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Daily by Faraz



**“Questioning
The Answers”**





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CHANNEL 4 UK GOES TO DISNEY+.

WHITHER INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM? DISPATCHES?

The financial terms remain undisclosed. The future of investigative programming on Disney+ is unclear. And the founding purpose of Britain's publicly owned broadcaster raises questions that cannot be answered by commercial enthusiasm alone.

Britain's Channel 4 has entered into a landmark distribution agreement with American entertainment giant Disney, opening the way for its programmes to reach Disney+ subscribers in Britain and Ireland from early 2027. The arrangement promises new audiences and commercial opportunities for a broadcaster facing the relentless migration of viewers from traditional television to streaming platforms. But it also raises fundamental questions about the future of independent British production and the investigative journalism that has distinguished Channel 4 for more than four decades.

Neither party has disclosed the financial value of the agreement. There is no publicly confirmed minimum guaranteed payment, licensing fee or overall revenue-sharing formula. Channel 4 will continue selling advertising on its live channel carried through Disney+, while Disney will sell advertising around Channel 4's on-demand programming. The commercial returns to Channel 4 under the latter arrangement remain undisclosed.

This matters because Channel 4 is no ordinary commercial television company. Publicly owned but commercially funded, it was established under the Broadcasting Act 1980 and began broadcasting in November 1982 with a distinctive mission.

It was intended to broaden the range of British television, encourage innovation, provide opportunities for independent production companies and give expression to perspectives frequently overlooked by established broadcasters.

Its publisher-broadcaster model helped transform Britain's independent television industry. Instead of producing most programmes internally, Channel 4 commissioned outside companies, opening opportunities for documentary makers, investigative journalists and creative enterprises. The arrangement was designed to encourage diversity and competition in programme-making, not simply maximise returns for television distributors.

Over the years Channel 4 programmes picked up several awards for outstanding journalism and creativity.

That founding principle deserves renewed attention as Channel 4 embraces one of the world's most powerful entertainment corporations. Disney+ offers considerable commercial advantages, but the question is whether the programmes that made Channel 4 different will enjoy the same opportunities as its popular entertainment offerings.

Consider *Dispatches*, the broadcaster's award-winning investigative documentary series, or *Unreported World*, which has brought audiences powerful reporting from conflict zones and neglected communities. Channel 4's journalism has examined Gaza, Sri Lanka, Syria and other politically sensitive subjects, often challenging official accounts and confronting institutions that would prefer uncomfortable questions to remain unanswered.

Will Disney+ carry these investigations? Will documentaries concerning military operations, intelligence agencies, corporate misconduct and allegations of human rights abuses receive meaningful distribution? And who will decide which programmes are included in the streaming catalogue?

The initial announcement highlights entertainment productions, including *Maya*, *Stepping Up* and *Celebrity SAS: Who Dares Wins*. There is nothing objectionable about entertainment, which forms an important part of Channel 4's output. But the absence of its celebrated investigative strands from the announced examples warrants clarification, particularly because programme selection is expected to involve both Channel 4 and Disney.

That absence does not mean investigative programmes have been excluded. The agreement also includes distribution of Channel 4's live television channel, potentially making scheduled news and current-affairs programmes accessible through Disney+. Nevertheless, access to a live broadcast and prominent availability within an on-demand catalogue are entirely different propositions.

Editorial independence is equally important. There is no evidence that Disney has obtained editorial authority over Channel 4 News or its investigative documentaries. But a broadcaster can retain complete editorial independence while becoming increasingly dependent upon commercial platforms for distribution. Decisions concerning programme selection, prominence, recommendations and discoverability can significantly influence whether important journalism reaches its intended audience.

Britain's independent production companies also have a substantial interest in the agreement. Channel 4 was specifically designed to nurture this sector, and its commissions have supported thousands of creative jobs and internationally successful productions. Whether independent producers will receive additional financial benefits from Disney+ distribution, and how existing intellectual-property and licensing arrangements will be protected, are questions deserving clear answers.

There are sound commercial reasons for Channel 4 to pursue such partnerships. Traditional television audiences are shrinking, advertising revenues face pressure and younger viewers increasingly turn to international streaming services. Greater distribution could generate additional income, support British production and ultimately strengthen Channel 4's public-service mission. Commercial adaptation is not, in itself, a betrayal of that mission.

Be that as it may, commercial necessity and enthusiasm, cannot become an excuse for diminished transparency. Channel 4 is a publicly owned institution, and the public has a legitimate interest in understanding the financial arrangements, the protections afforded to independent producers and the safeguards surrounding its most challenging journalism.

The agreement is not a sale of Channel 4, nor is there evidence that its editorial independence has been surrendered. It is a distribution partnership whose commercial benefits may prove substantial. But those benefits should be measured against the broadcaster's statutory responsibilities and the principles that justified its creation.

Channel 4 was established because Britain recognised that broadcasting required something more than commercial popularity. It needed different voices, creative independence and journalism willing to question powerful interests.

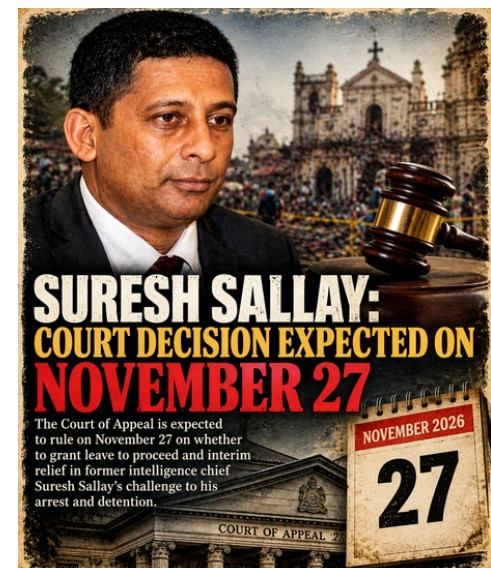
Disney may offer Channel 4 a larger audience. What remains to be established is whether that audience will have meaningful access to the investigations, documentaries and uncomfortable truths that have helped make Channel 4 an indispensable part of British public-service broadcasting.

The commercial opportunity is clear. The financial return remains undisclosed. Be that as it may, the protection of Channel 4's founding mission deserves answers.

(By Faraz Shauketaly. www.shauketaly.com)

SURESH SALLAY: COURT DECISION EXPECTED ON NOVEMBER 27

The Court of Appeal is expected to rule on November 27 on whether to grant leave to proceed and interim relief in former intelligence chief Suresh Sallay's challenge to his arrest and detention.



The Court of Appeal is expected to deliver its decision on November 27 concerning the substantive legal

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challenge brought by retired Major General Suresh Sallay, former Director of the State Intelligence Service, against his arrest and detention under the Prevention of Terrorism Act.

The court recently dismissed applications by several Buddhist monks seeking to intervene in the proceedings. That decision did not determine the merits of Sallay's own petition, which challenges the legality of his detention in connection with investigations into the 2019 Easter Sunday attacks.

Meanwhile, investigators have presented fresh allegations concerning the suppression of intelligence following the bombings. Sallay's lawyers have rejected the allegations.

Be that as it may, the November 27 decision could prove an important development in a case that continues to raise fundamental questions about due process, intelligence accountability and the pursuit of justice for the Easter victims.

Editorial clarification: November 27 is the reported date for a decision on leave to proceed and interim relief, not necessarily a final determination of Sallay's substantive writ petition.

SPAIN'S RAIL HORROR: AT LEAST 110 DEAD IN TWO DISASTERS

Two railway disasters. Nine months apart. At least 110 lives lost.

Spain is confronting another national tragedy after two high-speed trains collided near Urda, in Toledo province, on Wednesday, killing at least 64 people. Combined with the 46 deaths in January's Adamuz disaster, the toll from the two collisions presents a devastating picture.

Wednesday's figure remained provisional as emergency teams searched the wreckage. Carriages had derailed, debris lay scattered down an embankment, and families faced the agonising wait for news.

Initial accounts indicated that a Renfe service struck a stationary Iryo train. The circumstances remained under investigation. Reports of signalling difficulties require examination before responsibility can be established.

But the questions are already unavoidable.

What safeguards should have prevented one high-speed train from striking another? What did the control room know? What instructions were issued? And what lessons from January had actually reached the railway?

Be that as it may, public anger cannot replace evidence. Equally, an investigation cannot become a waiting room in which accountability quietly expires.

Spain's authorities owe the bereaved a precise account of events, supported by signalling records, communications and maintenance evidence.

The combined figure of at least 110 relates to these two disasters. Behind that arithmetic are families whose journeys have ended, and a country entitled to know why.

WILL WE BE SHOT OF NETANYAHU? NOT SO FAST

Benjamin Netanyahu has encountered an awkward opponent: parliamentary arithmetic.

Provisional results from Israel's election placed his bloc on 53 seats, eight short of the majority required in the 120-member Knesset. Gadi Eisenkot's bloc stood at 48, with Arab parties holding 19.

Those figures, with approximately 85.6 per cent of the total vote counted, offered the possibility of Netanyahu's departure. They did not establish it.



The distinction matters.

An election can deny a leader a majority without producing an agreed replacement.

Netanyahu's opponents must still turn their combined numbers into a workable political arrangement.

On the provisional tally, Eisenkot's bloc and the Arab parties together would cross the 61-seat threshold.

Yet Eisenkot's resistance to an alliance with Arab parties exposes the distance between possessing the numbers and being prepared to use them.

Be that as it may, Netanyahu cannot claim a governing mandate merely because Likud emerges as the largest individual party.

The test is whether he can assemble sufficient parliamentary support.

Nor can his opponents declare the job completed while leaving their own route to government unresolved.

Outstanding ballots could alter the balance. Coalition negotiations could alter it again.

For those asking whether Israel will finally be shot of Netanyahu, the answer remains conditional: the door to his departure is open, but someone must still construct a majority capable of walking through it.

GOTABAYA'S FORMER SECRETARY: MORE REMAND, QUESTIONS REMAIN

Sugeeshwara Bandara, former private secretary to former President Gotabaya Rajapaksa, has been further remanded until November 11.

The Colombo Magistrate's Court extended his custody on Wednesday in proceedings concerning allegations that he received two salaries under the presidential expenditure head.

A remand order is not a conviction. The allegation must be proved through the judicial process, and Bandara remains entitled to the presumption of innocence.

But the public is entitled to answers about the public purse.

What appointments did he hold? What salary attached to each? Who approved the payments? Which officials checked whether the arrangements complied with the rules?

Government money does not ordinarily leave the Treasury through the actions of a single recipient. There are appointment letters, payroll instructions, authorisations and officials charged with checking them.

That paper trail matters.

Be that as it may, neither proximity to a former President nor the political appeal of a prosecution establishes criminal responsibility. Documents and admissible evidence must do that work.

The same standard requires investigators to examine the authorisation chain, wherever it leads.

Successive remand dates tell the public where a suspect will remain.

They do not, by themselves, explain what has been established or how proceedings are advancing. The next date is November 11.

The larger question is whether the case will deliver a timely, evidence-based account of how these payments were made.

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BRITAIN'S BUDGET: BREATHING SPACEWITH A BILL ATTACHED

Britain's Chancellor John Healey has offered households some relief from rising costs. The accompanying question is who pays, how much, and for how long.

Around 20 million households in council tax bands A to D are to receive a £100 energy payment. Gas standing charges will be abolished from next year, although their fixed costs will move into unit prices.



That detail matters. Removing a charge from one line of a bill does not make the underlying cost disappear. The Treasury estimates that 60 per cent of households will save an average £45 annually.

Banks will face a temporary doubling of their corporation tax surcharge from three to six per cent for 15 months. Savings and property income tax rates will rise by two percentage points from April 2027.

The £20,000 cash ISA limit stays. Fuel duty remains frozen. Minimum wage rates will rise by 3.9 per cent, while the Carer's Allowance earnings cliff edge is to give way to a taper.

Be that as it may, the country's financial breathing space is also narrowing. The fiscal buffer falls to £15 billion in 2029–30, against £22 billion previously envisaged.

For families, the verdict will come through their bills and bank balances. For the government, it will come through growth, borrowing costs and whether today's relief survives tomorrow's economic pressures.

ABORTED LIFT-OFF AT KATUNAYAKE: SUSPECTED BIRD STRIKE HALTS A SRI LANKAN AIRLINES FLIGHT

Passengers aboard SriLankan Airlines flight UL503 bound for London Heathrow were met with an abrupt jolt of runway adrenaline when a sudden engine bird strike forced pilots to slam the brakes mid-takeoff roll at Bandaranaike International Airport. The October 28 afternoon flight, carrying 269 passengers and 15 crew members, was accelerating down the tarmac for its scheduled 12:55 p.m. departure when a stray bird was

ingested into the aircraft's right turbine, triggering immediate cockpit alarms and halting the transcontinental journey before the jet could leave the ground.

While aviation headlines often sensationalize mid-air emergencies, this incident underscores the invisible hazards that haunt commercial aviation across South Asian airports. Wildlife strikes around runway perimeters remain an enduring operational menace.

When thousands of pounds of thrust suck feathered wildlife into turbine blades spinning at thousands of revolutions per minute, the resulting mechanical damage can transform a luxury passenger carrier into a grounded liability in milliseconds.

Fortunately, quick thinking in the flight deck prevented what could have been a catastrophic airborne disaster. Once the aircraft returned to the gate, all 269 passengers, including four young children, disembarked safely into the terminal terminal.

Ground operations scrambled to organize refreshments while sourcing a replacement aircraft, with the substitute jet eventually getting airborne by 4:30 p.m., roughly three and a half hours behind the original schedule.

While the stranded travelers eventually caught their connecting routes to Europe, the incident leaves lingering questions for airport authorities. As civil aviation regulators launch a formal inquiry into the Katunayake perimeter breach, the focus must shift beyond reactive flight swaps. Protecting national carriers from avian hazards requires rigorous wildlife management around airport perimeters, ensuring that future flights make it safely into the clouds without a flock of birds rewriting their itinerary.

STATE FUNDS AND NAVAL AMBITION: THE LONG- AWAITED DAY IN COURT ARRIVES

When a state military apparatus was repurposed to advance the personal career of a president's son, institutional integrity ceased to exist. Bringing one of the most glaring examples of dynastic entitlement back into the public spotlight, the Colombo High Court has formally concluded pre-trial conferences and today set November 23 as the official commencement date for the long-standing corruption trial against Yoshitha Rajapaksa, son of former President Mahinda Rajapaksa, alongside former Navy Commander Wasantha Karannagoda.

For the Rajapaksa family, state institutions were never administrative bodies bound by law; they appeared to be personal fiefdoms designed to subsidize their family ambitions and project international prestige.

The indictment details how former Navy Commander Wasantha Karannagoda allegedly abused his high command between September 2006 and June 2007 to maneuver state resources, securing Yoshitha Rajapaksa an elite placement at the Royal Naval College in Dartmouth, United Kingdom. While ordinary officers earned postings through merit and years of service, the Rajapaksa surname acted as an immediate golden ticket, funded by taxpayers who paid for his overseas lifestyle under the guise of naval training.

Separate indictments target Yoshitha directly for obtaining these undue financial and professional benefits. For over a decade, the Rajapaksas operated under the unshakable belief that political power granted their inner circle permanent immunity from prosecution.

STATE FUNDS AND NAVAL AMBITION: THE LONG-AWAITED DAY IN COURT ARRIVES



Foreign academy seats, state-funded travel, and rapid promotions were treated as birthrights, leaving the military hierarchy compromised and public coffers drained to feed the personal vanity of a ruling family.

Yet, locking in a trial date before High Court Judge Ravindra Premaratne is only the first step. The real test is whether the judicial system will hold Yoshitha Rajapaksa truly accountable for this calculated theft of state opportunity, or whether the proceedings will dissolve into another round of procedural delays and political compromises.

As November 23 approaches, the public is asking one direct question: will Yoshitha Rajapaksa finally face the severe, due consequences of the charges against him, or will the legal system once again confirm that the Rajapaksa name carries a permanent exemption from the rule of law?

DESTINATION SINGAPORE: GOTABAYA ASKS COURT FOR A TEMPORARY TICKET OUT

It seems Singapore remains the preferred sanctuary for former Sri Lankan heads of state when domestic climates grow uncomfortable. Former President Gotabaya Rajapaksa made a personal appearance in open court at the Colombo Fort Magistrate's Court on October 28, seeking a temporary hall pass from an active travel ban so he can fly out to the Lion City for follow-up medical care.

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THE TEA SECTOR...

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The overseas travel ban was slapped on Rajapaksa and several former intelligence chiefs in connection with ongoing investigations into the 2019 Easter Sunday terror attacks. The legal web surrounding national security failures during that tragic period continues to hold firm, ensuring that high-profile figures remain within the reach of local process servers.

However, despite the former president sitting in open court ready to advance his plea, the primary investigative agency involved in the case was nowhere to be seen.

The Criminal Investigation Department, listed as the official complainant, managed to miss the hearing altogether. The absence of state investigators left Colombo Fort Magistrate Pasan Amarasekera with little choice but to stall the motion, officially ordering the CID to present itself in court on November 4 to state its position on whether Rajapaksa should be cleared for departure.

Whether the CID missed the memo or simply took a leisurely approach to one of the country's most polarizing political figures remains open to interpretation.

But for now, the former president's boarding pass remains firmly on hold. When November 4 arrives, state sleuths will have to explain whether allowing a key figure in an ongoing national security inquiry to fly to Singapore serves the interests of justice, or if the court should remind Sri Lanka's former ruling elite that medical exemptions cannot double as a permanent exit strategy.

RS. 60.2M NARCOTICS SHIPMENT BLOWS OPEN POSTAL SMUGGLING

In what has become a routine exercise in intercepting high-end contraband, officers from the Sri Lanka Customs Narcotics Control Unit and the Postal Appraising Branch, operating alongside the Police Narcotic Bureau, unsealed nine foreign parcels at the Central Mail Exchange in Colombo. What lay inside was not standard international mail, but a carefully curated assortment of narcotics valued at over Rs. 60.26 million.

The seizure included 4,934 grams of high-grade Kush cannabis valued at Rs. 49.34 million, 1,035 grams of hashish worth Rs. 10.35 million, 25 grams of ecstasy tablets, and four grams of cocaine. Originating from Thailand, Spain, the United Kingdom, and the United States, the parcels were addressed to fictitious local locations and left deliberately uncollected in postal holding bays in the hope that law enforcement would simply miss them.

The seizure sheds light on a growing structural shift in how illegal narcotics penetrate the domestic market. While traditional maritime routes and fishing trawlers historically carried bulk shipments across the Indian Ocean, syndicate operators are increasingly leveraging standard airmail and international postal systems.

By distributing small consignments across multiple parcels sent to dummy addresses, syndicates treat individual postal losses as an acceptable cost of doing business, counting on overworked sorting hubs to let packages slip through the cracks.

Beyond the immediate financial tally of the seized goods, the case highlights a severe investigative bottleneck. Handing over seized contraband to the Police Narcotic Bureau fulfills legal protocol, but prosecuting ghost networks remains notoriously difficult.

When packages are routed to non-existent addresses or proxy names, physical arrests are rarely made at the sorting facility. Without advanced digital tracing of international shipping logs, financial payment trails, and dark-web order histories, postal seizures risk functioning merely as temporary speedbumps for sophisticated distribution syndicates.

Until state security agencies upgrade cross-border intelligence and digital tracking tools to match modern smuggling tactics, the Central Mail Exchange will remain a silent frontline. Intercepting millions of rupees worth of drugs on a sorting table is a tactical win for customs officers, but breaking the anonymous supply chains that feed Sri Lanka's growing appetite for synthetic narcotics requires going far beyond the postal counter.

THE CENTRAL BANK'S PYRAMID LIST EXPANDS TO 27

Picture a tired wage earner sitting at a kitchen table late at night, staring at a glowing smartphone screen while daily returns tick upward on an app that looks far too professional to fail. For thousands of families across the country, that digital illusion is a desperate prayer to outrun an impossible cost of living. Then reality crashes through the door.

The Central Bank of Sri Lanka has just added three more names to its public wall of shame. After investigations under Section 83C of the Banking Act, Max App Media Ltd, together with Max LK (Pvt) Ltd and Max Media Lanka (Pvt) Ltd, has been declared a prohibited scheme. That brings the official roster to 27.

The full blacklist now reads:

1. Tiens Lanka Health Care (Pvt) Ltd
2. Best Life International (Pvt) Ltd
3. Mark-Wo International (Pvt) Ltd
4. VML International (Pvt) Ltd
5. Global Lifestyle Lanka (Pvt) Ltd
6. Fast3Cycle International (Pvt) Ltd
7. Sport Chain App / Sport Chain ZS Society Sri Lanka
8. OnmaxDT
9. MTFE App (including MTFE SL Group, MTFE Success Lanka, and MTFE DSCC Group)
10. Fastwin (Pvt) Ltd

11. Fruugo Online App / Fruugo Online (Pvt) Ltd
12. Ride to Three Freedom (Pvt) Ltd
13. QNet / Questnet
14. Era Miracle (Pvt) Ltd / Genesis Business School
15. Ledger Block
16. Isimag International (Pvt) Ltd
17. Beecoin App / Sunbird Foundation
18. Windex Trading
19. The Enrich Life (Pvt) Ltd
20. Smart Win Entrepreneur (Pvt) Ltd
21. Net Fore International (Pvt) Ltd / Nettrix
22. Pro Care (Pvt) Ltd / Shade of Procare (Pvt) Ltd
23. SGO / <http://sgomine.com>
24. I.C.A.N. Advertising (Pvt) Ltd and affiliated domains
25. Infinity Rover (Pvt) Ltd
26. TM App
27. Max App Media Ltd (including Max LK and Max Media Lanka)

These names are not just companies.

They are household trauma. Early operators like Tiens and Best Life relied on old-school multi-level product pitches. Today's versions have upgraded to high-tech digital traps, slick apps, Telegram groups, and Instagram reels of rented luxury.

And here lies the bitter irony every citizen feels in their bones.

The Central Bank issues these alerts through its Financial Consumer Relations Department like clockwork, but the warning always arrives like an autopsy report after the patient has flatlined.

By the time the state finishes investigating, gazetting, and publishing, the local promoters have closed their virtual storefronts and funneled millions across borders.

Worse, this toxicity is mutating. Alongside the apps, we now see fraudulent agricultural and plantation schemes promising fake yields on land, shadowy crypto trading bots that vanish overnight, and a predatory explosion of online gambling and betting apps feeding on desperate youth.

When grocery bills double and salaries evaporate before the second week, predatory networks smell blood.

They dress classic Ponzi mechanics in modern clothing: digital media agencies, crypto arbitrage bots, social media engagement platforms.

They rent flashy hotel ballrooms and promise effortless wealth to people exhausted from counting rupees.

Publishing statutory notices satisfies a legal checklist, but it does not stop the bleeding. Without real-time financial tracking, immediate asset freezing, and aggressive criminal trials that actually lock up local ringleaders, these blacklists remain a museum of financial crime.

Until the state stops treating financial fraud as a civil annoyance and starts hunting operators before they cash out, the list of 27 will inevitably keep growing.