom will provoke a response from the profession as a whole.

Sri Lanka's leading media organisations should therefore consider a formal cross-industry compact. It need not require editorial agreement. It should simply establish that when a recognised news organisation or journalist is denied access, threatened, unlawfully searched, physically attacked or punished for legitimate reporting, the industry will respond collectively and immediately.

That response could include a common statement, shared legal assistance, prominent coverage across participating networks and, in the gravest circumstances, coordinated action over access or coverage.

Such a compact would not protect dishonest journalism from criticism or lawful accountability. It would protect the principle that governments cannot decide who qualifies as a journalist according to whether the coverage is flattering.

In America, competitors recognised that CNN's exclusion was not only CNN's fight. Be that as it may, Sri Lanka's media institutions must decide whether they are merely competing businesses or joint custodians of a democratic freedom that none of them can defend alone.

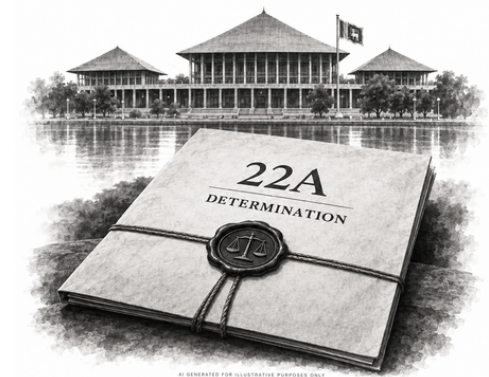
22A: THE COURT HAS SPOKEN. TODAY WE LEARN WHAT IT SAID.

The Speaker has received the Supreme Court's determination on the 22nd Amendment. Its expected announcement today will set the terms of the parliamentary battle ahead.

The controversy surrounding the 22nd Amendment enters a decisive phase today, with the Speaker expected to announce the Supreme Court's determination. Parliament has scheduled the debate for September 24 and 25, following hearings on petitions challenging the proposed legislation.

22A: THE COURT HAS SPOKEN. TODAY WE LEARN WHAT IT SAID.

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At the time of writing, the determination remained confidential. Claims that the Court has approved the proposal outright, rejected it or required a referendum would therefore run ahead of the publicly available facts.

The immediate task is to examine the actual wording when it is announced. What provisions has the Court addressed, what conditions has it identified, and what changes, if any, will the Government propose before the vote?

Be that as it may, scheduling a debate does not settle the argument. Parliament must explain why this amendment serves the public interest, while the public deserves the determination itself, clearly explained, before political interpretations harden into accepted fact.

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ONE DESK. LESS RED TAPE? BUSINESS WILL BE THE JUDGE.

The Government's new ViYASA centre opens today with a promise to help businesses navigate state bureaucracy. Success will be measured in problems solved.

Sri Lanka's entrepreneurs are being offered a new point of contact with the Government. The ViYASA National Business Facilitation Centre is scheduled to open today under the Presidential Secretariat, with a mandate to address administrative and regulatory obstacles affecting investment and industry.

Located on Hector Kobbekaduwa Mawatha in Colombo, the centre is intended to coordinate with government institutions when businesses encounter difficulties starting or operating. A dedicated website is also scheduled for launch.

The practical question is whether that coordination will shorten the journey from application to decision. Another office is useful only if it can obtain answers, resolve conflicting requirements and prevent applicants from being passed endlessly between departments.

For smaller businesses, the test should be particularly straightforward: can someone without political access obtain a clear response within a reasonable time? Published service standards, case tracking and a record of resolved complaints would give the new centre something more valuable than an opening ceremony: evidence that it works.

A CENTURY OF GUIDING. A FUTURE WITHOUT BARRIERS.

Girl Guides with disabilities have been recognised for their achievements as their branch marks its centenary. Their success deserves attention beyond the ceremony.

For the Girl Guides receiving the Blue All Round Cord at Temple Trees, the occasion recognised achievement, commitment and ability. The September 20 ceremony honoured recipients of the highest award of the Sri Lanka Girl Guides Association's Differently Abled Branch, which is marking its centenary.

Prime Minister Dr. Harini Amarasuriya said disability should never become a barrier to a child's future. She outlined planned support including a Rs. 100,000 allowance through the President's Fund for university students with disabilities, alongside improvements to accessibility and educational resources.

Those commitments matter, but the young people being celebrated are the heart of this story. Their achievements illustrate what becomes possible when participation is encouraged and opportunities are made available.

The next step is to make that opportunity ordinary. Accessible classrooms, transport, training and workplaces should allow young people with disabilities to pursue their ambitions throughout the year, with the same expectation of independence and dignity as everyone else.

A CENTURY OF GUIDING. A FUTURE WITHOUT BARRIERS.



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NO FUEL PRICE HIKE, SAYS MINISTER. HOW MUCH RELIEF?

The Government promises protection at the pump in the next revision, but the size of the proposed concession remains undecided.

Energy Minister Anura Karunathilaka said on Monday that fuel prices would not increase at the month-end revision. The Government was instead preparing a concession, following the President's announcement, although its amount had yet to be determined.

For motorists, transport operators and businesses watching their running costs, the assurance offers some breathing space. However, consumers still need the actual prices and an effective date before calculating what the announcement means for their household or business.

The distinction matters because holding prices steady and reducing them deliver different benefits. Neither should be presented as an implemented reduction before the revised schedule is published.

Be that as it may, relief deserves a clear explanation of how it will be financed and sustained.

The public should be able to see both the saving at the pump and the cost, if any, elsewhere in the public accounts.

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US\$450 MILLION IN. ANOTHER BILLION STILL TO FIND.

The BOI remains confident of its annual investment target, but the first-half figures leave substantial ground to recover.

The Board of Investment says approximately US\$450 million in foreign direct investment was realised during the first six months of 2026. Against an annual target of US\$1.5 billion, that represents 30 per cent of the required total.

Reaching the target would therefore require roughly US\$1.05 billion during the second half, more than double the first-half inflow. BOI Director General Dr. Sulakshana Jayawardena remains optimistic, pointing to applications involving both large investments and smaller projects.

The figures nevertheless need a fuller public explanation. The latest estimate is higher than the approximately US\$250 million previously cited for the period to June, while the BOI's consolidated first-half figures have yet to be formally published.

Investment can arrive unevenly, so a strong second half remains possible. But readers should distinguish between applications, commitments and money actually received.

A published breakdown explaining the revised total would make the BOI's confidence easier to assess and give the public a firmer measure of progress.

FOURTEEN NEW UNITS. CAN AMPARA SLEEP SAFELY?

New elephant-control units are being established in high-risk areas, alongside measures to strengthen field operations and maintain protective fences.

Ampara is to receive 14 new Elephant Control Units as the Government responds to human-elephant conflict in the district.

Initial work has begun, with officials instructed to accelerate completion following a meeting chaired by Environment Minister Dr. Dammika Patabendi on September 20.

The programme also includes stronger field support and village committees to help maintain electric fences and spring gates. Authorities discussed the Addalaichenai garbage dump, which attracts elephants, including a possible waste-to-energy project as a longer-term response.

For families protecting crops and homes, the practical test will be whether assistance arrives when it is needed.

New units require personnel, transport and reliable communication, while fences need regular maintenance to remain useful.

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FOURTEEN NEW UNITS...

FOURTEEN NEW UNITS. CAN AMPARA SLEEP SAFELY?



ILLUSTRATION

Protecting people and conserving elephants must advance together. Addressing waste, safeguarding habitat and involving residents should accompany emergency responses, with progress measured through fewer deaths, injuries and damaged livelihoods. The number of units opened is a starting point; safer nights are the result communities need.

ANOJAN: THE PARENTS HAVE BEEN HEARD. NOW A LIFE MUST BE SAVED.

The President has met Sivarasa Anojan's parents, while the Foreign Minister is expected to address Parliament today on efforts to secure a pardon.

The campaign to save Sri Lankan national Sivarasa Anojan, who faces a death sentence in Saudi Arabia, has reached the highest levels of Government.

President Anura Kumara Disanayake and Foreign Minister Vijitha Herath met his parents on Monday and assured them that legal and diplomatic efforts were being pursued.

Herath is scheduled to make a special statement in Parliament today.

The Foreign Ministry says it continues to monitor the case, with judicial proceedings still under way in Saudi Arabia.

The statement offers an opportunity to clarify what assistance has been provided, the present procedural position and the steps being taken to seek clemency. Sensitive diplomatic exchanges need not be disclosed, but the family deserves clear information and a dependable point of contact.

Be that as it may, political attention must translate into sustained work. Across party lines, the immediate objective should remain the protection of a Sri Lankan life through careful diplomacy, effective legal assistance and an urgent appeal for mercy.

ANOJAN: THE PARENTS HAVE BEEN HEARD. NOW A LIFE MUST BE SAVED.



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LANDSLIDE RED ALERTS: GETTING THE WARNING IS ONLY HALF THE JOB.

High-risk areas in six districts are under red warnings as persistent rain places vulnerable communities under pressure.

Landslide warnings issued on Monday cover ten districts, with Level 3 red alerts applying to specified areas within Galle, Kalutara, Kandy, Kegalle, Nuwara Eliya and Ratnapura. The bulletin runs until 4 p.m. today, September 22, unless revised.

LANDSLIDE RED ALERTS. GETTING THE WARNING IS ONLY HALF THE JOB.



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The red-alert locations include Neluwa, Walallawita, Pasbage Korale and several divisions in Kegalle and Nuwara Eliya, together with Ratnapura. These are warnings for identified localities, not a declaration that every part of the six districts faces the same danger.

Residents should follow the latest NBRO notices and instructions from local disaster-management officials, particularly where evacuation is directed. An earlier bulletin should not be treated as reassurance if conditions worsen or new instructions are issued.

The public-service test extends beyond announcing danger. Families asked to leave need transport, accessible shelter and help for children, older people and those with disabilities.

A warning becomes effective protection when people can act on it safely, promptly and without being left to manage the move alone.

MOSCOW TO COLOMBO RETURNS. WILL THE BOOKINGS FOLLOW?

Aeroflot plans to restart direct services on October 3, offering Sri Lanka's tourism businesses another opening ahead of the winter season.

Aeroflot is scheduled to resume flights between Moscow and Colombo on October 3, initially operating twice weekly. Russian Ambassador Levan Dzhagaryan said the frequency would subsequently increase, although a timetable for that expansion was not specified.

MOSCOW TO COLOMBO RETURNS. WILL THE BOOKINGS FOLLOW?

AEROFLOT | OCTOBER 3



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The airline suspended the service on May 17 during the low season. Its planned return is timed for winter travel and should make Sri Lanka more accessible to Russian holidaymakers considering a direct flight.

For hotels, guesthouses, guides and transport operators, the announcement creates an opportunity to convert interest into bookings. Additional air access can support business, but the benefits depend on how many passengers travel, how long they stay and where they spend.

The industry's task is to offer reliable service and convincing value across destinations and price ranges. More flights are welcome; the stronger result would be visitors whose spending reaches local businesses and whose experience encourages a return.

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MOSCOW TO COLOMBO...

October's arrivals will provide the first indication of how much this resumed connection delivers.

HORMUZ: ANOTHER TANKER HIT. THE DANGER HAS NOT PASSED.

A reported strike injures two crew members as shipping continues through one of the world's most consequential waterways under dangerous conditions.

A tanker was reportedly struck by an unidentified projectile in the Strait of Hormuz, injuring two crew members, according to a Monday update. The vessel continued under its own power, but the incident underlined the risks facing commercial seafarers.

Iran's Revolutionary Guard separately warned Washington that further escalation could bring new targets and weapons into the conflict.

Responsibility for the reported tanker strike was not established in the available account and should not be inferred from that warning.

HORMUZ: ANOTHER TANKER HIT. THE DANGER HAS NOT PASSED.



Shipping continues through Hormuz, although tracking reports describe severely reduced traffic.

The passage of some vessels should not be confused with a return to dependable commercial operations.

For Sri Lanka, the implications extend beyond the quoted price of crude.

Disruption can affect delivery schedules, freight and insurance costs, placing additional pressure on importers.

Be that as it may, keeping fuel prices steady at home will be easier to promise than to sustain if the journey to our ports becomes more expensive.

XI HEADS TO AMERICA. THE WORLD NEEDS MORE THAN A HANDSHAKE.

Beijing confirms a September 23 to 25 state visit as the Chinese and American presidents prepare for another round of high-level diplomacy.

China announced on Monday that President Xi Jinping would visit the United States from September 23 to 25 at President Donald Trump's invitation. Beijing said the discussions would address bilateral relations and wider questions of peace and development.

The announcement emphasised dialogue, cooperation and managing differences. Those intentions offer a starting point, but they do not establish that agreements have already been reached.

XI AND TRUMP. MORE THAN A HANDSHAKE?



For countries such as Sri Lanka, the practical interest lies in whether the meeting produces greater predictability.

Businesses planning exports, sourcing supplies or seeking investment benefit when major powers explain their policies clearly and keep commercial disputes from escalating without warning.

The visit should therefore be judged by its published outcomes and subsequent implementation.

A cordial appearance can improve the atmosphere, but durable progress requires specific commitments and evidence that both sides will honour them.

Smaller economies have good reason to welcome dialogue while waiting to see what changes after the cameras leave.



JAPAN'S STORM WARNING: THE RAIN IS THE EMERGENCY.

Dujuan brings dangerous conditions to eastern Japan, with a highest-level landslide alert issued for Oshima.

Japan faced torrential rain and strong winds on Monday as Dujuan approached its Pacific coast. Oshima in the Izu Islands received the highest-level landslide emergency warning after rainfall exceeding 300 millimetres since Saturday.

JAPAN'S STORM WARNING: THE RAIN IS THE EMERGENCY.



Authorities warned that concentrated bands of rain could worsen flooding. The disruption also reached the Asian Games, where an equestrian competition was postponed, while the Prime Minister delayed her departure for New York.

For readers following the storm from overseas, its name and projected track tell only part of the story. The immediate questions concern which communities face danger, whether transport is operating and what local authorities are instructing residents to do.

There is a relevant lesson for rain-battered Sri Lanka: warnings must lead to practical assistance. Evacuation plans need to account for people who cannot travel independently, while shelters must be accessible and ready. Forecasting danger is essential, but the quality of the response is measured by how effectively people are helped before conditions deteriorate.

PAKISTAN STRIKES. AFGHANISTAN DISPUTES THE TOLL. CIVILIANS FACE THE RISK.

Fresh airstrikes bring conflicting casualty claims and renewed fears of escalation between the neighbouring countries.

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PAKISTAN STRIKES...

Pakistan said on Monday that airstrikes had killed at least 28 militants, while Afghanistan's Taliban authorities reported at least three civilian deaths. The competing accounts must remain attributed claims rather than be combined into a single verified casualty figure.

The strikes followed deadly militant violence inside Pakistan. Islamabad accuses Afghanistan of sheltering groups responsible for cross-border attacks, an allegation the Taliban government denies.

PAKISTAN STRIKES. AFGHANISTAN DISPUTES THE TOLL. CIVILIANS FACE THE RISK.

Fresh airstrikes bring conflicting casualty claims and renewed fears of escalation between the neighbouring countries.



Afghan officials threatened a response, raising the possibility of further military exchanges. That makes independent verification of casualties and the circumstances of each attack especially important.

The wider concern is what another cycle of retaliation would mean for families living near the border.

Military announcements cannot by themselves establish whether civilians were protected or whether the threat of future attacks has diminished.

A credible response requires both scrutiny of the violence and sustained diplomatic efforts to prevent its repetition. For a region already carrying heavy security and economic pressures, another expanding confrontation would offer little reassurance.

Rajeeva Bandaranaike
Chairman,
Data Protection
Authority (DPA)
CEO Colombo Stock
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Key Note Speaker



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Director General
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Upekha Batuvantudave
Senior Director -
Regulatory Strategy
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"From Data Collection to
Data Protection:
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Legal Consultant
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