

EMPOWERING JOURNALISTS; STRENGTHENING THE SLMMF

*A Year of
Action and
Achievement*

ACTIVITY REPORT
2025/2026

ஊடகர்களை
வலுவூட்டல்;
அமைப்பை
பலப்படுத்தல்!

ஒரு வருட
செயற்பாடுகளும்
அடைவுகளும்!





Executive Committee - Sri Lanka Muslim Media Forum 25/26



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(Editor- Uthayam)



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M.B.M. Fairouz
(Editor- Vidivelli)



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(Local News Editor,
Thinakaran)



TREASURER
Kiyas A. Buhary
(Editor,
Newsplus.lk)



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ORGANIZER**
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(Editor, Vidiyal.lk)



VICE PRESIDENT
Sihar Anees
(Editor-Insight News)



VICE PRESIDENT
Jemsith Azeez
(Journalist)



VICE SECRETARY
Ramzi Kuddoos
(Sub Editor, Thinakaran)



VICE SECRETARY
Sameeha Zafeer
(Editor- Newsbar)



VICE TREASURER
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(Annoncer, SLBC)



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(Senior Journalist)



Furqan B.Ifthikar
(Senior Broadcaster)



Javid Munawwar
(Senior Journalist)



Irshad A. Cader
(Broadcaster, SLRC)



U.L.Mabrook
(Editor- Puthithu)



Sadiq Shihan
(Journalist, Thinakaran)



M.F. Rifas
(Freelance Journalist)



Ashraf A.Samad
(Freelance Journalist)



S.M. Rizwan
(Web Editor, Thinakaran)



S.N.M. Suhail
(News Editor, Vidivelli)



S. A.M.Fawaz
(Information officer)



30th Anniversary and Annual General Meeting

- The 30th Anniversary and Annual General Meeting of the Sri Lanka Muslim Media Forum was convened on September 27, 2025, at the Postal Headquarters Auditorium in Colombo 10.
- Health and Mass Media Minister Nalinda Jayathissa graced the occasion as the chief guest.
- The Ambassador of Saudi Arabia to Sri Lanka, Khalid bin Hamoud AlKahtani, attended as the special guest. Members of Parliament, diplomats, and intellectuals were also in attendance.
- During the event, financial grants were distributed to 15 journalists by S.S. Sirajudeen, Chairman of the Singapore Royal Kings Group.



Executive Committee Appointments

During the executive committee meeting held on October 11, 2025, under the leadership of President M.B.M. Fairouz, former President N.M. Ameen was appointed as the Founding Patron.

* Vice Presidents: Sihar Anees, Jamsith Azeez

* National Organizer: Rifthi Ali

* Assistant Secretaries: Ramzy Kuthoos, Sameeha Zafeer

* Assistant Treasurer: A.H.M. Fowzan

* Magazine Editor: S. A.M. Fawaz

* Website Editor: Rizwan Segu Mohideen

Subcommittees and future strategic initiatives were also deliberated upon.

Appointment of District Organizers

The following members were appointed as district organizers during the executive committee meeting on October 11, 2025:

Colombo	—	Akram Luthfi
Kalutara	—	Ajwath Fazy
Gampaha	—	Fiyas Muhammed
Kandy	—	M.A. Ameenullah
Matale	—	M. Sathurdeen
Batticaloa	—	Umar Arath
Trincomalee	—	O. Kiyas Shafi
Ampara	—	A.B. Fuadhu
Puttalam	—	S.M.M. Muzaffir

Kurunegala	—	U.L. Muzammil
Galle	—	Isbahan Sharfdeen
Hambantota	—	Z.M. Irfan
Matara	—	M. Farhan
Mannar & Mullaitivu	—	P. Mujeeb Rahman
Jaffna & Kilinochchi	—	J.M. Rizwan
Vavuniya	—	Sarjan
Anuradhapura	—	M. Firthous
Monaragala	—	Salsabeel
Badulla	—	M.T. Fayiz
Kegalle	—	Altat Mohammed



Meeting with the Director of Information

The newly appointed executive committee of the SLMMF held its inaugural official meeting with Government Information Department Director General H.S.K.J. Bandara.

- Discussions centered on media law reforms, safety and welfare initiatives for journalists, scholarship opportunities, and the enhancement of the SLBC Muslim Service.
- The Director General outlined constructive departmental plans designated for media personnel.
- Both entities reached a mutual consensus to foster collaborative efforts.

Meeting with the SLBC Chairman

A formal meeting was conducted with Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation (SLBC) Chairman Dr. Uditha Gayashan Gunasekara on November 17, 2025.

- A comprehensive memorandum was presented concerning the regularization of Muslim Service program producers, remuneration adjustments for artists, and the necessity of maintaining equilibrium between commercials and broadcast programming.
- The Chairman assured that these representations would be escalated to the Board of Directors for prompt remedial action.
- Participants included President M.B.M. Fairouz, Founding Patron N.M. Ameen, Vice President Jamsith Azeez, former President Furkhan B. Iftikar, and Head of the Muslim Service Fathima Rinoosiya.



Meeting with the Deputy Minister

A productive consultation took place with Deputy Minister of Mass Media Dr. Kaushalya Ariyaratne on July 2, 2026.

- Proposals were submitted to strengthen the RTI Commission, develop the SLBC Muslim Service, secure artist honorariums, introduce female journalist training, formulate AI ethical frameworks, establish school media clubs, and expand welfare programs.
- The State Minister committed to resolving issues surrounding the repeal of the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA), drafting journalist friendly legislation, and regularizing artist payments, while encouraging applications for Asidisi scholarships.



Meeting with the Bangladesh Professor

Discussions were held between visiting Daffodil International University Associate Professor of Media Studies, Abdul Kabil Khan, and SLMMF representatives on November 13, 2025, at the Sri Lanka Press Institute auditorium, under the chairmanship of M.B.M. Fairouz.

- Bilateral media cooperation areas were reviewed, encompassing postgraduate scholarships for Sri Lankan media graduates, specialized training programs, joint academic seminars, and cross border reporting frameworks.

Disaster Relief Fund Donation

On December 18, 2025, in the presence of All Ceylon Jamiyyathul Ulama President Ash Sheikh M.I.M. Rizvi Mufthi, Wellawatte Jumma Mosque Trustee and prominent businessman Peer Khan Rizvi made a substantial personal financial contribution to the SLMMF Disaster Relief Fund.

- Facilitated through the initiatives of National Organizer Rifthi Ali, a portion of these funds was promptly allocated to journalists severely impacted by Cyclone Ditwah in late November.



Meeting with the Jamiyyathul Ulama

An executive delegation from the SLMMF met with the leadership council of the All Ceylon Jamiyyathul Ulama, headed by Ash Sheikh M.I.M. Rizvi Mufthi, at their headquarters on December 18, 2025.

- Discussions highlighted the centurylong heritage of the Ulama Council, the pivotal role of journalists in societal empowerment, and ongoing disaster response strategies.
- The Ulama Council formally presented its performance report covering the past three years to the Forum.

Disaster Relief and Field Operations



The SLMMF identified 35 media personnel across all communities islandwide affected by Cyclone Ditwah and executed relief operations in structured phases.

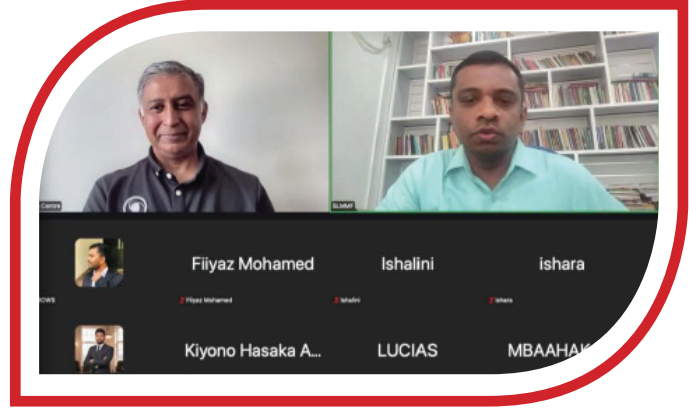
- Led by the President, a delegation conducted field visits to Gampala, Geli Oya, Wellampity, Megoda Kolonnawa, Malwana, Mutur, Gal Ela, and Nattandiya to extend moral support and distribute dry ration packs and sanitization equipment.
- These efforts were supported by Qatar Charity and the JJ Foundation.



Digital Safety Training Workshop

On January 24, 2026, an online webinar focusing on “Digital Safety for Journalists” was organized in partnership with Thailand’s Asia Centre.

- Headed by SLMMF President M.B.M. Fairouz, the session featured Asia Centre Project Manager Sanjay Gathia as the primary resource person.
- 45 multilingual journalists and civil activists benefited from the program.
- Both organizations agreed to establish a roadmap for localized training initiatives based on participant feedback.



PSTA and Freedom of Expression

On February 12, 2026, a specialized virtual forum titled “Does the AntiTerrorism Bill Challenge Freedom of Expression?” was coordinated by National Organizer Rifthi Ali.

- Open University Visiting Lecturer and AttorneyatLaw Waseemul Akram served as the keynote resource person, analyzing the statutory discrepancies, terminological ambiguities, and direct implications of the new bill on free speech.

Anti – Drug Awareness Seminar

As part of the governmentled national antinarcotics campaign themed “Whole Country Together,” the Government Information Department hosted an orientation workshop for Tamilmedium journalists on November 26, 2025.

- The SLMMF successfully coordinated this seminar with the Department.





International Media Training Program in Turkey

Following a formal request by the Founding Patron N.M. Ameen and President M.B.M. Fairouz, and with the valued guidance and support of H.E. Dr. Semih Lütfü Turgut, Ambassador of Türkiye to Sri Lanka, the Sri Lanka Muslim Media Forum (SLMMF) facilitated a professional media training programme in Türkiye for its members from 20 to 24 April 2026.

A total of 10 SLMMF members were selected to participate in this exclusive international training opportunity. An open call for applications was issued, and preference was given to members who had not previously participated in international training programmes. The selected participants travelled to Türkiye under the leadership of SLMMF Vice President and senior journalist Shihar Anees.

The training programme was conducted by TRT Academy, with the support of TİKA, and provided participants with practical exposure to contemporary media practices, including simulated newsroom experiences and mobile journalism video production.

The SLMMF places on record its sincere appreciation to H.E. Dr. Semih Lütfü Turgut for his valuable guidance, encouragement and support in making this important international professional development opportunity possible for SLMMF members.





Next Generation Journalism Training Fellowship

A yearlong hybrid training initiative has been devised to nurture ambitious youth into competent and socially accountable journalists.

- Targeting 50 participants nationwide (two per district), the curriculum covers investigative reporting, mobile journalism (MoJo), data analytics, cybersecurity, AI tool applications, media jurisprudence, and RTI mechanisms.

(Proposed by: Sihar Anees)

School Media Clubs

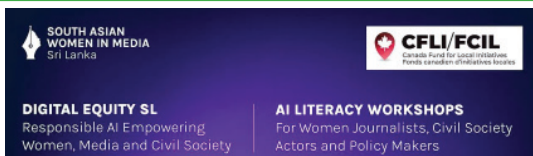
The SLMMF intends to collaborate with the Government Information Department to institute and formally register media clubs across Tamilmedium and Muslim schools, complemented by specialized capabilitybuilding workshops

(Proposed by: S.A.M. Fawas)

Media Bridge Initiative

A recurring monthly virtual series proposed by S.N.M. Suhail to chronicle the institutional knowledge of veteran journalists, close the generational divide, and host interactive Q&A sessions.

(Proposed by: S.N.M.Suhail)



AI Literacy Workshop

The SAWMSL, in partnership with the SLWJA, SLMMF, and JPC, initiated a specialized workshop series aimed at empowering female journalists regarding the responsible utilization of AI technologies.

- The SLMMF acts as the provincial partner for the Puttalam district chapter scheduled for November 3, 2026.

Advanced Level Student Seminar

Zoombased academic mentoring sessions proposed by S.N.M. Suhail to guide students post O/Ls regarding career paths, academic options, and professional development within the media sector.

(Proposed by: S.N.M.Suhail)

Parliamentary Advocacy on SLMMF Recommendations

During the committee stage debates on the 2026 budget allocations, Members of Parliament Imran Maharoof, Uduma Lebbe, and Rishad Bathiudeen raised critical policy recommendations submitted by the SLMMF to elevate the operational standards of the SLBC Muslim Service.

Key appeals emphasized minimizing long commercial breaks during Ramadan, appointing a dedicated Director alongside a Muslim advisory panel, and granting permanent status to contract workers without compromising revenue streams.

Journalist Welfare Fund

A dedicated welfare fund has been institutionalized to safeguard the socioeconomic interests of SLMMF members.

- Initial capital contributions were made by former National Organizer and executive member Irshad A. Cader, later amplified by industrialist Peer Khan Rizwi through the coordination of National Organizer Rifithi Ali.
- Disbursements from this fund are designated for members facing severe medical emergencies or bereavement, as evaluated by the executive committee.





Deputy Minister's Remarks

On June 18, 2026, the SLMMF voiced formal dismay regarding generalized allegations directed against Muslim media entities by Deputy Minister of Religious and Cultural Affairs Muneer Mulaffar in Parliament on June 11, 2026, demanding categorical retractions to safeguard journalistic liberties.

Letter to Dr.Rauff Zain

Following public allegations by Dr.Rauff Zain on social media suggesting links between certain Muslim journalists and foreign intelligence agencies within the Forum, the executive committee formally summoned an explanation, resulting in a public apology and retraction issued by him.

Organizational Statements and Clarifications

Advocacy for RTI Strengthening

In solidarity with the Sri Lanka Press Institute and the Editors' Guild, the SLMMF dispatched a joint representation to the Ministry of Finance advocating for enhanced financial resource allocation to the RTI Commission.

Objection to Proposed Media Institute

The Forum joined fellow media alliances in expressing explicit opposition to the proposed Chartered Institute of Sri Lanka Media Workers, maintaining that regulatory bodies must remain independently administered by media institutions rather than state ministerial oversight.



A.M. Faiz (Udadumbawinna)

Attorneyatlaw, literary scholar, legal consultant for the National Savings Bank in Kandy, and a founding member and legal advisor of the SLMMF, who passed away on October 22, 2025.



A.L.M. Saleem (Ninthavur)

A trailblazing journalist with a career spanning five decades since 1966, former Vice President of the Sri Lanka Tamil Journalists' Union, and early stalwart of the SLMMF, who passed away on March 25, 2026.



In Memoriam: Distinguished Media Personalities

Iqbal Athas (Colombo)

An iconic pioneer of investigative journalism in Sri Lanka, acclaimed for his work with the Sunday Times "Situation Report," BBC, and CNN, and recipient of the 1997 SLMMF Special Award, who passed away on January 13, 2026.



P.M. Anwar (Galewela)

A dedicated educator of 38 years, veteran correspondent for Thinakaran and Vidivelli, and BBC radio contributor, who passed away on May 8, 2026.



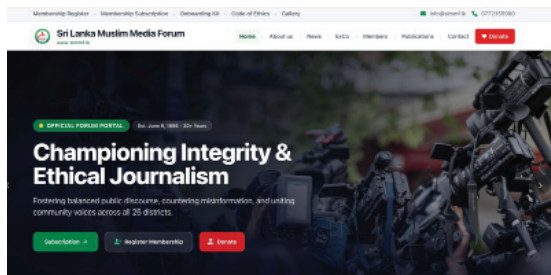


Rebranding and Digital Launch

The official logo has been redesigned and digitalized by member A.J.M. Firows based on conceptual art by the late Kalaivathi Kaleel, modernizing its visual elements to encompass print, broadcast, television, and digital media platforms.



Website Launch



A newly developed official website, engineered by member A.J.M. Firows under the directive of President M.B.M. Fairouz, has been launched to optimize organizational transparency and administrative communications.

At the first Executive Committee meeting of the SLMMF for 2025/26, former President and veteran journalist N.M. Ameen was appointed as the Founding Patron of the organisation, enabling the Forum to continue benefiting from his valuable advice and guidance.

In recognition of his longstanding contribution and continued support, he was honoured with a ceremonial shawl and presented with a commemorative photo plaque.

Founding Patron N.M. Ameen Honoured



Pictorial Highlights of Institutional Representation



Participation in the official farewell ceremony of the Saudi Ambassador.



Attendance at the 10th-anniversary commemoration of the Turkish democratic resistance in Colombo.



Engagement sessions with regional journalists in the Puttalam district.



Representation at the Artificial Intelligence Media Workshop hosted by the Government Information Department.



Tribute participation at the memorial event honoring veteran journalist Saleem in Ninthavur.



Attendance at commemorative forums organized by the Tamil Journalists' Union.



30th Anniversary and Annual General Meeting



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**Sri Lanka Muslim
Media Forum**

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