

Death trap at Kandy shopping mall

Rugby star Bisthamin in critical condition after fall

by Rukshan Razak



The Kandy Sports Club and Sri Lanka third-row-forward Imran Bisthamin sustained serious head and spinal injuries as he fell from an upper floor of the George R. De Silva Shopping Complex in the Kandy town on Saturday night.

Bisthamin had visited the complex to have dinner and while walking in an unprotected area he had fallen on to a concrete slab about ten feet below, eyewitnesses said.

He was rushed to the Kandy General Hospital where doctors performed an emergency operation lasting over five hours to save his life.

He is currently in a critical condition in the Intensive Care Unit. Hospital sources said he was not out of danger until last evening.

Imran Bisthamin, a tall and well-built forward started his rugby career at St. Anthony's College, Katugastota, playing in all age groups and captaining the school in his final year as number-eight. After leaving school, he played for Kandy Sports Club as a flanker.

He excelled in the line outs and was also an excellent player in the loose, punching holes in the opponents' defence.

The exclusion of Bisthamin from the National rugby team ahead of the Asian Five Nations Rugby Championship concluded last week in Taiwan created a controversy with the second set of selectors led by Rohan Abeykoon protesting against the move by the Minister of Sports.

Basic amenities at refugee camps soon: Collector

Sunday, Nov 23: DIGUL: Basic infrastructure like street lights and interior roads would be created and amenities such as drinking water and toilet facilities enhanced shortly, assured Collector R. Vasuki.

She was interacting with Sri Lankan refugees after inspecting the camp at Adiyanthu village near here on Saturday evening.

Already, basic amenities have been provided to families of Sri Lankan refugees in various camps in the district. Efforts were on to enhance these facilities.

Damaged roof of the houses and electric posts would be replaced soon. Sewing machines would be offered to refugee women for their livelihood activities.

The refugees appealed to the Collector to repair drinking water pipe lines and construct drainage canal for safe disposal of domestic liquid wastes.

Responding to a request on supply of wheat and grocery items at subsidised price through ration shops, she assured to bring the matter to the knowledge of government for further action.

At present there are 196 families in Adiyanthu camp, 164 families in Thotanthu, 15 families in Gopalpatti, 257 in Nilakottai, 191 in Pulimpatti, 70 in Sivagiripatti and 106 in Virupatchi camps in the district.

(The Hindu)

Police after Sakvithi's angels

by Norman Palihawadane

Police will check the details of bank accounts of those employed by Sakvithi Ranasinghe, who fled the country recently having taken deposits from the public to the tune of billions of rupees.

Police suspect that Sakvithi had been helped by some of his workers to swindle funds. Some

of the workers had been paid a special monthly allowance of rupees 50,000 each and the police believe they would not have been paid so much just for nothing.

"It is unthinkable that Sakvithi could have duped so many people and cheated them out of so much of money without the knowledge and assistance of his staff," a police officer involved in the hunt for the private teacher turned con man told *The Island*.

Police have interrogated a young woman who had a close relationship with Ranasinghe. Police have also ascertained information from several girls, who had affairs with Sakvithi.

A special police team has been sent overseas to trace Sakvithi, an investigator said.



The Pulasthigama Cooperative Society filling station was reopened recently after refurbishment. Picture shows Agriculture Development and Agrarian Services Minister Maithripala Sirisena inaugurating operations by dispensing fuel.

Somali pirates release Geek ship

Crew members including Lankans safe and cargo intact

Greek merchant shipping officials say a Greek-owned chemical tanker ship hijacked in September has been released.

The 19 crew members - from Georgia, Sri Lanka, and Syria - are safe and the cargo is intact. There is no word as to what ransom, if any, was paid.

Earlier Saturday, Somali Islamic insurgents said they will fight the pirates holding a Saudi supertanker off the country's coast.

A spokesman for the group al-Shabab said Friday that ships belonging to Muslim countries

should not be seized. The hijacked ship is loaded with 100 million dollars worth of crude oil.

Pirates have seized eight ships of the coast of Somalia in the past two weeks.

African Union Commission Chairman Jean Ping told VOA the increased activity by Somali pirates is a symptom of the country's political failure.

Ping says Somalia's U.N.-backed transitional government is at the brink of collapse.

Islamist insurgents carry out frequent attacks in the capi-

tal Mogadishu and have captured two of Somalia's major ports.

Pirates have seized eight ships near Somalia in the past two weeks, - and about 40 ships this year, including the Saudi supertanker carrying 100-million dollars worth of crude oil.

The United States, India, Russia and other countries have sent naval ships to the region to try and stop the pirates.

Somalia has not had a stable central government since 1991 when rebels toppled President Mohamed Siad Barre. (VOA)

PM to lead Lankan delegation to Doha Summit

Prime Minister Ratnasiri Wickremanayake would lead the Lankan delegation to a UN Conference on Financing for Development scheduled to take place in the Qatari capital of Doha November 29-December 2, Prime Minister's Office said.

The Prime Minister is due to address the plenary session, along with dozens of other world leaders, on the global financial

crisis and its impact on developing nations such as Sri Lanka.

The delegation will include several government officials, including Sri Lanka's former Permanent Representative to the UN, Prasad Kariyawasam, who is currently an Additional Secretary in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Athulathmudali Memorial Oration

Lalith Athulathmudali Memorial Oration will be held at the Committee Room A, BMICH on 26th November 2008 at 5.45 p.m.

Deshamanaya M. D. D. Peiris former Secretary to the Prime Minister will deliver the Memorial Oration. All are welcome.

'JVP not opposed to English'

JVP Kurunegala District member Bimal Ratnayake told Parliament that the minister who referred to a news report in *The Island* had failed to tell the House that



Bimal

"we said that English medium education should be stopped but we had emphasized that English should be taught as a subject as the standards of English teaching were not up to the

mark. In this regard reference should also be made to an article written in *The Island* of November 19 by an American teacher who had been working in Sri Lanka giving much insight into the teaching of English in our country but it was totally wrong to tarnish the image of the JVP saying we were opposed to teaching English."

Maldives' first president dies at 82



Ibrahim Nasir

Ibrahim Nasir, who led the Maldives' independence movement from the British and became the island nation's first president, has died at the age of 82, an official said.

Nasir died at a Singapore hospital Saturday and his body was flown to the Maldives and kept for public viewing at the president's office, Foreign Minister Ahmed Shaeed said Sunday.

adding that the cause of death was not known.

Born on Sept. 2, 1926, Nasir became the prime minister of the British protectorate in 1957 at the age of 31.

He signed an agreement with the British that won independence for the Indian Ocean island in 1965.

In 1968, three years after independence, Nasir became the Maldives' first president and held that position until he resigned 10 years later. He was accused of ruling the country as a dictator and fled in 1978 amid public resentment and unproven allegations of corruption in handling public funds.

Nasir modernized the country's fishing industry and introduced tourism, for which the Maldives is now world famous.

President Mohamed Nasheed and his ministers were to be present at the burial Sunday night.

Nasir is survived by two sons and a daughter. (AP)



A well wisher hands over a bottle of water at the Ragama Station to the Brotherhood Train plying from Matara to Medwachchiya on Nov. 22 collecting essential items for the soldiers fighting in North and the civilians who have escaped the LTTE held areas. The train collecting aid on the way reached Medwachchiya last evening. The goods will be transported to the warfront in trucks from there.

Pic by Richard De Silva, Ragama corr

Gold bars seized, Sri Lankan held

Sunday, Nov 23 CHENNAI: Officials of the Air Intelligence Unit of the Customs seized gold bars weighing 1.16 kg from a Sri Lankan national at the Anna International terminal here on Friday. They were concealed in stroller rods of checked-in baggage. They arrested the passenger and the seized gold bars valued at Rs.15.38 lakh.

An official release stated that the passenger was pro-

ceeding through the Green Channel. On suspicion the authorities examined her baggage. This is the second instance in two months in which Sri Lankan nationals attempted to smuggle gold through the Chennai airport.

In this financial year, so far the Customs authorities have seized goods worth Rs.20 crore, which include gold, drugs, electronic goods and ornamental fish, the release added.

(The Hindu)

Multi-pronged offensives help troops dominate more land swathes

Troops of the 57 Division engaged a number of terrorist targets in the outskirts of Kilinochchi yesterday (23) during their daring offensives advancing towards the LTTE heartland.

The fighting erupted during the wee hours of Sunday when the troops of 12 Sri Lanka Sinha Regiment and 9 Gajaba Regiment launched a pre-dawn attack on terrorists in Adampan, about 7.5 km west of

Kilinochchi town centre. Terrorist concentrations in the area fell apart making them take to run for life. At the end of the five hour-long confrontations, 12 SLSR and 9 GR soldiers captured about 2 sq km patch earlier held by the terrorists, Army media unit sources said.

Giving a different punch on the face, 3 GR troops in the meantime smashing terrorist strong points in

Pudumurippukulam area, west of Kilinochchi, fought a fierce battle using small arms and heavy weapons against the terrorists who withdrew further north. This round of fighting that commenced around 11.00 a.m. continued till about 1.00 p.m., Army media unit said.

Meanwhile, 8 and 10 Sri Lanka Light Infantry troops advancing towards Murukkandy junction along the Akkarayankulam road

were also able to dominate a stretch of road more than 1 km by yesterday (23) afternoon.

Similarly, troops of the 17 Gamunu Watch, 12 GR and 8 SLSR operating under the Task Force I, in offensives conducted during wee hours yesterday (23), destroyed LTTE strong points built on the LTTE earth bund in the north of Adampan.

Troops were consolidating their positions at the time this edition went to the press.

Jeep plunges into Victoria: Two injured

by Cyril Wimalasurendre

KANDY - A jeep veered off the road and fell into the Victoria Reservoir near Orutota on the Teldeniya-Kandy road injuring two travelers on Saturday (22) afternoon. One of the injured is the wife of a senior police officer of

Kandy, said Teldeniya police. She was receiving treatment in hospital.

The vehicle had gone off a precipice about 150 feet deep and plunged into reservoir. However, the injured had escaped death due to the receding water levels.