

Journalism Awards for Excellence 2019 (21st Edition)

Rules and Regulations

What are the Journalism Awards for Excellence about?

This is the single most prestigious annual Journalism Awards event at which good journalism is recognized and celebrated by the profession's peers; it is about appreciating and rewarding courage, dedication and excellence in journalism and saluting lifetime contributions and service to the profession.

Who can apply?

Applications may be submitted by any Sri Lankan journalist; who for the purpose of the Journalism Awards for Excellence programme is a person who writes articles or news reports for publication in newspapers published in Sri Lanka. He or she should be employed full-time in journalism or should have written articles or news reports for publication in newspapers, and had at least 10 of his/her articles/news reports published within the stipulated time period.

Articles/reports published while being a journalism student intern will also be considered.

Definition of a newspaper

The newspaper can take any size-tabloid or broadsheet and must be registered as a newspaper in Sri Lanka at the time of applying. It should be published regularly throughout the year. It should not be an insert in another newspaper and must be sold separately.

Period of publication

Articles/photographs/cartoons/news reports should have been published between January 01, 2019 and December 31, 2019.

How to Apply?

Applications and Nominations should be sent to: The Convener, Journalism Awards for Excellence Jt. Committee, C/o Sri Lanka Press Institute, 96, Bernard Soysa Mawatha (Kirula Road), Colombo 05.

Closing Date for Applications

The closing date for applications is **Thursday, October 29, 2020**.

General entry rules for all categories

1. Application Form ONLY should be in triplicate (three copies).
2. Name of applicant should be given in English language in capital letters.
3. If photocopies are submitted they should be signed by the Editor and his/her seal should be placed on each photocopy certifying it as a copy of the original.
4. Entries must be properly bound. Loose sheets will not be accepted.
5. The category applied for should be specifically mentioned (tick appropriate box).
6. A minimum of ten (10) articles/photographs/cartoons for the category applied for should be attached to the Application Form unless otherwise specified.

7. The statement requested for in certain categories should be included in the application and should not exceed 250 words.
8. The Application Form should be signed by the Editor in the appropriate place signifying his/her consent to the journalist and the newspaper abiding by the Editors' Code of Professional Practice (CPP) and the Rules and Procedures of the PCCSL.
9. In the case of an applicant using a pseudonym which is different to the name on the application form, a letter from the Editor certifying that he/she is one and the same person should be attached to the application.
10. Before signing the Application Form, Editors should check that the application is suitable for the category applied for.
11. Articles/photographs/cartoons should be submitted only for one category. However, the judges may consider assigning the entry for consideration in another category.
12. If the applicant is working for several newspapers, the Editor must ensure that the application relates to the newspaper of the Editor concerned.
13. Any corrections, clarifications or retractions made after initial publication should be submitted as part of the application. Copies of any written challenges to the article or news reports must be attached to the application, including responses by the news organization. Failure to do so may result in an Award being later withdrawn.
14. Judges may interview applicants should the need arise.
15. E/S/T – denotes language in which the application is submitted. E-English, S-Sinhala and T-Tamil.
16. Any form of lobbying, canvassing or threatening of judges by applicants will result in disqualification.

Categories for Newspapers and Online News Websites

01. Mervyn de Silva Journalist of the Year:

One Award.

This award, given in memory of the first President of The Editors' Guild of Sri Lanka and his work as a well-known editor, columnist and foreign correspondent, recognizes excellence and consistency throughout the year and adherence to best journalistic practices. It is also open to Sri Lankan Editors and journalists. Applicants should have covered a wide range of issues of critical importance to the whole country and society. A statement of not more than 250 words explaining the significance of the achievement with supporting material should be submitted with each entry form or this award calls for published material portraying a wide exposure to news and news features. To win this prime award the applicants should have used media content skilfully 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 for this award.

02. Investigative Journalist of the Year:

One Award.

This award is to the journalist, or team of journalists who have published an accurate insightful story or series of stories on the same subject matter which were strictly of an investigative nature and were of

national significance. These can be on serious crimes, political corruption, or corporate wrongdoing. Please submit a supporting statement by the applicant(s) of not more than 250 words. (A supporting statement from the Editor is required if a team of journalists is applying). Judges will take into consideration the research done and the professionalism shown in the investigation 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 had both, public interest and national importance.

03. Scoop of the Year:

One Award.

This category is for the journalist or team of journalists who have published the single best exclusive report for the year that had national implications. Please submit a copy of the story and supporting statement. (A supporting statement from the Editor is required if a team of journalists is applying). A scoop must be exclusive and the original work of the applicant/applicants.

04. Denzil Peiris Young Reporter of the Year:

One Award.

This award is to honour Denzil Pieris, one of the finest journalists Sri Lanka has produced who was widely admired both at home and abroad.

This award is for a journalist under 26 years of age who by his or her work shows impressive potential in journalism, who with fair and accurate reporting has produced a consistent body of work and adhered to best journalistic practices.

Judges will be looking for the young journalist who has made the most impact in the year.

The winner of this award will receive the Lakshman Kadirgamar scholarship for journalism studies abroad. 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.

05. Best Health Care and Medical Report of the Year:

One Award each for the three language streams.

This category is for the journalist who has published consistently stories concerning health issues. Stories should explain to the readers concerning health issues, treatment and control. They should be researched and should not confine to material from a handout or press release. Interview of a doctor explaining the health issue its control and treatment should be explained in simple language without any medical terms.

06. Environment Reporter of the Year:

One Award each for the three language streams.

The award is for a journalist or 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, but 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. A supporting statement is required for each entry. If a team is applying, a supporting statement is required from the Editor. A maximum of six (6) different articles can be submitted with each entry. Submissions should prompt the reader to appreciate the value of environmental protection, be well researched and have the required scientific basis.

07. Sports Journalist of the Year:

One Award each for the three language streams.

This award is given to a journalist specializing in sports, who has given added value to sports coverage by going behind the scenes and producing a solid body of work on the subject. Entries may be from contributors to a single sport or several sports and should include sports scoops, coverage's and/or interviews that created follow-up stories. At least six (6) copies with a supporting statement need to be submitted.

08. Best Designed Newspaper:

One Award.

This award is given to the team or individual producing the best designed newspaper in the country - a newspaper that is reader-friendly, attractive and appealing to the general public. Judges will look for the newspaper that has achieved the biggest impact through design and the treatment of stories throughout the different sections of the newspaper. Entries must have at least six (6) copies of the original newspaper. The entire newspaper with sections should be submitted.

09. Business and Finance Journalist of the Year:

One Award each for the three language streams.

This award is given to the journalist who consistently covered business stories that interested and impacted on all readers and increased the understanding of business, finance and the economy, was fair and accurate in his/her reporting and adhered to best journalistic practices. Applicants will be judged on their ability to break news, predict trends, and/or analyze stories and explain issues to a general audience. A compelling style and clear understanding of their core readership will also score highly.

Interviews must not be in the question and answer format.

Stories published based on press releases are not eligible.

10. Cartoonist of the Year:

One Award each for the three language streams.

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 the language barrier in his/her work and captured the imagination of the public on public issues through art and humour. A minimum of six (6) cartoons covering the year need to be submitted to the judges.

11. Prof. Kailasapathy Award for Reporting Under Special Circumstances:

One Award each for the three language streams.

This award is given in memory of an academic cum journalist who fought for an independent Sri Lankan Tamil readership. This award is for a journalist or a team of journalists working under unusually stressful conditions where their personal and professional freedoms have been gravely threatened and where they have placed their lives in danger or undergone special circumstances to keep the citizenry better informed.

The trying circumstances, should be clearly stated in the entry.

Judges will require a supporting statement for this category and if a team of reporters submit an application, a supporting statement from the Editor concerned is required. As many published articles as possible (though not more than ten (10)) may be submitted in support of the entry. This award could be made posthumously provided an entry is submitted by an Editor, a family member or a member of the Editors' Guild.

12. Photojournalist of the Year:

One Award.

This award is for the photojournalist who consistently captured the best news or feature pictures of 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 an interview subject or feature needs to come across strongly.

Where possible, every picture must be accompanied by a caption.

Each submission should consist of a minimum of six (6) to a maximum of ten (10) pictures.

Poor quality photographs, 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 with the date of publication are required together with copies of the original newspaper.

13. B. A. Siriwardena Columnist of the Year:

One Award each for the three language streams.

This award in memory of B.A. Siriwardena, a versatile writer and Editor goes to the writer who expressed himself or herself boldly, stimulating thought and debate among readers. This commentary could be written either under his /her own name or under a pseudonym but should be a regular bylined column. Judges will be looking for the writer's unique style. At least 12 such columns should have been published within the year of which six (6) need to be submitted as entries. A supporting statement is required from the Editor if a pseudonym is used.

Submissions should be consistent and limited to a column or two in length and not a whole page.

14. Best News/Feature using RTI:

One Award each for the three language streams.

This Award is given for the first time. The Award recognises a body of work either News or Features using the Right To Information (RTI) Act to secure information to write the story. That fact must be mentioned in the story.

15. Subramaniam Chettiar Award for Reporting on Social Issues:

One Award.

The award is given in memory of Subramaniam Chettiar, who started 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 until justice is done. Stories should focus on social issues.

16. Upali Wijewardene Feature Writer of the Year:

One Award each for the three language streams.

This award given to honour of the late Upali Wijewardene – the founder of Upali Newspapers Ltd. The award recognises a body of work (minimum six (6) features) to be submitted) that is varied and captures the essence of issues and the subject written about while giving the reader a better understanding. The articles must also be fair and accurate and adhere to the best journalistic practices. Quality

of writing and language is paramount in this category. Judges will be looking for journalists who demonstrate a compelling style in news-feature reportage and/or feature writing. They could vary from human interest articles to travel writing and need not necessarily be issue-based. One-on-one interviews are not eligible for this category.

17. Best News Website:

One Award each for the three language streams.

The award is open only to news-websites that have a printed newspaper. The printed version along with the news-website should have been in production from January 01, 2019 to December 31, 2019. This Award will be given to the news web site that has the best content, structure and navigation, visual design, functionality and interactivity. The applicants will also be requested to submit a PDF based PowerPoint not more than 10 slides indicating the features of the website and distinctiveness, including screen-captions.

Special Awards nominated by TEGOSL

- D. R. Wijewardene Award for Earning the Appreciation of Peers and the Public
- Sepala Gunasena Award for Defending Press Freedom in Sri Lanka
- Life Time Achievement Award (Long and Distinguished Service Awards).

end/wsr – August 26, 2020