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இலங்கை பத்திரிகை முறைப்பாட்டு ஆணைக்குழு

Press Complaints Commission of Sri Lanka

e-Newsletter

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First quarter 2012: PCC receives 33 complaints

The Press Complaints Commission of Sri Lanka (PCCSL) during the first quarter January to March 2012 received a total of 33 complaints. Of the 33 complaints 20 were valid complaints in that they fall within the mandate of the PCCSL which is mandated to resolve complaints against incorrect stories appearing in the print media. Of the 20 complaints, four were resolved successfully with the editor carrying a 'Right of Reply' at no extra cost to the complainant. The balance 16 complaints are pending and communications between the PCCSL and the complainant and the editor are ongoing.

Besides this the PCC that monitors daily and weekly newspapers that violate the Code have found that newspapers during this period (March) had not violated the Code of Professional Practice by carrying photographs or stories contrary to the Code.

Newspapers also handled complaints direct as is a requirement by the PCC and in the event it does not work,

the complainant is encouraged to write to the PCC. In this respect in March, the newspapers have carried a total of 83 complaints resolved outside of the PCCSL process. Of this amount 71 complaints involved the Sinhala print media, one against the Tamil print media and 11 against the English print media.

The newspaper industry has grown in the past year with four new Sinhala newspapers and two English newspapers been published. The Sinhala newspapers are: *Ada* – a daily publication published by the Wijeya Group, *Randiva* – a weekly publication published by Imashi Publishers and *Mawbima* – a daily and a weekly publication published by Ceylon Newspapers. Ceylon Newspapers also publish two English newspapers *Ceylon Today* – a daily and a weekly publication.

JOURNALISM AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE 2011

Closing date extended to Wednesday, April 25, 2012

The 13th Edition of the Journalism Awards for Excellence 2011 is off the ground with journalists and photographers of the print media in a frantic search for their stories and photographs published in 2011, which will comprise a dossier to be submitted for the contest. The event is organized jointly by the Sri Lanka Press Institute and The Editors' Guild of Sri Lanka.

Due to request from journalists, the closing date from Saturday, March 31, 2012 has been extended to Wednesday, April 25, 2011 considering the Good Friday/Easter weekend and the New Year.

The glittering evening award ceremony billed as the greatest media event focusing on the skills and professionalism in Journalism will be held at the Mt. Lavinia Hotel on Tuesday, July 31, 2012.

In all there are 14 categories with the Application Form and the brochure in the language of your choice available at the Sri Lanka Press Institute 96 Kirula Road, Colombo 05.



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Eighth Convocation of SLCJ

The Sri Lanka College of Journalism (SLCJ) held their 08th Convocation of the 2011 Batch at the Sri Lanka Foundation Institute on Thursday, March 29, 2012. Sixty aspiring print, radio and television journalists received their Diploma Certificates. The one-year Diploma programme which in 2012 became a 1 ½ year programme admits students who have passed the GCE Advance Level Examination with three passes. Courses for print, radio and television are conducted in Sinhala, Tamil and English.

Beside the Diploma programme, the SLCJ also conducts mid-career programs for middle-level journalists on specialized topics such as parliament reporting etc.

Please see Page 04 for the Convocation photographs.

Representative on Freedom of the Media

Freedom of expression on the Internet is one of the issues followed by the Representative on Freedom of the Media of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). The Office of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media was established in December 1997.

In March 2010, Dunja Mijatović of Bosnia and Herzegovina was appointed OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media.

Free expression and free media are basic human rights. To ensure compliance with media-freedom commitments agreed upon by participating States, The function of the Representative is to observe relevant media developments in OSCE participating States with a view of providing early warning on violations of freedom of expression.

The Representative's second main task is to assist participating States by advocating and promoting full compliance with OSCE principles and commitments regarding freedom of expression and free media.

Correction, apology in *The Guardian* for story on Mark Duggan's death sufficient

The UK Press Complaints Commission (PCC) has ruled that an article published by *The Guardian* in November 2011 about the investigation by the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) into the death of Mark Duggan breached Clause 1 (Accuracy) of the Editors' Code of Practice. However, it found the newspaper's subsequent actions - which included an apology to the IPCC - represented a sufficient remedy to this breach under the terms of the Code.

The complaints to the PCC were made by the IPCC and the Metropolitan Police Service. They centred on the headline and subheadline, which stated: "Revealed: man whose shooting triggered riots was not armed; Mark Duggan investigation finds he was not carrying a gun when killed in Tottenham". The IPCC and Met Police said that this was substantially misleading, given that at the time of publication the IPCC investigation was ongoing. Following direct representations from the IPCC to the newspaper at the time, *The Guardian* amended the subheadline in later print editions to say that there was "no forensic evidence" that Mr. Duggan had been carrying a gun when he was shot.

The next day, the headline to the article online was changed to "New questions raised over Duggan shooting". The newspaper subsequently corrected the story in its Corrections and Clarifications column and apologised for the errors. It also published a column by its independent Readers' Editor, whose investigation concluded that the newspaper had taken too long to respond to the IPCC's concerns, and that there had been "serious failings" in its editorial processes.

The Commission ruled that *The Guardian* had failed to take care not to publish inaccurate or misleading information in breach of Clause 1 (Accuracy); its view was that the error was "significant and avoidable". It noted the "over-riding" responsibility that newspapers have to take care over the presentation of stories at particularly sensitive times. However, although the Commission noted that the newspaper's initial delay in recognising the problem was a matter of regret, it ruled that the combination of steps taken by the publication to remedy the error met the requirement of the Editors' Code.

Stephen Abell, PCC Director, said: "*This was an important story about a man whose death had significant social and political implications. The requirement for editors to 'take care not to publish inaccurate, misleading or distorted information' is at the heart of the Editors' Code, and it was absolutely right for the newspaper to take the steps it did to properly remedy the situation once the error had been recognised.*" (Courtesy: UK PCC)

Hungary media laws remain cause for concern: Media experts

Hungary's Prime Minister Viktor Orban, "who once fought for democratic principles against an oppressive communist regime, seems to have succumbed to the toxic polarization of Hungarian politics by adopting a winner-takes-it-all approach to governing," wrote Paula Schriefer, Vice President for Global Programs, Freedom House, in her recent analysis for the web portal hungarypressfreedom.org.

Schriefer was referring to the media laws adopted by the Hungarian parliament in 2010, revised after international and national criticism in 2011, and still a matter of concern for both the international community as well as for Hungarian media professionals.

The web portal is specialised in monitoring media developments in Hungary. The web portal is run by the Vienna-based South East Europe Media Organisation (SEEMO), an affiliate of the International Press Institute (IPI), in cooperation with the International Media Centre (IMC). Additional partners for the web portal are: the South East European Network for Professionalization of Media (SEENPM), the Center for Independent Journalism (TASZ) and the Center for Media and Communication Studies (CMCS).

Agnes Urban, Assistant Professor at Corvinus University in Budapest said "The legal environment does not support investigative journalism: Section 6 of Act 104 of 2010 (of the so-called Media Constitution) says in exceptionally justified cases, courts or authorities may – in the interest of protecting national security and public order or uncovering or preventing criminal acts require the media content provider to reveal the identity of the informant. Anyway, these categories are far from being well-defined, so protection of sources cannot be guaranteed at all and self-censorship is an evident consequence of this regulation."

Márton Nehéz-Posony, Legal Representative of the Hungarian Association of Journalists, stated: "The Hungarian Media Law raises grave concerns in believers in freedom of speech."

The president of the Hungarian Association of Journalists (MÚOSZ), Pal Eotvos, noted: "The composition of the leading authority bodies responsible for overseeing media regulation guarantees the exclusive influence and control of the governing power over the media."

Ildiko Vincze, editor-in-chief of the media law monitoring site said: "The amendments of July 19, 2011 contain no changes concerning those sections of the media law that were strongly criticised by international organisations and European Union institutions; moreover, in certain cases these amendments even aggravate the situation. Major concerns have prevailed with respect to the media law."

Sandor Orbán, Program Director of the South East European Network for Professionalization of Media from Budapest added: "Hungary – as a signatory of the European Convention of Human Rights – must respect the Council of Europe's standards on freedom of expression and media pluralism."

Jan Mainka, publisher of two Budapest-based dailies, the German-language *Budapester Zeitung* and the English-language *Budapest Times*, has a different view: "It is a paradox, but the only real political pressure that I occasionally feel – in the form of insulting, aggressive remarks about me or my newspapers in articles, on web pages like Wikipedia or in the forum section of our web pages – come exactly from those who allegedly burn for the freedom of press in my country and whose tolerance ends when they get confronted with articles that treat our prime minister, Mr. Orban, any differently than a "Dr. Evil" from the East. As a result of this latent pressure and because of my unwillingness to assist in undifferentiated Orban bashing, I stopped writing editorials a few months ago. In this sense, I have to correct my above statement regarding not feeling political pressure about what we can and cannot publish ... but I hope this will pass soon."

Lord Justice Leveson: Who guards the guardian

UK Prime Minister David Cameron announced a two-part inquiry investigating the role of the press and police in the phone-hacking scandal, on July 13, 2011.

Lord Justice Leveson was appointed as Chairman of the Inquiry. The first part will examine the culture, practices and ethics of the media. In particular, Lord Justice Leveson will examine the relationship of the press with the public, police and politicians. He is assisted by a panel of six independent assessors with expertise in key issues being considered by the Inquiry.

The Inquiry has been established under the Inquiries Act 2005 and has the power to summon witnesses. It is expected that a range of witnesses, including newspaper reporters, management, proprietors, police officers and politicians of all parties will give evidence under oath and in public.

It will make recommendations on the future of press regulation and governance consistent with maintaining freedom of the press and ensuring the highest ethical and professional standards.

Lord Justice Leveson opened the hearings on November 14, 2011, saying: "The press provides an essential check on all aspects of public life. That is why any failure within the media affects all of us. At the heart of this Inquiry, therefore, may be one simple question: who guards the guardians?" The Leseson inquiry is now in its second phase.

PCCSL at work

* In Horana: March 28, 2012



Press Complaints Commission of Sri Lanka Complaints Officer Sinhala Print Media Kamal Liyanaarachchi addresses Colombo University students of Mass Communication at the Sri Pali Campus, Horana.



Students listen attentively.

* In Puttalam: March 30 - April 01, 2012



Mr. Kamal Liyanaarachchi, Complaint Officer Sinhala Print Media and Mr. Ameen Hussain, Complaint Officer Tamil Print Media in conversation with Puttalam District Secretary Kingsley Fernando



Puttalam District journalists at the 'Doing Ethics' Program



Mr. Ameen Hussain, Mr. Kamal Liyanaarachchi and Mrs. Theva Gowry at the Program

Photographs by : Nalalaka Liyanage - SLPI

* The best of the best received their awards from Norwegian Ambassador Hilde Haraldstad



Miss. Mal Sri Amarasinghe
Best Student of Radio Journalism



Mr. Tharaka Basnayaka
Best Student of Print Journalism



Miss. Rathika Sanjeevani Saravanamuthu
Best Student of Television Journalism

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PCCSL Secretariat

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