

25th Edition
Journalism Awards for Excellence 2023
Categories and Criteria

It is important that applicants read through the 'Categories and Criteria' before filling in the Application Form. The guidance of the Editor/Department Head is advisable to ensure that the applicant selects the appropriate category and follows the criteria before the submission of the application. The application has to be signed by the Editor or in his/her absence, a Member of the Editors' Guild. Applications certified by sectional heads would be rejected. Each application should be accompanied by a maximum of five entries and must be bound when submitting.

List of categories (Print Media)

ME – Mervyn de Silva Journalist of the Year
(Single Award)

Criteria: This Award, given in memory of the first President of The Editors' Guild of Sri Lanka and well known Editor, columnist and foreign correspondent. The Award is a recognition of excellence and consistency throughout the year and adherence to the best of journalistic practices. It is open to Sri Lankan Editors and journalists. Applicants should have covered a wide range of issues of critical importance to the country and society. This Award calls for published material which has given wide exposure to news and news features. Applicants should have used media content skillfully and creatively. He/she should have an inquiring mind and investigative persistence resulting in in-depth stories. The courageous and responsible handling of sensitive issues, despite threats or challenges, will be an advantage to win this award. A statement of not more than 250 words explaining the significance of the achievement with supporting material should be submitted with each entry form.

IJ – Investigative Journalist of the Year
(Single Award)

Criteria: This Award goes to the journalist or team of journalists who had published an accurate insightful story or series of stories on the same subject matter, strictly of investigative nature and of national significance. These can be on serious crimes, political corruption or corporate wrongdoing. Judges will take into consideration the research done, professionalism shown when conducting investigations and the impact of the exposure on society and/or the authorities. The story need not necessarily be a Scoop and could even be a follow-up but one that has both public interest and is of national importance. A supporting statement of not more than 250 words should be given by the Editor if a team of journalists is applying.

SY – Scoop of the Year
(Single Award)

Criteria: This category is for the journalist or the team of journalists who have published the best exclusive report or 'breaking news' that makes an impact at national level for the year. It should be the original work of the applicant/applicants. . A supporting statement from the Editor of not more than 250 words is required stating that his or her newspaper broke the story first.

DP – Denzil Peiris Young Journalist of the Year (Single Award)

Criteria: This Award is to honour Denzil Pieris who was one of the finest journalists Sri Lanka has produced and who was widely admired both at home and abroad. The applicant must be under 26 years of age who by his or her work shows impressive potential in journalism and with fair and accurate reporting, has produced a consistent body of work adhering to best journalistic practices. Submissions should be a full body of work with consistency of reporting in both news and features. Interviews in the question and answer format are not accepted. The winner of this award will have the opportunity to follow a Course in Journalism at the prestigious College of Journalism MASCOM in Cochin, Kerala, India offered by the Lakshman Kadirgamar Foundation. It is a requirement that the Scholar who travels to MASCOM has a good knowledge of English language since the course is conducted in English language.

BH – Best Health Care and Medical Reporter of the Year (One Award for each language stream)

Criteria: This category is for journalists who have published consistently stories concerning health issues, medical treatment and its prevention and control. Importantly, stories should be well researched and should not confine to material from handouts and press releases. Interviews with doctors explaining health issues, its control and treatment should be explained in simple language that could be understood by the layman with the minimum use of medical terms. The interview however, should not be an advertisement for the doctor.

ER – Environmental Reporter of the Year (One Award for each language stream)

Criteria: The Award is for a journalist or a team of journalists who have produced a body of work throughout the year that focused on the environment, raised awareness for conservation and/or exposed environmental abuse. Judges will look for a long-running investigation, campaign or series of reports. One-off stories that have had a very strong and definitive impact on society and resulted in action by the authorities will also be considered. Submissions should make an impact on the reader to appreciate the value of environmental protection. It should be well researched and should have a scientific basis.

SJ – Sports Journalist of the Year (One Award for each language stream)

Criteria: This Award is given to a journalist who has added value to the sports coverage by going behind the scenes and producing a solid body of work on the subject. Entries could be from contributors on a single sport or several sports and should include sports scoops, coverage and/or interviews that had led to follow-up by authorities to resolve the issue, which should be stated in the story.

BD – Best Designed Newspaper of the Year (One Award for each language stream)

Criteria: This Award is given to the team or an individual producing the best designed newspaper which is also ethical in content. It should also be user-friendly, attractive and appealing to the general public. Judges will look for the newspaper that has achieved maximum impact through design and the handling of stories ethically throughout the sections of the newspaper. The balance, rhythm, colour-sense, readability, reader-friendliness, the use of space and visual harmony will be taken into consideration for the evaluation. The original newspaper along with sections should be submitted.

BF – Business and Finance Journalist of the Year (One Award for each language stream)

Criteria: This Award is given to the journalist who consistently covered business stories that interested and impacted on the reader, increased the understanding of business, finance and the economy and was fair and accurate in his/her reporting adhering to the best of journalistic practices. Applicants will be judged on their ability to break news, predict trends, analyze stories and explain issues to a general audience. A compelling style and clear understanding of the readership will also score marks. Stories should not be in the question and answer format and should not be a reproduced press release.

CY – Cartoonist of the Year (One Award for each language stream)

Criteria: This Award is for the artist who was able to convey the mood of the country and comment on the state of the nation through his/her satirical drawings or computer graphics. Judges will look for the cartoonist who transcended language barrier in his/her work and captured the imagination of the public on public issues through art and sense of satire.

PJ – Photo Journalist of the Year (One Award for each language stream)

Criteria: This Award is for the photojournalist who consistently captured the best picture for news or feature story during the year and was technically sound and clear in his/her presentation. Judges will look for the most compelling news and/ or feature photographs taken by a photojournalist over the year. They will also look for versatility, technical skill, including cropping of pictures and the ability to capture the picture that matters. The mood of the interviewed subject or feature needs to be seen prominently. Where possible, every picture must be accompanied by a caption. Photographs of poor quality, photographs that have been digitally manipulated and those that have been incorporated into headlines will not be accepted. Every entry should be within a frame. Original newspaper clippings of the published photographs along with the newspaper and date of publication are required.

SC – B. A. Siriwardene Columnist of the Year (One Award for each language stream)

Criteria: This Award in memory of B. A. Siriwardena, a versatile writer and Editor goes to the writer who expressed himself/ herself boldly, stimulating thought and debate among readers. This commentary could be written either under his /her name or under a pseudonym but should be a regular bylined column. Judges will be looking for the writer's unique style. Submissions should be consistent and limited to a column or two in length and not a whole page. Applications must be accompanied by a letter from the Editor stating that the applicant has written a minimum of 12 columns in his/her newspaper for the year under review. A supporting statement is also required from the Editor if a pseudonym is used.

SS – Subramaniam Chettiar Award for Reporting on Social Issues (Single Award)

Criteria: The Award is given in memory of Subramaniam Chettiar, who founded the *Virakesari* in 1930 - a man who stood for the rights of workers. This award is for a reporter who has consistently highlighted social issues in a fair and ethical manner, who sought to give voice to the voiceless and moved to find solutions for these issues through the media. Submissions must not only break a story but follow it through. Stories should focus on social issues.

UW – Upali Wijewardene Feature Writer of the Year (One Award for each language stream)

Criteria: This Award is given in honour of Upali Wijewardene - the founder of Upali Newspapers Ltd. The Award is for a Feature Writer who has presented varied styles of writing and captures the essence of issues and subjects while giving the reader a better understanding. The articles must also be fair and accurate and adhere to the best of journalistic practices. The quality of writing and the use of language are paramount requirements in this category. Judges will be looking for journalists who

demonstrate a compelling style in feature writing and news-feature reporting. Features could vary from stories of human interest to any subject that could hold the interest of the reader and need not necessarily be issue-based.

KR – Prof. Kailasapathy Award for Best News or Feature using RTI (Single Award)

Criteria: The Award is to honour an academic cum journalist who fought for an independent Sri Lankan Tamil readership. This Award is for a journalist or a team of journalists who had published a news story or feature using 'Right To Information' (RTI) must state how RTI helped to highlight an issue of public interest and seek redress. It should also give the process adopted in seeking the RTI information.

List of categories (Newspaper Websites)

Best Designed Website (One Award for each language stream)

Criteria: This Award will be given to the news web site that has the best structure and navigation, visual design, functionality and interactivity. The applicants will also be requested to submit a PDF based PowerPoint of not more than 10 slides indicating the features of the website and distinctiveness, including screen-captions.

Best Digital Video Storytelling (One Award for each language stream)

Criteria: Strong and innovative work in telling stories through digital video, including animation.

End/- Sukumar Updated version August 30, 2024