



Before the smell of gunpowder could disappear from the air on Sunday April 29, 2007, we carried the picture of ack-ack fire lighting up the sky.
Pic by M.A. Pushpa Kumara

the country or from any corner of the world are received instantaneously in a ready-to-be used status.

The fax machine is fast becoming obsolete. World news stories that came via a telex machine are now on our computer screen with search and edit facilities. We no longer need those reams of paper fed non-stop --24/7-- into the telex machine that brought in world news. No film rolls, no film sheets and some departments which existed then have disappeared or transformed themselves to meet the new challenges. Investment in technology has brought in savings to the company.

Today, we could humbly claim we are simply the fastest, if not the best --fastest and best because we possess the technology to give news that you won't get in your sms alerts or in television breaking news. Twenty five years ago, our provincial edition was printed on Friday and the city and late city edition on Saturday night. As our circulation increased, thanks to the talked-about stories the team Sunday Times produced, we even had a provincial edition deadline on Thursday for a short period until we got faster and bigger printing machines installed. Today with the latest printing machinery and somewhat state-of-the-art editorial system, even our provincial deadline has been set for Saturday night. Almost every journalist's desk has a well-networked computer with access to internet. Our visits to the library, which is also being digitalized, have become less frequent as information is available at the press of a button on the computer screen. The bulky Oxford dictionary, which we

referred to 25 years ago, is today a small icon on our computer screen.

To illustrate how fast we are in giving news to you before it becomes history, I share with you how we beat the clock to give you the shocking events that took place after midnight on April 28/29, 2007. It was the day of the cricket World Cup finals on Saturday April 28, 2007. With the news pages done and sent to the printing machine, only the sports journalists stayed on to give the match result and the write up to the Sunday Times readers. While much of Sri Lanka was watching the Sanath-Sanga fireworks at the finals between Sri Lanka and Australia, the country was plunged into darkness. But soon anti-aircraft and machine gun fire lit up the dark skies. Two Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) planes were airborne. They dropped crude bombs on the Kolonnawa oil depot and the Kerawalapitiya gas storage facility. The attack took place between 1.50 a.m. and 2.15 a.m.

No sooner the all-clear signals were given than some members of Team Sunday Times were back in office. By 3.30 a.m. we produced a newspaper that carried the air attack story with a picture showing ack-ack gun fire lighting up Colombo's night sky along with the World Cup story. The paper was also available on the stands in Colombo and the suburbs at the usual time, though delivery to some of our outstation agents was delayed.

As our journalistic technology journey continues, the next step, we are told, will make even our office redundant.



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