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Canadian Students-Toronto to Chicago on Foot for Oprah Show

By: Krishni Loganathan, BA (Hons.)

The crisis in Sri Lanka is affecting both young and old alike all over the world. Many people have taken an active role in making their voices heard about this vital issue through protests, writing to local and federal leaders and many other affective forms that will encourage and enforce some kind of change. The goal behind all of this is to expose this issue on the global level and attain a greater force such as the United Nations to take on this issue on a larger scale by aiding Sri Lanka in solving and finally ending this war that has gone far too long. Without exposure and building

the awareness on the worldwide stage, the war on Tamils will continue to exist and innocent civilians and others fighting for the cause will be eliminated in the process. The future of Sri Lanka rests on the hands of the people today from within the country and afar. This is why a group of six students from various universities and colleges are walking to the Oprah Winfrey show in Chicago to highlight the plight of Tamil civilians. The awareness campaign evidently will expose millions of people around the globe about the crisis going on in Sri Lanka that they are unaware of.

Please see page 15 for the full text of the press release.



Ontario NDP marks International Women's Day with newly elected leader Andrea Horwath

By: Krishni Loganathan, BA (Hons.)

Ontario's New Democrats must take the province back from the Liberals to stop the loss of manufacturing jobs and force issues that matter to working people back to the forefront, the party's newly minted leader said on her first full day as the leader - on International Women's Day, Sunday, March 8th.

Federal New Democratic leader Jack Layton welcoming Horwath as provincial leader in Hamilton said, "It is International Women's Day and we are thinking about the importance of women leadership".

He added, "The fact the party has chosen a woman to lead at this critical time when women actually suffer more than others in an economic crisis sends a very strong message."

Andrea Horwath is the sixth leader in the history of the Ontario NDP and only the second woman to lead a major political party in Ontario. She



was elected leader on March 7 2009.

Born in Stoney Creek, Andrea worked her way through McMaster University on low wage jobs to earn her B.A. in Labour Studies.

Since 2004 upon arriving at Queen's Park, Andrea has been continuing to focus on achieving results that matter to people - regarding workplace harassment and violence, long term care, nursing homes, allowance for low-income people for the purchase of nutritious food and on ending mandatory retirement.

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Canada Increases its Support to the Most Vulnerable in Sri Lanka

The Honourable Beverley J. Oda, Minister of International Cooperation, announced at the end of Feb 2009, additional funding to help civilians being affected by the ongoing conflict in Sri Lanka.

"The Government of Canada is gravely concerned for those civilians in Sri Lanka adversely affected by the country's ongoing conflict in the north," said Minister Oda. "Once again, we call on all parties to ensure the safety and well-being of civilians and unhindered access for international humanitarian agencies providing the needed assistance."

Canada will provide up to \$1.5 million to assist those civilians affected by the current conflict. This support is in addition to Canada's pledge of \$3 million announced on February 4, 2009.



Two grants of \$750,000 will be provided to the International Committee of the Red Cross in response to its 2009 Emergency Appeal for Sri Lanka, and to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in response to its appeal for funding for shelter, camp management and protection.

Expansion of Settlement Services for Newcomers in Libraries in Southern Ontario announced

The federal government is expanding assistance to newcomers into 14 more libraries in southern Ontario, Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism Minister Jason Kenney announced recently.

Originally piloted in Toronto, Ottawa and Hamilton, the services will expand to Brampton, Kitchener, Richmond Hill, Windsor and London with the aid of \$1.9 million in federal funding to seven service providing organizations, the Minister said, speaking at the Chinguacousy Branch Library. The services will be delivered through the Library Settlement Partnerships Program, which places settlement workers in public library branches.

"Our Government is helping make settlement services more accessible to immigrants," said Minister Kenney. "This investment will give newcomers in our community access to settlement services to help ease their transition

to life in Canada. Their success will strengthen this community and Canada."

The library settlement workers offer group orientation workshops and help newcomers research local housing, transportation and employment opportunities. They also engage in community outreach to help make the wealth of resources and services in public libraries more accessible to newcomers.

"The library serves as a gathering place for newcomers," said Ahmed Iqbal, Executive Director of the Brampton Multicultural Community Centre. "We are very pleased to work more closely with the Brampton Library. This dynamic partnership, funded by Citizenship and Immigration Canada, will enable us to integrate our services and coordinate efforts to reach more newcomers, thereby improving their access to much needed services in our growing community."

Don Valley West MP, Rob Oliphant Welcomes Liberal Leader Michael Ignatieff's Statement on the Crisis in Sri Lanka

Rob Oliphant, Member of Parliament for Don Valley West, strongly endorses Liberal Leader, Michael Ignatieff's statement on the crisis situation in Sri Lanka. "It is time this Government takes action on this tragic situation. Our Party is taking a lead on this issue and is demanding a real response from this Prime Minister," said Rob Oliphant. "The Tamil community is reaching out to us, begging for help. Canada has a strong reputation for responding to international human rights abuses and we cannot be silent this time. How can the Conservative Government sit back and ignore their fellow Canadian's



plea for immediate intervention? Something must be done now," he continued.

For more info contact: Mazhar Shafiq, Communications Assistant, 416-467-7275.

Emotions run high at Sri Lanka related @ townhall meeting

A forum was organized by South Asians for Human Rights Association (SAHRA) on Friday Feb. 20th, 2009, at Markham City Hall, to create a dialogue between the Government of Canada and the Tamil Diaspora directly affected by the atrocities suffered by 250,000 civilians stuck amidst cross-fire in the Northern Vanni region of Sri Lanka.

The meeting was attended by respected and prominent Conservative politicians, Hon. Jason Kenney, Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism, Oakridges-Markham Conservative MP Paul Calandra and Candidate of Record Chuck Konkel with over 80 Community leaders and constituents, and was moderated by SAHRA chair Roger Nair as the neutral party.

In the spirit of core Canadian values - human rights, rule of law, democracy and freedom - Canada has listened and responded to the concerns of Sri Lanka through parliamentary statements and a commitment to financial aid, but wanted to continue their action through further engagement with the community.

A roundtable with Hon. Jason Kenney took place at the Ministers Regional Office, Toronto, to address the civilian and humanitarian situation in Sri Lanka with various Sri-Lankan-Tamil community leaders and SAHRA representatives Mr. Shan Padda Esq. and Roger Nair Esq.. The need for civilian evacuation, medical aid and human rights in the war-torn



region was discussed.

The Minister, promised to look into the matter immediately, and consult with cabinet colleagues/caucus members in Ottawa. He expressed sincere, personal concerns that Tamil-Canadians from all walks of life were being painted and branded with the same broad brush as Tamil-Tiger suspects.

"We feel very concerned that certain undertones have been pinned onto the local Tamil-Canadian community, and that was surely not our intention." Hon. Minister Jason Kenney told the crowded room in his opening remarks. "Given the escalation of violence in the region, we are committing an additional \$1.5 million of aid on top of the \$3 million already announced which will go directly to the safety and security of the civilians through aid agencies such as the UNHCR and Red Cross, and not through the government."

A petition and a memorandum signed by numerous Tamil Canadians outlining the problem



and suggestions was presented to the Minister and MP Paul Calandra which was subsequently read in the House of Commons on Monday Feb 23rd 2009.

"The Conservative government is concerned about the civilian loss of life caused by the civil conflict in Sri Lanka. We have twice issued a public statement expressing our deep concerns and have spoken with the Sri Lankan Minister of Foreign Affairs," said MP Paul Calandra. "It is important to speak to those directly affected by this crisis. I wanted to hear how the local community is dealing with the situation and to find out about what else I could be doing," said Calandra who has a significant number of Tamil constituents in his riding.

"It is important for us as world citizens to pay attention and bring to light any Human Rights violations that take place anywhere in the world. We are deeply concerned about the mounting civilian loss of life and lack of medical aid in the war torn region in Sri Lanka and urge both the warring parties to commit to a immediate ceasefire so hundreds of thousands of innocent civilians can be evacuated" stated a press release issued by SAHRA.

SAHRA (meaning "to lean on" in Hindi, Urdu or Punjabi) is a Human Rights Organization that helps spread the knowledge of Human rights as outlined in UN charter. SAHRA is dedicated to helping individuals and or group of individuals whose human rights have been violated.

Support for Newcomer Youth in Toronto's Jane/Finch Neighbourhood announced

Immigrant youth in the Jane/Finch neighbourhood of Toronto will have access to more settlement services, Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism Minister Jason Kenney announced recently.

The Government of Canada is investing \$939,189 in the Jane/Finch Community and Family Centre to continue settlement programs for newcomer youth at its youth drop-in hub called "The Spot." The funding runs to the end of March 2010.

"Our Government wants to help youth succeed," said Minister Kenney. "This investment will help improve the lives of young adults in the Jane/Finch community. When we invest in our youth, we invest in the future of Canada."

A portion of the funds has enabled Jane/Finch Community and Family Centre to offer a volunteer program that matches trained volunteers, familiar with Canadian ways, with newcomer

youth to help them adapt, settle, and integrate into Canadian life. It also includes a digital photography and music component that encourages newcomer youth to tell the story of their community through photography. Ultimately, it gives them an opportunity to develop relationships, exchange ideas with other youth and gain new skills in digital communications. Over 100 newcomer youth have benefited from this program since it began.

"Thanks to the funding we receive from Citizenship and Immigration Canada, we have been able to hire a diverse group of youth outreach workers who connect with young newcomers in our local schools and community," said Sue Wilkinson, Executive Director of the Jane/Finch Community and Family Centre. "Often young newcomers feel extremely isolated. When we build relationships with them and bring them into our community,



we create a safe space for them. This program offers newcomer youth the opportunity to thrive in a positive peer environment which eases their transition to Canada."

The Jane/Finch Community and Family Centre is one of many settlement agencies in Toronto that have partnered with Citizenship and Immigration Canada to address the needs of young immigrants to Canada.

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- Lord Mahavir

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Layout Design
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Graphics Consultant
Gnane B. Gnanendran

Contributing Columnists

Anand. J
Abizar Badani
Arun Senathirajah
Ayktah Grover
Prof. Ghai, Saran
Harish . G
K.T. Kumaran
Krishni. L
Kumar Punithavel
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Sri Krishnan. S

Circulation Co-ordinator
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From the Publisher's Desk ...

Finance Minister Jim Flaherty must exert IMF to put stringent guidelines for Sri Lanka loan

Amidst the current global economic contraction, several smaller economies are reportedly under a threat of bankruptcy. The Globe and Mail recently reported as many as 16 countries face this threat. And the nations' lender of last resort, International Monetary Fund (IMF) has said it doesn't have anywhere near enough money to bail them all out.

While several countries face widening cracks stemming from the rising tide of financial and economic woes swamping the globe, countries such as Sri Lanka have dug deeper by going on a "military solution" for a political issue that has been facing the country for the past 61 years.

Recent news reports by Reuters say the Central Bank of Sri Lanka is currently negotiating a standby loan of \$1.9 billion dollars from the

International Monetary Fund, to correct the country's severe shortfall of foreign currency reserves. In addition to the global economic conditions, the Sri Lanka situation has been ballooning due to the transparency lacking government's corruption and defence procurement excesses.

The IMF intends well in providing this loan to Sri Lanka in the best interests of stabilizing the international financial system. However these funds may be used to continue the uprooting of Tamil civilians and putting them in what the Human Rights Watch called as internment camps.

Canada, as a contributor to the fund and in the midst of considering more resources being given to IMF these days, must urge the institution to put stringent guidelines so the funds are not utilized for more

war related expenditures by the Government of Sri Lanka.

As the IMF too looks to replenish its reserves, Chisholm Pothier, a spokesman for Finance Minister Jim Flaherty recently said "Canada stands ready to support the institution (IMF) to ensure IMF members and markets have confidence that the fund will be able to fulfill its stability mandate."

All this amidst the contributing countries too face tough economic conditions at home. These nations are essentially bankrolling a corrupt government such as Sri Lanka at the expense of their own tax payers.

The Monsoon Journal urges Finance Minister Jim Flaherty to exert IMF to demand stringent transparency and data standards from the Central Bank of Sri Lanka. Canada must call the Managing

Director of IMF, Mr. Dominique Strauss-Kahn to ensure controls are placed for the loan funds and are not in any way misused or obtained excessively to further carry out the war to continue uprooting the Tamil civilians and forcibly send them to internment camps.

The Monsoon Journal urges Liberal Finance Critic Scott Brison and NDP Finance critic Thomas Mulcair also, to seek measures that Canadian tax payer dollars for IMF bailouts and other assistance such as via Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) are not utilized by the Government of Sri Lanka for arms procurement and to continue uprooting an unwilling populace into barbed wired internment camps at the expense of depriving them of their livelihood and freedom.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR AND OPINIONS

Another Fraudulent Report on Youth Violence - No to the Criminalization of Youth!

By Frank Chilelli

In November 2008, the Ontario government released its Roots of Youth Violence Report written by former Chief Justice of Ontario Roy McMurtry and former Liberal MPP and Speaker of the Ontario Legislature Alvin Curling. It purports to investigate "youth violence" in the aftermath of the killing of Jordan Manners, a black youth, at a Toronto high school in May 2007. The report cost \$2 million and is 1,700 pages long.

The report begins by praising the government for its foresight in commissioning the inquiry. It proposes more funding for psychologists, social workers, child and youth workers and guidance counsellors in schools, implying that the problem is in the 'minds' of some of the youth. In other words, the objective condition, i.e., the system, is not the problem.

Instead, the starting point of the report is further disinformation that escalating youth violence is a danger to all Ontarians. The report goes to great lengths to stress that schools are becoming more unsafe, that there are gangs, that many youth suffer from "mental illness" and are desensitized to violence, and how violence has become the norm to settle scores. It points out that "danger arises from the impulsiveness of youth and the lack of foresight with which they often

act." [1] Mentioning the word 'impulsiveness' leaves a mystery as to the cause of impulsiveness which is youth itself, and why it should lead to violence. The authors have worked themselves into a panic about the level of violence, and furthermore, blame the youth as the cause of social violence.

The report suggests that youth involved in gun violence and social crime within their neighbourhoods are victims themselves. However, it does not elaborate or provide any answers as to whom or what these youth are victims of. It then concludes that there cannot be an assumption or hypothesis that violence is connected to poverty. It states that if it was, "we would be a far more violent society than we are now given the extent of these conditions and circumstances." [2] This, however, contradicts the studies pertaining to shootings in Toronto, which corroborate the connection between poverty and social violence. More than half of the killings involving shootings in Toronto have been in poor working class neighbourhoods such as Jamestown and Jane/Finch region where the majority of residents are oppressed blacks and other national minorities.

The report asserts "immediate risk factors" that allegedly predispose youth to serious violence.

Continued in Page 06...

India and the Slumdog



By Villa Anandaram

Indians all over the world are excited at the triumph of the movie Slumdog Millionaire at the Academy awards. With the exceptions of A.R. Rahman who received two awards, Resul Pookutty who shared the award with two other non Indians and Gulzar who shared the award with Rahman, the other achievements of the movie are not Indian. The story is set in slums of Mumbai. This is no achievement for India; the same story can be played in any developing country like Sri Lanka, Philippines, Mexico, Colombia etc and having such slumps, corruptions and police brutality as depicted in the film is not a thing to be proud of. The theme of the story, the will to struggle and move from rags to riches is not unique to Indians only. But insulting a contender for who wants to be a millionaire by calling him "chai walah", the

police beating him up just because he provided correct answers, the conductor of the programme trying to mislead the contestant are not something a country which claims to be a global player to be proud of.

It is no doubt that all actors and technicians of Indian origin have contributed to the success of the movie and they can be proud of working in a team of a movie which bagged eight Oscars. Out of all one Indian excelled, holding two Oscars in his hand who has achieved this by his individual talent and hard work. He is not other than A.R. Rahman who could narrate his life as rags to riches. He outshone every one by thanking his mother, said "all my life I have had to choose between hate and love. I chose love and I am here" and humbly reciting the Tamil saying "every thing is act of god".

Jai Ho Mr. Rahman.

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Minister Kenney Issues Statement Recognizing Tibetan New Year

The Honourable Jason Kenney, Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism, issued the following statement recognizing Losar, the Tibetan New Year.

"Feb 25th, 2009 marks the first day of 2136, the Year of the Earth Ox, on the Tibetan calendar.

"I offer my best wishes to His Holiness the Dalai Lama as well as the Tibetan community on this day. A year and a half ago, I had the privilege of meeting His Holiness the Dalai Lama in Ottawa.

"For many people of Tibetan heritage living in Canada, Losar is a time for renewal and purification, a time for gathering with family, friends and the larger community.

"For all Canadians, Losar provides an excellent opportunity to think about the tremendous contributions that members of the Tibetan community have made to this country's rich and diverse heritage.

"Over the years, I have personally enjoyed participating in



Losar festivities and it is undoubtedly a very important day for Tibetan-Canadians.

"This year, according to media reports, a great many Losar celebrations have been cancelled, and I fully understand the desire for a more reflective, personal Losar observance.

"As Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism, I hope the new year brings peace to you all, preserves your optimism and nurtures hope for the future."

Recipients of the 2008 Citation for Citizenship

Dr. Anthony Hutchinson and Victor Oh were honoured recently by Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism Minister Jason Kenney as two of eleven recipients of the 2008 Citation for Citizenship at a special ceremony presided over by the Minister.

"Canada has benefited tremendously from the ongoing hard work and dedication of Dr. Hutchinson, Mr. Oh and all recipients of the Citation for Citizenship," said Minister Kenney. "This award recognizes their accomplishments as well as what they represent as citizens of Canada - humanity, compassion and a concern for others. For that they have my respect, admiration and deepest appreciation."

The Citation for Citizenship is an award that honours Canadian

individuals for their outstanding contributions in helping immigrants and refugees to integrate smoothly into Canadian society. The eleven award recipients from across the country - Dan Brown, Young Sup Chung, Ellen Gillies, Art Gillies, Ted Grant, Anthony Hutchinson, Lucy Marco, Victor Oh, Josephine Ereno Pallard, Claudette Taschereau and Dharam Pal Verma - have together helped thousands of newcomers more easily adjust to a new life in Canada.

"Over the years, all of these individuals have devoted countless hours to helping newcomers feel welcome and supported and to achieve success in their communities," said Minister Kenney.

The winners were chosen by a panel of citizenship judges after a



national call for nominations in 2008. The award consists of a gold maple leaf pin and a certificate signed by the Minister, which will be presented to the recipients at citizenship ceremonies in Edmonton, Regina, Vancouver, Hamilton, Saint-Georges-de-Beauce, Mississauga and Charlottetown throughout the coming months.

The Citation for Citizenship was established under Multiculturalism and Citizenship Canada in 1987 as part of celebrations for the 40th anniversary of Canadian citizenship. The award aims to recognize volunteer work in support of the citizenship values of freedom, justice, equality and respect for diversity.

Ontario's march towards a green revolution

Ontario's Premier Dalton McGuinty and Energy Minister George Smitherman recently unveiled Ontario Green Energy and Green Economy Act, 2009, a plan to infuse the Canadian province with green energy and energy efficiency improvements.

The Green Energy and Green Economy Act, 2009 (GEA) takes a two-pronged approach to creating a green economy. The first is to bring more renewables to the province and the second is the creation of more energy efficiency measures to help conserve energy. The bill also includes measures that hopes foster a new green economy for Ontario by giving local communities more opportunities to develop distributed renewable energy generation projects.

The bill proposes enacting a feed-in tariff (FIT) with pricing that will hopefully generate more investment in renewable energy by offering investors greater confidence in the profitability of projects and increasing their access to funding. In addition to the FIT, the bill streamlines the approvals process for renewable energy projects and provides service guarantees for them. It also establishes a "right to connect" to the electricity grid for renewable energy projects.

To support local communities, the bill offers measures to assist developers of smaller community-owned generation facilities and also implements a smart grid in Ontario, with the aim of making it easier for renewables to connect to the system. Homeowners would have access to incentives to develop small-scale renewables such as low- or no-interest loans to finance the capital cost of renewable energy generating facilities like solar panels.

Energy Efficiency

The bill makes energy efficiency a prominent aspect of Ontario's Building Code by requiring, every 5 years, a review of the efficiency of any given building to identify areas that might be improved through better energy efficiency technology. It also establishes an advisory council to provide energy efficiency advice to the Minister of Municipal

Affairs and Housing.

The bill would establish Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Silver as the standard for new buildings and would require the broader public sector, including municipalities, universities, colleges, schools, and hospitals, to develop energy conservation plans.

In terms of household appliances and water use, the bill would require the use of Energy Star appliances as standard and require that households make efficient use of water. Homes would be required to have an energy audit prior to their sale.

Green Economy

The proposed bill is estimated to create 50,000 jobs in Ontario in



three years with its benefits sweeping across all communities. Employment will be in every sector, from steel workers to lawyers, manufacturers, and contractors.

A best-in class renewable energy feed-in tariff' combined with streamlined approvals processes and service guarantees has the potential to help Ontario to leap forward in terms of renewable energy capacity.

Send special UN envoy to Sri Lanka, urges Canadian opposition leader

"I urge United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon to send a special envoy to Sri Lanka to find ways to ensure no further loss of life and to begin immediate discussions on the political future of the country involving all sectors of Sri Lankan society," said Michael Ignatieff, Leader of the Liberal Party and Official Opposition in Canada in press release on Feb 27th.

Full Text of the Press Release:

I am deeply concerned about the continuing violence in Sri Lanka. Countless lives are being lost on a daily basis and more than 250,000 civilians are trapped on the frontline. An immediate ceasefire is needed now more than ever.

I urge both the government of Sri Lanka and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) to work together to find every possible way to save lives and to further avert a humanitarian disaster.

I also call on the international community to come together to work towards political reconciliation in Sri Lanka and to provide humanitarian assistance where it is needed. We have a responsibility to protect innocent civilians whose lives are at risk as a result of this military con-



Michael Ignatieff and President Obama after their meeting on February 19th, 2009. Photo credit: J.M. Carisse

flict.

In this regard, I urge United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon to send a special envoy to Sri Lanka to find ways to ensure no further loss of life and to begin immediate discussions on the political future of the country involving all sectors of Sri Lankan society.

There is no excuse for terrorism and attacks on civilians, and the world has to show its concern for the protection of the civilian population.

Our thoughts are with the people of Sri Lanka at this time as well as the Canadians of Sri Lankan descent whose lives are affected by this terrible situation.

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LETTERS & OPINIONS

An opinion by Villa Anandaram

President Obama has come and gone conquering the hearts of Canadians. Media coverage of Academy awards has kept every one excited about the dream world. In the mean time layoffs are taking place. Pink slips are being given. Ordinary working families are facing a bleak future with no programmes to survive and re-emerge from looming recession. Our finance minister is taking wait and see approach which reflects his lack of vision and inability to be proactive.

The address to the joint session of Congress by President Obama clearly demonstrates the difference in style and substance between the new leadership of U.S and the conservative leadership of Canada. Obama said "the impact of this recession is real, and it is everywhere," the result of extravagant buying, gutted regulations and inadequate financial planning. He admitted "too many banks handed out loans to people who could not pay. Politicians allowed the surplus to disappear with tax cuts for the rich. Regulations were gutted to help companies make a quick profit." He recognized it as an opportunity to remake the economy and build a foundation for lasting prosperity. The key word is remake the economy which is anathema for the Conservatives who believe in hands off by the government and let the business decide. Mr. Harper and his finance minister Mr. Flaherty are still reluctant to admit that the global recession is due to unbridled expansion of the free market and any remaking done in other countries has to be echoed in Canada as well.

Conservatives are claiming that among the G7 nations our economy is stronger. Mr. Flaherty proudly admits that the key of this strength lies on our banking system. What they do not want to admit is the credit for properly regulated banking system should go to the former Liberal finance minister Mr. Paul Martin. His toughness against Conservatives encouraged bank mergers and deregulation 10 years ago is keeping us in a better position than other industrialist countries. Balanced budget and deficit reduction was started by Liberals during the term of Mr. Jean Chrétien and the sound economy provided by their leadership allowed the Conservatives to continue paying down the debt. Liberals recorded five consecutive budget surpluses, and paid down \$36 billion of national debt. Economic growth with strong social programs and regulations to maintain check and balance was the policy of Liberals and that is what making us hope for a soft landing during the current economic crash. Conservatives don't admit that and deviously claim the credit for themselves.

During the election campaign the Liberal leader Mr. Stephan Dion raised the issue of impending eco-

What the Conservatives don't admit

conomic crisis. That was the key issue for Liberals and New Democrats. Mr. Flaherty continued to down play the danger. As the finance minister in power he should have known if not the severity but at least the inevitability. This is either inefficiency on the part of the finance minister or dubious practice of the Conservatives. We didn't want to panic the public is not an excuse for the Conservatives who believe in less government intervention and public knows best. I believe the public they mean are the elite and well to do.

The deficit budget they have produced is a big U turn from their conservative policy. It was not by choice but forced on to them by the opposition. A mixed budget was produced to appease the opposition. How will it be implemented is a task for the opposition to monitor. The voters did not trust the Conservatives and that was the reason they were not given a majority even for the second time. Mr. Ignatieff as a responsible opposition leader gave the budget a conditional support insisting on quarterly report card on spending. What the conservatives won't tell us is how they are going to sneak in their political agenda passing Bill C-10 with the implementation of the budget. Under this bill the government can pass measures that are anti labour, such as pay equity, right to strike and loosening environmental protection laws etc. Harper made a big U turn on his policy on senate appointment which he said has to be elected. This was his position before the general election. Now, in order to pass these bills against the will of opposition he has made senate appointments with his conservative lackeys.

The opposition need to make sure the money allocated in the budget should go to the consumer who could boost the economy by spending. The common man is the consumer who would spend on essentials which are vital for the economy to recover. To do this, jobs should be saved; unemployed should be retrained and reemployed; money should be spent on infrastructure where more jobs are created; make sure money does not end up in big bonuses to privileged and fortunate.

It is time to redefine and remake the economy. Conservative economist Milton Friedman cannot be idealised. It is time to rethink about sharing the risk and rewarding for work. It is time to think how much higher, heads of corporations are to be paid than the average wage. Accountability of the bosses should be translated into repayment of rewards for the down turn of the business. Former NDP premier Bob Ray was criticized during his time for the introduction of Ray Days. But now similar measures are being taken in California. Harper Holidays or Flaherty Fridays are possible ways of saving jobs as oppose to massive layoffs. This will put food

Another Fraudulent Report on Youth Violence

Continued from Page 04...

Two of the points made are that 1) the youth, "believe that they are oppressed, held down, unfairly treated and neither belong to nor have a stake in the broader society" and 2) "believe that they have no way to be heard through other channels." The authors have invoked the word "believe" in their report, suggesting that the youth have a "perception" rather than knowledge based on their own direct experience regarding their oppression and marginalization by the racist Canadian state in which the anti-social offensive and the law and order agenda are used to negate the rights and claims of these black youth and others. In other words the use of the word "believe" is carefully added to dismiss the direct experience of these youth and the oppression they face in the system on a daily basis.

The report by McMurtry and Curling, accommodated defenders of the racist Canadian state, does not raise the issue of poverty within the context of the brutal anti-social offensive waged by successive governments against the people of Ontario. Instead, the inquiry points to the symptoms as the root cause and in doing so blames the youth themselves as being the cause of "youth violence." Thus, the report will do nothing to alleviate the problem of "youth violence," but provides a "safety valve" for the Canadian state to once again show Ontarians and Canadians that "something is being done" about youth violence. Such reports serve to disinform Ontarians, isolate youth and black

and national minority youth in particular, in order to divert attention from the violence of the state whose primary aim is to serve the interests of the monopolies.

It is interesting to note that while McMurtry and Curling were conducting their inquiry, the McGuinty Liberals found the money to hire more police and began putting police in the schools, but could find no money for the very social programs that the youth need. It shows that their report is but a public relations exercise, no different from past reports such as the Lewis Report or the Falconer Report or many other reports that are conducted at the expense of the public, that purport to deal with the issue of "youth violence" but blame the youth for the violence in order to justify after the fact inflated police budgets and jails.

The problems being faced by the youth are indicative of a degenerating society based on oppression and exploitation which does not recognize their needs as youth. Unemployment, humiliation and marginalization of their concerns, culture and language engender acts of desperation. It is these anti-social conditions in society which are being reflected in acts of desperation. What is termed the youth being "attitude problems" is their rejection of these conditions and the clash between conditions and the authority of the state which refuses to recognize their rights.

The McMurtry and Curling report and its recommendations are not going to make any progress to address "youth violence" or any of the myriad problems facing black and other

minority youth. This is because as Ontarians, Canadians, blacks, national minorities and the working people of Canada, there is no mechanism to discuss the issues confronting them so that they can decide upon and initiate actions that would serve their interests and the interests of all. The Canadian state has no interest to solve the problems of the most vulnerable and to provide rights to all.

On the occasion of Black History Month, when we recall the historic liberation and emancipation struggles of the past in the context of the present, a question facing the entire polity is how to take these struggles further so as to become the decision-makers in all matters which affect us. To think that the political parties in the Parliament and the Legislature who have contributed to no end of problems for the workers and people of Ontario will defend the interests of the black and minority communities or anyone else simply negates our direct experience. This is why it is crucial that the black youth, national minorities and working class people build their own committees for renewal in their neighbourhoods so that they are able to discuss their concerns and select individuals to represent their interests.


No to the Criminalization of Youth!

Build Committees for Democratic Renewal!

Notes

1. Curling, Alvin and McMurtry Roy, The Review of the Roots of Violence, Executive Summary Report

2. Ibid.



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on the table for many, save their houses from power of sale, save families from breakup and put dignity in their lives. Such measures may not be acceptable for Mr. Harper who still believes in let the markets decide and only the fittest should survive.

It appears that Mr. Harper is not bent on solving the problem of the nation nor that of the common man but on his own political interest.

Unlike president Obama who is more open and forthcoming Mr. Harper has not addressed the public or the reporters about the economic crisis. Our prime minister was keen in getting a photo opportunity with president Obama so that he can piggyback on the charisma of the president. Mr. Harper's politics is closer to that of George W. Bush. With no love for Bush in Canada and Obama's popularity running much

higher than Harper's he wanted to at least appear close to Obama in pictures. For this purpose he went to the extent of reducing the time of Obama's meeting with the opposition leader, the lowest ever given to the opposition leader, and made sure the meeting is held not in parliament hill but at the airport. Should the prime minister's office deplete to this level? We need substance not style.

Samy Appadurai

It was a pleasant afternoon in the beginning of the year 1998. Torontonians were in a celebratory mood regarding the amalgamation of the six municipalities of Scarborough, York, North York, Toronto and Etobicoke into one wonderful entity we like to call the mega city. The invites for the celebration were heading towards the city hall with pride and enthusiasm and I was among them. The long awaited historic swearing in ceremony began with cheers and I noticed that Mr. Mel Lastman, the first mayor elect, was well dressed and wore the Jewish kippah (skull cap) on his head. This affirmed his identity and exhibited the Jewish belief that he is not on the top of the world and that the almighty god is and presides over all. With this symbolism in mind, we participated in the swearing in ceremony with much enthusiasm. This elevated my morale and impression of Torontonians and how they have broad, accommodative and embracing minds. I could not help but notice many invitees who came from all corners of the world happily participating in this ceremony. My mind went back to a time, not very long ago in Toronto, where in some of the remote restaurants notices were placed on the doors stating that "Dogs and Jews are not allowed". Times have changed. Long before this ceremony, during Mr. Lastman's election campaign all of the supporters, volunteers and assistants were all members of various multi-ethnic groups and almost all ethnicities were well represented. Toronto the city of multicultural rainbows. This diverse and complex city exhibits the peaceful coexistence of Torontonians with new comers who come from over 170 countries from the six continents, who belong to over hundred ethnicities and speak over one hundred and sixty languages and practice many faiths certainly elevate Toronto's status as a model city in this modern world.

The recent rapid growth of this city in terms of demographic patterns, economic expansion, extended national and provincial administrative organs and having a bulk of skilled workers in the service industries along with improved infrastructure has placed Toronto as the largest city in Canada with over 2.5 million residents. Toronto is also the fifth most populous municipality in North America. It is also one of the top financial centers in the world and is the economic capital of Canada along with its recognition as a global city. Compared with other large cities such as London England, New York in the USA, Paris France, Tokyo Japan, and Bombay India, Toronto has well balanced growth in all aspects and does not lack or have deficiencies in certain areas of urbanization. I would cite a couple of examples to illustrate this point. In many cities, certain areas are recognized as the residential areas for the cream of the crop. These areas are of such a high caliber and poor people can not even dream about living in these rather exclusive areas. In contrast, there are areas where the bulk of the population lives in poverty. Hunger, anger, violence, along with frustration, in these very densely populated areas with inadequate social amenities is a way of life. It is not

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unusual for entire families with parents and grown children to live in one room with no privacy for adults, no room for doing school work and certainly no where for the children to play. It is also very common in these urban slums to have no access to clean running water. I happened to meet one such laborer in one of these cities who had only two sets of clothes. He was wearing one of them and the second pair was in laundry for washing. Once I met him at the laundry where he paid for the services and received the washed clothes. He then moved into a corner of the laundry room and changed into the clean clothes. He spent his only weekend off by purchasing a drink at a corner store that was made from rotten fruit and some insects and became very intoxicated. Many of these people are forced by the ignorance of the government or the so called absolute liberty in free enterprise where everyone has the key to open the door to accumulate wealth and climb up the economic ladder. Certainly such a poor labour class exists in many cities around the world, but not in Toronto. Those circumstances push them into indulging in many unlawful activities and I spent some time with them and they expressed their belief that their life is destined to suffer and the successful and rich people are cheats, liars and steal public money. Those areas are mostly centers of crimes such as drug trafficking, prostitution, murder for money, theft and so on. I do not mean to

say that these things do not happen in Toronto but the amount is very limited and confined to small pockets here and there. I understand the residences of lower income earners have a lot of problems and inadequate facilities but compared with the cities I have just mentioned the gravity of those problems is minimal.

Any stranger who visits Toronto can easily notice the underground railway, basement apartments, and the underground shopping complexes in the downtown but they would not be able to hear about the underground economic activities in operation. In some cities the amount of wealth in the underground economy and income generated exerts great control not only in the economy but also political power. In some cities, the politicians or the rulers cannot be in operation without their blessing and anyone who tries to oppress or eliminate them will simply "disappear". Although the size of the underground economy cannot be fully measured or exposed, we can arrive at a conclusion which is close to the reality of the situation. As far as I know, such a strong underground economy is not a threat to Toronto.

Toronto is one of the most well planned, structured and maintained cities in the world. The magnificent growth of the city began naturally with limited planning because the size of the population was low and a low number of new immigrants migrated to the city. In the absence



of big factories, there was no need to have a concentration of workers settlements around the factory and settlement in the city was brought into the planning of the municipalities. I am very certain that in those days they might not have dreamed of today's growth. Since the 1960's the growth rate has been unbelievable and the municipal government of Toronto, with the help of the provincial government planned the further physical development well and Toronto expanded to the hinterlands. Toronto is among the very few, if not the only city that has wide open space with untouched virgin land. The planning thus became unavoidable and all modern physical structures had to be approved before the construction work began.

I had a very wonderful experi-



ence in Toronto a few days after I arrived from Montreal in early 1987. I did not own a car, and being a new immigrant, had to apply for a driver's license. My mode of transportation was commuting and this gave me a chance to write articles and read books. As usual I left my home in Scarborough, got into the rapid transportation, reached Kennedy station and got into the subway train. It was heading towards Kipling station. When the train passed three or four stops the door of the compartment where I was seated had some mechanical problems and could not be opened. The train was in motion and after passing three stations, two mechanics came in, put up a sign saying that the subway door was under repair and started their work. When the train reached Sherbourne station everything had been brought back to normal and the passengers who entered the train at that station had no idea of what went wrong and how it was repaired. The effective operation and efficiency of those technicians impressed me a lot and got deep down into my heart. It is one of a handful of unforgettable experiences that I will never forget for all my life. It was amazing and exhibits the efficiency of the operation of other institutions and I neither cite it as a typical example nor an exceptional incident, but it could be generalized about the effective operation of government and non government institutions.

Contd. in pg 45

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Current wage rate	\$8.75/hour	\$8.20/hour	\$7.60/hour	\$43.75	\$87.50	110% of the minimum wage
Mar. 31, 2009 wage rate	\$9.50/hour	\$8.90/hour	\$8.25/hour	\$47.50	\$95.00	110% of the minimum wage

On March 31, 2009, the general minimum wage will increase to \$9.50 per hour from the current rate of \$8.75 per hour.

To find out more about how the new minimum wage guidelines affect employers and employees, call or visit the Ministry of Labour web site.

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Fasting for Sri Lankan Peace

Jessica Schieder of The Hoya, Georgetown University's newspaper on record since 1920 - interviews People for Equality and Relief in Sri Lanka's (PEARL) advocacy director Tasha Manoranjan:

Tasha Manoranjan (SFS '08) has volunteered in her family's home country of Sri Lanka since the summer after her freshman year of college and has become an advocate for peace in the island nation's civil war. As a member of PEARL, an organization that works to inform Americans about the suffering in Sri Lanka and the crimes performed by the Sri Lankan government against Tamil civilians she is currently fasting along with seven other Tamil-Americans for the Sri Lankan Tamil population's rights.

How did you first get involved with the situation in Sri Lanka?

Well, my family is originally from Sri Lanka. I was born in Columbus, Ohio, but growing up [my] parents would tell me what they experienced in Sri Lanka and how they were forced to flee the country and the discrimination they experienced, being a part of

the Tamil minority there. It was more difficult for them to access education opportunities, based on the fact they were Tamil. It was something I knew, but hadn't really absorbed, because I was just so far away in my daily life. It never really meant much to me, until I actually went and did volunteer work there.

I felt a part of me really needed to go to this country and see where I came from, and so I went the following summer, the summer before I started college, and spent a few weeks in a girl's orphanage, teaching them English and getting their conversational abilities a little bit stronger, and that struck me. Hearing that and knowing the differences between their experiences and my experiences just really struck me, because it could have just as easily been me living there. It's just because my parents were lucky enough to leave the country that I have this amazing life here, and it could've just as easily been my life there - in that orphanage, having lost family members, and without any support system, experiencing the devastation that they're experiencing now. That first experience made me want to go back again and again. Every summer, I go and stay at that girls' orphanage

or another school in the area, just teaching English - and even learning some of their language, myself. I learn from them what their lives are like, and then conveying that to others to educate people about the suffering there.

Can you tell us a little bit about what you do here in the United States, as one of the leaders of PEARL?

PEARL is an organization in which we try to educate Americans about the suffering in Sri Lanka and about the crimes the Sri Lankan government has perpetrated against the Tamil civilians and try to elevate the dialogue, which is currently going on, regarding the conflict. The basic status quo approach to the situation is that it's a conflict between the Sri Lankan government and the LTTE [the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, a separatist group in Sri Lanka]. Tamil civilians are completely absent from that conversation, and for so long Tamil civilians have been silenced and ignored. The international community has supported the Sri Lankan government's approach, that this is a war against terrorism, and according to the Bush doctrine, during wars of terrorism, you can attack innocent civilians, and mark them off as collateral damage. I think the

Sri Lankan government has successfully rode on the coattail of that and has been able to portray this crisis and all the civilians, who have been killed over the past few years, as Tiger supporters or as LTTE supporters. The other stories aren't being heard, so I... see this organization as a tool to utilize our own experiences... to convey that to policy makers and other Americans here, and foster a more educated dialogue, that includes Tamil civilians and respects the rights of Tamil civilians.

That's our objective, and how we go about doing it is we have a membership of about 2,600 Americans and we e-mail them every week, asking them to forward the letter to their congressional representatives. The letter updates the congressional representatives about what Tamil civilians are currently experiencing.

We supplement the letter-writing campaign with advocacy days on Capitol Hill. We'll go and speak with congressional offices that are handling foreign affairs, and educate them.

Why are you fasting?

On Monday, the government began bombing safe zones, after having told Tamil refugees they'd be safe there. Then, they began shelling those safe zones, includ-



ing the refugee camps. When we found out about that, we were beyond outraged - these were people we know. We have friends there, we have family there, and we were so overwhelmed by a sense of urgency. As citizens of the most powerful nation in the world, we felt we should act as a voice for these people and stop this suffering. We thought the typical protests and rallies were insufficient. I know how long it's been since I've eaten, but I have no idea how long its been since these refugees have eaten, slept, been nourished or had access to proper medical supplies - things we take for granted. We felt a fast shows how eager we are to bring an end to this genocide.

[courtesy: The Hoya]

US Senate Panel Discusses Sri Lanka

By Deborah Tate

A U.S. Senate committee Tuesday, Feb 24th focused its attention on the situation in Sri Lanka, where the military is engaged in an intense battle with Tamil Tigers as the two sides struggle for control of what is believed to be the last of the rebel strongholds. Witnesses at the Senate hearing decried the actions of both sides in one of Asia's longest running wars.

Anna Neistat, senior researcher for Human Rights Watch, told a Senate Foreign Relations committee hearing that human rights violations are being committed by both sides in Sri Lanka's 25-year-old conflict.

She described a deplorable situation in the so-called safe zone, established by the government to protect refugees. "We received several detailed accounts from people who stayed within the safe zone, and these accounts suggest that the shelling by Sri Lankan forces killed dozens if not

hundreds of people inside there," she said.

But Neistat is equally critical of the rebel Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, or LTTE. "The LTTE has deliberately prevented civilians under its control from fleeing into the government controlled areas. We have documented several incidents where LTTE forces fired at fleeing civilians, killing and injuring dozens. We also documented cases where the LTTE effectively used civilians as human shields to protect their positions from attack. This is a war crime," she said.

Other witnesses described what they called the Sri Lankan government's growing assault on dissent.

"Many Tamils have been abducted and have simply disappeared. It is sad to say that it is almost a certainty that these attacks have been carried out by elements of the government. Impunity seems total. Nobody has been prosecuted for any of these

incidents," said Jeffrey Lunstead, a former U.S. ambassador to Sri Lanka.

Lunstead also noted that journalists have come under attack, a point echoed by Bob Dietz, Asia Program coordinator at the Committee to Protect Journalists. "Top journalists have been killed, attacked, threatened and harassed since the government began to pursue its all-out military victory against the LTTE. Many local and foreign journalists and members of the diplomatic community firmly believe the government is complicit in these attacks," he said.

Ambassador Lunstead said the world community could play an important role in shaping Sri Lanka's future. He recommends that international donors impose conditions on economic aid to the government of Sri Lanka. He says those conditions should include an improvement in the country's human rights record, the resettlement of displaced persons and a



Anna Neistat

devolution of power from the capital, Colombo, to local areas to allow all Sri Lankans to have a greater say in how they are governed.

Anna Neistat of Human Rights Watch is urging the United Nations Security Council to hold a special session to address Sri Lanka's humanitarian catastrophe.

Senator Bob Casey, a Pennsylvania Democrat, chaired the hearing. He called for both sides in the conflict to come to a

political settlement. "Should the war end and the broader Tamil population continue to face systemic discrimination by and inadequate representation in the Sri Lankan government, the Tamil Tigers may once again be driven underground to carry out acts of terror, perpetuating another go-around in this vicious cycle of violence. So far, there are few indications that a political deal is imminent. The government of Sri Lanka will not negotiate directly with the LTTE, but it does not appear the government has much interest in finding alternative Tamil interlocutors, nor have the Tamils presented credible alternatives to the LTTE," he said.

Sri Lanka's military says its forces advanced Tuesday into the last rebel stronghold in northeastern part of the country.

The LTTE has said it is open to a limited cease-fire and a political solution, but has rejected calls to disarm. The government has rejected anything short of the rebels' unconditional surrender.

[voanews]

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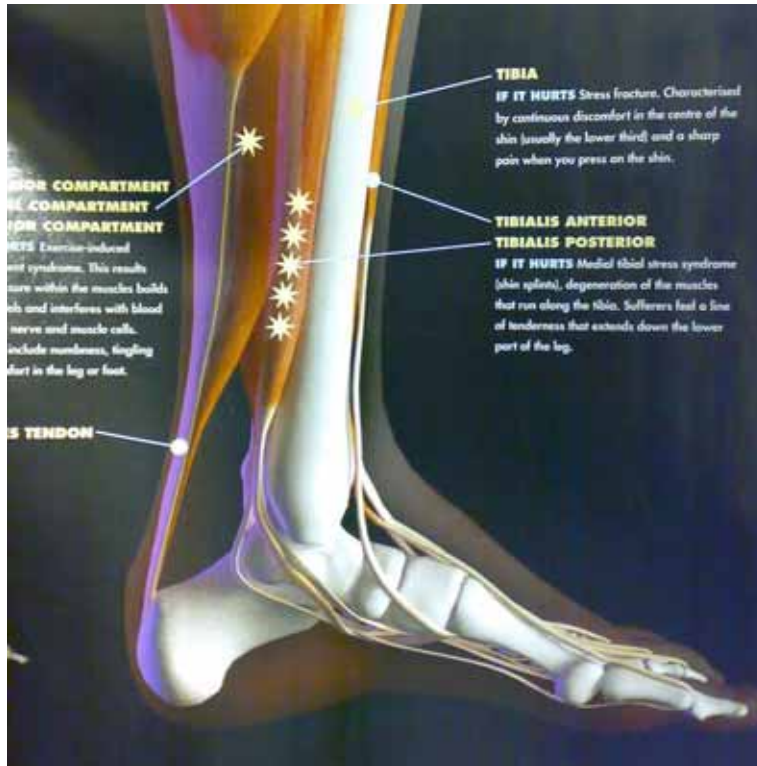
By Mithura Anandarajah, PT
Registered Physiotherapist

It could be on the dance floor as you twist and turn, or perhaps on a sandy beach. You could just be taking a step or it could be as intensive as running a sprint. You could be young or old, inactive or an athlete. Whatever the mechanism of injury may be, an ankle sprain can happen to the best of us. It can happen quickly, painfully and limit our mobility for days and even weeks. All it takes is an awkward movement or an uneven surface. Caused by the sudden twisting movement of the foot, an ankle sprain is one of the most common orthopedic injuries.

The ankle consists of several bones and joints interacting together, with muscles and tendons supporting the complex. A sprain is actually an injury to the ligaments, which are elastic, band-like structures that hold the bones of the ankle joint together. In the ankle, there are ligaments on the inner and outer aspects of the joint complex and they prevent excessive turning and twisting of the joint. In normal movement, the ligaments can stretch slightly and then retract back to their normal shape and size. A sprain results when the ligaments of the ankle have been stretched beyond their limits. In severe sprains, the ligaments may be

partially or completely torn. Most ankle sprains are inversion sprains, where the foot rolls inward, thereby injuring the outer ligaments of the ankle. Sprains are graded depending on the level of the injury. While a grade I sprain may be the stretching of the ligaments, a grade III sprain would be the actual tearing of the ligaments.

The signs and symptoms of ankle sprains may include pain or soreness, swelling, bruising, difficulty walking and stiffness in the joint. These symptoms may vary in intensity, depending on the severity of the sprain. As soon as the injury occurs, the first thing to remember is the R.I.C.E principle - rest, ice, compression and elevation. The immediate goal is to reduce inflammation. See your physician and discuss pain relief options and perhaps the need for an anti-inflammatory. Sometimes, if the sprain is severe and the ligaments are completely ruptured, you may require immobilization (cast) or even surgery. Once discussed with your physician, start rehabilitation and physiotherapy as soon as possible. Immediate intervention can reduce pain and swelling, while facilitating recovery. Inaction will result in muscles losing strength and the ankle



losing its stability.

During rehabilitation and physiotherapy, the initial goal is to reduce swelling. Modalities such as Ultrasound or Electrical Stimulation, with the use of heat or ice can facilitate this. Also you would want to return the mobility of the joint. This can be done through exercise or through manual therapy, where the therapist mobilizes the joints to minimize the stiffness. Initially, it may be necessary to use crutches to avoid weight bearing of the foot. Once the movement of the ankle has normalized, the goal of rehabilitation is to stabilize the ankle complex. This is best done by strengthening the muscles around

the joint. This process needs to be progressed appropriately and safely, without flaring up the injury and causing more pain and swelling. During the recovery of



an ankle sprain, it is important to work on balance and proprioception. Our feet tell the brain where we are in space. On an uneven surface, our feet need to adjust to the changes quickly and safely. Gait training and specific exercises can facilitate these skills. Eventually, the rehabilitation process needs to be progressed in order to be activity specific. If you are a runner or a jumper, you will have to train the ankle to resume this high level of function, while preventing further re-injury.

An ankle sprain can happen to anyone, anytime. The key is to minimize symptoms quickly and seek the appropriate care as soon as possible. This will facilitate recovery and prevent the injury from reoccurring.



Mithura Anandarajah, PT, CAFCI
Clinical Director / Physiotherapist

Rathburn Physiotherapy & Sports Medicine Clinic
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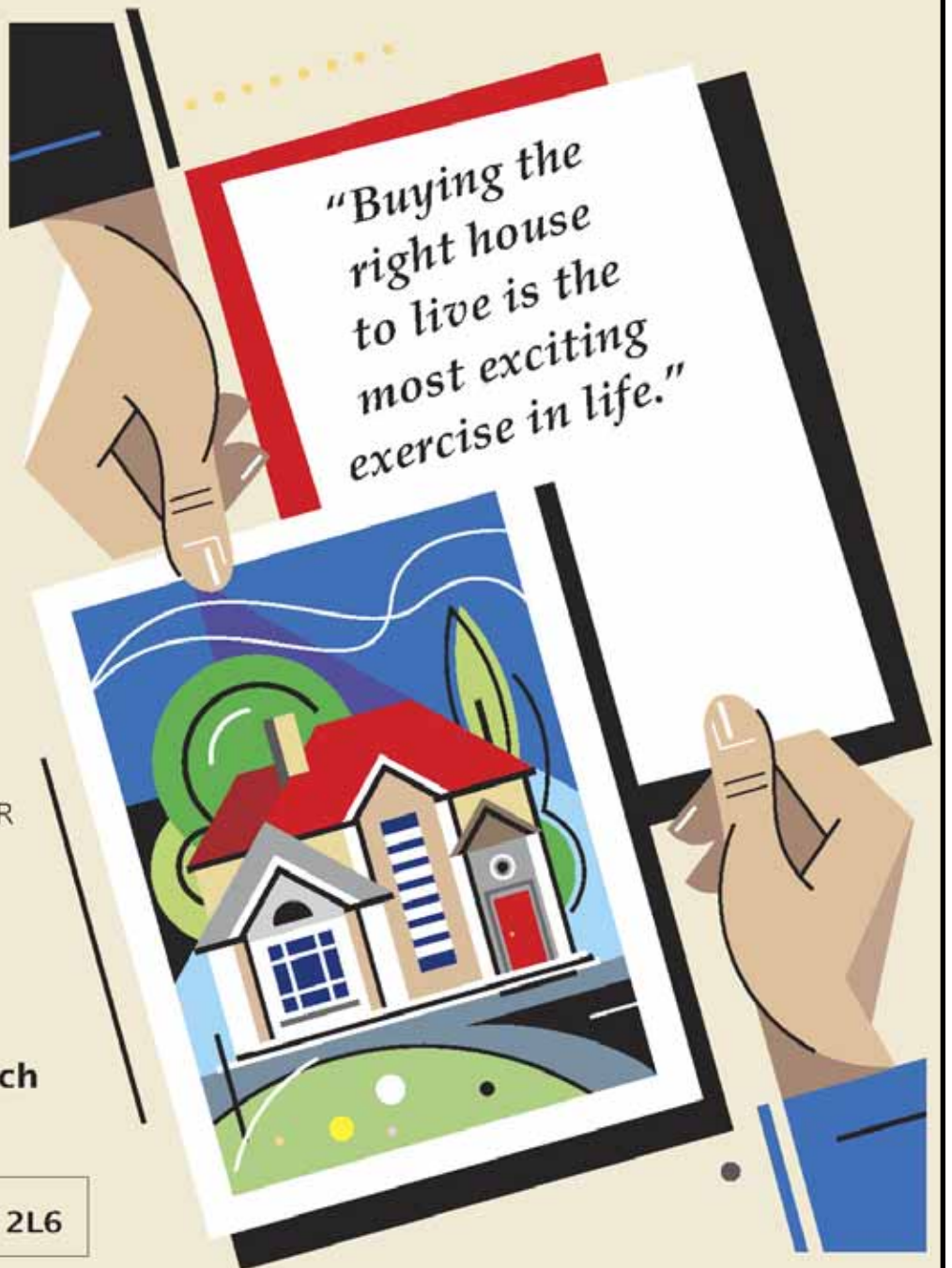
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ONLY 2.2% OF HUMANITARIAN SUPPLIES REACHED VANNI IN FEBRUARY RDHS

Dr. T. Sathiyamoorthy, the Regional Director of Health Services (RDHS) of Kilinochchi district, in a situation report issued on March 5th said that only 109.71MT of food had been received for the month of February 2009 through the ships with the help of the ICRC. The real requirement per month, according to the RDHS is 4950 MT. "Consequently people are threatened with starvation unless the food condition is urgently rectified," the doctor said

in his situation report adding: "Particularly children, women, elders and those who are seriously ill become vulnerable to the onslaught of starvation."

"Only a few people could be satisfied with this amount of food received. Even to receive this, people wait in winding queues in the scorching sun."

"In fact, 13 people have died of starvation in the latter part of February alone."

The water facilities in the 'safety zone' have been natu-

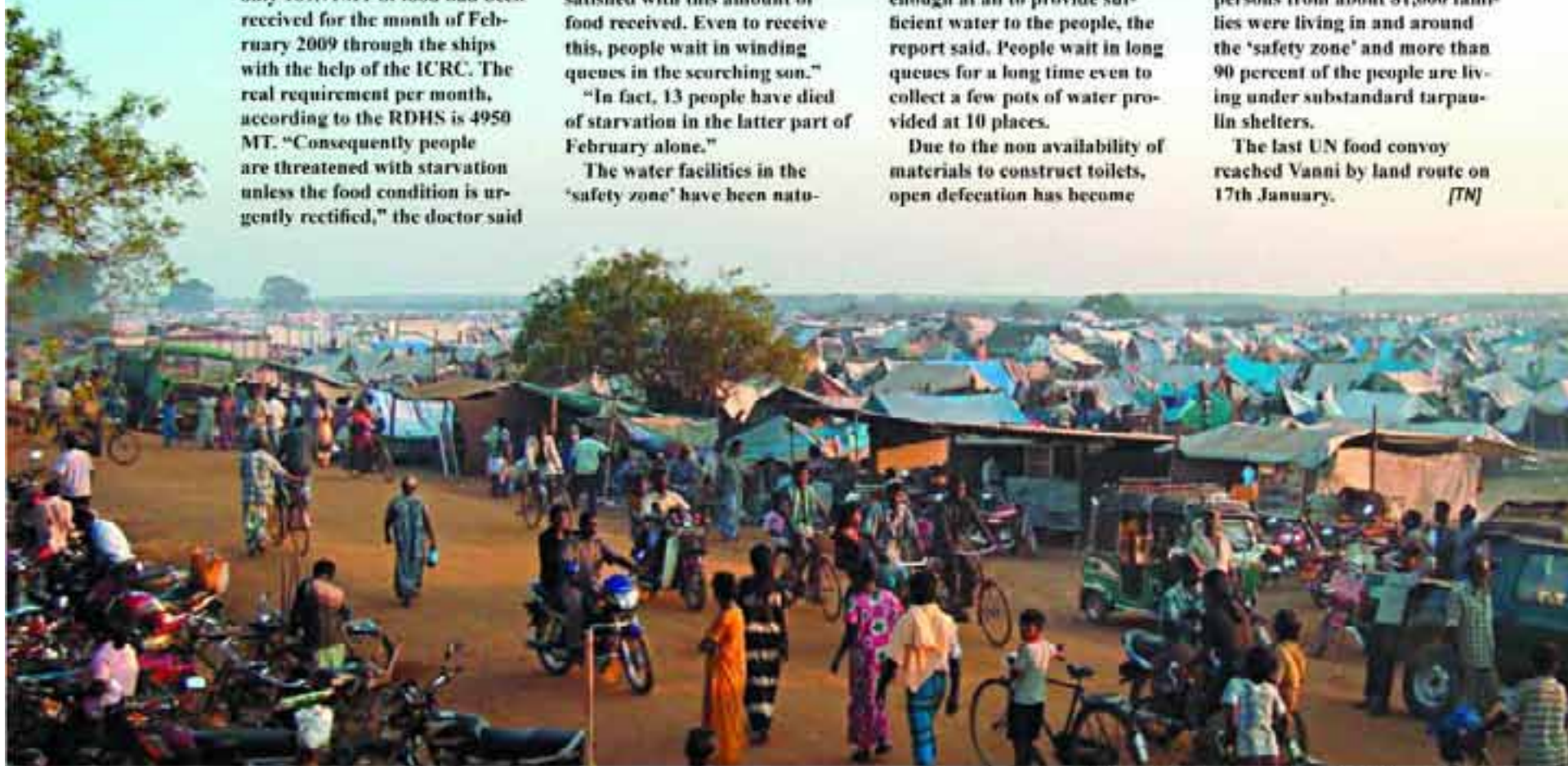
rally limited because of the landscape. The sudden increase in the population had made the situation worse. The available open wells and the water provided by the bousers are not enough at all to provide sufficient water to the people, the report said. People wait in long queues for a long time even to collect a few pots of water provided at 10 places.

Due to the non availability of materials to construct toilets, open defecation has become

common among the majority of the people.

The report by the Kilinochchi RDHS, citing the Government Agent's statement on 28 February 2009, said around 330,000 persons from about 81,000 families were living in and around the 'safety zone' and more than 90 percent of the people are living under substandard tarpaulin shelters.

The last UN food convoy reached Vanni by land route on 17th January. [TN]



Tarpaulin shelters at Puthumaththalan where the makeshift-hospital is also located

People arriving in Vanni need medical care and counseling

Wounded, shocked and distressed. After having fled heavy fighting in the Vanni, people arriving in Vavuniya hospital need both medical care and counselling. Mental health officer Karen Stewart hears their stories.

"People arrive here in a state of extreme anxiety and fear. They have been separated from their families and often have no news about their fate. Young children and elderly travelling with their caretakers claim they were separated at a checkpoint. The caretakers or family members who were healthy were

forced to go to camps, whilst those wounded and sick had to go to the hospital."

Lonely and trapped

"Children at the hospital are unaccompanied. They scream and call out for their mothers. Elderly people are on their own. Some people have bad wounds, some have been amputated or badly hurt by shrapnel. A child spoke about how he was in a bunker with his cousins at the time of an attack. Out of the 10 people seeking refuge, six people died.

"Patients were told they would go to the hospital for a

few days and then go back to the Vanni again. But later they heard they couldn't go back. At the same time, we could hear the bombing going on in the Vanni. You can imagine how desperate people were, thinking of their kids and other family members who were still there. People regretted coming here, saying they would prefer dying with their family, than being in a camp."

Showing someone cares

"Together with two other MSF mental health officers, I talked to about 25 people immediately after they arrived in the hospi-



MSF provides mental health counselling in Vavuniya for traumatized patients. It's important they can talk to someone and express their fears

and extreme anxiety. Of course we can't reassure them about their families, we don't have first-hand information about what's happening inside the conflict zone or in the camps. But at least we show that people care about them."

Mental health in Vavuniya

Karen Stewart and her colleagues offer support to a local organisation, specialised in mental health. They train supervisors and help new staff develop basic counselling skills. This is especially important in case counsellors themselves have been affected by the ongoing conflict.

(Reproduced from Medecins sans Frontieres website)

SRI LANKAN CONFLICT DUE TO 'REPRESSIVE' GOVTS

The 37-year conflict raging in Sri Lanka was borne out of "repressive" governments in Colombo, Canadian Minister of State for Foreign Affairs said on Thursday Mar 5th.

"I am sure all Canadians share the government's revulsion at the continuing humanitarian catastrophe in Sri Lanka, a civil conflict born of a succession of repressive Sri Lankan governments, which in turn spawned the terrorist organization known as the Tamil Tigers," Kent told the House of Commons.



Hon. Peter Kent MP was first elected to the House of Commons in 2008.

Prior to his election to the House of Commons, Mr. Kent was a broadcast journalist having spent more than 40 years working as a writer, reporter, producer, anchor and senior executive in Canada, the United States and around the world. Internationally, he covered stories that shaped the 20th century, including momentous events such as the Yom Kippur War, the fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of the Cold War.

Thousands of Tamils rally at White House



Thousands of members of the Tamil diaspora rallied on Friday 20th outside the White House to demand US pressure on the Sri Lankan government as it pursues a major offensive against Tiger rebels.

The rally was met by a smaller counter-demonstration, mostly by members of Sri Lanka's majority Sinhalese community, who called for the separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) to end their trademark suicide attacks.

The protests came just as the LTTE carried out a kamikaze-style air attack on Sri Lanka's capital Colombo, bombing the main tax building and killing two people.

Organizers said some 5,000 people -- mostly Tamil residents of the United States and Canada -- took part in the rally near the South Lawn of the White House, where they beat drums and chanted "Stop the genocide!"

Several protesters waved the LTTE's red flag and carried placards describing the group -- branded by the United States as a terrorist group -- as "freedom fighters."

"The United States is often reluctant to condemn a foreign government, especially when it says it is part of the 'war on terror,'" said Nalayini Gunanayagam, an organizer of the demonstration.

"But the 'war on terror' is only an excuse to carry out genocide," said Gunanayagam, a California resident who left Sri Lanka more than 40 years ago.

She said the United States could impose pressure by slapping trade sanctions on Sri Lanka, a major textile exporter.

Tens of thousands of people have died since the Tigers launched a campaign in 1972 to carve out a Tamil homeland. The military has been closing in on the rebels, who have lost 98 percent of the territory they controlled two years earlier.

Police in cars and on horses separated the crowd from a hastily called counter-demonstration by around 300 people, who waved Sri Lanka's national flag and denounced the Tigers.

They strongly rejected allegations of genocide, noting that Tamils make up a large part of the population in Colombo.

"They say 'genocide' because it's an eye-catching word that appeals to the Western public," said Sena Basnayake, a Washington-based lawyer of Sri Lankan descent.

"But genocide means the systematic annihilation of one race by another race. It does not exist in any sense of the term."

[courtesy: AFP]

Canadian Students-Toronto to Chicago on Foot for Oprah Show

Continued from Page 1

Full Text of the Press Release
OPRAH GIVE US A VOICE

We are a group of six students from various colleges and universities across Canada who are walking from the US Consulate in Toronto to the Harpo Studio in Chicago IL where Oprah Winfrey airs her show from.

We started the walk at 6:00 PM on Wednesday, March 05, 2009 and we will be walking for about two months through the freezing cold and snow to Chicago. Although our hope is Oprah will invite us much earlier in the process for the show, we are determined to not stop walking until we get audience with our beloved Oprah Winfrey. The purpose of the walk is to highlight the plight of innocent Tamil civilians in Sri Lanka on the Oprah Winfrey Show.

On the first day we walked from US Consulate at 360 University Avenue to the intersection of East Mall at Dundas.

On day two of the walk, we walked from Dundas and East Mall to Dundas and Mississagua Road in the City of Mississagua.

On day three we walked from Mississagua Road and Dundas and on March 7th, 2009, we were at Mississagua Road at Erin Mills Parkway.

We walked 16 km, 15.1 km 16.8 km and 10 km on the first, second, third and on the fourth day respectively. Yesterday we walked through Mississauga city and spent the afternoon with University of Toronto at Mississauga



campus students, academic community and the general public discussing with them about the plight of Tamil civilians in Sri Lanka and of the purpose of our walk.

A unified voice is important in this regard for us to make our journey successful and help bring an end to the people's sufferings. We would like to have your support behind us in making this endeavour a great success for many of the voiceless people in the world. Please send in your e-mails to the Oprah Winfrey Show encouraging them give audience to our collective voice.

If you have any further questions regarding this, please feel free to contact us at the information provided below.

Thank-you.

The walkers' names are as follows from left to right, as in the picture attached:

Vijay Siveneswaran, Kris Balasingam, Marlan Rajah, Kannan Sreekantha, Myron Rajah, Ramanan Thirukketheeswaranathan

Contact: Kannan Srekantha, Tel: 416.258.7957., Oprah Give Us A Voice - Toronto to Chicago on Foot, Wilfrid Laurier University alumni, Email: sree8510@wlu.ca



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LAHORE ATTACK ON LANKAN CRICKETERS IS TIED UP WITH SOUTH ASIAN GEO-POLITICS



Indian cricket fans wore black bands around their faces during a silent protest against the attack on Sri Lankan cricket players, in Agartala, capital of India's northeastern state of Tripura. Photo: Jayanta Dey/Reuters

By Kusal Perera

The news of the Lahore armed attack on Sri Lankan cricketers sent the Sinhala South into a momentary shock. It took a few seconds, if not minutes for most Southern Sri Lankans to ask each other faintly, "Why attack our cricketers?" And then they all got fired and were buzzing the news around, often with their own interpretations. Some thought it was a LTTE contract on SL. "These Muslim armed groups do things for money," they told others. Meanwhile the army spokesperson Brigadier Udaya Nanayakkara said, it can't be the LTTE. The military of course works on the premise, the LTTE is almost annihilated.

The attack had its immediate reactions across the sub continent and else where. The Indians and New Zealanders playing it out in NZ, came on the field with black arm bands against the attack on SL cricketers. Pakistani President Zardari and his Prime Minister immediately condemned the attack. Indian Home Minister Chidambaram did same, adding that it proved the Pakistani security is lacking. SL President on a 04 day visit to Nepal condemned the attack and cut his tour short on security reasons to head back home, after ordering his Foreign Minister Bogollagama to fly to Pakistan immediately.

The ICC came out with their condemnation of the attack and promised they would work for the safety of players in international cricket. The ICC would be taking some serious decisions during the next few days for sure, as ICC Chief Executive Haroon Lorgat had his reservations in fixing ven-

ues for the next World Cup, both in and outside Pakistan with the political climate in Pakistan and the region worsening.

The pre scheduled Indian tour of Pakistan was earlier called off, partly as a protest against the Mumbai 26/11 attack which they claim the Pakistani government is responsible for. SL nevertheless followed on diplomacy to tour Pakistan and the Pakistan Board of Cricket was going to cover the \$ 16 mn loss from the Indian cancellation.

While the much hyped belief that cricket is too holy for terrorists to touch, what does all this mean, beyond this sacred game? For once, we heard the SL government had been told late last year about a security threat on cricketers visiting Pakistan. The dollars apart that cricket is now bowled about with, the decision of the SL government to give its nod despite a security note on threats, has political reasons in the larger field of geo-politics.

It was evident from all what was said in the SL parliament by the Sports Minister Lokuge and by former "Captain Cool" Arjuna Ranatunge MP after the Lahore attack, that there had been negotiations with the Pakistan government on security. Arjuna said the SL cricketers were promised security at the level of President and PM of Pakistan and Lokuge said they trusted the Pakistani government. That was how the tour was agreed upon.

But why? The Sri Lankan government of Rajapaksa has tied up very intricately with the Pakistani military and intelligence establishments in waging war against the LTTE and is wholly dependent on

their military hardware and technical expertise. It is for that reason the top Indian politicians say, India has no leverage on SL any more. "Rajapaksa now works with China and Pakistan" they say quite frankly. SL can not back out without paying back Pakistan for all that and the Rajapaksa regime can not refuse. The Pakistani tour was one payment. Before India pulled out of the Pakistani tour, there were 04 other countries – England, Australia, West Indies and



New Zealand out of the 10 international cricket playing countries that had turned down Pakistani tours. Pakistan had not played test matches during the whole of year 2008. The Pakistan Cricket Board had to prove they can host international matches in Pakistan with the World Cup round the corner. SL was imported to prove it.

While some Indian media removed most scheduled programmes to spend 24x7 hours in proving Pakistan's cricket future is very much at stake, the Lahore attack does not isolate Pakistan only. The whole region is now under suspicion of terrorist attacks. India can not say it is safe any more after the Mumbai 26/11 attack, that raised serious doubts about its own security capabilities. There were clear links of collaboration too within India for the

Mumbai attack without which it could never have happened. Two Indians were charged in Mumbai courts for collaboration with the surviving Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT) cadre Amir Kasab.

Apart from Punjab and Jammu and Kashmir, India has its own North-East States reeking with armed insurgency, cruelly chased around for many many years. The Nagaland, Assam, Manipur and Mizoram are all boiling areas in the North East with armed insurgency. None could guarantee they would not make their presence felt in other parts of India after Indira Gandhi's assassination by a Sheikh, to say they can not be simply ignored. There is also high speculation in Indian political circles that Pakistani ISI agents have infiltrated Tamil Nadu with SL passports, since Pakistani collaboration with the SL war against Tamil separatism. Pakistani ISI is accused by the same sources of facilitating armed training by Mujahideen groups for Muslim youth from SL East. They call it "Talibanisation of SL".

India can not simply sit back and say they are all Sri Lanka's or Pakistan's making. Indira administration was wholly responsible for training, arming and financing SL separatist Tamil groups in early 1980's. The Delhi administration can not shun the fact they competed with Pakistan in providing the Rajapaksa regime with satellite intelligence, radars and expertise and also keeping mum when Indian fishermen were being targeted by the SL naval forces suspecting they were a support line to the Tigers. All done on the sly and denying such support to the Rajapaksa's war against the Tigers, thus giving

the Pakistanis the advantage of developing strong ties the Rajapaksa regime felt more dependable on.

Delhi administration can not shy away from the fact that their policy towards its neighbours was more on military strategy than political. They can not therefore refuse to accept that their approach lacked political foresight in diplomacy. Therefore, they can not now stand away from all what is happening around them and think, India could be safe for cricket while others are not. India has also made itself as vulnerable as Sri Lanka and Pakistan beyond spill over effects the Indians talk about.

What the Lahore attack now demands are a political leadership in the South Asian continent that could stand firm to politically challenge the growing terrorist movements that link up and cross borders to strike where they decide would be advantageous for them. A leadership that would talk in terms of democratising the whole region instead of talking in terms of tightening security more and more that in turn effectively dismantle the existing democratic structures. A leadership that would initiate dialogue on regional democratic issues as common issues.

In short, work towards a stronger dynamic SAARC that could sit together to understand national problems within the context of regional co-operation, without which, a lone Pakistan would lead destabilising of the region, with Sri Lanka partnering along and India getting stumped out in the run, not forgetting that Bangladesh has its own insurgent groups running across borders.

[transCurrents.com]

Desmond Tutu pleads for UN intervention in Sri Lanka

Sir, We call upon the UK Government to press for an urgent Security Council resolution on the situation in northern Sri Lanka, with the view to dispatching a fact-finding mission there under the auspices of the UN Secretary-General, in furtherance of the Security Council's primary responsibility under the Charter of the United Nations for the maintenance of international peace and security.

[On Thursday, November 20th, 2008 The American Friends of

the Phelophepa Train held their 7th Annual Gala Awards Dinner, at the TimesCenter in the New York Times building. The Phelophepa Achievement Award for Excellence was presented live to Archbishop-Emeritus Desmond M. Tutu]

[On Thursday, November 20th, 2008 The American Friends of the Phelophepa Train held their 7th Annual Gala Awards Dinner, at the TimesCenter in the New York Times building. The Phelophepa Achieve-



ment Award for Excellence was presented live to Archbishop-Emeritus Desmond M. Tutu]

We urge the UK Government, as a permanent member of the UN Security Council, to recognise the underlying importance of taking measures aimed at conflict prevention and resolution, and to draw its attention to its commitment under the Security Coun-

cil resolutions 1265/1999 and 1296/2000 on the protection of civilians in armed conflict; resolution 1366/2001 on the role of the Security Council in the prevention of armed conflict; resolution 1325/2000 on women, peace and security; and resolution 1460/2003 on children in armed conflict.

The deteriorating humanitarian and human rights situation throughout the war-afflicted areas of northern and eastern Sri Lanka warrants See page 20

Is South Asia falling apart?

by Michael Binyon

Rioting in the Punjab. A military mutiny in Bangladesh. The seizure and intimidation of a newspaper editor in Sri Lanka. Is South Asia falling apart? Is instability about to engulf a region that is home to a third of the world's population?

In each case, the violence comes after a long period of mounting tension. In Pakistan, the clashes were sparked by popular anger that the Supreme Court has barred Nawaz Sharif, the main opposition leader and leading politician from Punjab, from holding office.

In Bangladesh, thousands of mutinous troops from the paramilitary Bangladesh Rifles went on the rampage to demand higher pay, better conditions and longer holidays.

[Jan 2009: Deputy High Commissioner of UK in Sri Lanka, Mark Gooding, meeting with M.V. Kaanamylathan, the Editor of Uthayan (A popular Tamil newspaper) newspaper, Jaffna, Sri Lanka]

And in Sri Lanka, the police arrest of a Tamil editor attending a funeral came as government troops are on the brink of victory in the long-running war against Tamil Tiger separatists.

The causes of the violence differ. But there is a common underlying theme: in each case, anger is rising at the failure of government to cope with looming challenges. The consequences could be dire. Each of the three countries is teetering on the edge of breakdown. Rioting and popular demonstrations



Jan 2009: Deputy High Commissioner of UK in Sri Lanka, Mark Gooding, meeting with M.V. Kaanamylathan, the Editor of Uthayan (A popular Tamil newspaper) newspaper, Jaffna, Sri Lanka

will only exacerbate the problems and the tensions.

In Pakistan, the violence in Punjab is directly related to the political turmoil unleashed in the final year of rule by President Musharraf and the chaotic conditions in which a civilian government succeeded him. The two largest parties, the Pakistan People's Party and the Pakistan Muslim League, are regionally based, each drawing their strength largely from the country's two main provinces - the PPP from Sind and the Muslim League from Punjab.

The rivalry between Asif Zardari, widow of the assassinated former party leader Benazir Bhutto, and Nawaz Sharif, the leader ousted by General Musharraf's coup in

1999, is intense. They briefly formed a government of national unity as a way of forcing Mr Musharraf from office last August, but swiftly fell out over whether he should be prosecuted and all dismissed judges reinstated. Within weeks Mr Sharif withdrew his ministers and went into opposition.

Both leaders are now in a struggle for supremacy. But both feel vulnerable because of previous court convictions that have been set aside. Each party is therefore trying to use the courts, almost the only civil institution still widely respected, to gain political advantage. And few people in Punjab believe that the latest ruling, disqualifying Mr Sharif and his brother, currently the province's chief minister, from polit-

ical office is free of pressure by President Zardari.

The riots are a warning to the Government that it has already lost popular support, failing to tackle religious extremism, failing to quell the rebellions in the tribal provinces and, above all, failing to curb inflation, unemployment and economic decline exacerbated by the global downturn.

A similar perception of both political and economic failure now dogs the government of Sheikh Hasina in Bangladesh. The mutiny was sparked by anger among the 42,000-strong border guard force at low pay and shorter food rations than the regular army. But it represents the general anger of many in government employment at stagnant or falling living standards.

This, too, is a warning to a civilian government that returned to office only in December. The previous military government had disbanded the two main parties and promised a clean-up of Bangladesh's notoriously corrupt politics. Sheikh Hasina is one of the two "battling begums" - widows of murdered politicians who have divided the country in the long feud and who were both initially banned and investigated for corruption by the military government.

There is a real danger now that the mutiny, although brought to an end for now, will be echoed by the traditional rivals of Mrs Hasina's party. The military coup was meant to end a culture of corruption. But if the result of the election has returned not only civilian rule but some of the discredited politicians to power, frustration in Bangladesh will grow - especially as the recess-



MONSOON NEWSLINES

sion begins to cut the country's already low living standards.

In Sri Lanka, the fear among the Tamils and many moderate Sinhalese is that the present Government, flushed with its victory over the Tamil Tigers, is seeking not reconciliation but triumph. There is a growing intolerance of any criticism of the military campaign, of the plans for dealing with Tamil refugees and of anyone still proposing autonomy for the former secessionist regions.

Many Sri Lankans are delighted that the 20-year civil war seems to be ending. But many are also deeply worried that the seeds of future conflict are being sown. The arrest and murder of newspaper critics are an ominous sign that free speech may be one of the casualties of the war, along with any hopes for a measure of autonomy for the Tamils.

The three conflicts are on the periphery of India, which appears far more stable and settled than its neighbours. But with a general election coming in May, tensions will inevitably grow there and political frustrations rise. India is immensely resilient, however, and has a deeply embedded tradition of democracy. Whether this is enough to overcome the looming economic difficulties or help its turbulent neighbours remains to be seen. [courtesy: The Times, UK]

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of Trichy. He noticed the girl with the stunningly vibrant and pliable voice singing for alms in running trains and took her to Velu Nair.

Velu Nair enrolled Sundarambal in his drama company, Shanmukhananda Sabha. This was in 1917 when Sundarambal was about nine. The music

By: Subramaniam Kanthaswamy

The year 1953 witnessed Tamil films of great merit and the most successful of them all was "Avvaiyar" produced by S.S.Vasan in his Gemini studios. Avvaiyar is the most beloved and celebrated saint-poetess of the Tamils. Historians are still debating various aspects of the life and times of this great Tamil saint. Vamanan in his cover story in the Sruti magazine (December 2008) has this to say of the film. "...for whatever the historians and critics said of Avvaiyar, it was the living persona that mattered to the lay public, and the persona was the multi-layered dream of many centuries of Tamil memory! New centuries and aeons melted away. Poetry and personality began to glow in the ambience of Tamil letters and culture. To this glow, Sundarambal added the radiance of her own character and the clear voice of her music. It was she who personified in flesh, blood and voice the sublimity of Tamil culture, letters and values. As Sundarambal trudged the temple filled plains of Tamil country, the warmth of her voice and power of her music recreated the magic of a golden Tamil Nadu of the past."

Who was Sundarambal?

Kodumudi Balambal Sundarambal (KBS) was born on October 26, 1908 in Kodumudi, a town near Karur. Thiru-Pandi Kodumudi, as it is called in Thevaram hymns, lies on the west bank of River Cauvery and is well known for its vast Sivan temple. Little is known of Sundarambal's father; her mother, Balambal, barely managed to eke out a living. Indeed, so penurious was the family that Sundarambal, as a child, is said to have made some much-needed money by singing ditties on trains.

Even as a child, Sundarambal was immensely talented, and though not formally trained in music, could render even intricate classical compositions, traversing the higher octaves with nonchalant ease.

Accounts of Sundarambal's early years relate that Balambal, along with her daughter moved to nearby Karur in search of livelihood. There the Deputy Superintendent of Police, R.S.Krishnaswami Iyer, a great patron of arts, was drawn by the child's singing. Iyer realized that she would go places if properly trained, and took her to P.S.Velu Nair, the celebrated singing star of the stage and renowned dramatist. Another account of Sundarambal's early years is that she was 'discovered' by F.G. Natesa Iyer a talent scout, stage actor and man of fine arts

teacher and playwright of the troupe was T.T.Sankaradasa Swamikal. Thus, her artistic talents were honed to perfection under formal training and rigorous practice. With her remarkable singing talents, young Sundarambal quickly made a mark as a stage star. There were no mikes at that time and the singer had to deliver at the highest pitch possible. The musical fare covered a broad spectrum - tunes from classical music, Tamil devotional liturgy, Tamil folk and Marathi stage (*thumri, dadra and ghazal*). This was a going proposition for Sundarambal as she could sing at the highest pitch.

She also cut gramophone discs of songs, which became best sellers. Invariably many families in Tamil Nadu and even adjoining non-Tamil-speaking areas owned such 'plates'. These records sold in thousands and today they are collector's items.

Sundarambal was able to rise from portraying younger parts to the female lead roles when she was just fifteen. And as gender did not stand in the way of her portraying a male role, this also was quick in coming. Her *Nandanar* and *Valli Thirumanam* made waves all over Tamil Nadu. Her diction in song and speech was crystal clear - it was sharp and smooth. Such a reputation did she achieve even before she was eighteen that fans from Colombo were clamoring for her plays. In 1926, she crossed over to Ceylon (now Sri Lanka).

Senkottai Gangadhara Iyer Kittappa (1906-1933), was a singing phenomenon of the Tamil stage. Even as a six year-old he displayed astonishing talent. There was no money to enroll him in school, the dialogues and songs written and composed by the revered dramatist Shankaradas Swamigal that his brothers Subbiah and Chellappa practiced were all the education that Kittappa could afford. His startling good looks and wondrous voice made him the darling of the adoring masses. He could take his listeners to the dizzy realms of ecstatic music. He had the able assistance of his brother S.G.Kasi Iyer on the harmonium. Kasi Iyer truly lifted the quality of Kittappa's singing with his expert playing. It was said that "there could be no drama troupe without Kittappa, and no Kittappa without Kasi Iyer." Titans of Carnatic music's golden age marveled at Kittappa's inspired singing. I have heard old-timers say that to hear him render '*kaayatha kaanagathe*' and '*kodaiyile ilaipaarikkollum*' was a sublime experience; and to watch him don several roles with

Avvaiyar Incarnate



alacrity in the drama *Dasa-vataram*, including that of Vishnu in the garb of Mohini, singing '*devaasura kulathore*' was mystical and magical. The same Kittappa was now in Ceylon, about to act with Sundarambal.

The pairing of Kittappa with Sundarambal would have far reaching consequences for the Tamil stage...and personally for both of them. When the two super-stars of the Tamil theatre met in Colombo, it was love at first sight. Kittappa was already married - his marriage to Kittammal in 1924 had been attended by the cream of the Chennai society. This fact could not alter much in the altar of love; Kittappa and Sundarambal became life-partners in Ceylon. They began performing together, and thus began a glorious, though short-lived era of Tamil theater. Sundarambal proved her musical mettle when she shared honours on the stage with the phenomenally gifted Kittappa. They toured Malaysia, Singapore, and Burma where rapturous crowds showered gold and silver on their cult icons.

Sundarambal and Kittappa returned to India to a tumultuous welcome. They made a wonderful duo, and people came from far and near to listen to their music. They performed all over the Madras Presidency to packed houses. Their masterpiece was, '*Sri Valli*', where they often interchanged the roles of Murugan and Valli with ease, and their intimate on-screen chemistry, together with the excellence of their singing made the play an audio-visual extravaganza.

Both Kittappa and Sundarambal were deeply patriotic and involved themselves in the Indian Freedom Movement. They harnessed their popularity and talents to further that cause. They

took to wearing Khadi (home spun cotton) and included inspiring patriotic songs in their performances. They donated much of their earnings to deserving charitable and religious causes.

In the peak of their popularity tragedy struck. While performing in Kumbakonam, Kittappa, then only 27, collapsed on stage, and died soon after in December 1933, the bottle having got the better of him after his mother's and brother's death. Sundarambal was benumbed with grief and at the age of 26, took to wearing white, and lived an austere life of a hermit. Even decades later, the wound remained unhealed.

In its tribute to S.G. Kittappa, '*The Hindu*' recalled how Lord Wellington, Governor of Madras, drove in state to watch his performance and congratulated the young actor in the green room for his outstanding ability.

After Kittappa's death, Sundarambal cut herself off completely from the world of entertainment, vowing never to act with another hero. Kittappa's friend, the political leader S. Satyamurti, persuaded her to come out of mourning and sing for the Freedom Movement, something she and Kittappa had just begun doing. Congress leaders were among her ardent admirers and she readily complied with requests to sing for the party gatherings. Clad in white and with holy ash on her forehead she sang patriotic songs on Congress platforms. Sundarambal would start a political rally in song and Satyamurti would follow her dulcet appeal with his brilliant oratory. She continued to champion the movement, recording several gramophone discs extolling the struggle and sacrifices it entailed. In fact, gramophone records were made with Sundarambal singing on one side and Satyamurti orat-

ing on the other. The songs like "*Motilal Nehruvai parikodut-tomey*," "*Gandhi London sendrar..kai koopi tozhuveer*," "*Nambikai kondu kairattai sutruvom*," "*Nenjil uramumindr*" brought out the power and range of her voice. She then began giving the occasional classical music performance, but remained a widow in garb and appearance, both in life and on stage. Satyamurti's coaxing, however, made her take another step beyond seclusion - and she reluctantly agreed to act the part of *Nandanar* in the film of the same name (1934-35).

The tale of the low-born farmhand, Nandan, and his unfathomable devotion to Lord Nataraja of Chidambaram is well known to most Tamils. It was written as a musical titled, '*Nandan Charitram*' by Gopalakrishna Bharathi in the early 19th Century. Bharathi's work was immensely popular as Harikatha Kalakshepam. Later, it was made into a play and a silent film in 1923 and 1930. When cinema began to talk Tamil in 1931, it was produced thrice - in 1933, 1935 and again in 1942.

Film producer Asandas Chellaram and director Manik Lal Tandon hit upon the idea of casting Sundarambal in the title role in the celluloid adaptation of '*Nandanar Saritham*.' She was offered a staggering Rupees 100000 to play the role. Sundarambal made history as the first ever artiste of Tamil cinema to be paid such an astronomical sum, and the first woman to play a male role on the Tamil screen, that of Nandanar (1935.) One of the legends of Carnatic music, Maharajapuram Viswanatha Iyer made his only appearance in cinema as the rich Brahmin landowner, Vedhiyar, under whom Nandan worked as a farmhand. He received a fee of Rupees 3,000, while Sundarambal got an incredible one lakh. This amount was a big fortune indeed in 1935, when a sovereign of gold was sold at 13 rupees. Regrettably, the much hyped *Nandanar* failed at the box office and today, there is no trace of this historic film, except for a few stills, some 78-rpm gramophone records, and fast fading memories of old-timers still around.

Sundarambal's next movie was *Manimekalai* (1940). Produced by T.Kishenchand and directed by the famed Bomma Irani. The film had Sundarambal in the title role, supported by Kothamangalam Seenu, N.S.Krishnan, T.A.Mathuram and others. The brothers Papanasam Sivan and Rajagopla Iyer were in charge of the songs. The songs "*Siraichalal enna seiyum*" (raga: Todi), "*Maasindrikulamaadar*" (raga:Kedaragaula) and "*Manam kalanguvaden*" (raga:Saraswati) not only showcased the sweetness and flexibility of her voice, it also underlined her style of stressing the significance of the lyrics.

Contd. in Page 21

Voice of War

Dark nights of terror turn into our life,
 Our blue sky turns black
 Our green fields and grass turn red
 Our tears turn into dark rivers

Iyo Iyo, this is not a dream.

Where will I run to? Everywhere, the stench of corpses
 No, these are not just dead bodies,
 Here is my father, here is my mother, here, my own child
 My sisters, my brothers, my relatives, my friends
 Humans, destroyed. Humans like me.

All I want to do, is hold you
 All I want to do is scream until my tears run out.

I see the gun that points at my face
 I see my sister's body, frozen with fear
 I see the faces of the men who rape her
 I see my brother crawling without legs,
 They try to hold on, without hands
 I see people's feet, stepping over small babies
 Infants crying to awaken their dead
 I see the pregnant mother running
 To save herself and the unborn baby in her stomach
 I see her shatter in the explosion
 I see her two legs quivering in pieces on the earth
 I see the fragments of shells, raining down to destroy me.

Our wounds and dead bodies become invisible.

I do not want to be a dead body.
 I do not want to be raped
 I do not want to see these babies or
 My brother's tears of blood
 I run, run until my body breaks
 There is no house to sleep
 There is no food for life
 No clothes to cover my torn red dress
 No medicine to heal these wounds
 No arms to embrace and hold

Guns erased our faces and buried our voices
 It was the power of humans that killed our lives.
 Those terrifying men slit our wombs destroyed our karppappai
 Their powerful anger let the guns walk on our wounds.
 The peace makers and friends of human rights never heard our voices

My friends tell me: these are dreams, forget them.
 My country's protectors tell me: we will soon be free
 My brothers test me: what group does this blood belong to?
 My international friends and leaders tell me: this is terrorism

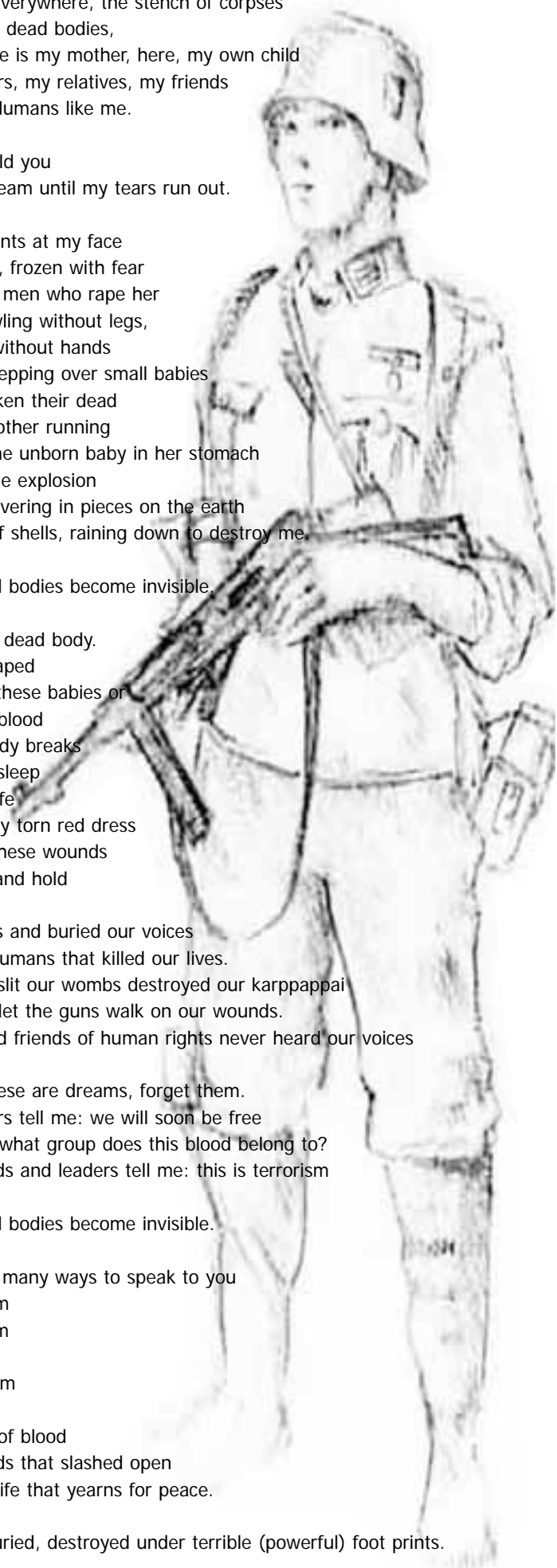
Our wounds and dead bodies become invisible.

I raise my voice in so many ways to speak to you
 No, this is not a dream
 No, this is not freedom
 No, this is not a test
 No, this is not terrorism

These are OUR tears of blood
 These are OUR wounds that slashed open
 This is the price of a life that yearns for peace.

Our voices became buried, destroyed under terrible (powerful) foot prints.

STOP protecting guns - how can you not see the bullet holes in our bodies?
 STOP being ignorant - how can you not see thousands of corpses over 30 years?
 STOP making us corpses for your victory-how can you slit our karppappai?
 STOP violence- how can you not see we have not seen peace for 30 years?
 STOP the War - I was 12 then - now, 26 years later- we still see that tears of blood.
 We refuse to see our children's dead bodies any longer- STOP THE WAR
 We will continue to raise our voices louder than ever
 Until your foot print feels our wounds.



By Regi David : Don't Test the colour of my blood, I also, will be destroyed. But even then, the colour of my blood is red, just like yours, my friend.

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By Jean H. Lee

COLOMBO, Sri Lanka (AP)— The assailants broke in after the fighting between ethnic rebels and the military erupted again into full-scale war, storming through his family's home and calling his name.

Thanabalasingham Surendran, a member of Sri Lanka's Tamil ethnic minority, fled to the capital, Colombo. But unknown "messengers from military intelligence" kept calling and demanding extortion money. So the shop owner paid a smuggler to get him out of Sri Lanka.

As the government claims it is coming close to winning a quarter-century war with the Tamil Tiger separatists, many ordinary Tamils are giving up on their country.

Hundreds of thousands have already left, and others are desperately trying to get abroad.

In his Independence Day speech last month, President Mahinda Rajapaksa appealed for everyone who left to return home to the Indian Ocean island nation off the tip of India.

But after decades of war, harassment and economic hardship, many Tamils say Sri Lanka doesn't feel like home.

Some 800,000 Tamils now live overseas and that figure is growing, especially among young men, analysts say.

"Their priority is to get out of the country," said Paikiasothy Saravanamuttu, a political analyst and executive director of the Colombo-based Center for Policy Alternatives.

Many fear a military victory over the rebels will further embolden the nation's mainly Buddhist Sinhalese majority and make life for the mostly Hindu Tamils even harder, Tamil parliamentarian Mano Ganesan said. Tamils make up about 18 percent of Sri Lanka's 20 million people.

"We feel more vulnerable now," Ganesan said.

Many also fear other Tamil paramilitary groups will grow stronger after the rival Tamil Tigers are defeated, threatening locals, increasing their forcible conscription of young boys and demanding heavier extortion payments to fund their activities.

In the capital, armed guards pull over cars and taxis for security checks several times a day, searching for possible rebel suicide bombers. Main roads are routinely shut down for government convoys, and security cordons block areas with government offices and tourist hotels.

MANY SRI LANKAN TAMILS GIVING UP ON COUNTRY



Sri Lankan ethnic Tamil men rest beside the train tracks in a Tamil majority neighborhood in Wellawatta, in Colombo, Sri Lanka on Saturday, Feb. 14, 2009.

Associated Press writers Krishan Francis in Colombo and Vincent Jeyan in Chur, Switzerland, contributed to this report.

[courtesy: AP]

Few residents, Sinhalese or Tamil, are willing to talk openly, and those who do generally refuse to give their names. Tamils fear that any criticism of the country would mark them as rebel sympathizers.

"I want to live here in Sri Lanka, but I have no choice but to go overseas because of the security situation," one Tamil man said. "Many young men are in the same situation."

Mohan, a 28-year-old civil engineer living in Colombo, left the northern city of Jaffna in 2006 amid a wave of violence that closed key roads and shut down construction projects.

"We lost our jobs, so we came down here looking for work," he said. "But there's no

work here, either."

Mohan, who like many others refused to give his surname, shares a room with a friend in Wellawatta, a Colombo neighborhood known as "Little Jaffna." The tiny, spare room has just enough space at night for sleeping mats, and someone has taped up a map of the world.

Mohan said he avoids leaving Wellawatta for neighborhoods where he cannot read

the Sinhalese street signs. If he needs to communicate with non-Tamils, he speaks English.

Every day is the same: "I eat, sleep, have a bath and go out looking for a job."

He hasn't found work in more than a year. Residents say many are reluctant to hire Tamils from Jaffna for fear they could be rebels.

Occasionally, that fear is justified. A Tamil engineer from Jaffna recently was caught trying to plant a bomb along nearby train tracks.

Mohan said he is focusing on getting overseas — to Canada, where he has relatives, or London, where his sister lives — even if it means doing menial work.

Those who have made it overseas are seen as the lucky ones.

But Surendran, now living in Switzerland far from his wife and young sons, said life there isn't easy. He was placed in temporary housing and given a small allowance for winter clothes and food. More than a year later, his bid for asylum is pending.

"It's lonely here; it's really sad to live away from family," Surendran, 34, told The Associated Press in Chur, near Zurich.

Some overseas Tamils help bankroll the rebels in their war. Others are caught up in the turmoil.

At least two overseas Tamils committed suicide in recent weeks by setting themselves on fire to protest violence against civilians in their homeland. A letter near one man's body in Geneva identified him as a 26-year-old Tamil living in London, the pro-rebel Web site TamilNet said.

"I believe the flames over my body, heart and soul will help the world community to have a deep human look over the great sufferings of the Sri Lankan Tamils," he wrote.



Sri Lankan ethnic Tamil Hindu devotees pray at a temple in Wellawatta, in Colombo, Sri Lanka, Saturday, Feb. 14, 2009. - pic: (AP Photo/Eranga Jayawardena)

Contd. From page 16 Desmond

immediate attention and action by the Security Council. An armed conflict entailing widespread and serious abuses continues in these areas. Calls for all sides to exercise restraint and respect international humanitarian and human rights law remain unheeded.

Accurate and timely information about the situation of civilians in these areas remain scarce because of government-imposed restrictions on independent observers, including the UN, most human rights organizations, journalists and others, from accessing the combat zones. A few remaining independent observers have placed the total civilian casualties at 7,000, with 2,000 fatalities, within a four-week period between January and February this year. The total number of civilians trapped by the fighting is conservatively put at a quarter of a million. The real figures are likely to be much higher. The alleged abuses are being carried out with total impunity and include serious and indiscriminate violations of international humanitarian law.

Humanitarian assistance and protection remain minimal owing to both targeted at-

tacks and generalised insecurity. In the absence of concrete improvements in the security situation, each day adds to the toll of civilian deaths and injuries.

Security Council action is urgently needed to ensure an end to persistent abuses by all parties to the conflict, to protect the civilians still at risk of attacks and to help to improve conditions by demonstrating the United Nations' continuing commitment to the wellbeing of civilians caught up in armed conflicts around the world.

- Archbishop Desmond Tutu; Dr Louise Arimatsu (LSE); Dr Chaloka Beyani (LSE); Professor Bill Bowring (Birkbeck); Professor Mathew Craven (SOAS); Professor Malgosia Fitzmaurice (Queen Mary); Professor Guy S. Goodwin-Gill (Oxford); Muthupandi Ganesan (barrister); Dr Krishna Kalaichelvan; Professor Mary Kaldor (LSE); Naomi Lumsdaine; John McNally; Dr Roger O'Keefe (Cambridge); Andrew Price (barrister); Professor Martin Shaw (Sussex); Mannan Thangarajah (barrister); Professor Nigel White (Sheffield)

Youths launch campaign wooing CNN's Anderson Cooper to visit Sri Lanka

An international grassroots effort led by concerned youths in Washington State and Toronto area are calling prominent CNN journalist, Anderson Cooper, to visit Sri Lanka and report on the growing culture of impunity towards media freedoms on the island. Driven by Jeffersonian instinct for the freedom of press, the Free-Our-Press website [<http://www.freeourpress.org>] said the petition was inspired by the "call of conscience" of Lasantha Wickramatunga's final essay, where the late editor decried the plight of media freedom in Sri Lanka. The virtual campaign was launched with a new website that chronicles media suppression in Sri Lanka, and calls for supporters to join the campaign to woo Cooper.

"Anderson Cooper is one of the few who have the journalistic prowess to independently present stories from the world's hot-spots," the co-ordinator for the campaign said.

Organizers are hoping the international



acclaim Mr. Cooper has received from reporting from numerous war zones including Afghanistan, Iraq, Rwanda, Bosnia and Vietnam, will draw greater international focus and attention to the increasing intensity of the conflict in Sri Lanka's north.

(By Ursula Stanislaus B.A. (Cey); LL.B. (Cey); Attorney-at-law (Cey)
Diploma in Corporate Law (Canada)

LEGAL ENTITIES



A 'Legal Entity' is an artificial person created by law which has the capacity of an adult individual person. A 'Corporation' is a distinct legal entity, separate from its shareholders. It may enter into binding contracts, can sue or be sued in any court of law and may own real property. A shareholder can enter into contracts with a corporation whose shares he or she owns; and also may sue the corporation, since it is recognized in law as a separate legal person.

The limited liability is the important benefit of a corporation. The limited liability protects the shareholder's personal property from the debts and liabilities of the corporation. Facilities are immense for a corporation to procure additional capital. The issue of various classes of shares, with preferences as to dividends, redemption or convertibility, and the issue of bonds or debentures, may be utilized by a corporation to maximise its profit. In addition,

various degrees of security, investment, and control may be structured through the different classes of shares and share conditions and restrictions that are available to the corporations. Perpetual succession, ease in transfer of shares and/or ownership are some of the other benefits of a corporation.

The federal corporations are governed by the Canada Business Corporations Act, R.S. 1985, c. C-4. The Business Corporations Act, R.S.O. 1990, c.B.16 applies basically to all body corporate with share capital incorporated in the Province of Ontario, under a general or special Act of the Legislature of Ontario, except where it is otherwise expressly

provided. Extra-provincial corporations carrying on business in Ontario are subject to the Extra-Provincial Corporations Act (Ontario). Part II of the Canada Corporations Act and/or Part III of the Corporations Act (Ontario) applies to nearly all non-profit corporations, other than boards of trade and the chambers of commerce, insurance companies etc.

A federal corporation is able to carry on its operations across Canada. A federal incorporation may also facilitate inter-provincial operations or international operations due to the prestige associated with federal incorporation. A federal corporation can go into any province and do business as of right without the necessity of obtaining an extra-provincial licence. It must, however, comply with the laws of general application of the particular province. It may be required to obtain licences or become registered in a certain jurisdiction in which it holds land or carries on business.

If a business wants to operate primarily in one province, then provincial incorporation may be desirable. If a business wants to operate in a number of provinces, or outside the country, then federal incorporation may be appropriate. Once federally incorporated, the corporate name has a protected status second only to a trade-mark protection. To establish a franchise business and/or to obtain domain names, a federal incorporation may be advisable.

The Articles of Incorporation should provide for at least one class of shares with voting power and the right to receive remaining properties of the corporation upon dissolution. If the corporation provides for more than one class of shares, then the attribution to each class of shares should be clearly defined in the articles. If it is a private corporation the Articles should contain provisions to restrict share transfer, limit the maximum number of shareholders to fifty and any invitation to the public to subscribe for securi-



ties of the corporation should be prohibited. For federal and some provincial (Ontario, Alberta, Manitoba, Newfoundland) incorporations, a minimum of one-fourth of the directors should be resident Canadians. British Columbia, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, and Quebec do not have any residency requirement.

The Government fee for federal incorporation is \$200, and it may be filed directly through online. Government fee for Ontario incorporation is \$300, and it should be filed through one of the authorized Service Providers. A corporation without name (number company) may be registered instantaneously, but if with a name, a full name search report (called 'NUANS') should be obtained and the name should be cleared with the respective authorities.

To be contd. in the Next Issue

Avvaiyar Incarnate

Continued from page 18

Thiruthuraiipoondi Subramaniam Srinivasan (alias S. S. Vasan) was hailed as 'the Cecil B. de Mille of India.' Indeed he was the first Indian movie mogul. He was the first filmmaker in this part of the world, to invest the celluloid with spectacle, grandeur and opulence. He was a pioneer in Indian cinema and had no equals, then, and now. Writer, journalist, adman, magazine publisher, film distributor, studio-owner, filmmaker and producer - he was all in one. He created film history establishing trends, and breaking box-office records in many languages. He and his Gemini Studio in Madras were household names and also part and parcel of the cultural scene of South India. The familiar 'Gemini Twins' blowing the bugles was a stamp for quality, clean, wholesome, family entertainment.

For ten years, S.S. Vasan had kept hoping to make the story of Tamil poetess Avvaiyar into a film, but he couldn't find the star he wanted. It was only when the short, dusky, slightly plump middle-aged Sundarambal finally agreed to his repeated requests that he got down to making the film. It was a film that was not only to make Sundarambal an icon but also to define in the minds of people her Avvaiyar as the real Avvaiyar; not the poetess about whom there had been much discussion and controversy in literary and historical circles over the centuries.

Sundarambal lived the role of the saint on screen. Directed by Kothamangalam Subbu, the film was some years in the making (1948-1953). Baby Sachu appeared as the child Avvai, Kusalakumari played the young Avvai and Sundarambal played the aged Avvai. M.K. Radha, Gemini Ganeshan, T.V.Kumudini, Balaji and Sundaribai were part of the huge

cast. The grandeur of the rich visuals and the meticulous screenplay, topped by the sagacious presence of Sundarambal made the movie a great success. The grand success of Avvaiyar took Sundarambal's popularity to unforeseen heights and made her a household name.

Besides the traditional songs by Avvaiyar, the film had songs written by Papanasam Sivan and Kothamangalam Subbu. Music was by Mayavaram Venu, M.D. Parthasarathi and Anantharaman. Sundarambal lives on in songs like 'katrathu kaiman alavu', 'muthamizh deivame vaa', 'ayyane anbarckku meiyane', 'ulaginile thamizhnaadu uyarga', 'kooriya vaalar', 'porumai enum nagai anidhu', 'aram seiyya virumbu', 'velane senthamizh viththaaga-mayilerum vadivelane', 'koodi nadandhukolla vendum', 'kanni thamizhnaattinile vennilaave', 'ganNanaathane varuga', 'aalai palaavaakkalaamo', 'periyathu ketkin', 'nellukku iraita neer', and 'munnai naal paarikku'.

After a lapse of about ten years she acted in another film, *Poompohar* (1964), scripted and produced by Mu. Karunanidhi. After this film she had minor roles in about six films. She appeared as Avvaiyaar in A.P. Nadarajan's *Thiruvilaiyyadal* (1965). Singing for K.V. Mahadevan's music she produced some evergreen gems like 'gnanapazhathai pizhindhu', 'pazhaneeyappa', 'vaasi vaasi endru' and 'ondraanavan'. She sang again for KVM in her next screen appearance in *Mahakavi Kalidas* (1966) with popular numbers like 'sendru vaa magane', and 'kaalathaal azhiyaatha kaaviyam'.

Sundarambal created a record of sorts by playing Avvaiyaar for the third time, in A.P.Nagarajan's *Kandan Karunai* (1967). Devar's 'Thunaiyan' (Dandayudhapani

Films) followed in 1969 in KVM's music. Besides Sundarambal gems like 'gnanamum kalviyum' and 'kondaadum Thiruchendur', it had the memorable 'Pazhanimalai meedhile kuzhandai vadiyaagave (Jayamundu payamillai)' which fetched Sundarambal the Tamilnadu Government's State Award for the Best Female Playback Singer of 1969.

Sundarambal played the title role in *Karaikal Ammaiyaar* (1973). Kunnakkudi Vaithyanathan composed the music for songs such as 'odungaal odi ullamurugi' (thagathagavena aada vaa) and 'Iraivaa un pugazh paaduvan' and Sundarambal sang them with characteristic fervour. She sang again in Kunnakkudi Vaithyanathan's music for 'Thirumalai Deivam' (1973). The song 'Ezhumalai irukka namakkena manakkavalai' was a stirring solo.

In the Carnatic music stage, along with rising female voices like M.S. Subbulakshmi and N.C. Vasanthakokilam, Sundarambal made a mark as a singer with an original stamp. Genuine expression of her personal devotion to Lord Murukan and Tamil music was the powerful mark of her performances. Those geared to bhakthi lapped up her music.

Devotional concerts took her to many temples all over Tamilnadu and Sri Lanka. She visited Jaffna many times and if my memory is right, her last concert there was at Mavidapuram Kanthaswamy temple. She was a regular participant at the Vel festival in Colombo.

Kamaraj, Satyamurti's understudy, knew of Sundarambal's contribution to the freedom struggle, and when he became chief minister of Madras honoured her with membership of the legislative council. She was thus the first film artist to enter an Indian legislature. In 1964, the Tamil Isai Sangam conferred upon her the title of "Isai Perarignar." In 1970, the government of India awarded her the

Padmashri for her contributions to the arts.

A great devotee of Lord Murugan, KBS enriched music on many fronts. Her contribution to the stage, film, nationalist cause and Tamil devotional music were unique. She had written herself into the memory of the Tamils as a modern-day minstrel celebrating the power of Tamil music and song. She had made a will bequeathing all her assets to Lord Murugan. Her musical contribution and bhakthi-filled life, of course belong to the Tamils and the wider world.

K.B. Sundarambal, artiste extra-

ordinaire, passed away in October 1980, still in white khadi and forehead adorned with sacred ash, as she had been from the time her sweetheart passed away.

Note: I wish to thank all the readers who found value in my short essay on M.S. Subbulakshmi. Your compliments are encouraging and very much appreciated. My unbounded love for the topic leaves me at a loss at identifying my next subject from the many worthy options available to me. Your suggestions on topics or subjects for future articles are welcome at skandos@hotmail.com.

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Dr. Ellyn Shander: "We will never stop fighting for justice"

Full Text of Speech by Dr. Ellyn Shander MD at the "Tamils Against Genocide", Washington DC rally, Feb 20, 2009:

VANAKAM

First I want to say how honored I am to speak at this rally.

I want to thank the organizers of this event who have brought us all together. I am so impressed with the number of people, who have traveled great distances, taken off from work, and put their lives aside to be here.. Look at us, thousands showing up in solidarity and giving voice to the Tamil people in this terrible crises.

WE have the power to change the present anguish and despair in Sri Lanka! WE WILL NOT BE DEFEATED!!!

[Dr. Ellyn Shander at a "Tamils Against Genocide" media briefing held at National Press Club, Washington DC, Feb 20, 2009]

I dedicate this speech

- to all those who have died in the senseless violence since 1948,

- to all the Tamil victims of targeted persecution and murder,

- to all the brave heroes that have fallen in the struggle for equality AND

- to all the Tamils in SL, who can't be here today and are suffering now in unbearable circumstances.

Let us take a moment of silence to pray for the restoration of hope, peace and dignity to the Tamil people of Sri Lanka. (Silence)

Most of you know me, as an American doctor, I went to the Northern coast of Sri Lanka after the tsunami and helped in a fishing village north of Killinochi.

After my second trip back to the North, the government broke the ceasefire. Since then the war on the Tamil civilians has increased to a heartbreaking devastation.

The genocide of the Tamil people is personal for me. I met hundreds of beautiful people in the North, but now it is over run by government savages.

My memories of Tamil children playing in the villages are covered with death and destruction. What kind of evil government kills its own civilians???

Saddam Hussein, govt of Sudan, Burma and the GOSL. All members of the Killing club.

We have all been shocked, saddened and devastated at the news that comes daily from the Vanni region.

-Incendiary bombs burning whole families as they sleep,

-civilians lying on the streets bleeding to death.,

-forced abortions of Tamil women,

-torture and rape in the new concentration camps for civilian Tamils who escape to Vavunia.

This ethnic cleansing of the

Tamils is spreading as a blood-stain across Tamil land. It is masterminded by the President of Sri Lanka, Mahinda Rajapaksa, guilty of war crimes against the Tamil people.

The Sri Lankan government apologizes to no one.

They do not say that civilian deaths are "collateral damage,"

They don't apologize for using cluster bombs on civilian areas,

They don't apologize for using incendiary bombs on densely packed civilians,

They don't apologize for threatening doctors to leave,

They don't apologize for ordering the UN and all NGOs to leave,

They don't apologize for closing off the whole area under attack from journalists or observers,

They don't apologize for starving and killing over 300,000 Tamil civilians who have done nothing wrong except be born Tamil in the country of Sri Lanka.

The similarity to the Jews being killed in Germany is chilling. The GOSL is acting just like the Nazi regime with plans to exterminate Tamils !!

And just as we can't imagine the GOSL's evil to get worse, he orders the shelling of civilian hospitals and then states openly that it was justified!!

These cowards claim they are waging a war against terror.

That is insane... just look at the pictures of the casualties. Old people, women and children. They are not killing terrorists, they are using this an excuse to ELIMIANTE EVERY TAMIL THEY CAN GET THEIR HANDS ON. This is genocide!!!!

But one thing the GOSL never counted on was us!!

The Tamil Diaspora and friends.

Look around at your neighbor. Look at the faces of the other people in this crowd. You are looking at the faces of people who are dedicated and loyal to truth and integrity for the Tamil people.

The time to accuse us as terrorists is over! We are thousands strong as humanitarians!!

All of you who come out and tirelessly write letters, organize rallies, come here to march and shout, AND send photos to journalists: all to make sure this genocide can not be hidden, can not be buried, and cannot continue!! We will make sure that the world knows what is happening to the Tamils.

WE WILL NEVER BE SILENCED! AND

WE WILL NEVER STOP FIGHTING FOR JUSTICE.

The GOSL never thought we would show up and expose their lies, but here we are: and in this darkest hour we will continue to make sure that people SEE what

is happening.. THEY CAN NO LONGER HIDE TAMIL GENOCIDE, by accusing us of being terrorist supporters.

Even if they try to kill every Tamil in Sri Lanka and take their land.

We will not let them succeed in extinguishing the Tamils.

Because in this darkness, we will fight for the Tamils to be a presence in the world and never be forgotten.

WE .. you and I can do this.

In these darkest hours, we will collectively move to our highest selves and say to those Sinhalese Nazis.

YOU WILL NEVER KILL THE COLLECTIVE TAMIL SPIRIT.

WE WILL SHOUT TO STOP GENOCIDE NOW!

AND WE WILL REBUILD!

Although there is silence in Sri Lanka

We will never be silenced

Although they control Tamils there

We will never be controlled here.

Although they are torturing and killing Tamils there.

They can never kill our collective regroup and stay on the highest moral ground.

WE HAVE GOD ON OUR SIDE, as we come here today: to the capital of our great country and ask for help

President Obama we have come to you for help

Secretary of state Clinton we have come to you for help.

Pres Obama your words on your inauguration day spoke directly to the heart of the Tamil people's struggle!!

You said:

"We must carry forward the precious gift, the noble idea, passed on from generation to generation. The God given promise that all are equal, all are free, and all deserve a chance to pursue their full measure of happiness."

Pres Obama we are asking you to make that pledge to the Tamil people.

We need your help!

Pres Obama: We have come here today thousands strong to tell the government butchers and masterminds of the Tamil final solution.

We will never stop fighting for the Tamil people, no matter where and when it is. You cannot break our spirit..

And on inauguration day, we heard your words Pres Obama, mirror ours

You said:

"And to those who seek to advance their aims by.....slaughtering innocents, we say to you now that, "Our spirit is stronger and cannot be broken. You cannot outlast us, and we will defeat you."



Dr. Ellyn Shander at a "Tamils Against Genocide" media briefing held at National Press Club, Washington DC, Feb 20, 2009

President Obama we are asking you to make that pledge to the Tamil people.

We need your help!

From the worst violent struggles have come free nations.

The US in the revolutionary war

Israel in the war of independence

Etria from Ethiopia

Kosovo and on and on.

And as we saw after WW2, the worse mass extermination of a people, 6 million and yet the Jewish state was born from the ashes.

Know this, the Tamils will rise from these ashes as well.

President Obama we heard you say to governments like the GOSL

To those who cling to power through corruption and deceit and the silencing of dissent, know that you are on the wrong side of history,

At this rally today we say to you. ...Mahinda Rajapaksa ... you are on the wrong side of history! We will overcome you!

President Obama we are asking you to make that pledge to the Tamil people.

We need your help!

PLEASE insist on an immediate and unconditional ceasefire.

Please send an international presence to SL to bear witness and stop the genocide of an entire people before it is too late.

Please pressure the GOSL to open the conflict areas to humanitarian aid, international journalists and human rights activists.

Sometimes in life we get the rare opportunity to fight for integrity, and truth, and we are forced to go outside, really outside, our comfort zone. That is when it is a privilege to do service for a people and a cause.

Tamils worldwide and their friends, we have been given this privilege.

We demand that the Sri Lankan government stop the genocide.....and

We demand that the interna-

tional community pressure this Nazi regime to stop the ethnic cleansing and send in humanitarian aid. It is time for the Tamil people to have their own state

But in this fight, we need help.. and once again Pres Obama we found a promise of hope in your words on January 20th. You said:

"know that America is a friend of each nation and every man, woman and child who seeks a future of peace and dignity, and we are ready to lead once more."

President Obama we are asking you to make that pledge to an independent Tamil nation.

We need your help!

And finally, President Obama you said on Jan 20th in front of millions of Americans and the entire world that

"this is a new era of responsibility ...on the part of every American, ...we (must) be, firm in the knowledge that there is nothing so satisfying to the spirit, so defining of our character than giving our all to a difficult task."

Mr. President .. the Tamils are facing a very difficult task.. stopping the final solution .a genocide ..from a madness that is stalking their country.

You speak about giving America's all to a difficult task.

Please,

President Obama we are asking you to make that pledge to the Tamil people.

We need your help!

And finally to all of you here todaylet me say, that I have met Tamil men, women and children. teens and elders from,

Sri Lanka, Canada, America, England, India and even Australia.

And what has impressed me most was their

Strength of character, The tenderness of their hearts, and

The courage to go on under unspeakable sadness about the situation back home,

so one thing I know for sure Tamils the world over and their friends

Will never give up the struggle Tamils the world over and their friends

Will try and save every Tamil possible

Tamils the world over and their friends

Will overcome this darkness

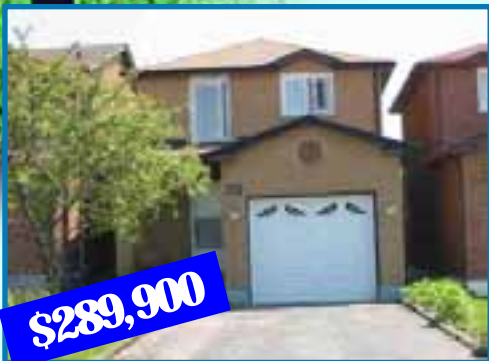
And then Tamils the world over and their friends

Will rebuild in our hearts and then on the ground

A FREE INDEPENDANT STATE CALLED TAMIL EELAM

Thank you

[Dr. Ellyn Shander MD of Connecticut, USA is a humanitarian activist]



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MONSOON FEATURE

John Boddy Homes has won the Diamond Award for 'Best Builder' for the twelfth year in a row in this year's Readers' Choice Awards and has now opened its newest phase in their Eagle Glen community in Ajax. Located just minutes east of Toronto, the Eagle Glen Community combines the closeness and convenience of city living with a suburban feel, and its prime location makes it a great place to call home. Classic two-storey homes are available, as well as side and back splits, bungalows, and future town-homes. Homes start at 1,800 square feet and range up to a spacious 3,858 square feet, some with triple car garages. John Boddy Homes offers traditional size lots with a minimum of 105 feet in depth and a limited selection of wide shallow lots and pond lots. With such a broad range of house sizes and styles Eagle Glen

EAGLE GLEN

A FAMILY COMMUNITY BY JOHN BODDY HOMES



has the ideal home to suit every preference. From the unique exteriors and charming streetscapes to the elegant interiors, various John Boddy Homes include such impressive standard features as vaulted ceilings, double door entries, décor columns, mirrored sliding closet doors, ceramic kitchen backsplashes, double basin bathroom vanities with make-up counters and so much more. Their gourmet kitchens, welcoming great rooms with cozy gas fireplaces and elegant dining rooms with coffered ceilings are all spacious and comfortable, making them the perfect location to enjoy time together with family or entertaining friends. In addition, some models include such impressive extras as classic french doors, transom windows and custom octagonal skylights allowing light to travel throughout the home for a bright and spacious feel.

For their homeowner's convenience, most John Boddy Homes include main floor laundry rooms, laundry chutes, kitchen

breakfast bars, private water closets, interior garage access, high efficiency furnaces and basement rough-ins for future bathrooms. Also, windows are vinyl clad wood which allows for interior custom colours with a maintenance free exterior. Other features include arched entryways, custom millwork, window mullions on all front and rear facades and decorative garage doors featuring appealing window lites. Custom landscaping packages and paved driveways are also included in all homes providing the renowned curb appeal that enhances the entire Eagle Glen community.

Innovative floorplan designs combined with an extensive array of standard features included with every new home have become a corporate trademark of John Boddy Homes and 'Eagle Glen'. Not only does a John Boddy Home offer such striking standard features, there are also a wealth of opportunities to upgrade, making their homes as unique as each individual homeowner. The 'Eagle Glen' Sales Office features a

Décor Centre that contains various upgrade items to select from in order to customize your home. Their high-tech electrical and décor consultants allow home-buyer's to make upgrade selections on site, enabling them to conveniently personalize their home.

When you purchase a new home in Eagle Glen there are no hidden closing costs. John Boddy Homes pays for education levies, development charges, water and hydro meter hookup fees, boulevard tree planting, landscape package and a paved driveway.

For a limited time only John Boddy Homes is currently offering a number of incentive packages such as an upgrade master ensuite which includes a separate shower with upgrade tub and your choice of a granite kitchen countertop or \$5,000 in free upgrades. They are also now

offering purchasers one year of Rogers services for free! Included in this package are home phone with 150 long distance minutes and 2 calling features, personal TV with free rental of a standard definition box, a HD digital box, VIP package, free on demand programming, Canadian timeshifting channels as well as Rogers Hi-Speed internet service and all are installed for free.

The Eagle Glen community offers many important neighbourhood amenities such as a brand new public elementary school opening in September 2009, places of worship, fully equipped parks and easy access to both Ajax and Go-Transit Services. Toronto is easily accessible from nearby Highways 401 and 407. Located just north of a host of shopping and recreation centres, 'Eagle Glen' allows residents all the amenities of the urban lifestyle while providing the beau-

ty and tranquility of the neighbouring countryside.

Since 1955, John Boddy has been involved in the construction of thousands of new homes throughout Ontario, and has earned a reputation as an accomplished builder of fine residential communities. Of significance are the award winning 1000-acre 'Bridlewood Community' developed during the 1960's and 1970's in Scarborough, the 'Forestbrook Community' in Pickering developed in the 1980's, 'Willowcreek' in Peterborough, and 'Eagle Ridge on the Green' in Ajax developed in the 1990's and early 2000's.

The John Boddy Homes' team of experienced management, planners, designers, supervisors, marketing and sales personnel have distinguished themselves by creating innovative and unique designs in truly outstanding communities that meet the needs and desires of today's families.

With five fully furnished model homes to view, a visit to Eagle Glen is a must. Drop by the Sales Presentation Centre located on Stevensgate Drive, north of Rossland Road West, one half kilometre west of Westney Road three kilometres north of Hwy 401. Sales office hours are Monday through Thursday 1:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.; Friday, Saturday, Sunday and Holidays 11:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Let their friendly knowledgeable staff help you determine which of the many home styles available is perfect for you and your family and get set to join the ever-growing 'Eagle Glen' family community by John Boddy Homes. For more information, please call (905) 619-1777 or visit the website at www.john-boddyhomes.com.

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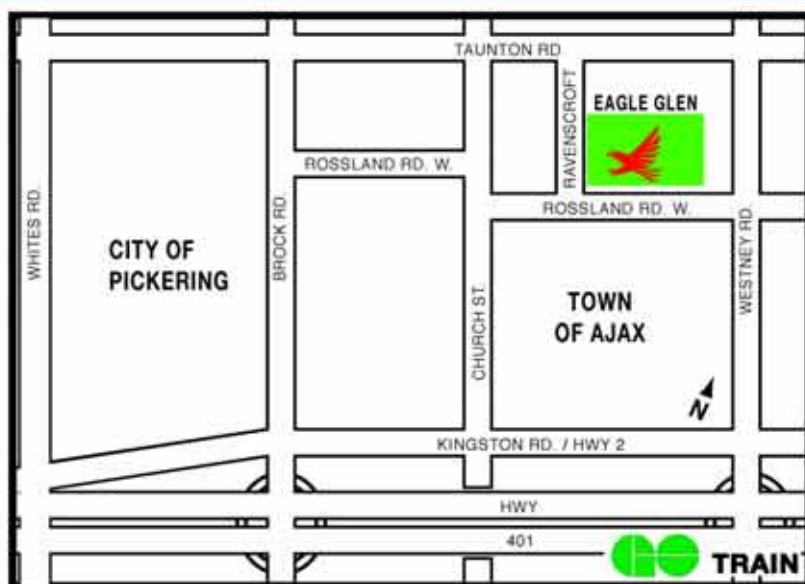
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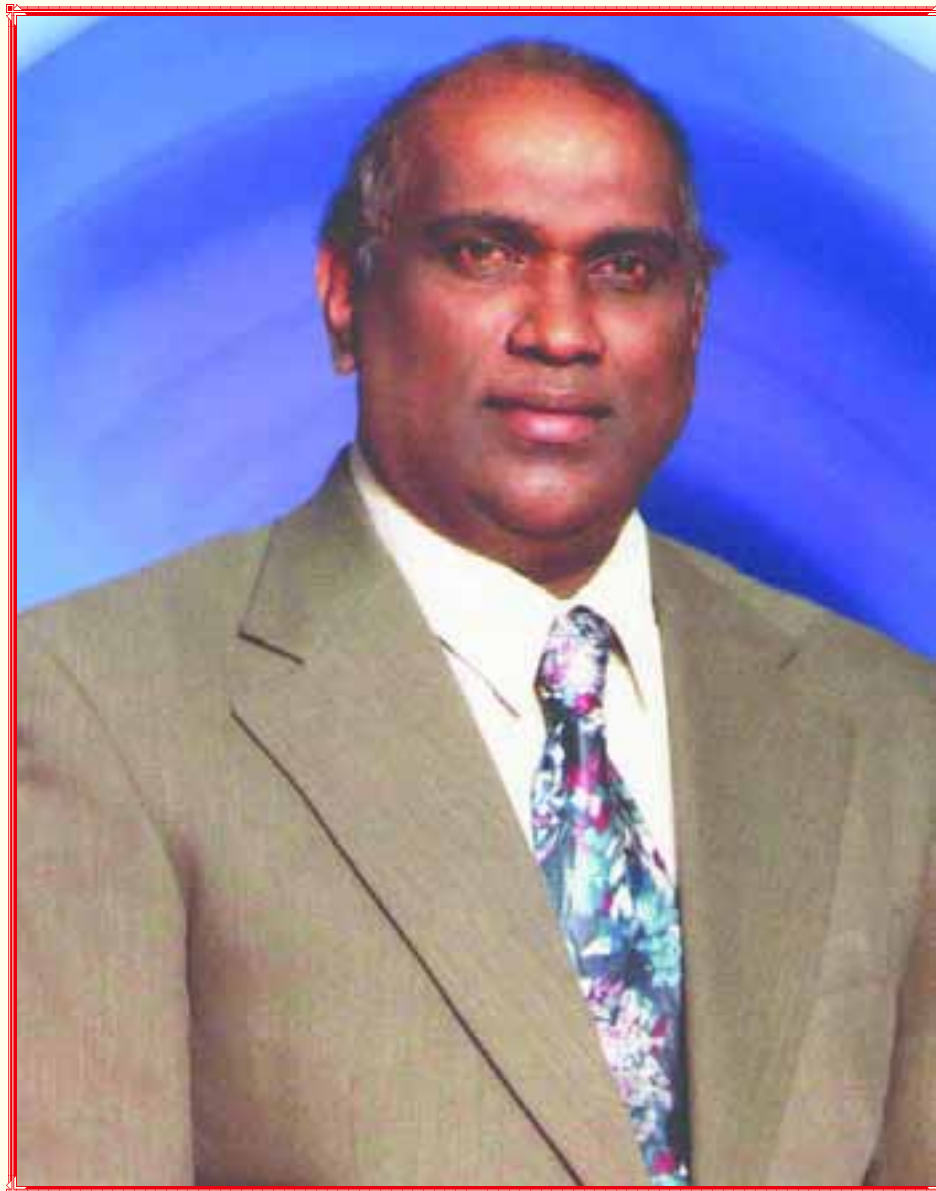
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Kanaga Arasaratnam, Editor & Publisher of "Thamilar Senthamarai" passes away



The sudden demise of Kanaga Arasaratnam, Editor & Publisher of the Tamil weekly "Thamilar Senthamarai" last month sent shockwaves to the Toronto Tamil community.

Mr. Arasaratnam began his full-time journalistic career back home in Sri Lanka working for the "Virakesari", the premier Tamil Daily published from Colombo. His speciality was crime reporting, and over a period of time he built sufficient contacts to write exclusive news-breaks for the paper. After working for over ten years for the "Virakesari", Arasaratnam migrated to Canada due to the unsettled conditions that prevailed in Sri Lanka at that time. In Canada, his interest in journalism continued and he started the Tamil weekly "Thamilar Senthamarai". The paper was well received by the community for its reporting of news and features associated with the Tamil community.

In addition to the publication of the paper, he also organized an annual musical event during the summer season by bringing down famous stars and music artistes from South India. Mr. Arasaratnam's long years of service in Journalism coupled with his desire to report news and events of the Tamil community through his Newspaper were well appreciated by the Tamil community. This was evident in the crowds that visited the Funeral parlour to pay their last respects to him.

As a member of the media fraternity in Toronto, "Monsoon Journal" mourns the passing away of this veteran journalist and offers its sympathies to his wife Raji, children Vino, Ajanthan and other members of his family.

From:

Siva Sivapragasam,

Logan Velumailum and all colleagues of Monsoon Journal

Shivaraatri

By: Kanayalal Raina

Shivaraatri was celebrated at Shri Ram Mandir this year in a grand scale and was attended by over 3000 devotees of Lord Shiva during a non-stop puja of 24 hours beginning at 6 AM on 22ND Feb and ended at 6AM on 23rd Feb. . May Lord Shiva bless each one of us with peace, happiness, prosperity, and good health? May our entire lives be auspicious (mangal maya). May God's benevolence and blessings be continually showered upon you?

Hindus of all castes and creeds offer prayers on this day and spend time in day or night in worship of Lord Shiva in temples and or at homes. For centuries, Hindus have been observing Shivaratri with utmost zeal and devotion. And this age-old traditions with its elaborate rituals covering three-fourth of the dark half of the lunar month of Phalguna (Feb-March) are followed even to this day, modified, of course, to suit the changing times and circumstances. Long time back it was a 21-day celebrations, marked by the same excitement, exultation and euphoria as in the days of yore.

Shivaratri provides a wonderful and meaningful get-together for all members of the family. Every member of the household is normally in a festive mood. It is a day of prayer and meditation for

the elders and one of fun and frolic for the youngsters, particularly children in their new colourful attires. During the entire celebrations, all the family members, men, women and children would greet each other and enjoy this day by singing bhajans and worshipping of deities.

Shivaraatri (literally meaning Shiva's night) is a festival of great significance for Hindus all over the world. It is symbolic of the mystic union of Jiva (individual soul) with Paramatma (the Supreme Godhead) and it represents the high state of spiritual realization wherein the world of relativity fades away and perfect peace and calm prevails. On this phenomenal night, the seeker remains fully aware of his identity with Shiva, the source of perennial joy, and thus experiences eternal Truth, Bliss and Beauty. (Satyam, Shivam. Sundaram). Shiva is the embodiment of consciousness said to be sitting atop Kailash in the sacred region of the Himalayas.

For Hindus, it signifies Lord Shiva's wedding with Uma, the beautiful daughter of the Himalayas. And in keeping with their hospitable nature, they offer delicious vegetarian food in puja on this day, ostensibly to entertain Bhairavas who formed the major part of Shiva's baraat.



The divine marriage has a deeper, philosophic connotation. Shiva in His transcendental (para) aspect is inactive in creation. And His union with Shakti (energy or activating power) represented by His 'consorts', Uma, Parvati, Durga and Kali (variously named to signalize particular functions of

the Divine Mother) make the infinite enfoldments in the cosmos possible.

Shiva represents the eternal process of creation and destruction, and His nature has primarily a two-fold aspect--immanent which pervades the universe and the transcendental that is beyond



the universal manifestation of time, space and form.

The ritual worship begins with formal invocation of Lord Ganesha, the remover of obstacles, followed by sanctification of various vessels representing different deities. Abhishek of the cone-shaped clay model used to be one of the main attractions. Being empty from inside, it represents the supreme Godhead that encompasses all the elements in the universe from prithvi tatwa (earth) to shunya tatwa (empty space).

The ritual worship continues till late into the night and concludes with the singing of devotional hymns in praise of Lord Shiva and finally aarti in the early hours.

This occasion keeps alive the very essence of Shiva and the eternal values He embodies, i.e. mutual love, togetherness, open mindedness, inclusiveness and respect for one and all.

No wonder, each year Shivaratri becomes the time for new beginnings ~ when old wounds are forgotten and new relationships fostered!

May the spirit of Shivaratri awaken the spirit of Shiva in each and every one of us!

It's never too late to get up and get moving

By Dr. Amir Janmohamed

If you're not already incorporating ways to keep your heart healthy, there's no better time than now to start.

Regardless of age, it's never too late to add physical activity to your life. And making it a regular part of your life can turn out to be a lifesaver. Just 30 to 60 minutes of exercise a day can help you to dramatically lower your risk of heart disease and stroke. It can also help to control or even prevent risk factors such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol and obesity. As well, it improves your sense of well being and quality of life.

Light activities such as walking, gardening or yoga are great ways to get started. If you're ready for more moderate activities, try brisk walking, swimming, cycling or dancing.

While physical activity can help prevent heart disease, stroke and many other conditions, remember that vigorous physical activity can be strenuous in extreme weather conditions, such as frigid cold temperatures, smog, and intense summer heat. The Heart and Stroke Foundation of Ontario recommends approaching activities such as shoveling snow in cold weather, with caution, especially if you have been diagnosed with heart disease, high blood pressure, or lead an inactive lifestyle.

Here are some tips to remember when exercising in extreme weather conditions:

" Prepare for the activity by doing a few minutes of a warm-up activity like



walking, to slowly increase your heart rate

" Take frequent breaks to prevent your body from becoming strained

" If you need to complete an urgent task, such as clearing snow, ask family or friends for help

" When shoveling snow, stop if you feel tired

" Wear weather-appropriate clothing, and keep water close by to stay hydrated

Almost anyone can benefit from a more active lifestyle. And if you have other health issues such as arthritis or osteoporosis, it can help to keep you mobile. If you have already had a heart attack, physical activity can help to prevent another one.

Of course, always consult your physician or healthcare provider before beginning any physical activity regimen.

Dr. Amir Janmohamed is a cardiologist at Rouge Valley Centenary.

MEDIA ALERT



PersonalTV™ from Rogers is offering an **entire month of free preview** of the popular sports channel, Setanta Sports, on Digital channel 429 from **March 1st, 2009 – March 31st, 2009:**



Courtesy of Getty Images

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Correctly predict the winning team and score of the game between Slovakia and England on March 28, 2009 and you could win a Grand Prize which includes a trip to London, England to watch a match featuring the English national side at Wembley Stadium (airfare and hotel accommodation included). Visit setanta.com/ca for more details.

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Suppressing Statehood in the Name of Upholding Sovereignty

Role of United Nations, India, the Co-chairs in the Genocide of Tamils in Sri Lanka

Arun Senathirajah

Forced Emergence of Tamil Statehood

S.J.V. Chelvanayakam Q.C. Leader of Tamil United Front called as Thanthai Selva made the following historically important statement in the history of Tamil Nation Building at his election victory in January 1975.

'Throughout the ages, the Sinhalese and Tamils in the country lived as distinct sovereign people till they were brought under foreign domination. ...We have for the last 25 years made every effort to secure our political rights on the basis of equality with the Sinhalese in a united Ceylon. It is a regrettable fact that successive Sinhalese governments have used the power that flows from independence to deny us our fundamental rights and reduce us to the position of a subject people...I wish to announce to my people and to the country that I consider the verdict at this election as a mandate that the Tamil Eelam Nation should exercise the sovereignty already vested in the Tamil people and become free.'

Tamils did not seek violence method to address their equality issues prior to 1970s. Violence methods were thrust on them. So many broken pacts and abrogated agreements for Regional Councils, District Councils, and Provincial Councils etc went into scraps. The request by the Co-chairs to go back to the democratic process with the Sinhala regime is a reverse process for Tamils in Sri Lanka. Tamil statehood is an Evolutionary Process of having a period of more than 60 years of history. When your age is now 60, one cannot change that to the age of 6. That is the request now there for Tamils from the Co-chair countries.

Visuvanathan Rudrakumaran a prominent Tamil lawyer in the USA has stated on the Tamil Eelam demand as follows:

'the Tamils of Sri Lanka, who are united on the basis of such objective factors as a distinct language etc., and by such subjective factors as a passionate yearning for freedom, and who have a long-established relationship to the Northern and Eastern provinces constitute a people, and are therefore entitled to self-determination in the form of secession, in the face of denial of effective representation in Sri Lanka's existing constitutional and political situation.'

United Nations

Independence for East Timor

East Timor was a Portuguese colony. In 1975 Indonesia invaded East Timor when it declared independence. The UN Security Council established a UN Mission in East Timor (UNTAET) in 1999 to oversee a referendum in which East Timorese voted for independence. The ballot was followed with Indonesian supported violence. UNTAET acted as transitional administration during the process of nation building. East Timor achieved full independence on May 20, 2002. When, violence emerged again in 2006 Australia, Malaysia. Former colonial ruler Portugal, and New Zealand had sent

troops to restore order. Australia again sent soldiers in February 2008 to subdue the violence erupted after the attempted assassination of East Timor President and Prime Minister. Australia has interest in East Timor coastal huge oil and gas deposits. In the building of East Timor the United Nations played a huge role. Why the UN is not taking interest in Tamil nation building? There are no interested superpowers supportive of Tamil nationhood to push the cause and the fact that Tamil nation has no significant natural resources to be exploited by the superpowers, other than strategic bases like Trincomalee, for which now they are ready to bargain with Sri Lanka since its forces currently occupy it.

Biased Attitude of the UN Secretary General

Innecitypress.com states that UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon who never called for a ceasefire in Sri Lanka has convened by contrast, to his office the Ambassadors of, among others, Sudan and Israel, to tell them directly when he is calling for government forbearance. In these disparate conflicts, in which government military action has killed civilians like in Sri Lanka, the UN has clearly used the term ceasefire, and conveyed it to the foreign service of each country. Why not in Sri Lanka? After belated call by Ban for a 'cessation of hostilities', Sri Lankan Foreign Minister Rohitha Bogollagama to so publicly mentioned the UN's position on Sri Lanka is viewed as "delicate," adding that Ban's view is that the Tamil Tigers lost support with their own people, even that some things must be accepted in the name of nation-building. Ban has consulted on the issue with India which is aiding and abetting with the Sri Lankan government and not bothered to have talks with justice seeking Tamil leaders in Sri Lanka or in Tamil Nadu.

India

Indian External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee has once again tried to deceive the people of Tamil Nadu and the politicians by making a statement that 'Sri Lanka should seize the reported ceasefire by the Tamil Tigers to bring a halt in hostilities' at an inaugural ceremony at Thoothukudy in Tamil Nadu on February 28th 2009. Many of the Tamil fishermen from this coastal village were killed and brutally attacked by Sinhala Sri Lankan Navy on many occasions. Minister Pranab Mukherjee or any other central government officials have even up to now uttered a word against these attacks on Tamil fishermen. He has added in the statement that the political solution to the Tamil ethnic problem has to be acceptable to all the societies in Sri Lanka. He is not bothered to highlight the need to find a solution to the satisfaction of the genocidal destruction facing Tamils in Sri Lanka. He is well aware that the majority of the people in Sri Lanka are Sinhalese. The solution acceptable to include these majority Sinhalese means, Pranab Mukherjee telling the Tamils of Tamil Nadu that dying Tamils by 100% representing Sinhala security forces need a solution with the blessing of the killer society. That means Tamils should

live only at the mercy of the Sinhalese in Sri Lanka. It is interesting to note that on the very next day Sri Lankan Foreign Minister Rohitha Bogollagama has publicly made a statement that they have never received any request from India to stop the war or go for talks with the LTTE. So, it is clearly evident that Pranab Mukherjee has just made a speech in Tamil Nadu, to look like he has pushed the Sri Lanka government for a ceasefire. Pranab Mukherjee thinks Tamils of Tamil Nadu are expected accept whatever the central government says, without a second thought. For India killing Tamil Nadu fishermen for many years by Sri Lankan Navy in Indian territorial waters is not an intervention in Indian sovereignty, but an isolated Mumbai attack is intolerable and has alerted Indian forces against Pakistan for a war confrontation. How can Sri Lankan Tamil expect a justification or fair contribution from India, when it gives step motherly treatment to its own Tamil citizens in Tamil Nadu. India has lavishly allowed Sri Lankan Navy to enter in Indian seas and attack Tamil fishermen. India also traded Indian origins of Tamils in Sri Lanka as merchandise through pacts and agreements with Sri Lankan government.

Pranab Mukherjee did not make any request from Sri Lanka for a ceasefire when he visited Sri Lanka even after Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M Karunanithy made a threat of resigning his party members from the coalition government. He has been keep telling that would be an intervention in Sri Lankan sovereignty. Flow of Sri Lankan Tamil refugees landing in India because of the ethnic conflict is not a problem for India. Although it is a valid reason to push the Sri Lankan for a justifiable solution to ethnic issue, India would not trouble Sri Lanka merely because Sri Lanka is a sovereign country, but Indian sovereign country resources can be used to provide accommodation for these refugees. Intervention in Pakistan to create Bangladesh is not an intervention in another country's sovereignty for India. Where did the sovereignty issue go when Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi signed a pact with Sri Lankan President J R Jeyawardene, insisting the merger of North and East Provinces in Sri Lanka.

India which, did not come forward during the ceasefire period and help Norway to achieve a solution to the ethnic problem, has now talked about ceasefire in Sri Lanka. The intention is very clear, that is to isolate the LTTE from Tamil civilians, and then it is very much easier for Sri Lanka forces to eradicate the LTTE completely. Not because of kindness on Tamils or real intention to solve the ethnic problem. India is suppressing Tamil Eelam statehood by providing funds and weapons to wipe out equal rights seeking Tamils in Sri Lanka. Indian High Commissioner in Colombo has convened a press meeting of Tamil media personnel and advised them to support moderate Tamil leaders other than the LTTE leader Velupillai Prabhakaran. So now India is in the process of choosing a Tamil political leader for Tamils in Sri



Lanka. In India's view Sri Lankan Tamils have no right to choose their own political leader who can bring emancipation for them from genocide.

Co-chairs

The Co-chair countries the USA, EU, Japan and Norway - Sri Lankan Tamils trusted them once, met behind the doors in Oslo, Norway in December 2005 and have conspired the Peacon Project's three phases with Sri Lankan Defense Secretary Gothapaya Rajapakse and Military Commander Sarath Fonseka on how to wipe out LTTE in the name of war against terrorism. That started from Vakarai operation in the East, then extended to Mannar in the West and now going on in Mullativu. Those Co-chair countries are keeping quite and silently watching the killings, bombings, chasing the Tamil population from place to place by Sinhala Buddhist chauvinistic forces, merely because they are strategic partners in the genocide on Tamils as they have already connived in Oslo.

Former US President George w Bush discovered the most favourite glossary term 'terrorism' in order to suppress even freedom fighters and minority equal rights seekers and donated this glossary term to put into practice by his US citizen Gothapaya Rajapakse and US green-card holder Sarath Fonseka on Tamils. 'Terrorism' is a very articulated defense shield to cover up their ethnic cleansing activities of Tamils. Whatever Sri Lanka government do against Tamils are cleanly cover under Bush's donation 'terrorism'. Ms. Karen Parker J D an human rights expert says 'instead of resolving a conflict, the Bush administration converted the armed conflict in 'terrorism / counter terrorism' and adds 'Terrorism / counter terrorism' policy has eroded basic human rights and it has demonized Tamil people worldwide....in my 27 years of my working on humanitarian law issues, I have never encountered a situation where an ethnic group that has been the victim of the most serious of human rights and humanitarian law violations becomes the culprits - and in ways that are overtly racist.'

She adds 'The LTTE has met all criteria for combatant status according to humanitarian law norms. They have a clear political aim. Their combatant status has to be recognized even if not their political aim. Both the LTTE and the government forces may carry out any military operation that is not prohibited in humanitarian law. Many of the military operations in this war are legal, but those occur-

ring now, that target the Tamil civilian population are not.'

The case of UDI of Kosovo

Alexander Orakbelasbvil in his 'Statehood, Recognition, and the United Nations System: A Unilateral Declaration of Independence in Kosovo' study envisages the validity of UDI (Unilateral Declaration of Independence) of Kosovo in terms of its contravention to international law and the unrelenting opposition to the independence of Kosovo by Serbia and number of other states, the validity of this independence hardly be expected to consolidate. But the argument of reality has been invoked by the USA in favour of accepting the independence of Kosovo. US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice put it, 'If you don't deal with that reality, you are going to sow the seeds of considerable discontent and considerable instability.' Russian Foreign Ministry doubted that 'the American thesis about Kosovo's case being unique is really moral, as it implies that some are supposed to have the right to statehood while it must be denied to others.'

Are the USA and the NATO countries who advocate the reality argument in favour of Kosovo ready to recognize Tamil Eelam for Tamils applying the same reality doctrine? But their silence in the genocide of Tamils, supply of funds and arms to the oppressor, the support in the name of 'war against Terrorism' indicate their ground reality is to cover the reality and against Tamil freedom fighting. So any statehood is recognized at its merits and demerits of how far the creation of prospective state would be beneficial to the interests of superpowers or regional powers who even influence the decision of the United Nations and in even electing the Secretary General for the same world body. Related to the state of Tamils, Indian duplicity is very clear. It actively participated in the creation of Bangladesh and recognized it, but did not recognize Kosovo. India will not recognize a Tamil nation building.

Tamils in Sri Lanka have more valid reasons to buildup statehood by exercising their self determination rights. They have their unique cultural identity, distinct sovereign land, and permanent habitats in the NorthEast of Sri Lanka and have endured enough sufferings and more than Irish under British, Kosovo under Serbia, East Timor under Indonesia and Eritrea under Ethiopia. The Co-chairs, India, and the UN are advising Tamils to reverse their freedom fighting by embracing democracy. They should understand democratic path which Tamils have already walked through for more than 60 years and how Tamils have been intimidated, cheated and lost their leaders in the name of democracy. Rather than criticize the current freedom fighters they should study the 60 years of sufferings, loss of 70,000 lives, and loss of our lands from Gal Oya to Manaluru and take positive steps to recognize the Tamil Statehood in their traditional homeland NorthEast of Sri Lanka.

West End YMCA blends old and new with renovations of historic building

Nearly 100 years since first opening its doors to the local community, the West End YMCA celebrates its newly renovated health, fitness and recreation centre, giving the YMCA an ideal blend of old and new.

The West End revitalization started two years ago with a focus on meeting the changing needs of its distinct and evolving community. The YMCA renovated the facility to better serve its members while also preserving the architectural integrity of the exterior of the building.

"We appreciate the patience of our members throughout the renovations. I've been a member for 25 years and I think the members will agree with me that the results have been well worth the wait," said Sandy McIntyre, current member and past chair of the YMCA of Greater Toronto Board of Directors. "This health, fitness and recreation centre is rooted in a rich history and with these new renovations it's now equipped to serve the community well into the future."

The renovations to the facility have created a greener YMCA with better heating, cooling and ventilation systems to improve air quality and climate control. All construction meets Leadership in

Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) standards.

The updated facility offers not only traditional activities like swimming and biking, but modern ones such as gravity and yoga classes. The 6000 square foot building is now equipped with upgraded locker rooms; additional free weights, cardio machines, stretching space and a new cycle-fit studio. There is also a modern membership area and a new play space where families can spend quality time together.

"The newly renovated West End YMCA will serve as a safe community hub for youth and families to gather," said Scott Haldane, President and CEO of the YMCA of Greater Toronto. "The YMCA will continue to offer opportunities for personal growth, community involvement, and leadership to all its members."

The West End YMCA has a rich history which began in 1890 when it opened at 1087 Queen Street West. It moved to the building at the corner of College Street and Dovercourt Road in 1912 and has been a landmark ever since.

About the YMCA of Greater Toronto

The YMCA of Greater Toronto is a dynamic charity connecting



Local West End YMCA members, Charles and Theo Thompson, explore the family play area at the newly renovated West End YMCA.



with more than 400,000 people at 235 locations across the GTA to build strong kids, strong families and strong communities. For 155 years, the YMCA has been promoting positive values that build spirit, mind and body. Mirroring the regions diversity, the YMCA welcomes everyone regardless of their background, experiences, or circumstances. Through the YMCA Strong Kids campaign, we strive to ensure no one is turned away because of an inability to pay. The YMCA, in partnership with more than 250 organizations and over 3,500 volunteers, offers a variety of programs responding to the needs of the community, including employment, education and newcomer programs, youth



outreach, health, fitness and recreation, youth in need of housing, international programs, child care, and camps. www.ymca.org

For further information: Celecia Partap / Stephanie Hurley, YMCA Charles Street 416-413-1020 ext. 2350 / 2339

celecia.partap@ymcatoronto.org / stephanie.hurley@ymcatoronto.org

Nearly 100 years since first opening its doors to the local community, the West End YMCA celebrates its newly renovated, health, fitness and recreation centre.

From left to right, Back row, Bahadur Madhani (Chair of the Board, YMCA of Greater Toronto), Susan Salek (Volunteer, Ontario Trillium Foundation), Sandy McIntyre (Past Chair of the Board, YMCA of Greater Toronto), Scott Haldane (President and CEO, YMCA of Greater Toronto), Cathyann White (General Manager, West End YMCA), Keith Lobo (Store Manager, Lowe's), Catherine Nash (Director Employee Relations Lowe's) and John Reid (Operations Manager, Lowe's). Front row, Theo Thompson and Charles Thompson (YMCA members).

Town of Richmond Hill Celebrates International Women's Day

Council proclaimed Sunday, March 8 as International Women's Day (IWD) in and for the Town of Richmond Hill in recognition of the contributions of women to the community as entrepreneurs, decision-makers, employees and citizens. In Richmond Hill, the film Iron Jawed Angels will be screened at the Richmond Hill Centre for the Performing Arts on Saturday, March 7 from 1 to 4 p.m. Tickets are \$10 and proceeds will be donated to the Yellow Brick House, Sandgate Women's Shelter and Pathways for Children, Youth and Families of York Region. IWD commemorates the deaths of 145 women who were killed in a fire at the Triangle Shirtwaist Company in New York

City in March 1911; recognizing and reflecting upon the progress made to advance women's equality and the gains made by women in today's society. In Canada, women make up more than half of our population.

International Women's Day has been observed since in the early 1900s, a time of great expansion and turbulence in the industrialized world that saw booming population growth and the rise of radical ideologies; it's now an official holiday recognized in many countries around the world. Annually on March 8, thousands of events are held throughout the world to inspire women and celebrate achievements.

A global web of rich and

diverse local activity connects women from all around the world ranging from political rallies, business conferences and government activities, along with networking events through to local women's craft markets, theatric performances, fashion parades and more. For more information about the Town's International Women's Day celebration, visit the Town's Website and select the Events tab.

To learn more about International Women's Day, visit www.internationalwomensday.com.

For more information, contact Deputy Mayor Brenda Hogg at (905) 771-2498 or

Donna McLarty, Town Clerk, at (905) 771-2529

Wanted: New Annual Members for The Scarborough Hospital

Are you concerned about issues that impact your community? Are you interested in helping The Scarborough Hospital become a stronger organization to meet the healthcare needs of residents now and into the future?

If so, you may be interested in becoming an Annual Member of The Scarborough Hospital Corporation. Annual Members play an important oversight role in the governance structure of The Scarborough Hospital.

Annual Members of the Corporation are admitted by resolution of the Board and consist of individuals who meet the eligibili-

ty requirements contained in the bylaws and who pay an annual membership fee of \$20. Membership is for one year, and those individuals whose completed application is received before April 7, 2009 will be eligible to vote at the next Annual Meeting to be held on July 7, 2009.

Any person interested in becoming a member of The Scarborough Hospital Corporation can obtain additional information and a membership application from our website.

Please note that completed applications must be received by April 7, 2009.



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MONSOON FEATURE

Toronto - On Valentine's Day 2009, medical student Vanessa Rambihar appeared on CBC Radio 1 to invite everyone to become part of Global Heart Hour and to continue this thinking throughout the year. She suggests we can start with the heart and do something more for the heart of the world on Valentine's Day and throughout the year.

"Just as we turn our lights off for Earth Hour and climate change, we can turn our hearts on for heart, global heart and do more for others. As we celebrate Earth Hour later this month, we should also think heart and global heart."

Global Heart Hour is a new concept launched at The Scarborough Hospital and by medical students at the University of Toronto, to start and sustain a global heart movement and network to make a better world. This also responds specifically to the various crises we now face, including global financial, food and climate change, which are expected to make existing global disparities even greater. The students suggest that we put our

Global Heart Hour launched

New concept started on Valentine's Day seeks to find a better world



At the launch of Global Heart Hour at The University of Toronto, from left: Dr Peter Liu, Dr Jen Kane, Dr Anne Dipchand, Dr Shafiq Qaadri, and standing Vanessa Rambihar.

hearts and minds together to start a global public engagement to find novel ideas and actions for change, using the new communication tools and new ways for change that their generation has adopted. The launch was very successful, which Vanessa credits to the tremendous support and work of the medical students who helped her organize this event, faculty, student council, Center for International Health, and the Office of Student Affairs which made it possible. Over a hundred students and many others participated in the launch, excited by the opportunity to make a difference in the world in this novel way.

Vanessa Rambihar has been

involved in community activities for a long time. She is enrolled in the first year of medical school at U of T and graduated from the UWO with a degree in Medical and Health Science. She has been part of community heart health promotion for many years and was involved with skits for heart health and writing health promotion articles at Indian Heritage Day celebrations and other events.

The launch featured opening remarks by Dr Catharine Whiteside, Dean of U of T's Faculty of Medicine, followed by a panel discussion with distinguished physician leaders, Dr Peter Liu, CIHR Scientific Director and Professor of Medicine, Dr

Anne Dipchand, Pediatric Cardiologist and Head of the Heart Transplant Program, Hospital for Sick Children, Dr Shafiq Qaadri, Government Member of Ontario Parliament, family physician and medical writer, and Dr Jennifer Kane, who has traveled extensively and is starting a year of Global Health Fellowship at U of T. Moderating the brainstorming session was Brodie Ramin, fourth year medical student who grew up in the developing world and obtained a Masters degree in International Development at Cambridge University.

The panelists reported on the increasing need for health awareness and action, especially with the crises we now face and the concern that health will decline as a result. They described small actions for us to help change this and described ways that we could be involved in right here to make a difference in the world.

The reciprocal relationship of heart health and poverty was noted and the opportunity to improve heart health to reduce poverty. Dr Qaadri described how policy change improves health and what the government is doing

to ensure health for all during these crises. He also brought greetings from Premier Dalton McGuinty that recognized Valentine's as an ideal time to mark this initiative "reminding us of the importance of good heart health" which "inspires us to envisage ways in which to make the world a better place."

Global Heart Hour is designed as a grass-roots, people-driven, idea-powered collaboration that builds on twenty-five years of a Valentine's Day for Heart Health, and four years of a Global Heart project. Ideas for the Hour that have already become actions are: a Valentine's party with fewer gifts and chocolates with more donations to a charity of choice, sharing ideas, poetry and more on Facebook and YouTube, and promoting heart health, which is now advocated for social and economic development and poverty reduction. Everyone is invited to use their imagination and creativity to design their own event or action plan, or use ideas others have already come up with.

For more information and ideas please visit www.globalhearhour.com

TSH medical team achieves a 'first'

Toronto - Physicians from The Scarborough Hospital (TSH) are heralded with performing a 'first' while recently volunteering their time and skills in Guyana.

The four physicians - Drs. Tim Sproule, Narayanan Nandagopal, Aroon Yusuf and Stanley Tam - offered their clinical skills for medical procedures and to train and educate at the Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation. The team presented a series of CME lectures while there. They also spent considerable time at a burn unit co-founded several years ago by Dr. Sproule.

"We lucked into having a perfect case, a 29-year old man who was healthy otherwise, but because of severe burns to his left knee, was looking to have his leg amputated," Dr. Sproule said. "We didn't have a lot of resources, but we had just enough. I brought microsurgical instruments I recently purchased from The Scarborough Hospital and a box of micro-sutures."

The procedure involved the microsurgical transfer of tissues, muscles and vessels from the patient's abdomen to an exposed area on his knee.

"Doing a first in Guyana like that I think perked up a few ears down there, and is something that we can use as a springboard to help us with other things we want to do," explains Dr. Sproule. The group worked under the auspices of the Canadian Reconstructive Surgery Foundation, a



Life Savers: The volunteer medical team from The Scarborough Hospital on visit to Guyana, from left, Drs. Aroon Yusuf, Narayanan Nandagopal, Tim Sproule and Stanley Tam.

charity that offers plastic surgery expertise to under-served countries around the world.

While this wasn't his first trip to Guyana, Dr. Sproule says it was his best.

"I've been on some really great trips to Guyana and elsewhere, but the way our team worked together and with the local medical staff, I think we had a tremendous impact," he explains. "But I think the most important thing we did was develop a structure on how we can move forward with ongoing support in both education and the burn unit itself."

This was the first trip to Guyana by the other three physicians, who each state they came away with a new appreciation for what they can accomplish as a team.

"We were able to achieve a lot more than we thought was possible," says Dr. Nandagopal, a plastic surgeon. "The major impact

opener." "As much as we contributed, I think we learned a lot about ourselves and our capacity to work together under stressful situations," says Dr. Yusuf.

"I was surprised that the facilities weren't as backward as I thought they'd be," explains Dr. Tam. "They had all the equipment to administer anaesthesia, but I was able to bring new devices for pain management."

Dr. Tam was able to put those devices to use on a difficult intubation case, the best opportunity

for local anaesthesiologists to learn how to use the equipment on a living patient.

"The patient had severe acid burns on his face and neck, and was unable to open his mouth very wide. That's what made it such a difficult intubation," Dr. Tam adds. "But the outcome went very well."

In all, the physicians completed ten surgical procedures and treated over 80 patients. The team is planning another trip to Guyana in May.

Canadian Minister visits Guyana

Canada's Minister of State for the Americas, in the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, Peter Kent, concluded a two-day visit to Guyana, recently. He assured that the proposed free trade agreement, between Canada and the countries of the Caribbean Community is open to negotiations, including addressing the changing realities in the different countries of the region.

He hopes the preliminary talks on the pact take place before the Summit of the Americas, slated for April 17 to



Canada's Minister of State for the Americas calls on Guyana's President Bharrat Jagdeo

19 in Trinidad and Tobago under the theme 'Securing our citizens future by Promoting Human Prosperity, Energy Security and Environmental Sustainability'.

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WORDS OF PEACE

The Heart and the Mind

The human mind is a wonderful tool, but it has its limitations, says Maharaji, who has traveled the world for decades urging people not to ignore their innate desire for joy.

It's important, he says, to remember that every human being is born with the ability to feel as well as to think. To illustrate the difference between these two realms, he sometimes tells a simple story.

In this story, a distant ambassador comes to the court of a king, and to pay his respects brings some mangoes as a gift.

The king says, "What is a mango? I don't know what a mango is." He asks his courtiers to find out.

"So," Maharaji continues, "one of them takes a mango and smells it. He says, 'A mango is something with a strange smell I've never smelled before.' The king says, 'I don't understand.'

"The next courtier cuts it open, tastes it, and says, 'King, a mango is something that tastes like something I have never tasted before, but it is sweet.' The king says, 'I still don't understand.'

"A third courtier says, 'Well, it's yellow on the outside, yellow on the inside, and it feels kind of soft.' The king says, 'I still don't understand what a mango is.'

"Then the ambassador took a mango, cut it, put it on a plate, gave it to the king, and said, 'Here. Taste it.' The king tasted it and said, 'Oh, so that's what a mango is!'"

So it is, says Maharaji, with experiencing the simplicity of existence. It's sweet and it's beautiful-but when someone tries to grasp it with the mind, it seems challenging and confronting.

"Why? Because it can only be accepted by the heart. Peace-joy, true happiness-is not a subject of thinking. It must be felt. You can't just say, 'I'm happy. I have a nice car, I have a very good dog, my kids are doing well in school, my wife is a great cook. So I should be happy.'

"That's trying to apply formulas to real joy, real happiness, real truth. The reality is that only the



quenched.

Q: I don't understand how my existence can be different from what I do.

A: Nobody in this world wants to peel those two things apart. Everybody thinks they have to be glued together. I'm saying that what is happening in your life is transitory. It will change. Sometimes things will go your way and sometimes things will not go your way, but you will still have this thing called existence.

Q: Can you help me find the Truth?

A: How about if I tell you the simplest of all truths? You are alive, and that is the greatest news on the face of this earth.

heart can recognize when we are happy-and that's why every one of us has a heart. It's no mistake. It is from this heart that we can begin to understand the simplicity of this existence-to understand, to know, to feel what a gift it is to be alive."

Maharaji often replies to questions from people who want to know more about his message.

Q: Are you saying thinking is a bad thing?

A: Thinking is great. Thinking is wonderful. Thinking is very powerful. But tell me, when you are thirsty, do you think by just thinking about water your thirst will go away?

You need water, pure and simple. Maybe thinking will lead you to the tap. That's fine. But there is still that act of somehow getting the water to your mouth and swallowing. Drinking. When that water reaches your body, then and only then will your thirst be

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Karma Is In Your Volition



Whatever nonsense people are doing in the world, if you keep talking about it, it'll become yours, because karma is not in your action, karma is in your volition. Karma is in the intention with which you perform action. It is the certain way that you are, that you become a certain karma; not necessarily a particular action.

For example, now you got very angry. You're very hateful about somebody, so you planned. You kept a knife in your pocket. You waited for the right moment and stuck it into this man-killed him. This is one kind of karma. Or,

Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudev is a realized master, yogi and mystic, who has founded Isha Foundation, an international public service organization that strives for ultimate human well-being. For world-wide program information, visit www.ishafoundation.org
Toronto local contact 416 300 3010 or email Toronto@ishafoundation.org

let us say you want to become a knife thrower. You want to throw it properly right there under the target, but you're a bad knife thrower. Just by mistake you through it into this man and he died. This is another kind of karma-karma of accident. Another thing is you were sitting and just playing with this knife, and just by chance you cut his throat, he died. This is another kind of karma- karma of negligence. Or you're a surgeon; you want to save this man's life. With the same knife you tried to perform a surgery upon this man, but one wrong move and he died. Same knife, same person dying, same you doing it, but not the same karma. So, it's not the action which decides your karma, it's the volition. Or, you hate this man; you want to kill him. Everyday you dream of killing him, but you never did anything to him. That is another kind of karma. In fact, that is the worst kind of karma. Everyday you plotted to kill this man, but you did not kill this man. Everyday you imagined killing this man; that is the deepest karma.

So, karma is not in what you have done or what you have not done. It is your volition. The way you are within yourself. Accordingly, the same situations, the same incidents may become

different types of karmas in different people depending upon their receptivity and what they make out of it within themselves. Karma of fear is one kind of karma. Karma of guilt is another kind of karma. Karma of arrogance, another kind of karma. So this is not a question of right and wrong. Do not think in terms of there is somebody sitting up there punishing you for what you did. It is just that nature, because of all these inputs, it develops certain tendencies. An amalgamation of all these inputs is you. This you develops a certain tendency. Because of that tendency, sometimes you may damage your body; sometimes you may damage your mind; sometimes you may damage some other aspect of you. But this is because of certain tendencies which are a resultant factor of vast number of karmas. So, somebody is ill. You say, okay he is ill because that's his bad karma. Now, this is your karma. You never talk about somebody else's karma. When you utter the word karma, it's always about you; never about somebody. You have no business with somebody else's karma. When you say karma, it's always you; never somebody else. If you talk about other's karma, it'll become your karma.

Continued on Page 34

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MONSOON FEATURE

AJ: The Rooted Cosmopolitan - A Festschrift: Edited by Chelva Kanaganayakam; Pub. by Tamiliyal; 27B High Street, Plaistow, London E13 OAD. Rs. 250.

Men of ideas and letters - teachers, litterateurs, and journalists, for instance - shine best when they work from settings to which they can relate to the most.

This collection of writings A J: The Rooted Cosmopolitan by and on Aloysius Jayaraj Canagaratna (1934-2006) (AJ), the Sri Lankan writer, critic, translator and journalist, is not only a tribute to a person; it is also a flashback to a country where decades of militarism has eclipsed the quest for intellectual pursuits.

Intellectual expression

AJ's succinct observation

made in an (unpublished) book review of one of Sri Lanka's intellectuals, K. Sivathamby, sums it all: "Like Prof Sivathamby I too wanted - and want - to be both a Tamil and a Sri Lankan living on equal footing with other citizens of Sri Lanka. And I certainly do not want to be treated as a second-class citizen: this is a feeling shared by many Tamils in Sri Lanka." As another contributor points out, despite being "traumatised by the Sri Lankan state's military adventure in the North," AJ was "always sceptical about the grandiose plans of Jaffna Tamil nationalism."

Conflicts invariably bring out the best - and the worst - in a society. Militarised civil conflicts, like that which has ravished Sri Lanka for over three decades now, broaden the canvas for

By V.S. Sambanadan

expression of ideas.

There are broadly two choices open to members of embattled societies, particularly those who have the ability to articulate both the popular sentiments and the undercurrents of a conflict, and are willing to stand up and be counted. They could choose distant, safer climes to espouse their ideals, or do so from the thick of things. By all accounts as presented by the writers in this book AJ chose the latter; and he did so with a sense of intellectual commitment. As one of the book's contributors, Rajan Philips notes in the piece Jaffna's Literary Soul: "AJ stuck with Jaffna through its years of trial and tribulation. He walked the fine line between the occupying army and the infighting

militants, but without sacrificing his intellectual independence."

Cosmopolitan

Of the several roles donned by AJ, that of a journalist from a troubled society merits detailed study. As editor and publisher of the Co-operator, "The journal of Jaffna's once vibrant cooperative movement," or as a moving force behind the unique, but now defunct Saturday Review, AJ's role as a journalist is summed up by Philips: "He did not become a ghost writer or apologist for any of the Tamil groups, as many others did. AJ was not brought up to be a supine fellow traveller of any group, although he had views - critically reflective views - on all of them." One of Sri Lanka's leading intellectuals, the late Regi Siriwardena, in his article, which gives the book its name, sums up

AJ's approach to life aptly: "...together with his cosmopolitan culture and broad international awareness, AJ was also an intellectual deeply rooted in the soil of Jaffna, in its life, experience and language..." The book, published by the London-based Tamiliyal, has two parts. The first part is a collection of essays on AJ, with a selection of essays and reviews by AJ making up the second part.

The book is a flashback of not only the life and times of one of Sri Lanka's accomplished writers, but also of a time when intellectual resistance was the norm, rather than an anachronism. The articles and narratives are a reminder of how rapidly liberal space can shrink when militarism overtakes a society.

[courtesy: The Hindu]

Fear and Beyond

BY: Devadas Chelvam

Bathed in Truth

From the Sea of Love

Being nothing leads to everything

As love pursues truth in all things.

Pain and pleasure

Tiny bubbles

In the vast ocean of joy,

Endless ever new bliss.

Embrace life here and now

Pain and pleasure in equal measure

Escape not from pain

Nor ever hate to delight.

To go beyond, accept

The terror of pain and gain,

Face all the fears fully

From the silent depths of being

In surrender serene.

Resistance nil, acceptance all

Silently aware of limitless silence

Peace and contentment.

Be still and know

That I am God

Who is Truth, Love and Joy

Conservatives blocking expedited immigration assistance to those in danger zones, Karygiannis MP says

OTTAWA - The Honourable Jim Karygiannis, Member of Parliament for Scarborough-Agincourt, recently introduced a Motion at the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration calling on the Harper government to:

"...deport no one to Sri Lanka until a safe environment exists there, and that it should expedite any family class sponsorships and refugee claims from the danger zone; that the Committee adopt these recommendations as a report to the House and that, pursuant to Standing Order 108(1), the Chair present it to the House." "We cannot ignore the reports coming out of Sri Lanka," said Mr. Karygiannis. "People in Sri Lanka are dying. Their loved ones, here in Canada, want to bring them to a safe place as quickly as possible."

Mr. Karygiannis has long called for the establishment of a protocol to deal with immigration applications from trouble spots around the world.

"The Harper Conservatives on the Committee showed their true

colours today." Mr. Karygiannis commented. "They voted no to the Motion. They turned their backs on their fellow human beings who are living in devastating humanitarian conditions and are in constant fear of their lives."

All the Opposition Members of Parliament on the Committee voted for the motion allowing it to pass.



COMPOSED UPON WESTMINSTER BRIDGE, 3RD SEPTEMBER 2008

(With apologies to William Wordsworth)

Earth has not anything to show more fair;
Dull would he be soul who could pass by
A sight so touching in its majesty;
That continues to lure even today.
The city then tranquil, peaceful and bare
With towers, domes, theatres, pubs and open fields
Now transformed into a bustling tourists hub;
The Big Ben, the Houses of Parliament, churches
Along side the towering buildings bordering the Thames
That continues to glideth at its own sweet will
With jet boats, yatches, canoes and cruising boats
And the breathtaking view from the London Eye
Ne'er saw I, never felt a view so captivating
As felt by Wordsworth two hundred years ago.



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Culture plan 2: A new vision to Kitchener residence



Kitchener has a high concentration of arts and cultural services for a diverse population. The culture plan 2 is a master plan recognizes the broad impacts and value that cultural resources have on the social and economic development of a livable community.

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tural heritage identity for the region;

- o building a stronger foundation for arts, culture and heritage within the community through education and awareness;

- o encouraging a greater degree of collaboration across all sectors and disciplines

The culture plan 2 final report was submitted to the public in

February at the Registry Theatre in Kitchener. The artists from the Tamil cultural association of Waterloo region presented a South Indian Classical dance program during the event.

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- Promote your Art - Profit from Experience**
Marketing for ARTISTS. Panelists: Al Kashvani, Loop Clothing, Paul Maxwell, Maxwell's Music House, and Laurie Worfor Nolan, visual artist
- Explore and Discover the Regional Market**
Marketing for ORGANIZATIONS - Susan Cudahy, Waterloo Regional Tourism Marketing Corporation and Cheryl Ewing, Cheryl A. Ewing Consulting
- Transformative Marketing**
Marketing for ORGANIZATIONS - Arlene Madell, Art Gallery of Ontario
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1:00 pm – 3:45 pm:
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MONSOON FEATURE

Self-realized yogi and founder of Isha Foundation, Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudev, has designed an Isha Yoga program called "Inner Engineering" that will be offered in Detroit this spring. This program will be conducted by Sadhguru from April 1st to April 5th at Hellenic Cultural Center, 36375 Joy Rd., Westland, MI 48185 - USA. The program runs

World Renowned Yogi Introduces Ancient "Kriya" for Human Fulfillment

Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudev Visits Detroit to Offer Inner Engineering

weekdays 7:00 pm to 10:15pm, Saturday & Sunday 8:00 am to 6:00 pm. A free introductory talk by Sadhguru on April 1st from 7:00 pm to 8:00 pm. All are welcome.

Isha Yoga programs are a 'live' process—an inner exploration of the very essence of life. Sadhguru's Inner Engineering class introduces to the public Shambhavi Maha Mudra, an ancient yogic "kriya" (inner energy process) devised by legendary yogis to attain to an unwavering state of inner calm and precision clarity.

According to Sadhguru, the ancient yogic discipline is largely misunderstood. As Sadhguru explains it, the types of yoga we are now so familiar with in the West are each just a small part of an extensive science gleaned from thousands of years of rigorous inner observation. In fact, the asanas, or physical postures of yoga, were traditionally just a preparatory practice for subtler, more potent techniques. These more potent techniques impart a deep understanding of one's own body, mind and emotions and confer keen perception and control over even the subtlest aspects of one's own life, including the complex energy system of the human form. This discrete mastery gives a self-realized yogi a moment-to-moment conscious choice of his inner experience of life.

"Everything you go through is just a certain expression of your energy," Sadhguru explained in a recent talk. "Right now you're angry—it's a certain expression of your energy. You're happy—it's another expression of your energy. You're loving—it's another expression of the same energy. If you have some mastery over your own energies...you will see, you will naturally become a joyous being because now your energies find a conscious expression."

Sadhguru's Inner Engineering class features interactive discussion, meditation, and a balanced set of simple, but powerful yoga practices. (No agility or prior experience with yoga or meditation is needed to participate.) Through the Inner Engineering program, Sadhguru introduces to the public for the first time Shambhavi Maha Mudra, an ancient yogic "kriya" (inner energy process) devised by legendary yogis to attain to an unwavering state of inner calm and precision clarity. Together the program and practice create a foundation of total wellbeing allowing one to tap the wealth

of vibrant life within.

Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudev is a yogi and mystic with profound mastery of the ancient science of yoga. He is one of few yogis capable of transmitting the subtlest aspects of yoga, enabling every person to explore and experience the deepest dimensions of life. He is a visionary and humanitarian who works with the world's foremost social, economic, and political leaders to engender a more peaceful and prosperous global community. At his home in southern India, Sadhguru oversees Isha Foundation, an entirely volunteer-run, nonprofit service organization

dedicated to cultivating human potential through yogic science. Set in the lush rainforest at the base of the Velliangiri Mountains, Isha Foundation operates Isha Yoga Center, which includes an ashram, program facility, Dhyanalinga (a powerful meditation shrine), Isha Rejuvenation Wellness Center, and the headquarters for three large-scale human service projects. These projects include: Action for Rural Rejuvenation (www.ruralrejuvenation.org), a program for health and human upliftment serving 2,500 destitute villages in rural southern India; Isha Vidhya (www.ishavidhya.org), a rural education program establishing 206 computer-based schools by 2014 for children in grades k-12; and Project Green Hands (www.projectgreenhands.org), a ten-year reforestation initiative kicked-off in October 2006 with the Guinness Record mass plantation of 852,587 indigenous varieties of trees across 57 districts in the southern state of Tamil Nadu, India.

er ship forums. In January 2007, he was hosted on four panels at the World Economic Forum and spoke on issues ranging from diplomacy, to economic development, to education, to the environment. In 2006, he addressed the World Economic Forum, the Tallberg Forum in Sweden, and the Australian Leadership Retreat. He also has served as delegate to the United Nations Millennium Peace Summit and the World Peace Congress.

At the 2006 World Economic Forum, Sadhguru challenged the world's foremost business leaders to shift the current socio-economic paradigm to one that is more inclusive of the vast majority of the world's population. "Big business is not about profit. It's about expansion," Sadhguru emphasized. "Expansion is inclusion." In 2007, Sadhguru stated a need for compassion and understanding at the highest levels of business and government to prompt true social change. "If tears of love and compassion flow from the leadership—from the eyes of the leaders on this planet—it will obliterate the lines of distinction..."

Sadhguru's vision and understanding of modern social and economic issues have led to interviews with BBC, Bloomberg, CNBC, CNNfn, and Newsweek International. His insights are regularly featured in The Times of India, India's leading national newspaper.

PROFILE:

Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudev

Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudev is a master yogi and profound mystic. He is one of few yogis capable of transmitting the subtlest aspects of yoga, enabling every person to explore and experience the deepest dimensions of life. Sadhguru is an embodiment of the wise sages of the past who served as beacons of inspiration and guidance for entire civilizations. He is an eloquent and compelling speaker whose wit, wisdom, and piercing logic examines and reveals the essential nature of life. In his native India, Sadhguru is a well-known public figure, regularly drawing crowds of more than 250,000 people for his public talks and "sathsangs" (group meditation).

Sadhguru is a visionary humanitarian whose every action is enabled by a deep, inner understanding of life. He is founder of Isha Foundation, Inc., an entirely volunteer-run, non-profit service organization with over 150 city-based centers worldwide. Isha Foundation implements various projects and programs to cultivate

peak potential for every individual, including rural health, education and community revitalization programs, environmental recovery projects, and yoga and wellness programs. Sadhguru's Isha Yoga is practiced by hundreds of thousands of people all over the world. Equally at home in any context, Sadhguru addresses questions about today's complex global issues as easily as the mundane challenges that define our daily lives. He speaks with refreshing candor and clarity about all matters affecting human wellbeing. Sadhguru has spoken at some of the world's most prominent international lead-

Spirituality

BACKGROUND: Isha Foundation, Inc.

Isha Foundation, Inc., founded by Sadhguru in 1992, is an entirely volunteer-run nonprofit organization dedicated to cultivating human potential. The Foundation is a human service organization that recognizes the possibility of each person to empower another—restoring global community through individual inspiration and transformation. Isha Foundation is operated by more than 250,000 volunteers through over 150 city-based centers

tap the wealth of vibrant life within him. Sadhguru's introductory program, Inner Engineering, introduces Shambhavi Maha Mudra—a simple but powerful yogic kriya (inner energy process) for self-transformation. Isha Foundation also implements three large-scale human service projects to support personal growth, revitalize the human spirit, and rebuild communities, including: oAction for Rural Rejuvenation (www.ruralrejuvenation.org), offering comprehensive health and community services to revitalize more than 2,500 destitute villages in rural



worldwide. The Foundation is headquartered at Isha Yoga Center, set in the lush rainforest at the base of the Velliangiri Mountains in southern India, and at the Isha Institute of Inner Sciences on the South Cumberland Plateau in middle Tennessee, USA. At the core of the Foundation's activities is a customized system of yoga called Isha Yoga, which is designed to facilitate inner growth even in a fast-paced contemporary atmosphere. Isha Yoga distills powerful, ancient yogic methods for a modern person, creating peak physical, mental, and emotional wellbeing. This basis of total wellbeing accelerates inner growth, allowing each individual to

southern India.

oProject Green Hands (www.projectgreenhands.org), a massive public reforestation effort aiming to plant 114 million trees in the next ten years, restoring 33% green cover in Tamil Nadu, India.

Isha Vidhya (www.ishavidhya.org), a pioneering computer-based education initiative to be established in 206 new village schools in rural southern India by 2014. Together the Foundation's community programs serve as a thriving model for human empowerment and community revitalization in other parts of the developing world.

Karma Is In Your Volition

Continued from Page 31

So don't think on those lines. Then, it becomes like this. Somebody is suffering; you say it's his karma. You'll become in-human, isn't it? See, this has happened to the world. Somebody is suffering—'oh, it's all his karma.' Never look at somebody else's karma. You think about your karma; what you can do about your bondage.

You never think of somebody else's bondage.

This has happened to the world in a big way. I happened to be in some international meeting it is, supposed to be. People were supposed to be doing things for making the world a better place. So they're talking and discussing about the plight of people in Africa, especially Africa, and a little bit about Asia. And, suddenly one, very religious-kind of person stands up and says, 'is this not all divine play?' Is this not all divine plan that, you know somebody should be poor, somebody should be rich, somebody should be die of hunger, somebody should be burnt here, somebody should be alive there. Is this not all divine plan? Somebody else is hungry; somebody's children are dying without food, it must be divine plan.

Suppose you're hungry; then you'll have your own plan, won't you? Yes or no? Once you're hungry, you're going to have your own plan how to fill this belly. Isn't it so? Somebody else is hungry; now we can philosophize. It must be all divine plan.

See, in the name of divinity, you're even forsaking your humanity. Unfortunately, in the name of God people are becoming in-human. At least if you saw, oh this is happening. I'm eating well; somebody is not eating well. Immediately your humanity at least overflows. But now if you think I'm eating, somebody else is not eating, this must be divine plan. Even your humanity is gone, forget about divinity, isn't it? Let your humanity overflow to its brim. Divinity will anyway happen. If you deny yourself your humanity, where is the question of divinity? It doesn't arise. So, never talk about somebody else's karma. When we talk about somebody else's karma, you forsake your humanity. Somebody's suffering; it must be his karma. Good way to insulate yourself from life, but you didn't come here to avoid life; you came here to experience life, isn't it?

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'Slumdog' Fusionist in Spotlight

The News York Times preview of A.R. Rahman before the Feb 22nd Oscar:

By Ben Sisario

One of the most prolific and successful film composers in India, he has three nominations, all for "Slumdog Millionaire": best original score and best original song, for both "Jai Ho" and "O ... Saya," a collaboration with the Sri Lankan-British rapper M.I.A. (The film, by Danny Boyle, has 10 nominations, and last month Mr. Rahman won a Golden Globe for best score.)

"It would be a great honor," Mr. Rahman said with characteristic diffidence in a phone interview this week from Los Angeles, where he was preparing to perform at the ceremony. "It would help me to do bigger things."

Ask him what those bigger things might be, however, and he grows even quieter. Naming some Western directors he would like to work with, he sounds distracted, almost bored, as if the future is just too abstract to worry about.

"Baz Luhrmann," he said. A beat, then: "Ridley Scott. I'm a big fan of Ridley."

But when it comes to his music Mr. Rahman, who is 43 but with his cherubic cheeks could pass for less than 30, turns surprisingly chatty. His work has been in more than 100 films since 1992, and after scoring Andrew Lloyd Webber's Bollywood-themed stage musical "Bombay Dreams" in 2002 he enjoyed had a steadily growing profile in the West. One of the first major composers in India to embrace digital technology, he is in his natural habitat at the computer, and he maintains the manic, multitasking rhythm of a true 21st-century techie.

"I like to see a film and then start scoring it in my mind, while doing something unrelated," he said. "You just grasp a film and start working, and something unpredictable comes out from a third element. The mind, the more active it is, the more productive it is."

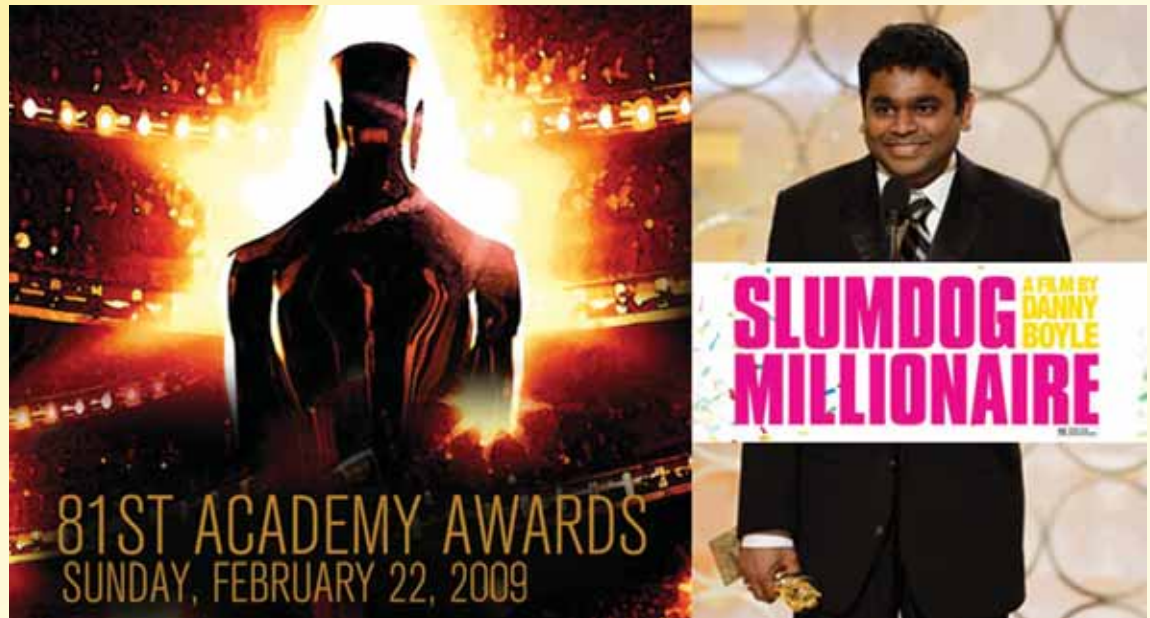
Productivity, along with a gift for golden melody and a cosmopolitan touch that reflects the new, globally conscious India, have given Mr. Rahman, who lives and works in Chennai (the city formerly known as Madras), a kind of national-hero status. "Rah Rah Rahman," The Times of India proclaimed on its front page after the Oscar nominations were announced.

"He has a rapper from Tanzania working with him," Mr. Boyle said, "and fulfilled a mutual desire to work with M.I.A., part Sri Lankan, part London, part New York. Add the house-music disco beats sweeping Bollywood dance lately and you have a real moment of fusion."

Mr. Rahman works on five or six films a year, juggling several at a time in various stages of completion. While unheard of in Hollywood, that pace is common in India, and Mr. Rahman has made his share of modern classics, like "Lagaan: Once Upon a Time in India" (2001), beloved by Indian and Western critics alike, and "Dil Se" (1998).

"Slumdog," Mr. Rahman said, was created in relatively luxurious circumstances: "I kept three weeks aside. I moved to London and did the whole score there."

Even by the musical-sponge standards of Indian film, Mr. Rahman has been an especially curious fusionist. The son of a film composer, R. K. Shekhar, he grew up with a record collection that included Indian music and rock; two favorites were the American country singer Jim Reeves and Walter Carlos's landmark electronic album "Switched-On Bach." (Born A. S. Dileep Kumar, he changed his name to Allah Rakkha Rahman when he converted to Sufi Islam in his early 20s.)



Mr. Rahman was playing professional sessions by age 11 and soon had a rock band. He received a scholarship to the Trinity College of Music in London, and upon his return to India began composing commercial jingles. His first film was "Roja," and his sophisticated approach quickly revolutionized Indian film music, said David Novak, an ethnomusicologist at the Heyman Center for the Humanities at Columbia University.

"He's sort of the Peter Gabriel of the Indian film industry," Mr. Novak said. "He shifted things from a simple East-West mode to a multicultural, global mode, where India and its regional musics are part of a palette of sound from around the world."

Mr. Rahman's crossover to Western audiences has not come without bumps. "Bombay Dreams" was a success in the West End, but on Broadway it closed in eight months and never recouped its \$14 million investment.

"I've long been impressed by his talent, and I'm so pleased that Hollywood has recognized it," Mr. Lloyd Webber said. "I'm just disappointed that Broadway didn't get it when he and I did 'Bombay Dreams' there."

An Oscar would certainly raise

Mr. Rahman's profile in Hollywood, and commentators in India and in the West have said that recognition for "Slumdog" could help legitimize India's film talent in general. Only two Indians have received Academy Awards: Bhanu Athaiya won in 1983 for best costume design in "Gandhi," and the director Satyajit Ray was given a lifetime achievement award shortly before he died in 1992.

But Mr. Rahman said he does not view the awards as a referendum on Bollywood, and indeed wasn't getting his hopes up about the contests, in which his competitors include Mr. Gabriel, Danny Elfman and James Newton Howard.

He didn't have an acceptance speech ready, he said, and his days in Los Angeles before the awards were packed with activity, including a performance of "Jai Ho" on "The Tonight Show" on Thursday, meetings with various directors and record labels, and filming the video of a Pussycat Dolls remix of "Jai Ho."

"I like to work fast," he said.

[Courtesy: NYTimes.com]



"All my life, I've had the choice of hate and love, and I chose love.": Oscar music king Rahman



AR Rahman, the undisputed king of modern Indian music, has won plenty of awards.

But nothing prepared him for the butterflies in his stomach as he walked up on the stage of the Kodak Theatre in Los Angeles in front of an audience packed with the world's most famous cinema stars to accept not one, but two, of filmmaking's most prestigious awards.

'I am excited and terrified,' Rahman said half-jokingly, half-seriously. 'The last time I felt that way was during my marriage.'

Rahman, 42, received awards for best original music score and best song, Jai Ho, featured in the movie Slumdog Millionaire. Jai Ho has become a global hit, and Gulzar, the poet with whom Rahman collaborated on the song, also received the award.

Slumdog took eight of the 10 awards it had been nominated for Oscar night on Sunday, Feb 22: best picture, best director, best adapted screenplay, cinematogra-

phy, original score, sound mixing, film editing and original song.

Between the two music awards, Rahman stayed on stage and performed both Jai Ho and the other single from the film, the opening theme O Saya, surrounded by whirling dancers and thrumming drummers.

He wrote O Saya with Maya Arulpragasam, the Sri-Lankan-born hip-hop artist called MIA.

The third nominee for best song was Down to Earth from the animated film Wall-E.

'The essence of this film is about optimism and the power of hope in our lives,' Rahman said. 'All my life, I've had the choice of hate and love, and I chose love.'

He ended his speech with a phrase in the Tamil language that he said means 'God is great.'

Rahman, who has done music scores for half a dozen Hollywood films and has worked with Andrew Lloyd Webber, knows directly about hope and optimism from the hardships he has over-

come in his own life.

Born in 1966 in a Tamil Hindu family steeped in music, Rahman was known as AS Dileep Kumar until his parents converted to Islam in the 1970s and renamed him Allah Rakha Rahman.

The Islamic Sufi strain has had a deep influence on his life and music. Rahman's father died while he was young, and the family had to rent out their musical instruments to get by.

The talented Rahman learned music from an early age, and at 11, he was playing the synthesizer in a local orchestra. He soon dropped out of school and devoted himself full time to music.

Rahman later won a scholarship to Trinity College of Music in London, where he got a degree in Western classical music. He hit it big with Indian director Mani Ratnam's film Roja in 1991.

Despite his high profile in the music world, it took a film like Slumdog Millionaire to get him the

international attention his fans feel he has long deserved.

Heading to Hollywood for the ceremony, he admitted to feeling a tad nervous.

'I feel like one of our sports persons at the Olympics who is being told to bring home a gold medal,' Rahman told the PTI news agency. 'I hope I don't let down people in India who are expecting me to win the Oscar.'

Slumdog has created waves internationally in the past few months, but in India, Rahman has long been a household name. His music, mostly composed for Bollywood films, has ruled the airwaves for more than a decade.

Year after year, Rahman, who started off as a jingle composer for advertisements, unfailingly spins out top-of-the-chart hits, each a mark of his versatility and penchant for experimentation.

'He has put Indian music on top of the world,' Indian music director Shankar Mahadevan said after the Golden Globe awards.

'From here, the future looks good, and Rahman is solely responsible.'

A versatile composer, Rahman creates scores that are often a fusion of two or more oeuvres. Other international works to his credit include the Chinese film Warriors on Heaven and Earth, Webber's musical Bombay Dreams and the stage adaptation of Lord of the Rings.

In Slumdog, he blended classical Indian music styles and instruments, such as the sitar, with Western electronica, Brazilian drumming and reggae. His studio in Chennai is said to be one of the best equipped in Asia.

In many ways, the young Rahman revolutionized the Indian music scene. His aim, he said, was to make the music exciting enough to attract young listeners. In his native Tamil Nadu state, they call him 'the musical storm.'

[courtesy: DPA]

Indian American inspired by Obama - Joins Washington 'Tamils Against Genocide' Rally

An engineer by profession, Sasikumar holds double masters degree in Engineering from Annamalai University (India) and Business Administration from the University of Phoenix (USA). He writes to transform the Indian politics into an issue based one.

Towards the end of the presidential election season in the USA, President Mr. Obama (then Democratic presidential candidate) requested all Americans to go to the polling booth early to avoid last minute mishap and fulfill their right to vote and walk taller. Although I have been a staunch supporter of Mr. Obama, being an immigrant, I was unable to fulfill his request since I was only a permanent resident and not a citizen yet. Even though Mr. Obama was addressing the entire nation, I felt as if he was talking to me directly. However, I wondered how I can walk taller.

I have been living in the USA - the land of opportunities, for ten years now and my roots stretch to India. I grew up in Chennai, a city in the southern state of Tamil Nadu which is in very close proximity to Sri Lanka - the South Asian island nation that has appeared in international headlines recently more than ever before due to the civil war and the civilian casualties. Right from my childhood I have been aware of the Sri Lankan crisis and the discrimination faced by the ethnic minority Tamils of that nation. However I have never had an opportunity to participate in any rallies or meetings that

were organized on the Sri Lankan crisis either back in India or here in the USA.

But two weeks ago when I received an email from my friend to participate in the "Stop the Genocide in Sri Lanka" rally in front of the White House at Washington DC, I decided immediately that I should participate.

Soon, I was thinking about how to make sign hoardings and placards (This being the first rally in my entire life). I used to think that it is always difficult to make hoardings by putting right words and perfect pictures to get attention from the authorities and others. But when I browsed a few web sites, I found lot of pictures of corpses of children, women and elders - all civilian casualties (real disturbing images - depicting the cruelty of war crimes committed by the Sri Lankan army). I downloaded few of those pictures in to my flash drive and went to the nearest FedEx-Kinkos store.

A lady staff was helping me at the Kinkos store to organize the pictures and phrases in to the hoardings. Before showing the images, I gave her the due warning that some of the pictures are very disturbing. Seeing all those pictures, she chose two of the less disturbing ones to use in the hoarding and said "let us not use other pictures because I don't want you and others who will be standing near by in the rally to get sick by seeing those pictures continuously".

I agreed and we completed

the hoardings with those subtle pictures and the following phrases - "Sri Lanka - Stop Genocide, Stop the War, President Obama - Please help Tamils defend their nation, Tamils need Freedom, Recognize Tamil Eelam" etc.

When I returned home from the Kinkos store, I was thinking about the lady staff's statement "get sick by seeing those pictures continuously", I was wondering about the psychological stress of the people living in the war zone who are seeing these images live.

On the chilly Friday morning my self and my 5 year old son got up early, refreshed quickly and collected our sign boards. My house is located at 3 hours driving distance from the venue where the rally was being organized. We left our house at 7.30 am so that we will be able to attend the rally in time. When we reached the front of the White House at 10.30 am, we saw lot of enthusiastic Sri Lankan Tamils walking towards the venue carrying banners, placards and the red flags of Tamil Eelam (Tamil Eelam is the name given to the North Eastern region of Sri Lanka, that the ethnic minority Tamils of Sri Lanka call their home and are seeking independence for).

I was delighted to see a large number of people (about 10,000) - men, women and children gathered during a work day to express their grief against the genocide of Tamils in Sri Lanka. Though the temperature in



Washington DC was cold and the weather windy we did not really feel much of it since we all had lots of heat in our hearts.

I saw Tamil Americans, Tamil Canadians, Tamil Indians and Tamils of different countries, but their aim was same. They carried different national flags - USA, Canada, England, France, Germany and also that of Tamil Eelam, However their aim was same. There were kids, adults, girls, boys, men & women but their aim was same.

They all wanted to stop the killing of Tamils in Sri Lanka, save innocent civilians from the Sri Lankan forces, expose the oppressive Sri Lankan government's ethnic cleansing tactics and free the Tamil Eelam nation.

All of us were chanting in front of the world's highest office. I was doing my part chanting along (my 5 year old son too)

"What do we want - Justice"

"When do we want - Right now"

"Sri Lanka - Stop Genocide"
"President Obama - help Tamils defend their nation"

At the end of the rally, representatives of the organizing group "Tamils against genocide" spoke about the various forms of Sri Lankan genocide and the ways to expose and protect the innocent Tamils from the hands of the Sri Lankan army.

After the rally when I returned to my car, I had a feeling that today, I walked taller (As our President Mr. Obama requested). For the first time in my life I have spent my day for a cause that might stop the killing of innocent people in Sri Lanka. I also exercised my freedom of speech and expressions in front of the world's greatest leader Mr. President Barack Obama.

With the belief that one day Hope will win over Fear and CHANGE will knock the doors of the Tamil Eelam people and a free nation will rise from the ashes, I went to bed peacefully.



"Sri Lanka once the 'Pearl of the Indian Ocean' is now a permanent disaster zone."

By: Siva Ganeshalingam

The charismatic, popular and Oxford educated former leader, the 'father of Singapore', Lee Kwan Yew once praised Sri Lanka as the model nation that Singapore has to emulate. But today, he points to Sri Lanka as the model that should be discarded.

Singapore is also an island nation similar to Sri Lanka with a mixture of different ethnic groups. Sri Lanka, at the time of independence was in a much better shape than Singapore. But the situation now is not even remotely comparable. While Sri Lanka today has become economically, financially and politically bankrupt, Singapore is hailed as one of the most prosperous nations in the world. The volatile ethnic mixture of Chinese, Malays and Tamils pooled their energies in a positive way and contributed towards the country's progress. This harmony among the different ethnic groups is rooted in the conscious decision made by its leaders at the dawn of independence to forge a common Singaporean identity. Unfortunately, successive Sinhala leaders, unduly influenced by parochial considerations and lust for power, chose a different path that would destroy any prospects for long term communal stability.

Early History

The first prime minister of independent Sri Lanka, Don Stephen Senanayake, started with good intentions. He initially envisioned the country as a multiethnic secular state in which minorities would be able to participate fully in governmental affairs. The prospects for an economically robust and manageable democracy looked good during the first few years of independence.

Democratic government is defined as the one in which power is held through popular vote by citizens under a free electoral system. Thus the majority rule becomes a characteristic feature of democracy. But without responsible government, it is possible for the rights of a minority to be abused by the 'tyranny of majority'. This is exactly what happened in Sri Lanka. D.S. Senanayake's vision of multiethnic Sri Lanka soon faltered and communal rivalry and confrontation appeared within the first decade of independence. Communal rivalry was instigated by some hard-line Sinhala nationalists. They put fear into the Sinhala psyche persuading the people to see themselves as the unique island people under perpetual threat of dominance by Tamils, especially the fear of being swamped by the 60 million

Indian Tamils only about 30 miles across the sea from the Jaffna peninsula.

Democracy that was hailed as a corner stone for a decent and responsible government has become a curse in Sri Lanka. Both major Sinhala parties, United National Party (UNP) and Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) that ruled the country since independence used anti-Tamil rhetoric to obtain Sinhala votes. They were never willing to concede that the state structure agreed at independence was an alliance of Sinhalese and Tamils to live under the same government with equal rights. They have effectively changed the definition of democracy to 'minority having their say and majority having their way'.

All Sinhala leaders that took the mantle of power after D. S. Senanayake, operated with an arrogant sense of entitlement. They decided within a few years of independence that national unity could no longer be advocated as a sensible political goal and prudently pursued in various virulent ways (both democratic and undemocratic) to create manifestly unfair and socially destructive inequalities. The systematic removal of some of the very basic rights was achieved by democratic means through various parliamentary acts. At the same time undemocratic and violent ways were also pursued to instill fear in Tamil community by instigating ethnic riots in which Tamils were murdered, Tamil women raped and Tamil homes and businesses were destroyed.

Parliamentary Acts to remove the Basic rights

The so called democratic parliamentary Acts to remove some of the existing basic rights of Tamils included citizenship legislation, 'Sinhala only' Act and standardization of university admissions. The first post independence government of UNP enacted the 1948 citizenship legislation which stripped a million Tamils of Indian origin of their citizenship leading to reduced presentation of elected Tamil members in the parliament. After many years of statelessness, over half of these unfortunate people were ultimately deported back to India, a country most of them had never seen.

Not to be outdone by the political rivals, the second draconian parliamentary legislation, the 'Sinhala only Act', was passed by the other Sinhala party in 1956. Although both parties used this as an important election manifesto to attract Sinhala votes, the Oxford educated Prime Minister Bandaranaike of the SLFP pursued with vigor in this direction and won the chauvinistic race.



This Act closed the doors of government jobs on what Tamils had principally relied for employment and economic advancement. All Tamil officers, including the very senior ones were given 3 years to learn Sinhalese or face dismissal. Tamil community became frustrated and psychologically uprooted.

The standardization of university admissions legislation in 1971 brought the Tamil youth into politics. University admissions in Sri Lanka, before the 1971 legislation, used to be strictly on merit depending on the performance of a common nationwide examination. The government brought in various stratagems of standardization, district quotas etc. to favor the admission of Sinhala students to the universities thereby denying a large number of Tamil students who have qualified on merit. It is these students who felt that they were unjustly excluded from the university and prevented by the state from achieving their aspirations, formed a vanguard, providing the leadership to the armed liberation struggle.

Ethnic Riots to instill fear

The physical violence perpe-

trated against the Tamils was mainly through the ethnic riots of 1956, 1977, 1981 and 1983. The first ethnic riot occurred in 1956 immediately after the passing of 'Sinhala only' act in the parliament. Tamil leaders protested by staging a Gandhian style non-violent sit in known as 'satyagraha' in Colombo. The peaceful protest was broken by Sinhala mobs and violence against Tamils spread to other parts of the island. Hundreds of Tamils were driven out of their homes, attacked and their houses were burnt down. Tamils were astonished at the inability of the authorities to provide adequate protection against the racially motivated attacks. The same scenario was repeated in 1958 and Tamils were put through the same ordeal with even more ferocity. Violence was aimed at the Tamils in almost every town where they lived as minority in Sinhala dominated areas of the country. Homes and businesses were burnt down. Several people were murdered and Tamil women were raped.

A Hindu priest was dragged out of his temple in the middle of prayers and burnt alive. Buddhist monks, ardent anti-Tamil campaigners organized and directed

the mobs. The police idly stood by or in some circumstances actively encouraged the mobs.

After the "Sinhala only Act" of 1956, Tamil parties were asking for more regional autonomy for north and east of Sri Lanka where Tamils are the majority. There were many agreements with the Prime Ministers but nothing was implemented. Finally desperate Tamil leaders decided that there is no point in coexistence and the only solution is a separate state. In 1974, all major Tamil parties representing the north and the east united under the umbrella of one party called Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) and adopted a resolution at their party convention in Vadukoddai, Jaffna calling for a separate state (Tamil Eelam). In the 1977 election, UNP led by J.R. Jeyawardene won an unprecedented landslide victory, winning 140 out of 168 seats reducing the SLFP to only 8 seats. Tamil districts voted almost entirely for the TULF. The TULF's rise becoming the second largest party in parliament angered Sinhala nationalists. The SLFP sympathizers were believed to have organized the riots immediately after the elections in which 300 Tamils lost their lives and as

many as 25,000 fled from their homes.

In June 1981, following the death of one policeman, a large group of police went on rampage burning the market area of Jaffna, the office of a Tamil newspaper, the home of the Member of Parliament for Jaffna and the Jaffna Public Library. The burning of the Jaffna public library and its entire collection of 90,000 volumes including historic handwritten manuscripts was an act of genocidal intent. This was a deliberate act by the state aimed to destroy the history and cultural identity of a city which prided itself on both its millennia old history and its possession of the second largest library in the whole of Asia.

The TULF MP's severely upset about the riots in Jaffna and particularly the burning of the Public Library, took their battle into parliament. They moved a vote of no confidence in the government, on the grounds that the June 1981 violence in Jaffna had been state sponsored and carried out by Sinhalese ministers and high ranking government officials present on the spot. The government responded by going on the offensive and what followed was the most racially poisonous verbal vendetta in Sri Lanka's parliamentary history. They brought in a motion of no confidence in the (Tamil) opposition leader on the grounds that he did not enjoy the confidence of the government. The TULF, SLFP and the only Communist Party Member walked out of the parliament on 23 July 1981 without participating in the no confidence motion on the leader of the opposition. The motion was eventually passed with 121 voting for and two abstentions.

The large scale pogrom of 1983 turned even moderate Tamils towards armed struggle. For a small number of army personnel being killed in Jaffna, there was a disproportionate reaction, something like an "eye for an eye-lash" against Tamils supported by Sinhala government that solidified the notion that Tamils will be always the second class citizens. That was the first time foreign media recorded and published the ferocity and horror of events. Senior cabinet ministers, armed with electoral lists directed the mobs to Tamil houses and businesses. Sinhala rioters did not even try to hide their faces in the certain knowledge that no harm would come to them from the law enforcing authorities. In one of the worst incidents, 35 Tamil political prisoners held in a high security prison in Colombo were massacred by Sinhala prisoners. Two more days later, 18 more faced the same fate. The Sinhala leaders made Tamils to feel that they are not safe in Sinhala areas (1956, 1958 and 1977 riots), they are not safe in Tamil areas (1981 riots in Jaffna), and they are not even safe in high security prisons. A total of 3000 Tamils lost their lives in the 1983 pogrom, some of

them burnt in their vehicles. About 150,000 Tamils fled the country immediately after this pogrom draining the country of high level manpower.

Unlike the previous riots, lot of prominent industries owned by Tamils was destroyed in 1983. Some well known Tamil victims were K. Gunaratnam whose interests span textile trade, film distribution and transportation; A.Y.S Gnanam who controlled major manufacturing firms such as St. Anthony's Hardware, Syntex, and Asian Cotton Mills; and R. Maharaja whose constellation of enterprises included the island's largest cosmetics manufacturing firm, the contract for large sections of the island's major development project, the Mahavali Scheme, and the distribution and retail of imported goods. All the textile mills, oil, rubber and other factories situated in the industrial locations such as Ratmalana and Peliya goda were reduced to ashes. But this destruction of the island's commerce and industry was confined not only to Sri Lankan Tamil interests; it did not merely include South Indian Tamil interests; it extended to include all Indian enterprises. As India Today news paper put it at that time "The most dangerous of all misconceptions in that frenzied week of riots was that every Indian is a Tamil, and every Tamil is a terrorist." The victims included prosperous Indian Sindhi and Muslim businesses owned by the Hirdamnis and Jafferjees, names familiar in Colombo for many years.

The current genocide that is going in the Vanni area is beyond anything that Tamils have endured in their 3000 year history in the island. Human Rights Watch in their recent report said that there was a dramatic increase in civilian casualties during the past month-approximately 2000 killed and 5000 wounded. The whole families have been wiped off by indiscriminate aerial bombing by the Sri Lankan air force. Hospitals in the area have been bombed and the Defense Minister of the country openly accepted that the hospitals were intended targets, not any accidental bombings. In the euphoric mood of their impending victory, Sinhala leaders are refusing any outside intervention. They have been rude to the special envoy appointed by the British Prime Minister warning him of repercussions. The German and Swiss ambassadors have been threatened for speaking against the government's treatment of Tamils. They have prohibited journalists and human right activists from going to the battle zone, making access to information difficult. The courageous ones such as Lasantha Wikramatunge who exposed the atrocities of the security forces have been brutally murdered.

International concerns about the ethnic problem

The insouciant attitude of the

international leaders at this critical moment of our 3000 year old history indicates that they do not understand the gravity of the situation. Instead of taking an impartial stand to help us to get through this unfortunate predicament, they tend to acquiesce to the propaganda of the Sri Lankan government and accept everything they say as the gospel truth. They failed to realize that Sri Lankan government is not just stretching the truth; they are mutilating it.

There is a notion among the western leaders that LTTE is the problem and once they are defeated the island will be peaceful without any ethnic tensions. Nothing could be further from the truth. Sinhalese chauvinism is never going to accept Tamils with equal status. One has to look at the past history to predict the future. The judgments about the future must be based on a broad body of historical evidence. As Professor Sornarajah pointed out in a recent article, every government in Sri Lanka, from that of the two Bandaranaike's, the Jeyawardene government and that of Chandrika Kumaratunge kept themselves in power by stoking ethnic hatred and unleashing the army on the Tamil population without making efforts at a political solution to an obviously a political problem. There were many pacts with Tamil political

leaders and the Sinhala governments. None of those pacts agreed with Tamil leaders in the past were implemented. Tamil political leaders through the Federal party and later through the combined Tamil United Liberation Front tried everything possible to extract some concessions from Sinhala leaders. Their sympathetic demands were met with vicious assaults, insults and humiliation.

The successive government's refusal to address the cultural and political grievances fuelled the insurgency. The continuous physical and mental harassing of Tamils with utter disregard to decency and law radicalized the Tamil youths convincing many of them that the peaceful strategy of Tamil political leaders using legal and constitutional means to get equal rights would never work. The historically passive Tamil youth was forced to retaliate with violence when necessary. In this context, it is important for the international community to understand that the Sri Lankan government by their actions and the atrocities unleashed on the Tamil population created the LTTE and other Tamil rebel factions. They were not the products of Tamil people's collective will.

Professor Uyangode, a Sinhalese, wrote in a recent article that branding the LTTE insurgency as terrorism and crushing

that terrorism should not obviate the fact that secessionist rebellion, despite its defeat, represented Tamil political aspirations for equality and autonomy. Elimination of LTTE will not reduce the fervor of Tamils for the restoration of their rights. Tamil freedom struggle for equality and autonomy is not tied up with one man or one organization. It is a wrong notion that everything ends with Prabaharan.

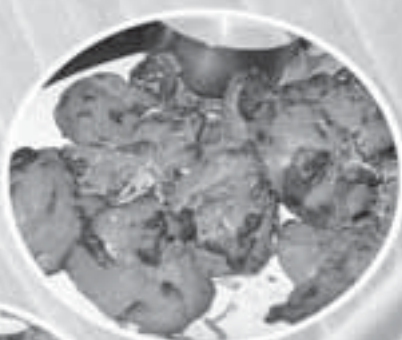
The Tamil Diaspora has been openly accused of aiding the LTTE. It is something many of us don't like but we have no choice. There are lot of things the LTTE leadership could have done differently to alleviate the suffering of the people but it is also important to realize that they are the only reliable group to protect our kith and kin from the tyranny of the government.



In conclusion, I plead with the international community to understand that if not for the government's university admission standardization policy there wouldn't have been an LTTE and if not for the 1983 pogrom there wouldn't have been any Tamil Diaspora. It is extremely sad for me to see my beloved country which was once considered as the 'pearl of the Indian ocean' has now metamorphosed into a permanent disaster zone.

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**MONSOON
FEATURE**

LAW & ORDER**Anton Muthukumar**

Army Commander

Major General Muthukumar

**Major General Muthukumar**

was the commander of the Sri Lanka Army from 1955 to 1959 and after his retirement had been living in Canberra. He was the third to command the Sri Lanka (then Ceylon) Army.

He was educated at St. Joseph's College, Colombo and Oxford University.

He passed away in 2001

Rudra Rajasingham

Inspector General of Police

He graced our history and our lives. No one ever gave more meaning to the title of the high office he held with majestic grace, decorum and dignity. An epitome of honour, integrity and professionalism he did not require that special magic to be accepted across the world in which he moved with the highest and the lowest with relative ease. In recognition of his professionalism and vast contribution to the Police Service he was appointed (after his retirement) by the Government as our Ambassador in Indonesia and thereafter to the

**Rudra Rajasingham**

executive of the Commission for Bribery and Corruption.

-A man of high caliber character and principles, he was neither flattered by authority nor sought to flatter it. Instead he combined simplicity with basic humility. It was the serenity in his spirit which seemed to know him like the gift of grace. He meant much to his friends as they did mean to him.

-Being an Officer with a fierce commitment to his profession and later as the Chief of Police he brought vision and meaning to

First among US Part - 3A

By: Raymond Rajabalan

the service. Emphasis on the importance of an independent police outfit free of political interference was his priority. Today, in large part and because of his inspiration and vision, the true identity of the Police Service is an abiding part of national policy. He was one of those who vigorously researched the viability of the establishment of a National Police Commission.

He never wanted public notice, in part I think, because it brought back painful memories of how much he was short changed in his career and what he endured but accepted with admirable equanimity. In all the years of his life, his genuineness and depth of character continued to shine through his jealously guarded privacy to reach people everywhere. He made a splendid and noble contribution to the Sri Lankan Police Service. To his family he was a magnificent husband, father, grandfather, and to others who he knew a true and a loyal friend.

He graced our history. For those of us who knew and loved him - he graced our lives.

Rear Admiral Rajan Kadirgamar

MVO - Commander of Navy

Rear Admiral Rajanathan Kadirgamar was born in 1922, son of Samuel Jebaratnam Christian Kadirgamar and Edith Parimalam Kadirgamar. He served in the Ceylon Royal Navy. As a Naval Cadet, he took the sword of honour at the passing out parade at Trincomalee in 1941. As a Sub-Lieutenant, he saw action off the coast of Burma with the Royal Navy. He was awarded Burma star for war service from 1939-1945.

After that, he was appointed as the first Commanding Officer of H.M.Cy.S. VIJAYA. He also served as Extra ADC to a number of Governor Generals - Governor General Soulbury, Governor General Sir Oliver Goonetilleke, and Governor General William Gopallawa. He was promoted to Lieutenant Commander in 1949, Commander in 1955, Captain in 1959, and temporary Commodore in 1960 (Confirmed 1964).

Rajan Kadirgamar was appointed Commander of the Navy at the young age of 40 years. He was later promoted to the rank of Rear Admiral. In addition, he was appointed as working director at Port Cargo Corporation and he retired on 1 July 1970.

**First Supreme Court Judge
Chellappah Nagalingam**

Chellappah Nagalingam served as Supreme Court judge since 1947 July.22 until 1951

Former Chief Justice of Sri Lanka

Suppiah Sharvananda

Sharvananda was the first Tamil to be appointed as the Chief Justice in 1984 and served in that

So many talented Eelam Tamils have achieved greatness in various fields ranging from Education, politics, sports etc within the past several decades but there appears to be no organized record of all such information

This article attempts to list some such information painstakingly gathered from various sources. This list is only a small beginning and with input from our readers it is hoped that this list could be updated and revised periodically.

The detailed information of only a few of these illustrious Tamils is available and any additional information provided by our readers will be greatly appreciated.

This list includes those who established records in sports, those who first held certain positions in politics, those who were involved in great political milestones,

some significant events during the three decades old freedom struggle etc.

position for four years until his retirement in 1988. He was born in Kayts, Jaffna on February 22, 1923. After completing his early education at St. Anthony's English School in Kayts, he continued his higher education at the prestigious Jaffna Hindu College from grade six as a hosteller. Later he entered the Colombo Law College and passed out as an advocate in 1946. While he was at the Law College he gained his Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of

**Judge Sharvanantha**

London. As an Advocate he was apprenticed under late Dr. H. W. Thambiah QC, S.J.V. Selvanayagam QC, and H.V. Perera QC.

He had an extensive practice in the civil cases prior to his appointment as a judge of the Supreme Court in 1974. It was with reluctance he accepted the higher judicial appointment and succeeded Neville Samarakoon QC as the Chief Justice in 1984.

As a judge of the Supreme Court Sharva's judgments were considered as landmark judgments. It was during his period as the Chief Justice the 13th Amendment was agreed upon by the Supreme Court. It was after his retirement as Chief Justice in 1988, he was appointed as the first Governor of the Western Province. He held this position from 1988 to 1994.

In 2001 Sharvananda was appointed as the Chairman of the Presidential Truth Commission on ethnic violence between the period of 1981 and 1984, by former President Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunge. Sharvananda at his final ceremonial sitting as Chief Justice on February 21, 1988 reiterated that a respected and independent judiciary and a respected and

strong bar were indispensable if we want to maintain our system of freedom under law.

Former Chief Justice Desamanya Suppiah Sharvananda passed away in 2007 at the age of 83 in Sydney, Australia

Principal of Law college

Marshall Fernando**Sylvester Pulle**

Marshall Fernando Sylvester Pulle from Colombo Chetty community, Former Supreme Court Judge since 1949 was appointed Principal of Law College in 1950. since he was a Tamil he faced lots of opposition when he initiated an idea that all students should learn both Sinhala and Tamil

POLITICS

Nominated for Legislative Assembly

Sir Muthucomaraswamy (1865)

One of the greatest Tamils of the last century. He was the first non-Christian or non-Jew to be admitted to the Inns of Court and called to the English Bar

On his return to Ceylon, he entered the Legislative Council where he was extremely successful. His translations, from Pali, works such as Sutta Nipata and Data Vamsa and from Tamil, Harischandra and the hymns of Thayumanavar introduced the West to "new vistas of spiritual and philosophical thought." Thus, he blazed the trail that others like Swami Vivekananda would follow. A.M.M. Ferguson described him as "the foremost man of the twenty millions or more of the Dravidian race."

He was the first Asian to be knighted during the reign of Queen Victoria.

Elected for Legislative Assembly

Sir Ponnampalam Ramanathan (1911)**Sir Ponnampalam Ramanathan**

Unofficial member of Legislative assembly

Sir Ponnambalam Arunachalam

Another remarkable Tamil. Winning the English University Scholarship, he graduated from Royal College and continued his studies at Cambridge University.

His father was Gate Mudaliyar Arunachalam Ponnambalam and mother was Sellachchi Ammaiyar. He was the third son of their parents and the younger brother of Sir Ponnambalam Ramanathan who was another famous Ceylon Tamil leader.

He was one of the first

**Sir Ponnampalam Arunachalam**

Ceylonese to enter the prestigious Ceylon Civil Service which he did in 1875.

In 1879 he was appointed to the post of Unofficial member of Legislative Council

He was appointed Registrar General in 1887

He also acted as Attorney General several times.

Probably one of the greatest of Tamils to be born in Ceylon, he entered the Legislative Council at a very young age and soon surpassed many of his seniors to become the Senior Unofficial Member from 1879 till he was made Solicitor-General of Ceylon in 1892.

He founded the Ceylon National Association of which he was the president and devoted much of his time to fight the government to win rights for all Ceylonese, irrespective of ethnicity. He retired from public service when he was in his 50s but due to the request of several Sinhala, Tamil and Muslim leaders, he decided to run for the Educated Ceylonese seat against Dr. M. Fernando, which he won by a landslide. Therefore, he has the distinction of being the first person to be voted to power by the Ceylonese people.

He was intensely devout Hindu but he viewed all religions as one. He traveled around USA shedding light on the mysteries of Hinduism and the commonality of religions and was received enthusiastically by everyone.

Continued Next Page

Smoking, heart disease and stroke

Smoking and exposure to second-hand smoke have many negative health effects that increase your risk of developing heart disease and stroke. Smoking contributes to the buildup of plaque in your arteries, increases the risk of blood clots, reduces the oxygen in your blood, increases your blood pressure and makes your heart work harder. Smoking also nearly doubles the risk of ischemic stroke.

Did you know?

Being smoke-free has enormous benefits for your health and the health of the people around you. More than 47,000 Canadians will die prematurely each year due to tobacco use, and almost 8,000 non-smokers die each year from exposure to second-hand smoke.

The good news

Once you become smoke-free and avoid exposure to second-hand smoke, you will immediately reduce your risk of heart attack and stroke. The sooner you become smoke-free, the sooner your body can start to recover and it doesn't take long to see the effects.

Within 48 hours, your chances of having a heart attack start to go down and your sense of smell

and taste begin to improve.

Within 1 year, your risk of suffering a smoking-related heart attack is cut in half.

Within 15 years, your risk of heart attack is the same as someone who never smoked at all.

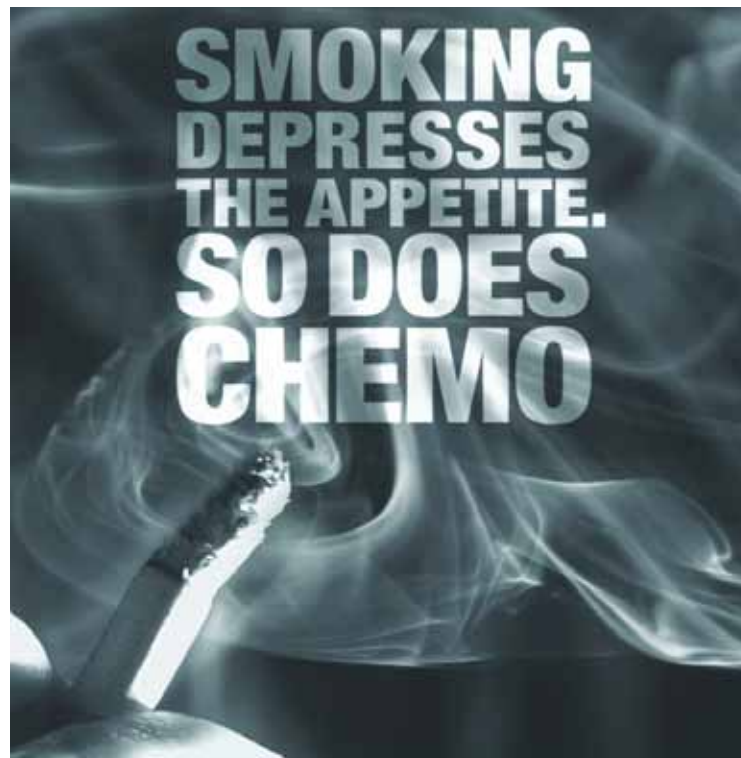
Becoming smoke-free

If you've been thinking about quitting, then you're one step closer to becoming smoke-free. But, it can be difficult to change a habit that you've had for years. We'll help you get started with some tips, quizzes and tools, and we'll point you to the support resources you'll need to help you go smoke-free for life.

Tips for becoming smoke-free

Identify your smoking triggers. Figure out when you tend to smoke. Is it when you have a coffee or go out for a drink with friends, or when you're stressed? Identifying your triggers is one of the most important steps to becoming smoke-free.

Break the connection, break the habit. Once you can identify your triggers, you'll be better able to break the connection between smoking and your routines. So, when you feel the need to smoke, stop and ask yourself if you really need this cigarette, or if you can



wait and do something else. Try to delay smoking by keeping your hands and mouth busy - drink water, brush your teeth, snack on carrot or celery sticks, or take a walk.

Set a Quit Date. If you are ready to quit, set a date now, write it down and tell a friend or family member you've decided to become smoke-free.

Make your home and car

smoke-free zones. The more difficult you make it for yourself and others to smoke, the less you will. Cut down on your opportunities to smoke and you'll be able to gradually reduce the cigarettes you smoke each day, which will help reduce your dependence.

Ask for help. Becoming smoke-free can be difficult, so don't be afraid to ask for help and support from family, friends and



your healthcare provider. Health Canada also offers free telephone support and counselling for smokers, their families and friends from trained specialists. Visit Health Canada's website to find the quit line in your province.

Check out www.gosmoke-free.ca Health Canada's Go Smoke Free! website and 1-800-O-Canada phone line provide you with support resources, tips and tools to help you become smoke-free.

For more information on this issue, read the Heart and Stroke Foundation position statement on Becoming and Remaining Smoke-Free.

For more information on smoking, please read brochure. Just Breathe: Becoming and Remaining Smoke Free.

Courtesy: Heart & Stroke Foundation



First Among us

Continued from previous page

It was Ramanathan, along with his brother, who conceived the idea of a University for Ceylon and spent his energy to make that a reality and was acclaimed as the "Father of Legal Education in Ceylon". The first Prime Minister of Ceylon, D.S. Senanyake, called him "the greatest Ceylonese of all time."

Appointed Member of Parliament

Sir Waithilingam Duraiswamy

Sir Waithilingam who was knighted in 1947 was born in Velanai, an island off the west of



Sir Waithilingam Duraiswamy

Jaffna peninsula on June 8, 1874. He was the son of Ayampillai Waithilingam an Engineer who spent sometime in Malaya. He founded the Hindu Board of Education and was the Secretary of the Hindu Board which was responsible for establishing a series of Hindu Schools. He was on the Governing body of Jaffna Hindu College and the President

of the Jaffna Saiva Paripalana Saba. He was the only Hindu elected to the Legislative Council in 1921.

In 1922, he successfully moved a motion for total prohibition resulting in all taverns and foreign liquor shops being abolished in the Jaffna District. In fact, the election of Sir Waithilingam as Speaker of the legislature was remarkable and it demonstrated his popularity and the tremendous esteem in which he was held by all sections of the country. Besides, he was a gentleman of genial disposition, full of kind thoughts, words and deeds combined with a sharp intellect, impartiality and fairness.

Senator P.Nagalingam

He was a Senator from 1951 to 1958. Member of the Lanka Sama Samaja Party led by Dr N.M.Perera. He was from Jaffna and was the Chairman of the Chunnakam (N.P) Town Council from its inception

First Cabinet Minister

Prof. C. Suntharalingam

The man who fathered the Tamil Eelam concept and introduced the word Eelam into the Ceylonese political vocabulary - Professor C. Suntharalingam - died in his ninetieth year at Vavuniya on the 11th February 1985. But it is perhaps a tragic commentary on Tamilian life that the majority of the youths who are today engaged in a liberation struggle for the establishment of a Tamil Eelam have not even heard of him!

It was C. Suntharalingam who founded the Eela Tamil Ottrumai Munnani (Unity Front of Eelam

Tamils) in 1959.

Although hardly known to the present generation, the late C. Suntharalingam was a many splendored figure in Ceylon's public life for nearly 40 years. Back from a brilliant student career at Oxford University he entered the Indian Civil Service, subsequently the Ceylon Civil Service and having got tired of signing gun licenses as he then put it, resigned what was then a much sought after plum of office to accept the Vice-Principalship of Ananda College, Colombo. Soon, he was offered the first Chair of Mathematics at the Ceylon University College. Many eminent men in Ceylon's public life, both Sinhalese and Tamils, passed through his hands at the University.

His much-remembered academic career ended when he switched to politics and was elected to represent the Vavuniya seat



C. Suntharalingam

in Parliament in 1947. He was the Minister of Commerce and Trade in the first Parliament of independent Ceylon and was dismissed from the Cabinet for not

voting with the government on the Indian and Pakistani Residents Citizenship Bill.

C. Suntharalingam' hailed from a distinguished family. His brother C. Nagalingam, was an eminent Supreme Court judge who once acted as Governor of Sri Lanka, then Ceylon. Another brother, Panchalingam was a popular and successful doctor of medicine while Dr. C. Amirthalingam was yet another brother, an outstanding Director of Fisheries. Another brother, C. Thiagalingam, shone in the legal field as a leading lawyer, whose services were much sought after.

However, C. Suntharalingam became a remarkably brilliant scholar who adorned the academic arena as a much loved and noteworthy intellectual, Professor of Mathematics. Having entered the much coveted Indian Civil Service, and later the esteemed select Ceylon Civil Service he served for a while. He found no excitement in conforming to office routine. C. Suntharalingam renounced the mundane routine of the civil service, however superior it was and instead chose the relatively more challenging duties and demanding responsibilities as a higher university don.

Now we may recall the most vital role of C. Suntharalingam in the politics of Sri Lanka. He could not resist the pressing lure of participating actively in public and national affairs of the independent island. His clear and cardinal role as an independent public personality engaged in the quest for justice and fair play for all citizens comes into prominence in the involvement in the vexed Indian Residents' Citizenship issue.

The first Prime Minister of Sri Lanka's policies on the hill country Tamils demonstrated an anti-hill country Tamils attitude in 1948 itself, the year of Independence. Ceylon Tamil Members of Parliament were firmly and forcefully opposed to the government's anti-hill country Tamils stance.

Suntharalingam, a long-time friend, and adviser to D. S. Senanayake, the first Premier, walked out of the legislature, lower chamber, when the division was called on the second reading of the Indian Residents Citizenship Bill on 10 December, 1948. Prime Minister wanted Minister Suntharalingam's explanation who immediately resigned in protest.

Suntharalingam cleverly saw in the measure a plan to decitizenise and disenfranchise a majority of hill country residents who had made Sri Lanka their home from early 19th century, and contributed immensely to build the island's economy. This was on obvious flagrant injustice. Suntharalingam had the courage of his conviction to forego a ministerial portfolio.

Again, Prime Minister, John Kotelawela, in 1954 concluded a Nehru-Kotelawela about hill country Tamil residents. It evoked controversy with a Sinhalese-Tamil problem and the bill was abandoned following vehement Sinhalese antagonism. Contention was riveted on the number of Indian residents to be absorbed into Sri Lanka, approximately at least 300,000.

(Note: The author can be contacted at rraja.2007@yahoo.ca)

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HNB records highest ever profit

Hatton National Bank continued its impressive performance recording post tax profit of Rs 3.22 Bn., an increase of 6.5% over last year's Rs 3.02 Bn. Commenting on the results, HNB's Managing Director Rajendra Theagarajah said " We are delighted to be able to deliver such results especially against the backdrop of significant fluctuations in key macro economic variables such as interest rates, inflation and exchange rates which adversely affected the growth and profitability of the financial industry and a global financial crisis since the great depression, which caused some of the world's biggest financial institutions to be bailed out on the verge of collapse.

Reduction of margins, increasing operating costs and high taxation will impose a challenge for the sector to maintain required capital requirements and will limit credit growth of the banking sector" said Mr. Theagarajah.

Shareholders' funds grew from Rs 18.4 Bn., to Rs 20.02 Bn., as the Bank retained part of the profits generated during 2008 to sup-



Mr. Rajendra Theagarajah

port future business growth. The Bank paid an interim dividend of Rs. 1.00 per share in December 2008 and has proposed a final dividend of Rs. 3.00 per share to be paid in April 2009.

"While it has been a challenging year, we have always stated that the real test is not to win when things are positive, but rather to win in an environment that constantly poses trials and challenges. This is where the strong will prove its mettle and be separated from the weak" commented Mr Theagarajah.

Q+A - Where is Sri Lanka's rupee heading?

By Shihar Aneez

Sri Lanka's central bank is negotiating a \$1.9 billion loan with the International Monetary Fund, and that has left the rupee currency <LKR=> market without a clear direction since hitting an all-time low last week. [ID:nCOL298469]

Here are some questions and answers about where the rupee is and where it could be headed:

WHY HASN'T THE RUPEE FALLEN YET?

The central bank has been defending the rupee since August, and that cost it half of its foreign exchange reserves in the last four months of 2008. By the end of the year, reserves fell to around six weeks of import cover, or \$1.75 billion. Downward pressure remains, and the state of reserves and a balance of payments deficit in 2008 prompted Fitch Ratings to downgrade Sri Lanka's debt outlook last week. But news of the IMF loan has brought some confidence back in the short term, and has both importers and exporters hedging their bets on the direction of the rupee, currency dealers say.

WHAT HAPPENS IF THE DEAL IS SIGNED?

The loan, nearly all of which the central bank expects to be

paid upfront, should boost \$32 billion economy's outlook. The resulting investor confidence should give short-term support, currency dealers say. The central bank expects to sign the deal before April.

WILL THE IMF DEMAND DEPRECIATION?

Two sources briefed on the IMF negotiations say the lender wants gradual depreciation of around 6 percent this year, with the aim of making the currency free-floating. Economists say gradual depreciation is the best option to maintain export competitiveness amid the global economic crisis. Neither the IMF nor the central bank has divulged any conditions being discussed.

WHERE WOULD THE RUPEE BE NOW WITHOUT INTERVENTION?

Economists and dealers say the rupee should have hit around 125.00 against the U.S dollar by now, if not for central bank intervention. In any case, the central bank no longer has the money to aggressively support it. Currency dealers say they expect it to find some equilibrium once the condition of the loan are known. It has depreciated an average of 3.95 percent per year since 1999, and so far this year is down an aver-



age of 1.05 percent. It plunged as low as 2.46 percent when the rupee hit a life low of 115.75/85 on Feb. 27.

WHAT WILL BE THE OVERALL IMPACT OF DEPRECIATION?

Sri Lanka's rapidly easing inflation could reverse course if the rupee's fall continues, since the island is a net importer of consumables. On the other hand, exporters could earn more rupees from their revenue. But global demand is down so the effect is likely to be muted in the near term.

For economist comments on Sri Lanka's negotiations with the IMF, click on: [ID:nCOL394407] (Editing by Bryson Hull & Jan Dahinten) Courtesy: Reuters

NASCAR - Here he comes!

North America's first Pakistani race car driver races to the big tracks!

By: Ayktah Grover

He's fast and furious. He has a need for speed. Competition fuels his ambition and drive. Adrenalin surges through his body like a tornado. He's passionate and relentless. He's North America's first Pakistani race car driver - ladies and gentlemen, meet 34-year-old, Nur Ali.

Born in Karachi, Pakistan, Ali's family moved to Fort Worth, Texas in 1983. He spent a few years of his childhood in Hamburg, Germany, where speed has no boundaries or barriers on the nation's highway system. It was inevitable that Ali would develop a love for racing.

"I was surrounded by Formula One from a young age," said Ali. "My father was in the clothing business and travelled a lot by road. My mother and brother would fall asleep and I would play navigator. I would drive fast and slow sitting in the middle of the car. I would stay awake and enjoy the drive."

Ali's father, an inspiration, role model and an authoritative figure in his life, offered both moral and financial support to his son's career ambitions.

"I thank my Dad all the time," said Ali, with a hint of nostalgia in his voice. "I love him, he's my best friend. I'd give my life for him. There are a lot of parents out there that don't let their kids pursue their dreams - they tell them what to be because it's part of our culture or our tradition. I was very lucky that I had support from my entire family."

Like any concerned parent, Ali's father had his own reservations about his son's aspirations. Would a career in race car driving guarantee stability, safety and security? His thoughts - probably not.

"When I was 16 years old I told my father that I wanted to become a race car driver," said Ali. "But, I had to make a deal with my father - I had to get an education."

So, to meet his father's condition, Ali received his Bachelor of Arts degree in International Relations from the American University in Washington, DC. "I finished my degree and walked off the stage and handed it over



to my father and said here's YOUR degree- let's go racing!" added Ali, bubbling with enthusiasm. "He said we'll go racing after you finish your Master's degree. I thought to myself, next he'll ask me for a Ph.D -I'll be 45 before I get to race!"

Ali not only reaped the benefits of his father's conditions, but himself became a strong advocate of higher education and professional training. "I'm glad I made the deal with my father because my education helped me get where I am today," said Ali. "You can follow your dreams but as long as you get your education, you will open many more doors."

At the age of 22, with no prior knowledge or professional training, Ali delved into the foreign world of motor sports. "Coming from our culture we don't know anything about racing," said Ali. "12 years ago I didn't know how to become a race car driver- what direction I had to take, or the proper channels. Motor sports are not like football, soccer or hockey where you can start in elementary school, and then eventually get into the Collegiate system and get picked up by pro-

fessional organizations, like the NBA or the NFL. When it comes to motor sports, you're on your own out there."

Ali received certification from the prestigious Skip Barber Racing School. Shortly after, he made his way to compete in his first professional race: the Skip Barber Formula Dodge Southern Series, attaining the title as the first Professional Asian-American race car driver.

After years of training and endless financial hardships, Ali's hard work, drive and perseverance did not go unnoticed.

"It was such an honour, they made me a national name in Pakistan," said Ali. "I couldn't believe a little kid from Fort Worth, Texas was now meeting the (former) President of Pakistan, Pervez Musharraf. The whole country shut down, streets and stores were closed for the ceremony - all this for my team and myself. I was very humbled by that experience."

Recently, Ali competed, for the second time, in the Lucas Oil Slick Mist 200 ARCA RE/MAX Series race at the famed Daytona International Speedway (it's

known as the "Official attraction of NASCAR"), in Florida, where he garnered the attention of hundreds of race car enthusiasts by placing Driving Diversity on the rear bumper of his car.

"I want to bring diversity into motor sports," said Ali. "You watch it on television and you change the channel. Why? Because you don't have anyone to follow. I want to bring an interest to our community. I want them to know that there is someone like me out there who is trying to make a difference in this sport -so we can get young people and old people watching motor sports on a Sunday afternoon. Let's support the future of up and coming drivers that are wanting to race behind me!"

To show his support for aspir-



ing race car drivers and to bring diversity to a predominantly white sport, Ali established the Nur Ali Motorsports Academy, the first professional racing school in Pakistan.

Ali is also the co-founder of Nur Ali Motorsports and the Motorsports Association of Pakistan, a non-profit organization responsible for regulating motorsports in Pakistan.

After competing in over 22 races in cities all over the globe, Ali continues to pursue his dream to become the first Asian-American NASCAR champion - with one thought in mind - "if you're passionate, you believe in yourself and you work hard and you work ethically, at the end of the day things do come your way."

A new name for the Grace campus

Last year, The Scarborough Hospital reached an agreement with The Salvation Army whereby the Army will continue its strong role in providing religious and spiritual care, but will no longer participate in the administration of the hospital. As the name "Grace" is traditionally applied to Salvation Army-run hospitals, the terms of the agreement require a new name for The Scarborough Hospital, Grace campus, as of June of this year.

Interested individuals are invited to submit their suggestions for a new name. That name could be to honour a citizen or caregiver of note, could apply to local geography, could reference a historical event, or whatever you think - be creative!

The winner will receive a commemorative plaque and gift basket at the public unveiling, and will have their photo and an article published in Vital Signs and the TSH community e-newsletter. They will also likely be featured in media coverage of the event.

To enter, simply e-mail your suggested name and a few

words about why you suggested this name to amales@tsh.to. Entries must be received by May 15. (Please note the contest rules)

Name the Grace Contest Rules

The selected name will apply to the former Grace campus only, and may not include any references to the words Grace, Salvation Army or derivatives considered overtly similar.

It may also not be a name the same as, or overtly similar to, the names of other Ontario hospitals.

Entries must be received by May 15, 2009.

This contest is open to all, including area residents, staff and physicians.

The future nomenclature of the site will be "The Scarborough Hospital, "[winning name] campus" with the understanding that the names of both campuses are open to future name changes as part of donor naming opportunities.

If more than one person or organization submits the winning name, the winner will be determined by random draw.

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Prof. Saran Ghai

People respect others for their age, knowledge, physical strength or in order to flatter. For the reasons stated above or for any other reason, but yes, we ought to respect others, and specially to those who really deserve it, but what about your own self! Who would respect you?

The answer is - you yourself. You ought to make your own-selves respectable, first in your own eyes then in the eyes of the rest of the world. Here it is very important to make it clear that you are not being asked or being advised to praise yourself, sing songs about yourself. No, we are not asking you to do that. That is not acceptable to anyone as you know - Self appreciation is no Recommendation. I am asking you to respect yourself and not to praise yourself. To be respected, be respectful.

It is a hidden desire in each one of us that others should appreciate us, should respect us. But the question arises why should they consider you to be respectable? Not to talk of others, why even your family would respect you? What is special in you?

That is my point - "What is special in you?" If you want to be Respectable, be Special. Ordinary and common people get ordinary respect but Special people get Special respect, Make yourself a high ranking and high profiled person to make others find a great personality in you. When you will attain that adorable status, you will automatically be a respected person in your own eyes, as well as in the eyes of others.

You will surely comment that it is easy to say but not easy to achieve a high status that we are talking about. The whole world knows that it is not everybody's cup of tea to be praiseworthy. I understand it is not easy, but it is not impossible too. In the world since ages to this date, each one of us has been trying to impose one's supremacy over the others. As a matter of fact this is the

toughest task, a most competitive field as everyone in the world wants to be more respectful than others. You are sure to come out with an argument that there are sixty million people in the current world and each one is trying to be the most respectable person. How it is possible to be adorable in such competition?

This thought is discouraging but finding its solution needs a little meditation. Just ask your inner self, what is that which charms you most? What is that you want to be like? What is that field you are very much interested to get into? Be that. If you are interested in the field of education, be an educationist. If you like modeling, be a model. If you want to be a movie star, learn acting, dancing, and be an actor. If you are good in math, be a mathematician. In the same manner you can be a scientist, economist, politician, doctor, engineer, computer expert, I mean anything, any field you want to enter into, get into that, work hard and achieve the position you dreamt.

Of course, competition is tough but those who dare, reach there. Upon your beauty, physical strength, mental capacity, your service to the community you can earn a special status for you. A status which makes you respect worthy. You have to march forward with a thought that I have to achieve a respectable position for me in my life.

Very commonly it is seen that how respectable a person may be in his community, business or job, he does not get any respect at his home. No family members care about him/her or give him/her due respect. Let me tell you, nobody else but we our own selves are responsible for this. You would have noticed that even kids of families, ridicule their elders and walk away laughing. Kids would say, "O' my father, he is dumb, does not know anything." Or will say, "My mom, she does not know anything except cooking. She is not more than a maid servant in our family." For other older family members they would say, "O they are in habit of murmuring, who cares?" Not to talk of the kids, even husbands and wives make the other partner an object to be laughed at.

Why does it happen so? It

happens because we were careless or ignorant when the very first time we were laughed at. We ignored that first incident and the result is till the last, we are being insulted. Take my words for granted, that last incident was not the ending last, this process of insults will be continued for ever. So, be careful, the very first time when someone younger from your family discharges an insulting comment on you, stop him/her right there.

It has also been experienced that in order to show ourselves extra-ordinarily polite, sometimes we become over respecting for others, especially when a person of a higher social or financial status happens to meet us or comes to visit our family. Let us see an example: A highly reputed rich person came to a poor person's home just for a visit. His wife and 4 kids also greeted the guest. That rich person asked, "Are all these kids yours?" He replied in an extreme polite manner, "What is mine, all they are yours." He said this to give a big respect to the honoured guest but this statement provided the guest to give an ugly disgusting look with a mysterious smile at the lady of the house. The guest must have thought in his dirty mind that if not all, at least a few could be mine. Lady of the house at the notorious look of the guest felt ashamed and went inside. That is why it is said that be courteous, but do not over respect any person, no matter how respected he is.

We have to understand that a normal standardized behavior with everyone is the demand of the culture. Be courteous but do not lay red carpet for everyone. Keep in your mind that you too expect someone else to lay red carpet in your honour. Achieve that position with your hard work, with your dedication, with your endless efforts. Once, you get that position, the only effort you are to continue with is that keeping your status maintained. Do not let it come down. Maintain your dignity and keep your efforts on.

Respect Yourself



I would like to end this topic with my own example. This incident occurred when we were in America. My daughter was studying in 9th grade. Mostly I used to help her in her studies. Once she was trying a calculus sum. She could not solve it so she asked my help. I tried a little but could not do as I studied calculus 30 years back and found myself unable. I told her to take help of any of her friends as I could not solve that. You know what she said, "How come you are a Papa if you cannot solve this tiny calculus sum." I understand she did not say it to ridicule or to insult me but she said this because I, her father, was a hero in her mind, but failed to solve a sum. For her, like a film hero, her father is a hero who can do anything. That hero image of her mind was hurt, that is why she used these words.

That's the message I want to deliver through this article that if not everything, at least ensure our capability in some fields of life, achieve heights and prove ourselves better than others so that in the eyes of others we become and remain respectable.

That was the example of an immature mind but this world is full of mature minds too, so be ready, be prepared to face challenges, prove yourself to be better than others. Keep learning, keep working hard and every moment try to match your footsteps with the progress of the world. Don't just relax that you have made your kids better than

you and now you do not need to know or learn anything. No. If you have provided every facility for your kids to be better citizens, give a room to yourself too to be a father or a mother, still greater than the kids. Only then, they will respect you. Otherwise, respect due to your age is not enough, respect due to your knowledge will beget you respect.

So to earn respect from others, respect yourself. Be respected to be respectful.

-Saran Ghai

Ph: (416)816-5559, Blog: saranghai.blogspot.com, E-mail: ghaisaran@gmail.com, website: www.muktipathmeditation.com.

- Continued...

(Prof. Saran Ghai is an Author, Editor and Publisher of a number of Books, Magazines and Newspapers. He is a Palm Reader and a Numerologist too. To book appointment to know about your present and future, Love, Marriage, Business and other problems, make an appointment on phone.

Prof. Ghai publishes a 2-in-1 English-Hindi monthly magazine titled "Superior Star" & "Soubhagya" (Good Fortune) covering Meditation, Wellness, Naturopathy, Yoga, Palmistry, Astrology, Numerology, Astronomy, Reiki and many other alike subjects. To Subscribe Superior & "Soubhagya" please e-mail - superiormonthly@yahoo.ca or soubhagyamonthly@gmail.com.

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HAPPY 175TH BIRTHDAY -TORONTO TORONTO- THE MODEL RAINBOW CITY Diversity Our Strength

Continued from page 7

In spite of the increasing number of crimes compared with the past, Toronto has been and still is one of the safest cities in the world and this trend of increasing crime is global and not peculiar to Toronto. Toronto has one of the lowest homicide rates and cities such as Atlanta, Boston, Washington, and New York City in the United States and Vancouver Canada has higher rates of crime than Toronto and this is enviable. While writing this article, the right honorable Prime Minister was in the city of Vancouver after a chain of homicides and the Justice Minister introduced tougher measures against such crimes and said that eventually more light would be shed on such cases. The rates of theft and robbery are also a concern and Toronto is ranked in a much better position. The effectiveness of the Canadian positive approach has made an excellent impact on new immigrants, in certain cases two or more ethnic groups fought against each other and had a mountain full of hatred in their country of origin. But after getting used to the Canadian way of living they began to intermingle and realized that it was not the entire population from the opposed community that was the cause of their suffering but certain forces.

Toronto, the biggest, most populous city in Canada is the center of catering to a large number of new immigrants. The increasing trend of new immigrants bringing their heritage values and preserving them while embracing Canadian values is widely respected and honoured in this city. The reflection of the cosmopolitan and international multi ethnic nature makes Toronto one of the world's most diverse cities. In terms of the percentage of non-native and early European settlers; the number of foreign born Canadians accounted for around 20% but its percentage in Toronto is a little less than a half (49%) of the population

The city of Toronto was officially incorporated and named on 6th March 1834 by Mayor Lyon Mackenzie and its 175th anniversary is a grand and historical event. It was renamed by Lt. Governor John Graves Simcoe in 1793 as York and elevated to the capital of Upper Canada. Later on to avoid confusion with the city of New York in the United States of America and for various other reasons, York was renamed as Toronto. The origin of the name differs. According to the Seneca word "giyando" it refers to a village called Taiaiaagon. According to Mohawks the word it is "tkaronto" meaning there are trees standing in the water around Humber River around the northern end of Lake Simcoe. Most likely it derived from the Iroquois word 'rkaronto'. As any Torontonian will tell you, there are many nicknames for Toronto such as the big smoke, the Queen City, and Hogtown

Pre historically the native people mainly the Huron and Iroquois who arrived in Canada via the west settled down in Toronto and around the great lakes and adjoining river areas. The forest area was very helpful for hunting and the abun-

dant source of fresh water for agriculture was a blessing for them to settle down conveniently. Since the sixteenth century the European settlers arrived mainly from Britain and France. The French traders founded Fort Rouille in downtown Toronto in 1750 but this was short lived. During the American Revolution there was an unexpected influx of British settlers who were United Empire Loyalists. When the immigration gates were widely opened from time to time many immigrants migrated to Toronto for many reasons which included; easy access for employment in a variety of areas, Toronto was a safe city for living in peace and harmony, better transportation facilities, and a cordial socio-economic atmosphere. These are some of the exact same reasons that many people choose to make Toronto their home even today.

Its growth from a triangular shaped city with only four blocks running from the current Parliament Street in the east to Front Street in the south and Richmond Street in the north and York Street in the west gradually expanded in all directions. The European settlers who came from the east contributed to the development of Toronto. Their hard work, new technology, determination, and enthusiasm made the reputation of Toronto taller than the CN tower.

Originally the capital of this region was situated at Newark at Niagara-on the lake and shifted to Toronto. The role of the great lake was much more than the supplying of fresh water; it was the most convenient access point for navigation which was the popular mode of transportation within the continent to foreign counties particularly to Europe. The St. Lawrence River, the gate way of Canada with few interruptions gave a way for Europeans to penetrate into the interior lands and set up successful trade establishments and local businesses. In the absence of an extensive network of land transportation and of course, air transportation, navigation was the only commonly available mode of transportation and this was one of the determining factors to locate the capital close to the lake. The city of Newark was attached to three out of the five great lakes.

The first municipal election for Toronto was held on 27th March 1834, twenty one days after Toronto was incorporated as a city on 6th March 1834. The election was called by the Lt. Governor. Sir John Colborne and most of the elections were held in taverns where people commonly met. It was an entirely new exercise and all elected councilors had no clue as to their responsibilities and limitations of rights and procedures. All councilors were brand new and started learning from scratch and built up a system of governing and cited an example to other municipalities in most of the functional aspects.

It was in 1834 and onward that the massive construction of buildings, bridges and roads began and continued. People were very busy in deforesting the land densely pop-

ulated with hard wood and soft wood virgin forests. The number of streets grew to 85 streets in 1840. The present generation and the new immigrants may find it hard to imagine overall life in Toronto in the absence of modern roads, vehicles, and pipe born water. There was an improperly built in harbour and navigation was the main source of long distance transportation. The city had only one newspaper called the "Upper Canada Gazette" with a very limited circulation. It was a different scene back then, but compared with the surrounding areas, Toronto was an advanced city.

In 1841 when Upper Canada and Lower Canada were amalgamated, Upper Canada was named 'Ontario' and Lower Canada was named 'Quebec', Toronto ceased to be the capital.

The growth of Toronto gradually extended to the hinterlands and the interdependency between the two brought fruits for both of them. In the GTA, there are twenty five municipalities and the inter link and interdependency benefits both sides, and the so called 905 regions with the 416 always has a greater link. Due to the congested environment and high price of housing and rent the trend of moving out of Toronto increased and this developed a strong link with the hinterlands. There are people who reside in Oshawa, Hamilton, and Mississauga, and come down to Toronto during the work week and return back to their suburban homes. This has led to certain cities in the GTA being called "bedroom communities".

The diversification of activities will not let Toronto down even at the peak of the recession. It covers everything from arable farming to dairy farming, manufacturing industries, service industries, finance and business, telecommunication and other communication networks, literature, pharmaceuticals, medical equipment, and tourism housing, has brought balanced growth to the Toronto economy. Depending on a single product, industry or a handful of them is very risky. As the old saying goes, it is never good to place all the eggs in one basket.

The city of Toronto is facing a couple of challenges and these have to be addressed sooner than later so as to avoid a volcanic eruption. The most recent challenge is that Toronto is believed to be on the top of the list to be attacked in revenge for Canadian support of the United States and the coalition forces fighting against terrorism. Though their agenda would have been very secret, Canada will change its stand in the near future and the target of the terrorists will be silenced. The change in the leadership of America in the long run will not change their agenda, but may slow it down.

The next challenges focus around the inadequate facilities and problems faced by low income earners that have not been resolved. Their living conditions are not up to the standard of decent living in any urban city. I had witnessed this when I ran for office in the provincial government election. They do not have adequate subsidized rental accommodations, lack of day care facilities and in some cases the cost is not affordable, limited recreation facilities, fully protected areas where the crime rates are not going down and lack of

counselling for parents and youth are some of the pressing concerns and my worry is that if these issues are not addressed in time with care it may lead to the beginning of unpleasant and destructive activities that will encourage unlawful activities, as an alternative. The third problem is the growing number of vehicles on the road causing traffic jams and accidents along with the increased cost of public transportation. I am very pleased that all three levels of government have agreed to extend the subway systems beyond the Toronto municipality. Medical care is always an issue for everyone in Canada and it consumes over forty percent of the budget. The waiting times are very long and many get frustrated and have lost confidence in the system. Though it is the responsibility of the provincial government not the municipality collaboration with GTA majors could be done to find ways and the means to pressure the provincial government. I am aware



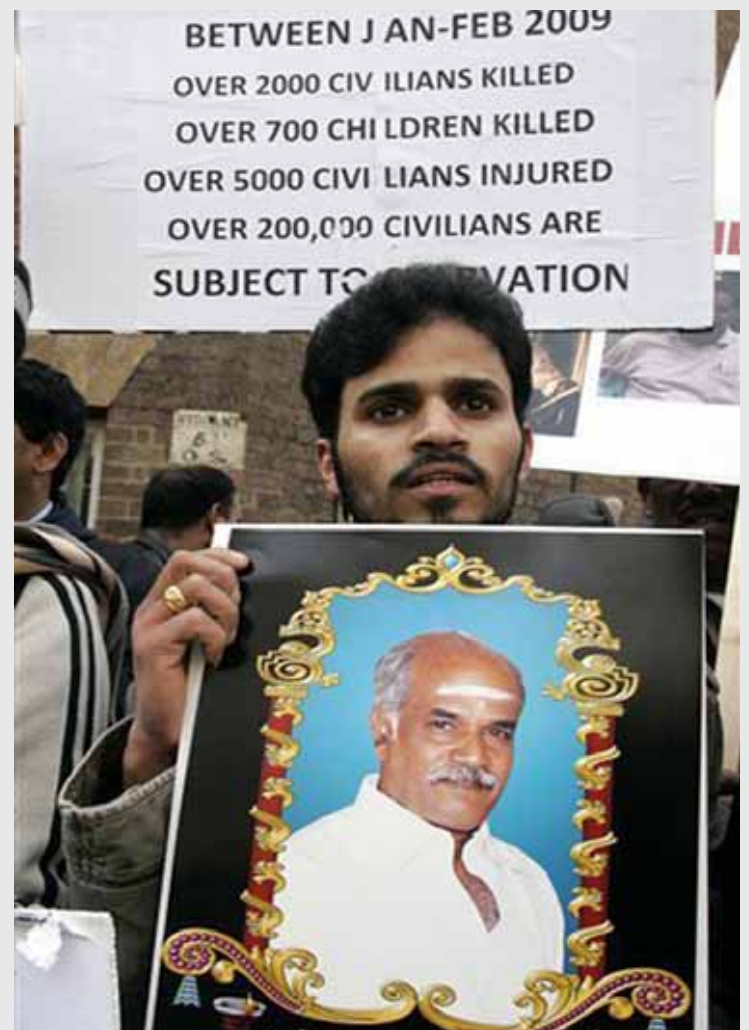
that most of these responsibilities have to be directed to the provincial and federal governments but the initiative and pressure have to come from the bottom at the grass root level and the municipal government cannot wash its hands of responsibility.

In spite of all these challenges Toronto is the safest and most tolerant city with an abundance of opportunities. Let us all work hard to elevate this city and in 25 years, let us throw a bicentennial celebration the likes of which have never been seen before!

Samy Appadurai is a renowned broadcast journalist, author, educator and public speaker who makes his home in Toronto.

Mathy Subramaniam, center, 26, who lost his father in a military action, poses with a picture of him as he joins protesters against Sri Lankan government demonstrating near the Commonwealth Secretariat in London, Wednesday, March 4, 2009. Protesters called for Sri Lanka to be suspended from the Commonwealth for human rights abuses against the Tamil community.

Pic: Akira Suemori/AP



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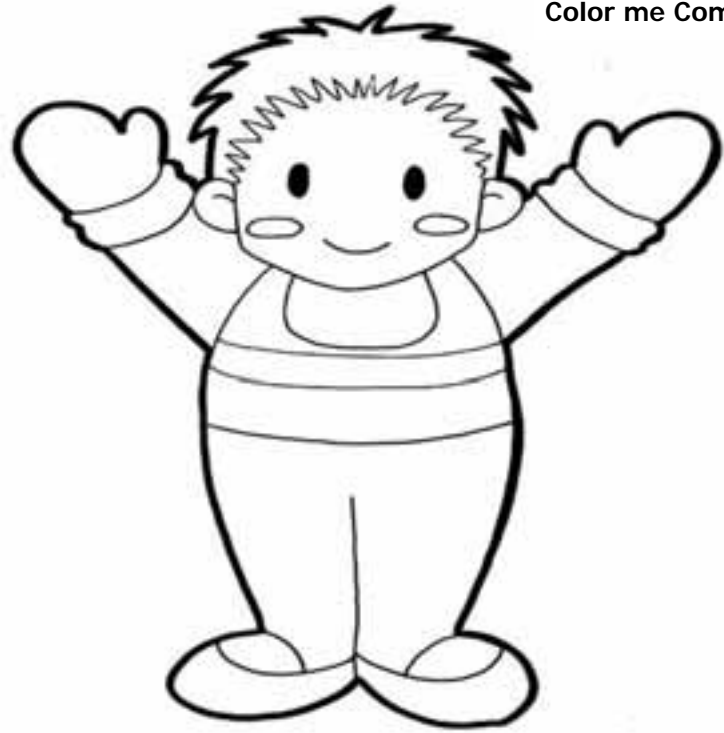
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AFYC - A CELEBRATION OF TALENT

Contributed by:
Abizar Badani

Arts for children and youth specializes in implementing hands-on training programs in visual arts, dance, music and drama, AFYC goal has been simple yet powerful in every way, by working with community agencies and partners such as public

Toronto. When I met her, the first time, even before she began to speak there was a amazing glow of success that got us all to believe that her success was in the success of those AFYC students who had made a difference to the city, in form of visual appeal.

Julie with the hard work of the teens from Warden and St. Clair

scape, as the buses are moving venues for public art.

Julie also shares a great passion for art herself as she herself comes from a visual art background with a keen eye for art and culture. She has been with AFYC for a long time and shares the same passion to bring out the local talent and showcase it for public display, she mentions, as we speak about how the teens would now have a virtual gallery for their work, this would be possible through the LCD displays on subways where we often see the news or weather, this now would also display work done by teens of AFYC.



Julie Frost,
Artistic Director of AFYC

Apart from these projects Julie mentioned to us that there are some great projects coming soon, which would help teens from all across Toronto helping them develop skills much needed to promote their talent, in one such project teens would be helped understanding marketing

and management skills that would help them promote themselves and contribute to the community in which they live, we wish them all the best. Apart from being the artistic director for AFYC, Julie Frost comes across as a wonderful human being who can be reached at Arts for Youth and Children at www.artsforchildren.org

As we say, it is us who can make a positive change, for we all know that somewhere deep inside us is good and with organizations and good guidance from human beings like Julie Frost and her wonderful team we can all make this world free of all fears and show the next generation that they too can leave a legacy of good behind them. God Bless Us.

For feedback or more information write to us at: kidscorner@monsoonjournal.com

Picture Courtesy:
Julie Frost, AFYC



AFYC members working on murals for display

health, community centers, malls and specially schools, that the City of Toronto has marked out as high priority areas.

"AFYC provides the bridge to bringing talent to the community and the platform for expression together" says Julie Frost the Artistic Director of AFYC who has been with the foundation working hand and glove with students and children from all across the city of

areas have created a unique project called youth X Press, and when I asked Julie what this project was and what AFYC is all about she explained how the teens had come together to create a mural on environment which is on display on a TTC bus in that area. AFYC youth X Press with a goal of creating visual art by disadvantaged teens that would become a part of the city land-

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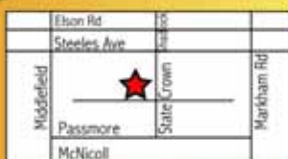
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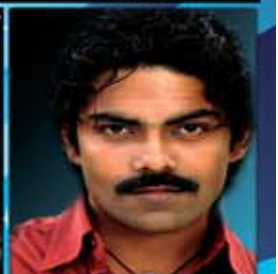


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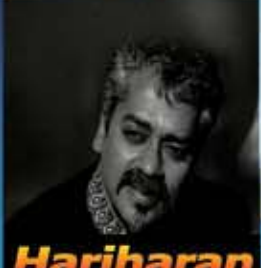
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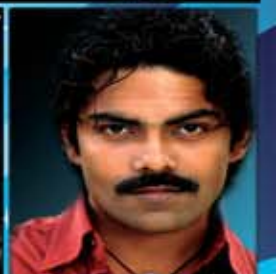
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