

The Daily News Line by Faraz



The death of Suranga Wellalage on September 18, 2025,

has sent shockwaves through Sri Lankan cricket that extend far beyond the boundaries of the sport itself. The 53-year-old former wicketkeeper-batsman, who captained Prince of Wales' College Moratuwa in 1993, suffered a fatal cardiac arrest while watching his son Dunith endure one of cricket's most brutal experiences – conceding 32 runs in the final over against Afghanistan.



What followed Dunith's expensive bowling figures was a familiar yet disturbing pattern in modern cricket: social media erupted in a torrent of abuse directed at both the young spinner and captain Charith Asalanka's decision-making. Within hours, a promising cricketer had become the target of thousands of angry voices, his every mistake dissected and amplified across digital platforms. For Suranga Wellalage, watching from afar, the vitriol may have been unbearable. Here was his son – the boy he had coached and mentored from childhood – being torn apart by strangers who would never face the pressure of bowling to international batsmen with a match on the line.

Young cricketers today don't just battle opposing teams; they face an invisible army of keyboard warriors ready to pounce on any sign of weakness. The psychological toll is immense, but it extends beyond the players themselves to their families, who watch helplessly as their loved ones are subjected to public humiliation.

Suranga's death also highlights cricket's relentless demand for perfection. In an era where every statistic is recorded and every failure replayed endlessly, the pressure on players has reached unprecedented levels. The margin for error has all but disappeared, replaced by an expectation that professional cricketers should be immune to the failures that define the sport's very nature. This "performance at all costs" mentality has created a generation of cricketers who carry enormous psychological burdens.

They know that one poor over, one dropped catch, one mistimed shot could trigger an avalanche of criticism that follows them for months or even years.

As young Dunith Wellalage flew from Abu Dhabi to pay his final respects to the man who was his first coach and biggest supporter, Sri Lanka began an uncomfortable period of self-reflection. The same public that had vilified him just days earlier suddenly rallied to his support, perhaps recognizing their role in a family's tragedy.

This outpouring of belated sympathy, while welcome, cannot undo the damage already done. It serves instead as a stark reminder of social media's power to destroy and the human cost of our collective hunger for sporting drama.

YOUNG CRICKET STAR RETURNS TO DUBAI

Sri Lankan all-rounder Dunith Wellalage has said that his late father's greatest wish was to see him become a successful cricketer and wear the national colours, and he remains determined to honor that dream.

Wellalage, who briefly returned home during the Asia Cup following his father's sudden passing, made these remarks before leaving Sri Lanka again this morning (20) to rejoin his teammates.



Speaking about his father's influence, Wellalage noted:

"My father has supported me unconditionally since I was a child. His only dream was for me to grow into a good player and represent Sri Lanka. I will make sure to carry that forward. There are still important matches left in the Asia Cup, and I intend to give my all for the team."

He added that the encouragement he received from Head Coach Sanath Jayasuriya, Captain Charith Asalanka, his fellow players, and the wider Sri Lankan community has given him the strength to face this difficult moment with courage and gratitude.

"From morning to night, my father dedicated his time to my cricket."

It's because of his sacrifices that I stand here today as a national player. I know exactly what his wishes were, and I am committed to fulfilling them," Wellalage said.

Suranga Wellalage, himself a former cricketer, passed away on September 18 at the age of 54, reportedly due to a sudden heart attack. His death occurred on the same day Dunith represented Sri Lanka in their Asia Cup Group B match against Afghanistan in Abu Dhabi.

Wellalage rejoined the Sri Lanka squad in the United Arab Emirates this morning and is under consideration for selection in tonight's Asia Cup Super Four match against Bangladesh in Dubai. Team sources said the Dubai wicket is expected to offer assistance to spinners, increasing the likelihood of Wellalage being included in the playing XI.

The Ghorts

The fire which broke out in an electronics store in 1st Cross Street, Pettah, has been contained after an operation of around 3 hours. The intensity was such that 5 fire fighting trucks were deployed. As it intensified a bell helicopter was also used. Fire Brigade.



38 alleged gunmen have been arrested by the Police so far this year. In that time, 1,721 firearms were recovered from various raids, including 61 T-56 firearms, 62 pistols, and 40 revolvers: Police Media Spokesperson.- Hirunews.lk



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LTTE ATTACKS IN SRI LANKA CAUSED HUGE ECONOMIC IMPACT

The LTTE attack on the Bandaranaike International Airport in Colombo occurred on July 24, 2001. A group of 14 LTTE Black Tiger suicide squad members infiltrated the Katunayake military air base, adjacent to the airport, and launched an assault using rocket-propelled grenades, anti-tank weapons and assault rifles.



The attack resulted in significant damage, with 26 aircraft destroyed or damaged, including:

- Destroyed Aircraft:
 - 2 Airbus A330s
 - 1 Airbus A340
 - 1 Airbus A320
 - 3 K-8 jet trainers
 - 1 Mil Mi-17 helicopter
 - 1 Mil Mi-24 helicopter
 - 2 IAI Kfir fighter jets
 - 1 MiG-27 fighter jet
- Damage and Impact:
 - Estimated loss of \$450 million
 - Disruption to Sri Lankan Airlines operations
 - Increase in insurance premiums for Sri Lankan ports and airports
 - Decline in tourism

The attack had far-reaching consequences for Sri Lanka's economy and military, and marked a significant escalation in the country's civil war.

LEGAL EAGLE'S HOUSE YIELDS ARMS CACHE

Police have uncovered a large cache of firearms and ammunition at the residence of a 73-year-old lawyer in Ratnapura, who is suspected to have died of a sudden heart attack while living alone.

The discovery was made on September 17 after information received by Ratnapura Senior Superintendent of Police Kapila Premadasa was conveyed to Ratnapura Headquarters Police OIC Prasanna Sumanasiri,

who in turn alerted a mobile patrol team.

Upon inspection of the lawyer's residence in Goluwa Wila Watta, Kospelawinna, officers recovered a 12-bore shotgun, a repeater shotgun, six dismantled shotgun parts, 11 barrels, two small firearms, 440 rounds of new 12- and 16-bore ammunition, and several other firearm components.



Police said the weapons appear to include both locally made and foreign-manufactured firearms. Investigations are underway to determine whether the cache had been supplied for criminal activity or distributed among groups.

SSP Sumanasiri added that inquiries are also being carried out to establish whether some of the firearms were locally produced by the lawyer himself or with the involvement of other parties.

Where is the Change?

The most unlikely party finally secured the people's mandate a little under a year ago. And for the first time since we had the new constitution brought in by tricky dicky JRJ himself, the second count was deployed.

For most people the new change has been difficult to touch and feel. The 'economy has not grown the way we hoped' a hotelier told me. If it had we would have more flights landing at Sri Lanka's airports including at the emptiest in the world, Mattala. The Aviation Minister and his team need to shift a leg, get real and pay attention to the matter at hand. That entails some serious marketing, targeting budget airlines serving the region and incentivise them to land in Sri Lanka,



Sri Lanka has amongst the highest landing charges in the region and these 'golden nuggets' need to be brought into a level where landing in Sri Lanka will be a sound business proposition for the airlines. No one is ever likely to invest in a country where the ROI is negligible or a long-term dream.

Leisure industry stakeholders tell me constantly that an intense, focused destination marketing campaign is a must. By intense we do not mean just the traditional methodologies but take into account the power of social media. Influencers are key.

In some areas of Sri Lanka there is concern that small foreign investors are using loopholes like using local citizens as 'fronts' whilst operating small businesses typically using credit card payments collected overseas. The Inland Revenue will need to ensure that these businesses – front running or not – must pay their taxes, and be properly regulated by registration with the Tourism Authorities. Equally the Immigration authorities must ensure that all foreigners are here and that their activities are consistent with the visas issued.



President AKD and his team must be congratulated for sticking to the agreement with the IMF signed prior to their election and key amongst that strategy has been to increase revenue collection. Economists tell me that the 'mere' practise of collecting revenue that is legitimately due, is not sufficient to repay our phenomenal loans. The clarion call is that the government must get to grips with growing the economy.

Implementing the law and seeking justice for those accused is just one aspect – albeit an important one. However this alone will not make so much as a blip on the growing of our economy.

As President AKD marks the anniversary of the first year in office, he must be mindful that the legendary patience and tolerance of our people will not go on forever. The people will demand action that is not delayed by whatever explanation.