



NARRATIVE WATCH

Key Online Narratives Shaping
Sri Lanka's Public Discourse

This report analyses a key online narrative shaping Sri Lanka's socio-political landscape. Using trend monitoring, keyword analysis, and observations of influential pages and channels, it explores how digital conversations emerge, spread, and influence public opinion. As social media increasingly drives civic and political discourse, understanding these narratives is vital for promoting informed engagement, countering harmful content, and strengthening inclusive dialogue in Sri Lanka.

Guest contributors include Darshatha Gamage and Mandana Ismail Abeywickrema.

NARRATIVE PERIOD

Feb/March, 2026

KEY THEME

The social media discourse around the 'Peace walk for Reconciliation' advocating against the silent pressures faced by the Sinhalese in the North.

BACKGROUND

The “Peace Walk for Reconciliation” is a multi-day mobilization initiative framed around advocacy for perceived grievances of Sinhalese communities residing in Sri Lanka’s Northern Province. The campaign is organized by the Sinhalese Global Coalition to Protect the Sasana, a group positioning itself as a protector of Sinhala-Buddhist heritage and interests.

The walk commenced on 19 March at the Jaffna Railway Station, symbolically significant as a starting point in a historically Tamil-majority region shaped by post-war demographic, political, and reconciliation dynamics. The procession is expected to traverse multiple key cities such as Kilinochchi, Vavuniya, Anuradhapura, Thambuththegama, Kurunegala, and Kadawatha, before culminating in Colombo on 25 March.

The organizers frame the initiative as advocacy against what they describe as “silent pressures faced by the Sinhalese in the North.” Within this framing, several key demands are articulated:

- Immediate protection of Sinhala-Buddhist archaeological sites and temples allegedly under threat
- Addressing teacher shortages in Sinhala-medium schools in the Northern Province
- Formal resettlement and recognition of Sinhalese populations in the North
- Provision of essential infrastructure to Sinhala villages in the North
- Ensuring access to state services in the Sinhala language in the North

Ruwini Tharanga Fonseka is with **Isuru Sadeep Madhuranga** and 6 others. 4d · 📍

යාපනයෙන් ඇරඹෙන සිංහල ජන බල පවුර උතුරේ අයිතිස ඉල්ලා කොළඹට 'සංහිදියාවේ සාම පා ගමන' ... අද ඇරඹේ

දශක අටකට අධික කාලයක් උතුරු පළාතේ සිංහල ජනතාව මුහුණ දෙන නිහඬ පීඩනයට සහ අසාධාරණයට එරෙහිව හඬ අවදි කරමින්, යාපනය යුම්මිරිස් ස්ථානය අසලින් අද (19) පෙරවරු 7.30 ට ඓතිහාසික 'සංහිදියාවේ සාම පා ගමන' ආරම්භ විය. 'සසුන රැකුමට ගෝලීය සිංහල එකමුතුව' විසින් සංවිධානය කරනු ලබන මෙම දැවැන්ත රථ පෙරහැර සහ පා ගමන, උතුරේ සිංහල උරුමය සුරැකීම සහ අහිමි වූ අයිතිවාසිකම් දිනා ගැනීම අරමුණු කරගත් සන් දින මෙහෙයුමකි.

මෙම පා ගමන ආරම්භ කිරීමට පෙර යාපනය නාග විහාරයේදී ආශීර්වාද ලබා ගැනීම සහ උතුරු පළාත් ආණ්ඩුකාර කාර්යාලයට විශේෂ සංදේශයක් භාරදීම ද සිදු විය. නිදහසින් පසු බලයට පත් වූ කිසිදු රජයක් උතුරේ සිංහල ජනතාවගේ ගැටලුවලට ස්ථිර විසඳුම් ලබා දී නොමැති බවත්, තමන්ගේම රටේ අනාථයන් බවට පත්ව සිටින මෙම ජනතාවගේ හඬ දකුණේ පාලකයන් විසින් 'ජාතිවාදී ලේඛනය අලවා මර්දනය කරන බවත් සංවිධායකයෝ චෝදනා කරති.

මෙම සන් දින ජන බල මෙහෙයුම මගින් බලධාරීන්ගෙන් ප්‍රධාන ඉල්ලීම් පහක් ඉදිරිපත් කර තිබේ. විනාශ වෙමින් පවතින සිංහල බෞද්ධ පුරාවස්තු සහ වෙහෙර විහාර වහාම ආරක්ෂා කිරීම, උතුරේ සිංහල පාසල්වල ගුරු හිඟයට විසඳුම් ලබා දීම, විධිමත් ලෙස සිංහල ජනතාව නැවත පදිංචි කිරීම, ගම්මානවලට අවශ්‍ය මූලික යටිතල පහසුකම් ලබා දීම සහ රාජ්‍ය ආයතන තුළ සිංහල භාෂාවෙන් සේවය ලබා ගැනීමට ඇති අයිතිය තහවුරු කිරීම එම ඉල්ලීම් අතර වේ.

අද දින යාපනයෙන් ආරම්භ වූ මෙම ගමන කිලිනොච්චිය, මුලතිව් සහ නයාරු හරහා ගමන් කිරීමට නියමිතය. හෙට (20) වැලිමඩ සහ වවුනියාව හරහා අනුරාධපුරයට ළඟා වී ථූපාරාමයේදී අධීක්ෂානුපාලිතව පැවැත්වේ. අනතුරුව තඹුරුගේගම, කුරුණෑගල, වරකාපොළ සහ කඩවත හරහා මාර්තු 25 වන දින කොළඹට ළඟා වීමට නියමිතය. මෙම මෙහෙයුම මාර්තු 25 වන දින කොළඹ සමස්ත ලංකා බෞද්ධ මහා සම්මේලන ශාලාවේදී පැවැත්වෙන 'උතුරු දින නමා සමුළුවෙන්' නිමාවට පත්වන අතර, එහිදී මහජන සංදේශයට අත්සන් තැබීම ද සිදු කෙරේ. පක්ෂ විපක්ෂ භේදයකින් තොරව රටට ආදරය කරන සියලු දෙනාට මෙම සාමකාමී ජන බල මෙහෙයුමට එක්වන ලෙස සංවිධායක මණ්ඩලය විවෘත ආරාධනයක් කර සිටියි.

#JaffnaToColombo #SinhalaRights #PeaceMarch #SaveHeritage #SriLankaPolitics #GlobalSinhalaUnion #UthuraDinanaSammuluwa

2026-03-19



යාපනයෙන් ඇරඹෙන සිංහල ජන බල පවුර උතුරේ අයිතිස ඉල්ලා කොළඹට දැවැන්ත 'සංහිදියාවේ සාම පා ගමන' අද ඇරඹේ

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Closely linked to this is the narrative of historical continuity of injustice. The invocation of “78 years of injustice” extends the scope of grievance beyond the civil war and into the entire post-independence period. This temporal expansion serves to construct a perception of systemic and prolonged marginalization, embedding current concerns within a broader historical trajectory. Such framing is analytically significant because it transforms localized or contemporary issues into part of a long-standing structural problem, thereby increasing emotional resonance and political salience.

The campaign also employs mobilization through urgency and scale as a central narrative strategy. Terms such as “massive force,” “people’s power,” and “campaign” are used to signal a large-scale, grassroots uprising, regardless of the actual scale of participation. This amplification of perceived momentum functions as a legitimizing mechanism, encouraging broader engagement and signaling inevitability or growing public support. In digital environments, this kind of narrative inflation is particularly effective in shaping perceptions of legitimacy and influence.

At the core of the campaign is the assertion of Sinhala-Buddhist heritage in the Northern Province. The emphasis on “protecting archaeological sites” and “heritage” reflects ongoing disputes over historical ownership, cultural legitimacy, and territorial belonging. These claims are not merely cultural but are deeply political, as they intersect with competing ethno-historical narratives about land, identity, and post-war resettlement. In this context, heritage becomes a proxy through which broader claims to space and recognition are articulated.

More broadly, the campaign reflects an emerging trend in which majority groups adopt minority grievance frameworks to articulate localized concerns. This has important implications for the evolution of rights discourse in post-conflict Sri Lanka.

The emphasis on heritage, land, and identity also underscores the sensitivity of competing historical claims in Sri Lanka's Northern Province. This creates a notable tension with the stated objective of reconciliation. Initiatives framed as reconciliation-oriented require inclusive, multi-perspective narratives that acknowledge the experiences and grievances of all affected communities. In the absence of such balance, there is a risk that these initiatives are perceived as partisan mobilizations rather than genuine efforts toward social cohesion. The current framing of the campaign, which centers predominantly on one community's perspective, may therefore limit its ability to contribute constructively to reconciliation processes.

An additional point of analytical significance is the relative silence or lack of visible engagement from prominent Sinhala-Buddhist nationalist actors. Given that the campaign's themes of heritage protection, identity, and Sinhala presence in the North align with broader nationalist discourses, this absence is notable. It may indicate strategic caution, internal fragmentation, or differing priorities within nationalist networks. This campaign may also indicate the emergence of new extreme Sinhala Buddhist Nationalist actors.





අපේ ලකුණ

Posted to බෞද්ධ උරුමය - Buddhist Heritage

21 Mar 2026, 14:16

යාපනයේ ජීවත්වන සිංහලයින් වෙනුවෙන් යාපනය සිංහල විද්යාලය නැවත නගාසිටුවීමට වගකිවයුත්තන්ගේ ඇස් ඇරේවා !



Kosala Paththinige

21 Mar 2026, 05:32

උතුරේ මිනිසුන්ගේ උරුමය වෙනුවෙන් නැගූ හඬෙහි තෙවැනි දින ජයග් රාහි සමාරම්භය අනුරාධපුර බස් නැවතුම් පල අසලින් ආරම්භ කරන ලද වගයි

උතුරේ සිංහල ජනතාවගේ ඓතිහාසික උරුමය අසීරිවාසිකම් සහ යුද්ධයට පෙර උතුරේ පදිංචිව සිටි සිංහල ජනතාව නැවත පදිංචි කරවීම හිමිකම් සහ පහසුකම් ලබා දීම කඩිනමින් කල යුතු බවට ජනතාව අතීතයේ සිටම විවිධ අවස්ථාවලදී ජනතාව විසින් රජයෙන් ඉල්ලීම් සිදු කරන ලදී

ගෙවීය 78 වසර තුල ඔවුන්ගේ අහිමි වූ උරුමය වෙනුවෙන් හඬක් නැගීම සහ බලධාරීන් ගේ අවධානය යොමු කිරීම අසීරින් දිනා ගැනීම උදෙසා සංවිධානය කෙරින

යාපනයේ සිට කොළඹ දක්වා ගමන් කරනු ලබන සංචිදියාවේ සාම පා ගමන සහ රථ පෙරහැර 2026 මාර්තු මස 21 වන දින තෙවැනි දිනයට අනුරාධපුර බස් නැවතුම් පල අසලින් ආරම්භ කෙරින රථ තුළ පවතින දැඩි ඉන්ධන අර්බුදය හමුවේ වුවද මේ සඳහා සම්පත් දායකයන් මහත් කැපවීමෙන් පා ගමන සහ රථ පෙරහැර සාර්ථක කර ගැනීම උදෙසා කටයුතු කරන ලද බව එහි පැමිණි සියලු දෙනා හට අපගේ ස්තූතිය හිමිවිය යුතුය

ඒ සඳහා රථට දැයට හිතැති ජාතිකවාදී මිනිසුන් මෙන්ම සිවිල් සංවිධාන රැසක් එකාමෙන් අත්වැල් බැඳගෙන ශක්තියක් වූ අතර මේ සඳහා ලබා දුන් සහාය සම්පත් දායකත්වය සහ පැමිණීම ගෞරවයෙන් යුතුව සිහිපත් කරමු

සසුන රැකුමට ගෝලීය සිංහල එකමුතුව [See less](#)



NARRATIVE ANALYSIS

The social media discourse around the “Peace Walk for Reconciliation” is not merely limited to a single event, but a continuing political narrative witnessed from time-to-time in post-war Sri Lanka. Following the end of the three decade long civil war, the topic of reconciliation and the topic of a permanent solution to the ethnic conflict have been predominant in political platforms. While the southern Sinhala politicians extensively spoke of reconciliation and coexistence, the Northern politicians continued to push for what they called a permanent solution to the ethnic problem with some sections on the North calling for internal self-determination powers.

However, the discussion on reconciliation and a permanent resolution of the Tamil political issues have become a political tinder box that has played a decisive role in national level politics while also shaping the outcome of national elections. While the Tamil political parties have campaigned and remained in power using Tamil nationalist sentiments, the ultra-nationalist, Sinhala-Buddhist political elites have campaigned on nationalism and extremist narratives centered on majority sentiments to control the majority vote bank as well as assume office through it.

It is in such a backdrop that the incumbent ruling party – Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP)-led National People’s Power (NPP) – ascended to office with its leader, Anura Kumara Dissanayake (AKD) winning at the 2024 presidential election and the JVP/NPP securing a two-thirds plus majority in parliament at the parliamentary elections held the same year. The victories recorded by the JVP/NPP were unique in nature because the party secured victory in both the north and south. President AKD and the JVP/NPP shook the vote banks of both the Sinhala and Tamil nationalist political elites, taking them by surprise.

It is therefore evident that the Sinhala and Tamil nationalists are currently working on winning back their lost vote banks. This has effectively resulted in campaigns being carried out against the ruling party and its leadership, by ultra-nationalist portraying them as atheists

who have failed to protect and give prominence to Buddhism in the country while safeguarding the Buddhist culture while the Tamil nationalists campaigning against the perceived failure of the incumbent administration to ensure reconciliation and solutions to the grievances of northerners.

Also, the continuing debate over reconciliation from both sides - the Sinhala majority and Tamil minority - reveal a struggle over narrative ownership, the persistence of ethnonational anxieties as well as the difficulty of building a shared understanding of reconciliation. Rather than bridging divides, the online conversation largely reproduces them in a manner that portrays reconciliation in Sri Lanka as not just a policy challenge, but a deeply contested communicative process shaped in real time by digital media.

In such a backdrop, the “Peace Walk for Reconciliation” multi-day mobilisation initiative organised by the Sinhalese Global Coalition to Protect the Sasana, has generated a complex and polarised discourse across social media platforms in Sri Lanka as well as among members of the diaspora. Although the “Peace Walk” has been presented as an advocacy campaign focusing the spotlight on perceived grievances of Sinhalese communities residing in the Northern Province, the initiative reveals deeper tensions embedded in the country’s post-war political landscape. A close examination of the online reactions to this campaign highlights not only competing narratives of victimhood and belonging, but also the contested meaning of reconciliation itself currently witnessed in the country.

The broader challenges in Sri Lanka’s post-war society show that rather than fostering mutual understanding, the discourse often reinforces ethnic divisions and encourages a form of competitive victimhood, where the acknowledgment of one group’s suffering is perceived as diminishing that of another.

At the heart of the social media discourse are two sharply contrasting interpretive frames. Supporters of the Peace Walk present it as a necessary corrective measure to what they describe as the “silent suffering” of Sinhalese minorities in the North, which includes cultural marginalisation, limited access to religious institutions, and feelings of insecurity in a Tamil-majority region. These narratives are often part of

of a broader ideological framework of Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism, predominantly ultra-nationalist political elements. The narrative driven by the Sinhala-Buddhist ultra-nationalists is that the Sinhala majority at the national level is locally vulnerable in the North and in need of protection. Through emotional posts, symbolic imagery such as Buddhist flags and temples as well as personal testimonies, narrative drivers seek to construct a sense of urgency and legitimacy around their claims and calls on the Sinhala-Buddhist population and more specifically the other ultra-nationalist to join forces against the Tamil majority in the North.

Meanwhile, critics of the ongoing campaign — including Tamil activists, civil society actors, and liberal commentators — have challenged both its premise and framing. They argue that the initiative risks re-centering majority grievances in a region historically marked by Tamil marginalisation, displacement, and the enduring consequences of civil war. From this perspective, the use of the language of “peace” and “reconciliation” is seen as strategic, potentially obscuring unresolved issues such as accountability, militarisation, and structural inequality.

The discourse also reveals the political utility of strategic ambiguity. By framing the initiative in terms of “peace” and “reconciliation,” organisers are able to present a moderate and inclusive image while simultaneously mobilising a specific ethno-religious constituency. This dual messaging allows for broader appeal and provides a degree of insulation from criticism, as the language employed is difficult to oppose without appearing dismissive of peace itself. At the same time, it enables the articulation of nationalist concerns in a manner that can resonate across different audiences.

Finally, it could be noted that the online discourse surrounding the Peace Walk illustrates how digital platforms have become central areas for negotiating political meaning in Sri Lanka as well as the need to understand the broader communicative and political dynamics shaping post-war Sri Lanka, where the path toward reconciliation remains contested, complex, and deeply intertwined with questions of identity and power. The ongoing campaigns in the north and south would also require close monitoring given its possible impact on future political developments.