

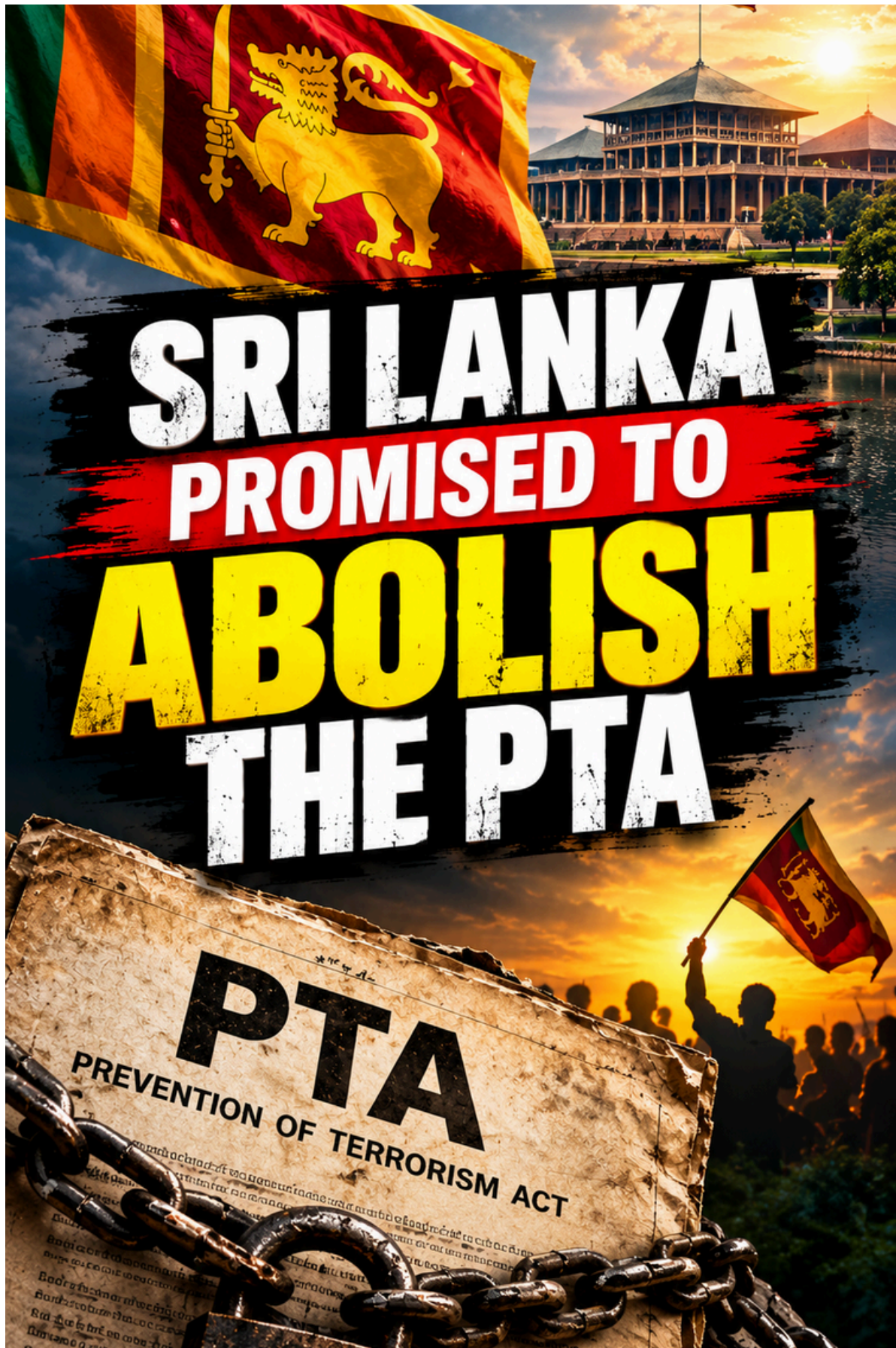


# NEWSLINE

Daily by Faraz



"Questioning  
The Answers"



SUBSCRIBE TO OUR YOUTUBE CHANNEL : @ceylonindependent



# NEWSLINE

Daily by Faraz



**“Questioning  
The Answers”**



## **SRI LANKA PROMISED TO ABOLISH THE PTA. IS ITS REPLACEMENT ANOTHER ASSAULT ON CIVIL LIBERTIES?**

Sri Lanka's proposed Protection of the State from Terrorism Bill has attracted fresh criticism from Transparency International Sri Lanka, which is calling for its withdrawal. The legislation, intended to replace the Prevention of Terrorism Act, raises fundamental questions about executive detention, judicial independence and the freedom of ordinary citizens. For a government elected on a promise of reform, the question is no longer whether the old law should disappear, but whether its replacement represents meaningful change.

Sri Lanka has spent nearly half a century living with the Prevention of Terrorism Act, legislation introduced in 1979 as a temporary response to extraordinary security circumstances.

Temporary, in the vocabulary of successive Sri Lankan governments, has proved remarkably durable. The law survived changes of government, the end of the civil war and repeated promises of repeal. Now, with a government elected on a platform that included dismantling oppressive legislation, the country faces the uncomfortable possibility that the PTA's most troubling characteristics could survive under another name.

Transparency International Sri Lanka raised fresh concerns on Thursday, October 15, about the proposed Protection of the State from Terrorism Bill, gazetted on September 22. The organisation argues that the proposed legislation contains excessively broad definitions of terrorism, expands executive authority and permits forms of administrative detention that could undermine fundamental rights.

Its objections are not confined to technical drafting deficiencies. They go to the constitutional relationship between the citizen, the judiciary and those exercising the coercive powers of the State.

Among the most significant concerns is the proposed authority of the Secretary to the Ministry of Defence to issue detention orders for an initial period of two months. Such arrangements raise the question of whether deprivation of liberty should depend principally upon executive decisions rather than independent judicial assessment.

A magistrate may have a role in the detention framework, but the essential test is whether a court can meaningfully examine the grounds for detention and order release where the law does not justify continued custody. Judicial supervision without effective judicial authority is a safeguard of questionable value.

The proposed definition of terrorism has also attracted criticism because it extends across several categories of conduct involving property, electronic systems, environmental damage and public health. The difficulty lies not in recognising that serious attacks against these interests may constitute terrorism, but in establishing sufficiently precise thresholds separating terrorism from offences properly dealt with under ordinary criminal law. Where definitions are broad and the consequences severe, the potential for disproportionate enforcement becomes a legitimate public concern. A democracy must be particularly careful when legislation designed to confront violent threats could also affect expression, association and political activity.

The Bill reportedly contains certain improvements over the existing PTA, including procedural protections and changes concerning the admissibility of confessions. Those improvements deserve recognition rather than dismissal merely because the legislation remains controversial.

Nevertheless, the existence of some safeguards does not answer the larger question of whether the framework adequately limits executive discretion. Legislation should be assessed not only by the protections it announces, but by the powers it actually permits the authorities to exercise.

The proposed involvement of the armed forces and Coast Guard in arrest, search, seizure and questioning has introduced another dimension to the debate.

Sri Lanka already possesses a police service, criminal courts and established procedures for investigating serious offences. Expanding military involvement in civilian law enforcement requires compelling justification, clearly defined responsibilities and effective mechanisms of accountability. Without those safeguards, the distinction between national security operations and ordinary policing risks becoming unnecessarily blurred.

The government has a legitimate responsibility to protect the population against terrorism. No serious argument for civil liberties requires the State to abandon that responsibility, and no democratic society can afford to disregard credible threats to public safety.

The issue is whether extraordinary powers are demonstrably necessary, proportionate and subject to independent scrutiny. The stronger the powers granted to the State, the stronger the safeguards against their misuse ought to be.

President Anura Kumara Dissanayake and the National People's Power administration inherited a country with a deeply troubled record concerning emergency powers, detention and political accountability. Their electoral mandate provided an opportunity to break with that history. The proposed legislation therefore deserves scrutiny not because this government is uniquely untrustworthy, but because the powers created by Parliament will remain available to future administrations whose intentions cannot be predicted. Good legislation must be capable of restraining bad governments as effectively as it serves governments that claim good intentions.

Transparency International has called for the withdrawal of the proposed Bill and the repeal of the PTA. The government should respond to the substance of those objections, explain why each extraordinary power is necessary and demonstrate how citizens can obtain effective remedies against unlawful detention. Public consultation, constitutional scrutiny and meaningful parliamentary debate should not be treated as inconveniences delaying reform. They are essential components of reform itself.

Be that as it may, Sri Lanka did not endure decades of controversy over the PTA merely to discover that the argument must begin again with a different title printed on the legislation. A government's commitment to liberty is measured less by its speeches about democracy than by the powers it is prepared to surrender. If the proposed replacement genuinely represents progress, its architects should welcome the closest possible examination. The citizen should never be required to accept that freedom is safest when the State is given greater power to restrict it.

## **SRI LANKA'S ELEPHANTS ARE LOSING THEIR FORESTS. ITS VILLAGERS ARE LOSING THEIR LIVES. WHO IS PROTECTING EITHER?**

Sri Lanka's human-elephant conflict has become one of the deadliest in the world, with hundreds of elephants and more than a hundred people dying annually. Fresh reporting has exposed the extraordinary sacrifices being made by rural communities forced to share increasingly fragmented habitats with hungry elephants. Behind the familiar language of conservation lies a national failure to reconcile environmental protection with the safety and livelihoods of ordinary people.

For generations, Sri Lanka has celebrated the elephant as a symbol of national identity, religious tradition and natural heritage. Its image appears in tourism promotions, cultural processions and countless expressions of national pride. Yet the relationship between the country and its elephants has become increasingly tragic, particularly for rural communities living along the boundaries of shrinking forests. The animal admired by visitors and celebrated in national imagery is also the animal that some villagers fear encountering on the journey home.

**SUBSCRIBE TO OUR YOUTUBE CHANNEL : @ceylonindependent**



# NEWSLINE

Daily by Faraz



**“Questioning  
The Answers”**



## SRI LANKA'S ELEPHANTS...

A Reuters investigation published this week presents disturbing evidence of the scale of the conflict. Since 2019, an average of approximately 138 people and 402 elephants have died annually in encounters associated with human-elephant conflict. The figures place Sri Lanka among the countries suffering the highest human death tolls from elephant encounters, while its elephant mortality has been described as the world's highest. Behind those statistics are families deprived of breadwinners, farmers forced to abandon livelihoods and animals increasingly driven into human settlements in search of food.

The consequences extend far beyond deaths. In some affected communities, school schedules have been adjusted to reduce the danger of children travelling when elephants are likely to be nearby. Families organise work, social activities and even funerals around the possibility of encounters with elephants. Agricultural activity becomes more hazardous, while the destruction of crops and property places additional pressure on households already struggling with rising costs. The freedom to move safely between home, school and workplace, taken for granted elsewhere, has become a daily calculation of risk.

One particularly distressing account concerns a wildlife officer and his wife who were attacked when an elephant entered their property seeking food. The woman lost a leg, while her husband suffered serious injuries. Their experience illustrates the inadequacy of treating human-elephant conflict as a matter of compensation for damaged crops or occasional emergency intervention. A permanent disability changes the economic, emotional and practical circumstances of an entire household, often for the remainder of the victim's life.

The underlying environmental problem is well established. Forest clearance, agricultural expansion, infrastructure development and fragmented habitats have progressively reduced the space available for elephants to move and forage. Elephants do not recognise administrative boundaries, land titles or the convenient distinctions between conservation zones and commercial development. Their movements are influenced by food, water, breeding patterns and traditional migration routes. When those routes intersect with villages and cultivated land, conflict becomes increasingly difficult to avoid.

Electric fencing remains an important protective measure, but its effectiveness depends on appropriate placement, maintenance and an understanding of elephant movement. A fence installed without adequate ecological planning can protect one community while shifting the danger towards another. Broken or poorly maintained barriers may provide little reassurance to families living nearby. The question is not simply how many kilometres of fencing the government has constructed, but whether those installations have demonstrably reduced injuries, deaths and property damage.

Sri Lanka must also confront the consequences of land-use decisions made over decades. Development projects, agricultural settlements and commercial activity have frequently been pursued without sufficient consideration of wildlife corridors and habitat connectivity. Once elephants are displaced, emergency measures become expensive, difficult and sometimes dangerous. It is considerably easier to approve a development proposal on paper than to persuade a hungry elephant that the land it once occupied is no longer available.

The economic consequences are substantial. Rural households can lose crops, working days, property and family members, while the State must meet the costs of wildlife management, emergency responses and compensation. At the same time, elephants remain an important attraction for Sri Lanka's tourism industry, contributing to the country's international reputation as a wildlife destination. There is an obvious question of equity when the economic benefits of wildlife tourism are enjoyed across the country while the greatest risks are concentrated among communities least equipped to absorb them.

Successive administrations have announced programmes to address the conflict, but the continuing mortality figures demand a more rigorous assessment of results. The government should publish comprehensive district-level information on human deaths, elephant deaths, injuries, compensation payments, fencing expenditure and habitat restoration. Such information would allow the public to distinguish between policies that are working and initiatives that merely provide opportunities for official announcements. Conservation cannot be judged by the number of committees appointed or the quantity of equipment purchased.

A credible national response must protect people without treating elephants as expendable obstacles to development. It must recognise that farmers have a right to cultivate their land safely and that wildlife requires viable habitats if conflict is to be reduced over the long term. Those objectives are not inherently contradictory, although achieving them requires political commitment, scientific planning and sustained investment. The families living with the danger deserve more than sympathy whenever another tragedy attracts national attention.

Be that as it may, Sri Lanka cannot continue celebrating its elephants in tourism advertisements while leaving villagers to defend themselves against the consequences of environmental mismanagement. Nor can it claim to value conservation while permitting the steady destruction of the habitats on which that conservation depends. The deaths of people and elephants are not separate problems competing for public attention. They are evidence of the same policy failure, and both deserve a government prepared to measure success in lives saved rather than promises made.

## **RS. 330 MILLION IN DONATED CANCER MEDICINES. WILL THEY REACH THE PATIENTS WHO NEED THEM?**

Sri Lanka has received cancer medicines valued at Rs. 330 million from a United States-based charitable organisation, providing welcome assistance to a public healthcare system facing continuing financial and procurement pressures. But the donation raises an equally important question about accountability. How will the medicines be distributed, how quickly will patients receive them, and can the Ministry of Health demonstrate that every donated dose is being used effectively?

Sri Lanka's public healthcare system has received a welcome contribution in the form of oncology medicines valued at approximately Rs. 330 million, donated by Latter-day Saint Charities, an organisation affiliated with The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the United States. The medicines were formally handed over to the Ministry of Health and Mass Media on October 14, with the donation announced publicly the following day. At a time when cancer treatment places considerable financial pressure on patients, families and public hospitals, assistance of this nature deserves recognition. It also deserves the highest standards of transparency.

The donated medicines include Oxaliplatin injections, Abiraterone tablets and Methotrexate injections, all used in the treatment of particular cancers. These are not interchangeable products that can simply be distributed wherever a shortage exists. Their clinical use depends upon diagnosis, treatment protocols, patient eligibility and specialist supervision. The Ministry must therefore ensure that the medicines are allocated according to verified clinical requirements rather than administrative convenience.

The donation forms part of a continuing programme of humanitarian assistance. According to the Ministry's announcement, the organisation has provided cancer medicines worth approximately Rs. 660 million over the preceding two years. A separate agreement has now been signed for the provision of 600 specialised wheelchairs for patients with spinal cord injuries, following an earlier donation of 570 wheelchairs in 2023. These contributions represent substantial assistance to patients whose medical needs frequently extend beyond what their families can afford.

There is, however, an important distinction between receiving medicines and delivering treatment. A consignment may be handed over at an official ceremony, recorded in an inventory and acknowledged through a certificate of appreciation without immediately reaching a patient. Effective healthcare requires the entire distribution process to function, from receipt and quality assurance to storage, allocation, prescription and administration. Any interruption along that chain can reduce the practical value of even the most generous donation.

NEWSLINE has previously examined the difficulties encountered by cancer patients when medicines are delayed by procurement, regulatory or distribution problems. The experience of patients travelling considerable distances to hospitals only to discover that a prescribed medicine is unavailable illustrates the human consequences of administrative failure. Such circumstances are especially distressing in oncology, where treatment schedules may be clinically significant and delays can create additional anxiety for patients and their families. The availability of a medicine somewhere within the State system is of little consolation to someone unable to obtain it when required.

The latest donation therefore presents an opportunity for the Ministry to demonstrate how a transparent distribution system should operate. It could publish the quantities received, relevant batch and expiry information, the hospitals designated to receive the products and the dates on which distribution is completed. Appropriate safeguards for patient confidentiality would remain essential, but those safeguards need not prevent meaningful public reporting on medicine availability.



# NEWSLINE

Daily by Faraz



**“Questioning  
The Answers”**



## RS. 330 MILLION...

Transparency should be regarded as a routine obligation rather than a concession made in response to criticism.

There is also the question of whether donated medicines are addressing temporary shortages or filling gaps that should ordinarily be covered through public procurement.

Charitable assistance can strengthen a healthcare system, particularly when specialised medicines are expensive or difficult to obtain. It should not become a substitute for reliable forecasting, timely purchasing and responsible management of public resources. A country cannot build a sustainable oncology service around the assumption that generous overseas organisations will repeatedly rescue patients from supply difficulties.

The financial value attached to the donation is substantial, but its clinical value depends on the number of patients who can benefit and the extent to which the medicines match current treatment requirements.

The Ministry should be able to establish whether the products correspond to existing shortages, anticipated demand or supplementary treatment capacity. It should also explain whether receiving these medicines will reduce planned government expenditure and, if so, how any savings will be applied. Public accountability does not diminish charitable generosity; it helps ensure that generosity produces the greatest possible benefit.

The wheelchair programme deserves similar attention. Specialised wheelchairs are medical and rehabilitation devices requiring proper assessment, fitting, training and maintenance. The inclusion of training for healthcare professionals is therefore a significant component of the agreement. The real measure of success will be whether suitable patients receive appropriate equipment and continuing support, not merely whether the announced number of wheelchairs eventually arrives in Sri Lanka.

The Ministry of Health, under Minister Nalinda Jayatissa, has an opportunity to establish a straightforward standard for reporting on donated medical supplies.

Every major donation could be accompanied by a public account of what was received, where it was distributed and whether the intended patients benefited. Such reporting would also help donors understand the impact of their contributions and strengthen confidence in Sri Lanka's public healthcare institutions. The objective should be a system in which accountability is automatic rather than dependent upon persistent questioning by journalists or patients.

Be that as it may, the most important person in this story was not present at the handing-over ceremony.

That person is the cancer patient waiting for treatment, perhaps after travelling for hours, perhaps after borrowing money for transport, and perhaps with a family already exhausted by the demands of serious illness. For that patient, the value of the donation will not be measured in millions of rupees or official expressions of gratitude. It will be measured by whether the prescribed medicine is available when the doctor says it is needed.

## SRI LANKA'S NEXT FLOOD DISASTER MAY ALREADY BE FORMING. IS THE GOVERNMENT PREPARED?

Fresh warnings of heavy rainfall, flooding and landslides have brought Sri Lanka's disaster preparedness back into focus. With communities still carrying the consequences of previous natural disasters, the question is whether the authorities have converted painful experience into effective preparation. Early warnings are valuable, but they are not a substitute for functioning drainage, safe evacuation facilities and a State capable of protecting its most vulnerable citizens.

Sri Lanka is once again confronting the familiar prospect of heavy rainfall, overflowing waterways and landslides, with weather warnings drawing attention to the risks facing several parts of the country. The immediate responsibility of the authorities is to assess the developing conditions and communicate credible information to the public. The larger responsibility is considerably more demanding. It involves ensuring that the country's disaster management arrangements are capable of protecting lives and livelihoods before an emergency becomes a national tragedy.

The distinction matters because Sri Lanka has experienced enough destructive floods and landslides to understand their consequences. Entire communities have been displaced, roads and bridges have been damaged, agricultural land has been inundated and families have lost homes that took decades to acquire. The financial consequences extend well beyond emergency expenditure, affecting employment, education, healthcare and the ability of households to recover from sudden economic shocks. For poorer families, a single flood can destroy what little financial security they possess.

The experience of Cyclone Ditwah in November 2025 should remain an important reference point for assessing the country's emergency preparedness. It demonstrated the vulnerability of infrastructure and communities to extreme weather, while raising questions about the adequacy of protective arrangements. The proper response to such an event is not merely to repair damaged facilities and restore services. It is to examine the failures revealed by the disaster and establish whether corrective measures have actually been completed.

Sri Lanka has institutions responsible for meteorological forecasting, disaster management, irrigation, local government and emergency response. Their existence should provide a framework for coordinated action, but institutional responsibility is not necessarily the same as operational readiness. A weather warning issued by one agency must reach the communities most exposed to danger, while other authorities must be ready to assist people who cannot safely remain in their homes. Effective disaster management depends upon those responsibilities being clearly assigned and exercised without avoidable delay.

The condition of drainage systems deserves particular attention. In many urban and semi-urban areas, construction, blocked waterways, inadequate maintenance and the disappearance of natural flood-retention areas have increased vulnerability to heavy rainfall.

Some flooding may be unavoidable during exceptional weather, but its severity can be influenced by planning decisions and routine maintenance. The public is entitled to know whether drainage improvements promised after earlier floods have been completed and whether the relevant authorities can demonstrate that those investments have reduced risk.

In rural areas, the challenges are different but no less serious. Communities living near rivers, reservoirs and unstable slopes may have limited transport options and fewer opportunities to relocate temporarily. Farmers face the possibility of losing crops and livestock, while small businesses may be unable to withstand prolonged interruptions. Families must often decide whether to abandon their property before the full extent of the danger becomes apparent. Those decisions become considerably more difficult when official warnings are inconsistent or evacuation arrangements are unclear.

The government should therefore be able to explain the present state of its emergency shelters, rescue equipment, transport arrangements and communication systems. District and divisional authorities ought to maintain current information about vulnerable households, particularly elderly residents, people with disabilities and those requiring continuing medical treatment. An evacuation plan that assumes everyone can travel independently is unlikely to serve the people most in need of assistance. Preparedness must be judged by its ability to protect those who cannot readily protect themselves.

There is also the question of public expenditure. Disaster prevention rarely attracts the political attention associated with major reconstruction projects, although effective prevention can reduce both human suffering and future financial losses. Maintaining waterways, strengthening vulnerable infrastructure and improving warning systems may be less visible than distributing relief supplies after a catastrophe. Nevertheless, those activities are fundamental responsibilities of government. The public should be able to examine how much has been allocated to risk reduction and whether the expenditure has produced measurable results.

Climate change adds urgency to these questions without removing responsibility from national and local authorities. More intense rainfall and changing weather patterns may increase the difficulty of planning, but they also strengthen the case for better infrastructure and more reliable emergency arrangements. Governments cannot control the weather, and it would be unreasonable to demand that they do so. They can, however, control many of the decisions that determine whether predictable hazards become avoidable disasters.

Sri Lanka should publish a clear assessment of its readiness for the present period of adverse weather, including the areas of greatest concern and the arrangements available to residents. Such an assessment would provide reassurance where systems are functioning and expose weaknesses where urgent action remains necessary. It would also allow the public to distinguish between the unavoidable consequences of extreme weather and losses aggravated by preventable administrative failures.



# NEWSLINE

Daily by Faraz



**“Questioning  
The Answers”**



## SRI LANKA'S NEXT FLOOD..

Be that as it may, the true measure of disaster management is not the speed with which ministers arrive at flooded villages or the number of relief packages distributed before television cameras. It is whether families receive timely warnings, whether they have somewhere safe to go and whether essential services continue when danger arrives. Sri Lanka has already paid dearly for lessons in disaster preparedness. The country should not have to purchase the same lessons repeatedly with the lives and livelihoods of its citizens.

## SRI LANKA'S CREDITORS MAY BE SATISFIED. BUT ARE ITS PEOPLE RECOVERING?

Sri Lanka's debt restructuring and continuing engagement with the International Monetary Fund have restored a measure of international financial confidence. Yet the improvement in macroeconomic indicators has not automatically translated into economic security for ordinary households. As the country approaches another phase of debt servicing, the government faces a fundamental test: can it sustain financial stability while delivering a recovery that citizens can actually experience?

Sri Lanka's emergence from sovereign default has been accompanied by considerable attention to debt restructuring, international reserves, fiscal targets and the assessments of multilateral lenders. These are important measures of financial stability, particularly for a country that experienced an extraordinary economic collapse in 2022. The restoration of confidence among creditors and international institutions has genuine economic value. Nevertheless, the question confronting millions of Sri Lankans is whether improvements in national financial indicators are producing meaningful improvements in their daily lives.

Recent reporting on the continuing restructuring process and the International Monetary Fund's engagement with Sri Lanka provides an opportunity to examine the next stage of recovery. The country has made progress in restoring a degree of financial order, but the obligations arising from its restructured debt have not disappeared. They have been reorganised into a repayment framework that will require sustained economic performance and fiscal discipline. The success of that framework depends not only upon the government's ability to meet scheduled payments, but also upon the economy's capacity to generate the income necessary to support them.

The distinction between financial stabilisation and economic recovery is frequently overlooked in political debate. Stabilisation can mean that inflation has been brought under greater control, foreign exchange availability has improved and the immediate risk of another financial crisis has diminished. Recovery, however, should also mean that households can afford essential goods, businesses can invest, employment opportunities are expanding and public services are functioning adequately. A country may achieve progress in the first category while remaining seriously deficient in the second.

For many households, the economic consequences of the crisis have proved lasting. Higher taxes, increased utility charges, reduced purchasing power and the depletion of savings have placed substantial pressure on family budgets. Some households have been forced to reduce expenditure on education, nutrition and healthcare, while others have relied increasingly on borrowing or financial assistance from relatives. The return of a degree of macroeconomic stability does not automatically reverse those losses. A family that has sold assets or accumulated debt cannot restore its former position merely because an international financial institution reports satisfactory progress.

Sri Lanka's poverty problem is especially significant. Economic hardship is not confined to those traditionally classified as poor, but extends to households whose incomes are insufficient to withstand even modest increases in essential expenditure. The consequences are visible in the difficult choices families make between food, transport, education and medical treatment. A recovery programme that does not progressively improve those circumstances risks producing a country that is financially more stable but socially more unequal.

The government must also confront the challenge of generating sufficient economic growth to support future debt obligations. Taxation can increase revenue, and expenditure controls can improve fiscal balances, but neither provides a permanent substitute for expanding productive activity. Sustainable repayment capacity ultimately depends upon businesses producing goods and services, workers earning incomes and the economy generating foreign exchange. Without stronger investment, exports and productivity, the burden of adjustment may remain concentrated upon taxpayers and consumers.

This is particularly relevant as Sri Lanka approaches the next phase of external debt servicing. The public deserves a clear account of the repayment obligations falling due over the coming years, the assumptions underlying those projections and the consequences if economic growth falls below expectations. Such information should be presented in terms that citizens can understand rather than confined to technical documents intended principally for financial specialists. Debt sustainability is too important to be treated as a discussion reserved for economists and international creditors.

The role of the International Monetary Fund must be examined with similar care. The IMF provides financing, policy advice and a framework intended to restore confidence in countries experiencing serious balance-of-payments difficulties. Its involvement can support reforms that governments might otherwise struggle to implement. Yet the distributional consequences of those reforms remain legitimate subjects of public debate, particularly when fiscal adjustment affects households with limited financial resources.

The Sri Lankan government cannot reasonably attribute every unpopular decision to the IMF while claiming exclusive credit for improvements in financial stability. It remains responsible for the choices made within the reform programme, including the design of taxes, the allocation of public expenditure and the protection of vulnerable groups. Equally, critics of the programme must acknowledge that abandoning fiscal discipline without a credible alternative could expose the country to renewed instability. The challenge is to reconcile financial responsibility with social justice rather than pretend that one can permanently replace the other.

There is also an important democratic dimension. Citizens who bear the costs of economic adjustment are entitled to understand how those sacrifices contribute to a better future. The government should publish accessible information about the progress of restructuring, the implications of future repayments and the measures intended to stimulate investment and employment. Parliamentary scrutiny should extend beyond approving fiscal measures to examining whether the underlying recovery strategy is delivering its stated objectives.

Sri Lanka has an opportunity to move from emergency economic management towards a more durable model of growth. That will require greater emphasis on productivity, export competitiveness, education, investment and the quality of public institutions. It will also require recognising that the credibility of economic policy depends upon the public believing that the benefits and burdens of reform are distributed fairly. Stability achieved at the expense of lasting social hardship is unlikely to command indefinite public consent.

Be that as it may, the approval of creditors is not the final verdict on a country's recovery. International institutions may judge success through fiscal balances, reserve levels and repayment capacity, but citizens measure it through wages, household expenses, employment and the ability to plan for the future. Sri Lanka needs both financial credibility and public confidence, and neither can safely be neglected. The ultimate achievement will not be that the country has learned how to repay its creditors, but that its people have regained the means to live with dignity.