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Emil Alphonsus CA, CPA, CGA

Actor Kamal Haasan begins his political journey from the temple city of Madurai

Tamil Nadu welcomes a new politician but loses a versatile actor



Kamal Haasan meets Rajinikanth for a 'courtesy call' just days before launch of his party

By Siva Sivapragasam

The temple city of Madurai which is considered the citadel and cultural capital of Tamil Nadu since the Sangam period with the towering Meenaatchi Amman temple standing majestically in the heart of the city became the hub for the launch of a new politician and party recently when actor turned politician Kamala Haasan launched his new party suitably titled "MakkalNeedhiMaiam".

'Madurai is the motherland of Theatre', said late AvvaiShanmugam considered the monarch of Tamil drama and theatrical guru of Kamal Haasan. Thousands thronged the city to get a glimpse of their new politi-

cian and actor of repute who declared that he is no longer an actor but a servant of the people. Apparently the actor feels that there is void in Tamil Nadu politics after the demise of former Chief Minister Jayalalitha and the lack of a credible party to lead the people of Tamil Nadu.

Without an organization base except for fan clubs, without money (he wants people to donate and help him run the party), without a clear plan (as yet) beyond saying he wants corruption to end, and without an identified team, it does look like an uphill struggle for the actor.

With his entry into politics he will say good-bye to cinema where he earned the title of "UlaaNaya-

han" through his versatile and brilliant acting in a series of blockbuster movies such as "Pathinaaru Vayathinile", "Naayahan", "Thevar Mahan", "Viswaroopam" and "Paapanaasam".

Kamal Haasan visited actor Rajinikanth and DMK Patriarch Kalaig-narKarunanidhi at their residences to obtain their blessings before the launch of his new party.

It will be a "wait and see" scenario to ascertain whether he will be successful in politics as he did in the field of cinema.

More coverage on Page 22.

(Photo: Twitter/@onlynikil)

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Sri Lanka

Coalition government to continue with Ranil Wickremesinghe as PM

By Siva Sivapragasam

Sri Lanka's two ruling parties UNP & SLFP have agreed to continue the coalition national unity government between them easing the political uncertainty created in the aftermath of the local council elections last month.

The results of last month's local government polls saw former President and strongman Mahinda Rajapakse's newly formed PodujanaPeramuna party sweeping most of the seats and thus creating friction between the two major parties that had forged the national unity government.

The SLFP leadership along with President Sirisena wanted a change in UNP leadership and supported by few UNP members too. But Prime Minister RanilWickremesinghe was able to iron out differences within his party and the party unanimously supported Wickremesinghe to lead the party and continue as Prime Minister. Also, constitutional experts took the view that President Sirisena has no authority to remove the Prime Minister from his post according to the provisions of the new 19th Amendment in the Constitution passed in Parliament some time ago.

There has been a reshuffle of ministerial positions on the UNP side and more changes are likely in the near future. The President and his party seem to be keen on holding onto key portfolios like Defence, Finance and Foreign Affairs.

The long-term continuity of the coalition government has raised some doubts among political analysts fearing that unless the friction between the two parties are sorted out soon, a certain degree of instability would continue for the government.

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Canada announces new partnerships with India



Prime Minister Trudeau welcomed by Prime Minister Modi in New Delhi

New Delhi, India - February 23, 2018: Canada and India share a strong relationship, and are working together to create good, middle class jobs and more opportunities for Canadians and Indians alike.

The Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau, today met with the Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi, and announced a wide range of new initiatives and agreements between both countries that span education, security, sustainable development, trade and investment, and women's health and

empowerment.

Prime Minister Trudeau and Prime Minister Modi also released a Joint Statement that outlines the way forward for the Canada-India relationship and how we will invest in mutual growth, achieve gender equality, and empower women. We will also cooperate to strengthen our cultural and economic ties, build a more peaceful and secure world, and work together on climate change, oceans, space, and clean energy.

- pm.gc.ca

Ontario PC party gears up for polls

Putting behind the unexpected event to hold a party vote, the Ontario PCs are gearing up for the provincial polls with leadership back on track and for a full length campaign. After the campaign to select their party's candidate for Premier, all four leadership contestants are anticipated to campaign vigorously to unseat the governing Liberals.

The following are the snap promotions posted by candidates on their websites running for the leadership of the Ontario PC party:

Tanya Granic Allen



Why is Tanya Running? Tanya Granic Allen is running to be a strong voice against Kathleen Wynne's sex-education curriculum and for freedom of speech, especially on issues that affect our families. Tanya is pro-Life and a social conservative. As with so many members of our party, when Tanya saw how socially conservative Ontarians and other principled Ontarians were treated in nomination selections and how their views were treated in the policy process, she was outraged.

Christine Elliott

As a mother, lawyer, businesswoman, and entrepreneur, Christine knows



the importance of balancing a family budget and managing a successful business. Christine knows that responsible leadership is needed to get Ontario back onto the right financial track; formerly served as MPP for Whitby—Oshawa.

Doug Ford



"It's time to clean up this mess." - "My new plan for cap and trade: we're going to put a cap on taxes and trade Kathleen Wynne."; seeking nomination as MPP candidate for Etobicoke North.

Caroline Mulroney



"Something new. A different, forward-looking and positive conservative"; MPP candidate for York-Simcoe.



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from the publisher's desk

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Black Panther Represents a Major Milestone for Diversity and Inclusion

After watching the film, Black Panther, one cannot help but obtain the urging to cross their forearms over their chest and exclaim with great enthusiasm, "Wakanda Forever!" The film, overall, was an exciting and modern outlook on Africa and black culture-withits story, action, story, music, and humor. It is the latest installment released by Marvel Studios within the Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU), along with being the first in the seriesto feature a black superhero as the lead character withapredominantly black cast.

It follows T'Challa, played by actor Chadwick Boseman, the soon-to-be King of the fictional African nation of Wakanda, a country that from outsiders may be contrived as a typical poor oneonthe continent, is highly advanced because of its abundance of



withinthe mass mediagenerally. This genre mostly showcased white or non-racialized actors as the lead superheroes inmovies and comic books. While films in the MCU have already depictedsome black superheroes such as the Falcon in Captain America or War Machine in Iron Man, there has yet tobe a film centered precisely on a black superhero until Black Panther. This addresses the lack of recognition for black and other forms of racializedrepresentation both on and offscreen in films within media from recent Academy Awards ceremonies.

Since its release, this representation has been reflected on society's wellbeing as well.For example, a GoFundMe campaign was organized to allow children from the Boys and Girls Club in Harlem, New York to see the film. This and media coverage along the same linessends the signal, in my view, ofa sense of belonging in their society, whether it be a country like the United States or Canada today to grow successfully.Black Panther was not your typical superhero film that attracted the average moviegoer. For many, watching this film felt likea duty because of its profound role in advancing integration and equality of black and racialized Americans or Canadians in both mainstream society and media.So, if you have not seen the film yet, make that the next thing on your to-do list.

Contributed by Harrish Thirukumaran.

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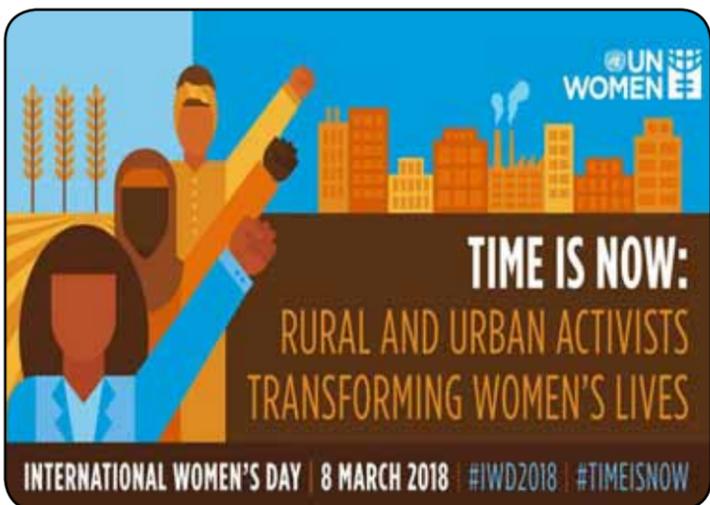
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a fictionalnatural resource, vibranium.T'Challa dons the mask of the Black Panther through superhuman powersgranted to him by ingesting a heart shaped herb to protect the nation from harm. The action sequences were raw and intense in their unfolding, especially with the challenge betweenT'Challa and Michael B. Jordan's Erik Killmonger, a tragic villain-with Wakandanancestry raised in the United States seeking to dethrone T'Challa.The action aesthetic from settings in South Korea to Wakanda were spectacular. The plot was carried on by some tremendous acting performances that conveyed the humility ofT'Challa, vengeanceofKillmonger, and the intellectual and comediculture of Letitia Wright's Shuri, T'challa's sister and Wakanda's chief scientist.The music score blended traditional African music with elements of hip hopto invoke the cultural divergence between the atmospheres of Africa and urban America. Interestingly, the character of M'Baku of the Jabari Tribe, evoked the Hindu god, Hanuman, as a battle crysupportingT'Challa during the final bout to reclaim Wakanda from Killmonger.It its popularity has extended globally as well.

One of the strongest takeaways from this film however was the milestone it represents for diversity and inclusion in the Hollywood film industry and

Canada Historic Milestones: MARCH

March 30, 1954 - It's a big day for Torontonians, as the city opens the first subway system in Canada. The network initially consists of four lines, including the 7.4-kilometre Yonge Street line. The subway is built to address significant expansion by the Queen City.



“In politics, If you want anything said, ask a man. If you want anything done, ask a woman.” - Margaret Thatcher (13 October 1925 – 8 April 2013) British Stateswoman

Printing the Winds of Change around us All lands home, all men kin.

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Out of touch Liberals considering a congestion tax for Ontario drivers – Ontario PC Party says



February 21, 2018:
Today, PC Critic for Infrastructure Sylvia Jones and PC Critic for Transportation Michael Harris questioned the Minister of Transportation on the Wynne Liberals' plan to cancel the environmental assessment of the GTA West Highway Corridor. Instead the Wynne Liberals are considering introducing a tax on drivers.
"After a \$14-million investment and over a decade of delay, the government has cancelled the environmental assessment of the GTA West Highway Corridor, without providing an alter-

native plan to address congestion," said Jones.
"One of the alternatives recommended by the Minister's advisory panel is to put congestion fees on 400 series highways across the GTA," said Harris. "The fact that the government is considering taxing drivers on provincial highways is shocking.
"The last thing Ontarians want is to be taxed to sit in traffic. This is just another example of how out of touch the Wynne Liberals are."
- via: ontariopc.ca

Thadsha Navaneethan Becomes the First Tamil Canadian Vice President of a Major Federal Party in Canada

Thadsha Navaneethan, a Scarborough resident and community activist was elected to be the Vice President of Canada's New Democratic Party (NDP), making her the first Tamil Canadian to become Vice President of a Federal Party in Canada. The role of the Vice President within the party is a senior leadership position in the governance of the party.



Thadsha received a number of prominent endorsements from party members across the country, including endorsements from Ontario MPP Lisa Gretzky, MPP Teresa Armstrong, MPP Michael Mantha and MPP Cindy Foster. She also was endorsed by many labour unions including United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW), United Steelworkers (USW) and Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE).
Thadsha was nominated by long time labour and community activist Bob Gallagher who was also chief of staff to the late Jack Layton. Party delegates voted for positions of President, Vice-President and Treasurer at the party's convention on Sunday, Febru-

ary 18, 2018. The 3 day NDP convention had close to 2000 delegates, making it one of the largest in the party's history.
Thadsha has worked on various roles within political election campaigns at all levels for the past thirteen years, including being a candidate at municipal level in Toronto in 2006. Thadsha currently works for the Ontario NDP Caucus Services in the Leader's Office. She also serves as the President of Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU) Local 578 and is an active member of the union. She is a community organizer who continues to build local grassroots movements for social and political change.

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Dr. Gerard Francis: "In the promotion of the dignity of our brothers and sisters, fighting for it, living for it!"



Dr Gerard Francis passed away on March 2, 2018

By Thiru K.Thirukumaran

Every now and then we would get a "rude awakening" about our short span of life on earth. It has been painfully too frequent in our midst with the "untimely" ones in the recent past, making us at a loss to cope.

Following are mere words and that only come after. I wish the spirited soul of Dr. Gerard Francis may be awakened just once, to at least whisper a "Thank you!"

The first time Dr. Gerard came to be known to many of us in NY/NJ is during the 2008/2009 rallies held to bring awareness on the escalating war. Dr. Gerard was a front-line foot soldier - organizer in many of these rallies along with his wife Ms. Suba Francis.

One can look back on those rallies and think what we got out of all those rallies etc. Yet they burgeoned into a collective voice for our homeland, which I think Dr Gerard always carried with him in the past 9 years.

Disregarding what followed as several post-war stands, Dr. Gerard truly believed in service, service to benefit the people, in giving voice to the voiceless. I've had long and short conversations many times thru May 2009 with Dr. Gerard, but was not a close friend or even an acquaintance of the Francis family over time. Every now and then Dr. Gerard would privately respond to news group emails that I post but they all started to dwindle as time went by.

But five years after 2009, when my mother passed away in August 2014, I heard from Dr Gerard, i was solemnly moved in his consoling words. He said,

Dr. Gerard Francis <gerardpsych@

gmail.com> 08/11/14 at 11:07 AM

Dear Mr. Thirukumaran,

"Words will not, even temporarily ease your suffering and loss. But, we felt that we should convey our sentiments to you nevertheless, especially to one who works hard for the benefit of our less fortunate brothers and sisters. Our condolences.

- Dr. Gerard and Mrs. Suba Francis"

The profound sadness is not because he sent me this message of condolence, but also in knowing and witnessing Dr Gerard Francis took the stride and worked along with many, from street protests, advocacy, political organizations, charity to connecting with Self-Respect movements etc. They were all the right modes for "service" in his core message, "for the benefit of our less fortunate brothers and sisters".

He put his captivating disposition in the broadcast media also. Dr Gerard Francis delivered many courteous and calming conversations to the audiences via Toronto based Tamil medias and charity events. Some of his talks, I have listened to as well on the internet.

Like Pope Francis called in Havana in September 2015, Dr Gerard is leaving his footprints here in the "promotion of the dignity of our brothers and sisters, fighting for it, living for it!" May Ms. Suba Francis, sons Andre and Aidon find the strength in their lives to move-on with his love. My sincere Heartfelt condolences. May his soul rest in eternity.

Dr Gerard Francis graduated from the University of Jaffna Medical faculty in 1987-Fourth batch, and practiced as a Psychiatrist in Meadville, Pennsylvania.

Valentine's Day: "When we lost Love"

By Thulasi Muttulingam

Today is his first death anniversary. For an alms giving, we cooked and took parcels to the Jaffna teaching hospital. In his last days, he had shared his food and money with the poor there.

We did not do any of the rituals associated with the one year anniversary, as he detested the pomposity and undue honour given to organised religion and its prelates in the system.

His bright orange cap, that he bought just to be contrary, yet wore regularly on all his outings, still hangs in the room I shared with him.

It took me a long time to clear away his clothes, dismantle his bed, clear away his books...

That orange cap alone remains, a testament to a man larger than life who once lived here.

His photo hangs in my room too, above where his bed once stood.

My sister could not bear to have it in the hallway. Too visceral a confirmation as per our culture, that someone is dead.

"In my mind, he is still alive. It is shocking to look up and see his photograph like that - I cannot handle it."



Sanmugam Muttulingam (21.10.1939 - 14.02.2017)

Valentine's Day is celebrated around the world for the arrival of love in one's life.

For us, it will be forever a day, when we lost Love.



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Trump Jr: 'Nonsense' That Family's Profiting From Presidency

NEW DELHI —
February 21, 2018: Donald Trump Jr. said that any talk of his family profiting from his father's presidency is "nonsense" during a trip to India that has raised ethical concerns about using the name of the American president to promote international business ventures.

The eldest son of President Donald Trump, who is in India to meet the promoters and buyers of Trump brand luxury homes in the country, said his family is actually missing out on business opportunities because his father pledged to conduct no new foreign business while he was in office.

Trump Jr., who along with his brother Eric now runs the Trump Organization, told Indian television channel CNBC-TV18 on Tuesday that when critics talk about them "profiteering from the presidency and all this nonsense" they forget about "the opportunity cost of the deals that we were not able to do."

"It's sort of a shame. Because we put on all these impositions on ourselves and essentially got no credit for actually doing that ... for doing the right thing," he added.

Trump Jr.'s visit prompted one Democratic senator to press the American ambassador to India to explain if the embassy in New Delhi had provided any aid or guidance to the president's son.

"I expect that the U.S. State Department, including U.S. Embassy Delhi will treat Mr. Trump no differently than it would any other American individual visiting on private business, and will take every effort to avoid any perception of



President Donald Trump's eldest son, Donald Trump Jr. leaves after a photo shoot in Kolkata, India, Feb. 21, 2018.

special treatment or a conflict of interest," Sen. Robert Menendez wrote to U.S. ambassador Kenneth Juster on Wednesday. Menendez is the ranking Democratic on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

In the letter, Menendez asked Juster if American diplomats in India had briefed Trump Jr. during his visit or provided any support staff. Menendez also asked Juster whether any steps were taken "to make clear to the Indian government and citizens of the country that Mr. Trump in no way speaks on behalf of the United States government."

Trump Jr. was scheduled to speak about Indo-Pacific relations during a business summit attended by Prime Min-

ister Narendra Modi.

On Tuesday, State Department spokeswoman Heather Nauert said Trump Jr. "was visiting as a private person" and said U.S. diplomats had not "interacted with him regarding his meetings or speech."

For at least a week before Trump Jr. arrived in India on Tuesday, several major Indian newspapers carried glossy, front-page advertisements boasting, "Trump has arrived. Have you?"

The ads promised that buyers who order apartments in a new Trump-brand luxury real estate development in a suburb of the Indian capital by Thursday will get "a conversation and dinner" with Trump Jr. a day later.

He is expected to visit and promote business in all the Trump-brand projects across four Indian cities. Media access to his events in the country has been limited and only news organizations chosen by his team have had access to him.

The Trump Organization has licensing agreements with all its Indian business partners. They build the properties and acquire the Trump name in exchange for a fee. With five projects in India, the country is the brand's largest market outside the United States. A luxury complex is already open in the central city of Pune, with other developments in varying stages of construction in the coastal cities of Mumbai and Kolkata, and two in Gurgaon.

All the projects were signed before President Trump took office, but promoting even existing business has raised ethics concerns.

"The president should be putting the public's interest before his business interests. That can't happen if his son is flying around the world trying to trade on the fact that his father is sitting in the Oval Office," said Scott H. Amey, general counsel for the non-partisan Project on Government Oversight in Washington.

Amey added that several foreign deals touted by the president's two adult sons have "stretched the definition of what ventures were previously in the works."

Trump Jr. has made several visits to India over the years and has repeatedly talked of great business opportunities in the country.

- via VOA News

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Around the World

New UN high-profile panel set to take on noncommunicable diseases, cause of seven in 10 deaths globally

Bold, innovative solutions are now on the table to accelerate the prevention and control of deadly noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) – such as heart and lung disease, cancers and diabetes – as a new United Nations health agency high-level commission gets set to begin its work.

16 February 2018: “NCDs are the world’s leading avoidable killers, but the world is not doing enough to prevent and control them,” said Tabaré Vázquez, President of Uruguay and co-chair of the World Health Organization’s (WHO) Independent Global High-level Commission on NCDs.

“We have to ask ourselves if we want to condemn future generations from dying too young, and living lives of ill health and lost opportunity. The answer clearly is ‘no.’ But there is so much we can do to safeguard and care for people, from protecting everyone from tobacco, harmful use of alcohol, and unhealthy foods and sugary drinks, to giving people the health services they need to stop NCDs in their tracks,” he added.

The NCD Commission is also co-chaired by President Maithripala Siris-

ena of Sri Lanka; President Sauli Niinistö of Finland; Veronika Skvortsova, Minister of Healthcare of the Russian Federation; and Sania Nishtar, former Federal Minister of Pakistan.

Each year, seven in 10 deaths globally are from NCDs, mostly from tobacco and alcohol use, unhealthy diets and physical inactivity.

More than 15 million people between 30 and 70 years old die annually from NCDs. Low- and lower-middle income countries are increasingly affected – with half of premature deaths from NCDs occurring in those countries. “For the first time in history, more people are dying of noncommunicable diseases, such as heart disease and diabetes, than infectious diseases. This loss of human life spares no one – rich or poor, young or old – and it imposes heavy economic costs on nations,” said Michael R. Bloomberg, WHO Global Ambassador for Noncommunicable Diseases and Commission member.

Many lives can be saved from NCDs through early diagnosis and improved access to quality and affordable treatment, as well as a whole-of-government approach to reduce the main risk factors.



A blood glucose test is used to check for gestational diabetes, which may appear for the first time during pregnancy. Pic: WHO/PAHO/Sebastián Oliel

“The more public support we can build for government policies that are proven to save lives – as this Commission will work to do – the more progress we’ll be able to make around the world,” Mr. Bloomberg added.

The Commission was established by WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus and runs until October 2019. It will contribute actionable recommendations to the Third UN General Assembly High-level Meeting on NCDs scheduled for later this year.

“Everybody deserves the right to a healthy life,” Mr. Tedros stressed. “We can beat the drivers of the NCD

epidemic, which are among the world’s main obstacles to health.”

Dr. Nishtar argued that while there have been improvements in some countries and regions, the overall rate of progress has been unacceptably slow, “resulting in too many people suffering and dying needlessly from NCDs, and leaving families, communities and governments to bear the human and economic costs.”

“This year, governments will be held to account on progress they have made in protecting their citizens from NCDs,” she underscored.

- UN.org

Tamil National Alliance and allies secure overwhelming majority of the local bodies in Sri Lanka North and East

By Thiru K Thirukumaran

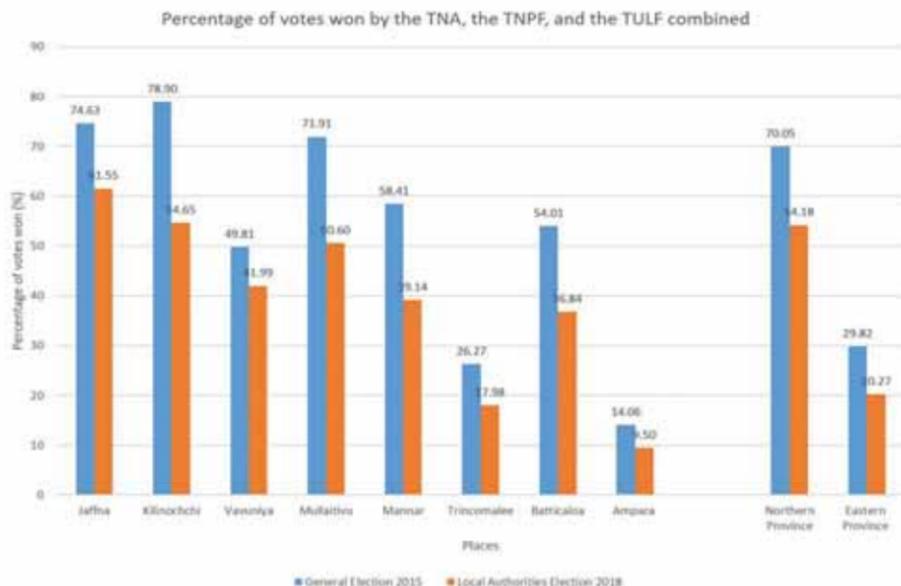
Tamil National Alliance (TNA) and its allies secured an overwhelming majority of the local bodies in Sri Lanka North and East at the polls conducted on February 10.

The Eelam People’s Democratic Party (EPDP) - a non-Tamil Nationalistic party and a revived Tamil Nationalist Akila Ilankai Tamil Congress (AITC) or the All Ceylon Tamil Congress also made notable inroads in the islands off

Jaffna peninsula and in urban councils in Jaffna, respectively.

In an interview with Tamil media after the election results, TNA MP and spokesperson M. A. Sumanthiran said that they were pleased with the result in most districts of the North-East, while noting of the few setbacks the party encountered in the Jaffna district.

Despite all the anti-TNA campaign waged by various actors from Southern



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based parties as well as Northern ones during the campaign, the TNA kept their support intact.

A political solution could not be anything less than a federal solution, Mr Sumanthiran said, urging all Tamil parties to unite to achieve at least a federal solution for the Tamil people.

Mr Sumanthiran said that the South’s overwhelming vote for former President Mahinda Rajapaksa’s Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna cast a bleak outlook on the Tamil people’s political aspirations.

TNA leader R. Sampanthan speaking in Sri Lanka parliament castigated former President Mahinda Rajapaksa for falsely campaigning in the South that an independent Eelam is about to bloom if the people vote for the government of President Maithripala Siris-

ena.

Sri Lanka’s national parties based in South also made gains in the North.

It was also noted in social media posts that Tamils are increasingly voting for national political parties that promise employment and economic prosperity. In the Northern Province, Tamil parties polling at the General Election held in 2015 was 70.05%; now in Local authority elections of 2018 it fell to 54.18%.

In the Eastern Province during the General Election of 2015, the Tamil parties received 29.82% of the vote; in the 2018 Local authority polls the vote share fell to 20.27%.

The graph here compares the voting for Tamil Nationalist parties with other southern Sri Lanka parties and non-Tamil Nationalist parties.



9,000 devotees from both, India and Sri Lanka attend St. Anthony's Church annual feast

The Katchateevu St. Anthony's Church annual feast this year was a great success, with nearly 9,000 devotees from both, India and Sri Lanka attending on February 23 and 24, Sri Lanka Newspaper The Sunday Observer reported.

The report further stated, "for the first time in history, the feast Mass was held in Sinhalese as well and was conducted by the Bishop of Galle Diocese Raymond Wickramasinghe.

Meanwhile, the feast mass in Tamil was conducted by the Bishop of Jaffna Dr. Justin Bernard Gnanapragasam."

Katchateevu is located between Neduntheevu, Sri Lanka and Rameswaram, India and has been traditionally used by both Sri Lankan Tamil and Tamil Nadu fishermen.

The only religious structure in Katchateevu, St. Antony's Catholic Shrine holds more than a century old traditions.



Pic via: Consulate General Of India, Jaffna, Sri Lanka

"Komaali Kings": A Feature Length Sri Lankan Tamil Film on silver screens after several decades

After several decades, Komaali Kings, a Sri Lankan feature length Tamil language film, made by an all Sri Lankan cast and crew, released on February 23rd across Sri Lanka in over fifty cinemas.

The release of this film is being hailed as an important milestone in the rebirth of the Sri Lankan Tamil film industry. A media release on the much anticipated movie states -

"Produced with the sole intention of being an all-out family entertainer, Komaali Kings can be enjoyed by Tamil movie fans of all ages worldwide. The screenplay for the movie was designed to include elements of comedy, romance, action, suspense and thriller, keeping the audience engaged from start to finish, throughout the movie.

One of the key highlights of the film is the abundant usage of the diverse set of Tamil dialects and accents spoken across the nation. Absolute importance was given to the portrayal of this diversity throughout the film. It will no doubt be one of the key features of the movie that would transport and delight the Sri Lankan Tamil speaking audience.



A crisp screenplay, great acting, memorable songs, catchy music, coupled with the impeccable craftsmanship and world class production values, Komaali Kings sets the benchmark high and sends a strong message out to those who doubt the capabilities and artistry of Sri Lankan filmmakers and

artistes.

Written and directed by King Ratnam, Komaali Kings features an all-star cast including King Ratnam himself in the title role of Pat, as well as Kalabooshan Raja Ganeshan, Dharshen Dharmaraj (Best Actor 'Ini Avan' - Hiru Golden Film Award 2014), Ni-

ranjani Shanmugaraja (Best Supporting Actress 'Ini Avan' - Hiru Golden Film Award 2014), famed "Pravegaya" villain Gajan Kaneshan and television anchor and presenter Sathyapriya Ratnasamy.

Produced by Picture This Production, in association with Arokyia International, M Entertainment and Wine Creative Networks, Komaali Kings is privileged to have on board as its producers, Mr. Ganesh Deivanayagam, Deputy Chairman of Eswaran Brothers Pvt Ltd, Mr. R. Selvaskandan, Attorney of Law and Chairman of Ceylon Theatres Pvt Ltd and Mrs. Dharani Rajasingham.

Mr. B. H. Abdul Hameed, legendary announcer/broadcaster and star of the hit 1976 Sri Lankan Tamil film, 'Komaliga', serves as the honorable patron for this landmark movie."

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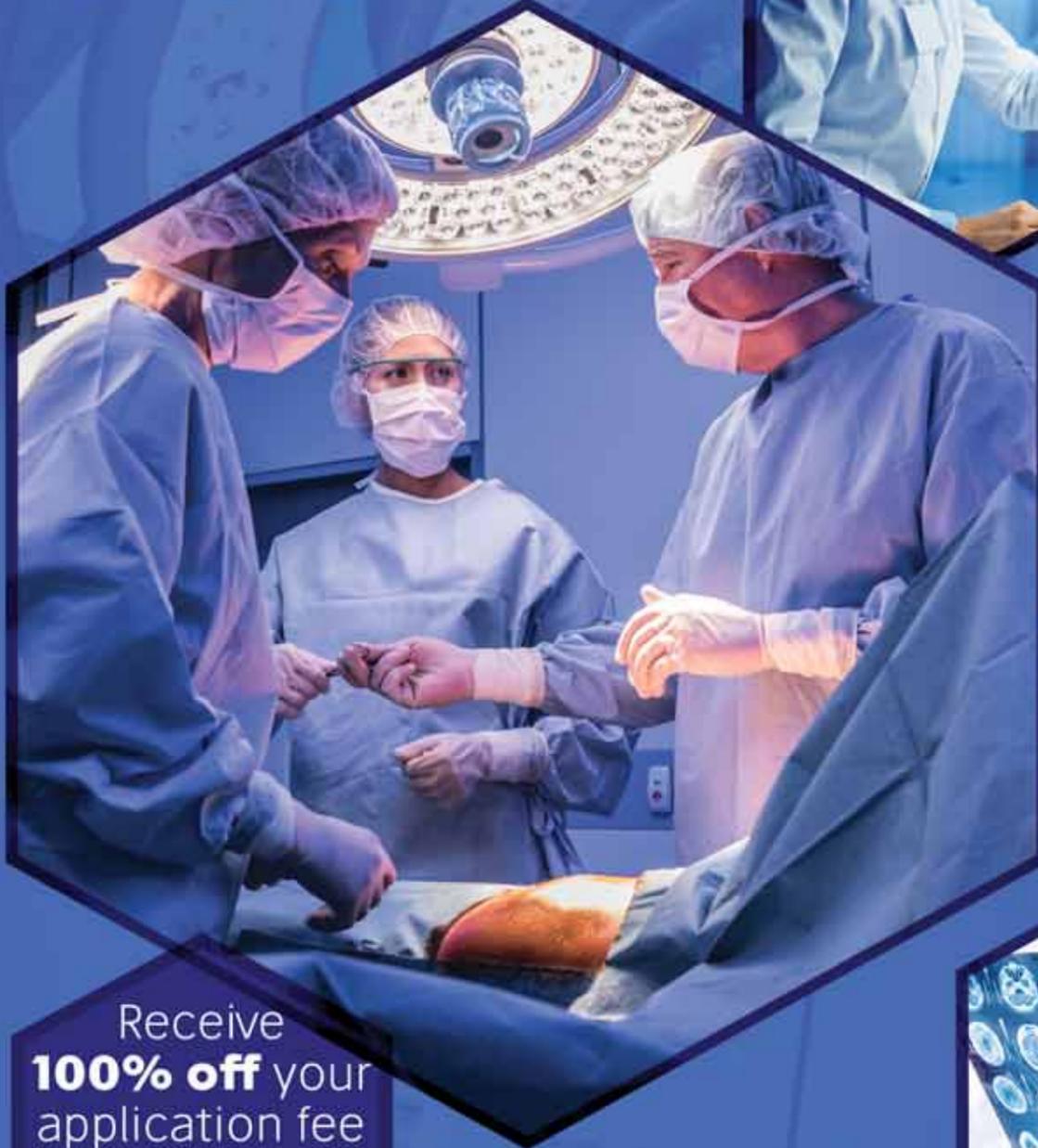
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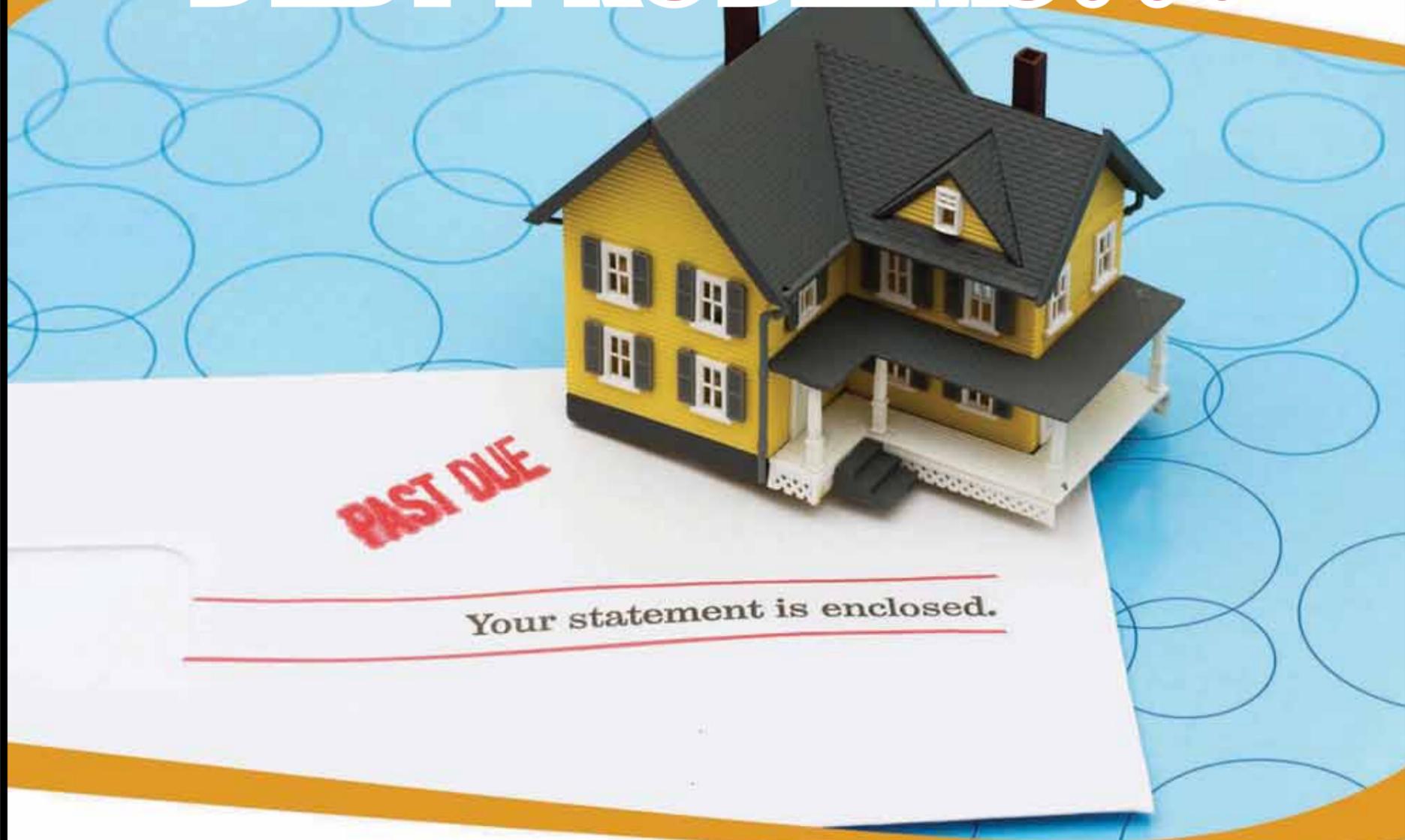
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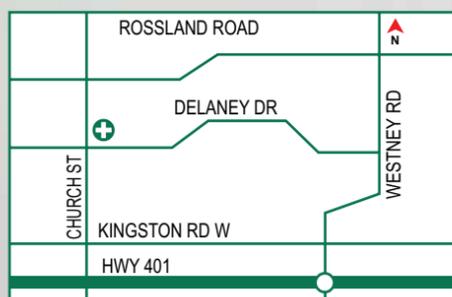
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Local Philanthropists Raise Funds at **IRISH PUB NIGHT**



On January 31st Men Advancing Philanthropy for Providence (MAPP) celebrated its first event of the year at Dublin Calling on Adelaide Street West for a high-spirited evening of games, laughter and philanthropy. MAPP promises exclusive experiences and this night was no exception, as the bar was reserved solely for MAPP donors for the evening. Special thanks to Darcy Browne for personally sponsoring the evening which raised over \$3,000 (net) for Providence Healthcare!

MAPP is a group of philanthropic men who have joined together to support the mission of Providence Healthcare. The men make monthly or annual donations to attend exclusive quarterly events, meet executive philanthropists from across the GTA, and vote on innovative projects. All donations received through MAPP support essential programs and services at Providence Healthcare.

Between enjoying delicious food donated by Dublin Calling, the men were kept busy with virtual reality games donated by VR Vision, allowing them to become world travelers, boxing champions, and lethal ninjas, all in the span of a few minutes. For those who prefer more classic games, Dublin Calling offered ping-pong, pool, skee-

ball, and arcade games for a little friendly competition.

A highlight of the evening was a fine scotch tasting donated by Tomatin Highland Scotch. Scotch expert Trevor Heyd led the men through sampling Tomatin's 12-year-old, 14-year-old, Legacy and Cù Bòcan scotch whiskey. A high-end raffle was included in the event, with one lucky winner taking home a bottle of each of the scotches!

In 2018, MAPP will be granting \$100,000 to fund an innovative project which will support the urgent needs of patients and residents at Providence Healthcare. Donors will be presented with multiple staff-inspired capital projects and vote on the most innovative and impactful project to fund. Past projects include building an Ear, Nose, and Throat Suite to broaden the hospital's in-house services, and purchasing 100 pressure-relieving mattresses. In just four years, MAPP has granted over \$220,000 to Providence and its impact continues to grow.

Providence Healthcare is a leader in providing rehabilitation, palliative care, long-term care and community programs. Situated on St. Clair Avenue near Warden Avenue, Providence Hospital offers inpatient and outpatient programs to over 5,000 individuals each year; its

Cardinal Ambrozic Houses of Providence provides long-term care to 288 residents; and its caregiver support and education programs reach out to thousands in the broader community through services such as the Adult Day Program. For more information, visit the Providence website.

To join MAPP or learn more about Providence, check out www.mappto.com or contact Evan Creighton at Ecreighton@providence.on.ca or 416-285-3666, ext.3872. The next MAPP event – The Ultimate Axe Battle will be at BATL in late March 2018.



Tips on staying immune healthy this March

by Jean-Yves Dionne, Pharmacist

We may be nearing the end of the winter season but the flu is still making its rounds, continuing to impact the health of Canadians.

This year, we have seen very high flu rates. Just before the holidays, The Public Health Agency of Canada reported that the number of flu cases and hospitalizations were soaring much earlier than usual. In its weekly FluWatch report, the agency reported “there was a notable increase in the number of outbreaks and hospitalizations” due to flu in the weeks prior to the holidays. Also, the number of cases were considerably higher compared to the same period in the previous two seasons.

How do you stay at the top of your health game? Start with a healthy immune system.

Below are some facts, tips and myth busters that may help.

Definition of immune health

Basically, immune health is the capacity of NOT GETTING SICK when everybody does. Our immune system is our body’s natural defence system against invaders such as cold and flu viruses.

Viruses abound

With more than 200 different viruses that can cause colds, the immune system has a lot of work to do to protect us from these invaders. Still, the average Canadian adult will get two to four colds each year and for children, that number doubles.

Immune health compromisers

Alcohol, lack of quality sleep, or simply a change in sleeping patterns, lack of sunlight, poor nutrition, stress, and exposure to germs can all compromise the immune system.

Your body won’t be happy

When you get a cold or flu, you will likely feel tired, exhausted and low in energy. If you are lucky you’ll simply feel sluggish. However, if you are like many of us, you’ll succumb to the virus, with symptoms ranging from body aches, sore throat, a sneezing, runny nose, and more.

Take charge and stay “immune healthy”

Embrace the following to stay strong for the rest of the winter season:

- Eat nutritious foods
- Reduce or eliminate added sugar
- Reduce or eliminate alcohol
- Get some well-deserved quality rest
- Take vitamin D
- Exercise daily for at least 30 minutes
- De-stress by taking time to breathe, meditate, or anything that will help you relax
- Take a supplement, consider a natural health remedy such as COLD-FX to proactively arm yourself against



Jean-Yves Dionne, Pharmacist

About Jean-Yves Dionne, Pharmacist

Expert in Natural Health Products

Jean-Yves Dionne is a pharmacist, trainer, clinical consultant and scientific advisor on natural health products (NHPs). He enjoys an exceptional reputation and credibility in Quebec. For the past two decades, he is recognized as the NHP expert by the media and many health professional organizations.

Great communicator and well-known speaker, Jean-Yves stands out for his remarkable ability to integrate different health approaches in order to convey concrete, practical and realistic advice.

Mr Dionne currently teaches at Université Laval and Université de Montréal. In addition, through his Apothecary Academy (apothicaire.ca), he offers clinical and independent training on NHPs to healthcare professionals.

Jean-Yves acts as a collaborator and reviewer for several scientific and popular publications such as Natural Medicine Journal (USA), actualité pharmaceutique and Montréal en santé. He is also author or co-author of several books including The end of pain; Fatigue, Stress, Insomnie: Briser le triangle infernal and Herbs - Everyday Reference for Health Professionals (CPhA & CMA 1999).

Jean-Yves Dionne has a weekly health column at LCN (French news channel) and is regularly called as a health expert by several media. His French blog Franchement santé (jydionne.com) attracts approximately 900,000 readers each year (1,300,000 page views).

cold and flu

- Wash your hands more frequently and cough into your elbow (ask others to do same)

Three Cold and Flu Myth Busters

Myth 1 Dressing warmly will protect you from catching a cold.

False (sorry Mom). Your immune system has to “open the door” to the virus and this happens when it is weakened by stress, fatigue, lack of vitamin D, poor nutrition, etc.

Myth 2 A cold lasts a week.

False. While cold and flu symptoms typically last between five to seven days, there are strategies you can use to reduce both the length and intensity of a cold. You can shorten the duration and symptom severity of cold and flu symptoms by taking COLD-FX products.

Myth 3 All products sold for colds and flu only relieve symptoms.

False. While that may be true for medications such as cough syrups and pain relievers, it is not necessarily true for natural products, such as COLD-FX’s Daily Defence, Chewables and Extra Strength. These products help reduce the frequency, severity and duration of cold and flu symptoms by boosting the immune system. To be sure these products are right for you, always read and follow the label.

I hope this information will help prepare you for the fight against colds and flu this season, and give your immune system a much-needed boost.

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Appreciation

All Ceylon Hindu Congress President and Senior lawyer Kandiah Neelakandan passes away

By Siva Sivapragasam

Senior lawyer and All Ceylon Hindu Congress President Kandiah Neelakandan passed away recently in Colombo, Sri Lanka.

He was the Precedent Partner of Neelakandan and Neelakandan Associates, a leading law firm in Colombo. Neelakandan was also the President of the Thiruketheeswaram Temple Restoration Society, Secretary of the Hindu Educational Society and a former President of the Sri Lanka - India Society. He was also a Patron of the Jaffna Hindu College Old Boys' Association - Colombo.

Sri Lanka's President Maithripala Sirisena, former Chief Justice Shirani Bandaranaike, Opposition Leader Sampanthan, Northern Province Chief Minister Wigneswaran, Minister D.M. Swaminathan and other leading personalities paid their last respects to late Neelakandan's mortal remains at his home.

Neelakandan was educated at Udupiddy American Mission College and later at Jaffna Hindu College. After school he joined Sri Lanka Law College, graduating in 1969.

Neelakandan is married to



Sashidevi, daughter of V. Murugesu, his former partner in the law firm.

Neelakandan was called to the bar as an attorney-at-law of the Supreme



Court in 1970. He joined Murugesu and Kularatne in January 1970 as a Professional Assistant. He became a partner of in the firm, which was re-named Murugesu and Neelakandan, in 1973. He was the chief editor of the Bar Association Law Journal for many years and was Group Deputy Chairman of George Steuart and Co, Sri Lanka's oldest company, from 2008 to 2012. He had previously been secretary of the company.

Neelakandan is a member of the

Company Law Advisory Commission, the Law Commission of Sri Lanka and the Council of Legal Education. He has written several books on Sri Lankan company law. He was general-secretary of the All Ceylon Hindu Congress before becoming its president.

Neelakandan leaves behind his wife Sashidevi and children Saravanan, Janani and Pranavan

(Pictures show TNA Leader Sampanthan and Northern Province Chief Minister CV Wigneswaran paying their last respects)

Sivaguru Sellathurai expires at the age of 99

Sellathurai who died recently at Scarborough was a man of many parts. He migrated to Canada from Urumpirai, Sri Lanka. At Urumpirai he was village council chairman, interpreter mudaliyar in the courts and later a volunteer at Christa Seva Asharam, Maruthanamadam.

He was a great lover of serving the people and he lived up to his passion until the later years of his life. After migrating to Canada he became a translator and interpreter and also used his knowledge and influences to help many people from Sri Lanka to migrate to Canada.

He got the help and support of the Lutheran church to sponsor hapless refugees from India and Sri Lanka to migrate to Canada to find a new life hope and satisfaction. He was also a founder member of the Tamil Christian Church of Canada where he was a worshipper until his recent demise. He was a self-reliant man who used the public transit until the ripe old

age of ninety eight.

In Jaffna he was originally a farmer who sold his produce at the Urumpirai market. He used to say that he mended the well sweep to irrigate his farmlands. He attributes his long life to hard work and the joy of serving Jesus. His favourite Tamil lyric was "Yesu enrathume enakkor inmpam pirakkum amma".

In his later years he never forgot to sing this lyric at prayer meetings and church gatherings. At his funeral service there was a record crowd in attendance. The pastor of the church remarked that his church was never full and only at Sellathurai's funeral he was happy to see large numbers. During his long years of living he has touched the life of so many people that they all were there to see him for the last time.

He was a veritable jewel amongst men and a great example for the younger generation to follow.

Info by: JJ Atputharajah





3 Young Tamil Community Leaders Chosen for Toronto's Future Civic Leaders Program

"In a region where nearly 50% of residents identify as a visible minority, but account for zero of the Toronto region's mayors or regional chairs, shrinking the sidelines of the leadership playing field has never been more important. Today, the CivicAction Leadership Foundation added 25 new faces to a growing pipeline of diverse, civic-minded rising

leaders as part of the 2018 Cohort of Diverse City Fellows, a program that is changing the face of leadership in our region." (Civicaction.ca)

As part of the fellowship, extended to 25 promising leaders, three hail from the Toronto Tamil community.

-Images and bios sourced from CivicAction.ca

Abi Jeyaratnam

Leadership Academy Architect,
Centennial College



Abi Jeyaratnam is a Leadership Academy Architect and contract Faculty with Centennial College where she engages in challenging but necessary conversations about social justice with students and community stakeholders. Deeply rooted in her Tamil heritage, she enjoys preserving and telling stories through mixed media art. Growing up at Jane and Finch to a refugee family, her commitment to creating a more accessible city is driven by her own personal struggles with access. She has worked to combat issues of poverty, accessible education, and the negative impacts of racism through her appointment to the Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) Board, speaking at various community forums, participating in consultations around the Toronto Youth Equity Strategy, and through her work at Pathways to Education. Abi was featured in Toronto Life's "Toronto is Failing Me" series that shed light on the growing income gap in Toronto and has been recognized as one of Toronto's Top 30 Tamil Women Agents of Change.

Kumaran Nadesan

Senior Business Consultant, Ontario Ministry
of Government and Consumer Services



Born in Sri Lanka and raised in India, Oman and Scarborough, Kumaran Nadesan is currently based in Mississauga. As a Senior Business Consultant for the Ontario Ministry of Government and Consumer Services, he spends his days helping advance the Provinces' interests at various inter-governmental service delivery forums. Kumaran also heads up Konnect Communications, a strategic communications agency that works with small-to-medium enterprises in different parts of the world. Outside of work and business, Kumaran is currently a Young Advisor to 6 Degrees Citizen Space; Founding Chair of comdu.it, a growing diaspora network committed to the sustainable development of war-impacted areas in Sri Lanka; and Director of Network Engagement for the non-partisan Tamils in Public Service network in Canada. Guided by the advice that you should "give back at least twice as much as you receive", Kumaran has a long history of involvement within the South Asian community. For Kumaran, a diverse region means a place where residents can live their full potential without fear or discrimination, while harnessing their talent and skills for the continued prosperity of our shared home.

Subagini Sivapatham

Director of Marketing and Communications,
Futurpreneur Canada



Born in Sri Lanka and raised in South Africa, Subagini Sivapatham is the Director of Marketing & Communications at Futurpreneur Canada and currently calling the Region of Peel home. She spends her days promoting stories of entrepreneurial innovations and success, building networks of Canadian achievements, and looking to inspire new ideas by showcasing the leading edge change makers across our country. Believing that there is much left to be done for youth in our region, Subagini is passionate about empowering youth, especially young women, to bring balance to our society. Subagini currently serves on the Advisor Board for both the Women's Economic Council and the Access Employment Entrepreneurship Program. To Subagini, leadership means creating space for dialogue, and it is only through diversity in leadership that we can achieve the beauty that's possible through collective thinking.

10 year old Nilaksan from AJAX Aces International Math Competition, Answering 200 Questions in 8 Minutes



Nilaksan Rajkumar, a Grade 5 student at Michaille Jean Public School (AJAX, ONTARIO) recently competed in the 22nd UCMAS International Competition, a math competition in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Nilaksan placed second in his group. January 29, 2018.

School math tests will seem like a breeze for Nilaksan Rajkumar, now that the 10 year old has aced an international math competition that requires kids to answer 200 math questions in just eight minutes.

"I had about two seconds for each question," says Nilaksan, a Grade 5 student at Michaille Jean public School in Ajax, Ontario. "That's not a lot of time."

In December, he travelled to Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia where he and thousands of other students took part in the UCMAS International Competition.

UCMAS is a math enrichment program offered outside of school that teaches students to do "mental math" — solving complex calculations in their head without using a calculator.

Nilaksan has been attending a UCMAS program on weekends for several years and has competed in national contests before, but this was his first time at an international event.

The 200 questions in his section of the competition included addition, subtraction, multiplication and division with a mix of one, two and three digit numbers.

"I was pretty scared and nervous," Nilaksan says. "They have a whistle that they blow to start the competition ... and then you just have to start and be focused. If I didn't know an answer right away, I put a dash next to it to come back."

Nilaksan succeeded in answering all 200 questions and finished in second place for his skill level — no small feat. "I felt happy," he says with a smile.

Nilaksan realized he was good at math in Grade 2, and started attending the UCMAS program because he was getting "a bit bored" with what was taught at school.

"It's kind of fun when there are a lot of ways to come to the same answer, I just really like it," he says, explaining why math is fun.

When he's not solving math problems, Nilaksan also enjoys playing soccer and writing assignments for English class.

Durham District School Board director of education Lisa Millar noted his achievement at the board's Jan. 22 meeting.

Courtesy: Ajax News Advertiser



Good Friday

By: Raymond Rajabalan



Good Friday, also called **Holy Friday**, is the Friday preceding Easter Sunday. It commemorates the Crucifixion of Jesus Christ and his death at Calvary.

As the centuries pass, the evidence is accumulating that, measured by His effect on history, Jesus is the most influential life ever lived on this planet. -- Historian Kenneth Scott Latourette

Here is a man who was born in an obscure village, the Child of a peasant woman. He worked in a carpenter shop until He was thirty, and then for three years He was an itinerant preacher. He never wrote a book. He never held an office. He never owned a home. He never had a family. He never went to college.

He never did one of the things that usually accompany greatness. He had no credentials but Himself. He had nothing to do with this world except the power of His Divine manhood. While still a young man, the tide of popular opinion turned against Him. He was turned over to His enemies. He went through the mockery of a trial. He was nailed to a Cross between two thieves. His executioners gambled for the only piece of property He had on earth while He was dying—and that was His coat. When He was dead He was taken down and laid in a borrowed grave through the pity of a friend. Such was His human life—Yet, He rose from the dead.

Twenty wide centuries have come and gone since the occurrence of a historical event on the Palestinian region of Middle East and today He is the Centerpiece of the human race and the Leader of the column of progress. Of all the armies that ever marched, and all the navies that ever were built, and all the parliaments that ever sat, and all the kings that ever reigned, put together, have not affected the life of man upon this earth as powerfully as has that One

Solitary Life. The crucifixion of Jesus created a vast impact in the history of mankind and resulted in a variety of social changes. The birth of the only son of God almighty brought in a ray of hope to the humanity stained by sins.

What was considered as an ordinary event at that time later turned out to be of great historical significance. The fact that the time of birth of Jesus was the basis for world history to be divided into Before Christ (B.C) and after Christ (A.D) emphasizes the tremendous significance of this epoch.

Jesus, the only begotten son of God who had the power of being able to be born in a palace with all the comforts and glory, chose to be born in a manger, depicting the greatness of humility. After 33 years of his life in this world when he sacrificed by himself on the cross on Mount Calvary on a Friday, he once again humbled himself.

His selfless sacrifice, offering his life to redeem the sinful mankind was the starting point of salvation for the humanity.

If there was one whose birth as well as death and his life between the two ends of human life cycle was of great historical significance, it was only the life of Jesus Christ and no one else.

There are 52 Fridays in each calendar year. Yet, why only Good Friday has gained significance worldwide?

■ It was the day when the Almighty Jesus, hung on the cross and gave his life for the salvation of the mankind.

■ It was on that day, the sinless son of God, volunteered to carry the weight of our sins, bled profusely underwent untold agony and breathed his last on the cross.

■ Good Friday was the day on which God showed to the world the depth of His Love for the mankind.

When Jesus was born in Bethle-

hem, a star was the guiding factor to the three wise men and helped them reach the place where infant Jesus was lying in the manger. Similarly cross, the identifying symbol of every Christian has become a permanent fixture in the history mankind as a symbol of salvation and redemption. It must be remembered that the death of Jesus, his supreme sacrifice for the entire world was not just for Christians alone but each and every one.

How the Cross did become a symbol of Redemption?

With the crucifixion of Christ, the cross which was considered to be a symbol of disgrace and humiliation has come to be accepted as a symbol of redemption.

In those days, only the worst criminals were crucified under the Roman rule. Those who were offended by the teachings of Christ, those Jewish leaders whose hypocrisy was exposed constantly schemed to lay false charges on Him and some how or other get him crucified. When their self interests were affected those opposed to the teachings enticed Judas Iscariot one of the disciples of Jesus, paying him 30 pieces of silver to help Jesus arrested.

Judas betrayed Jesus 2000 years ago but it is painful to note that incidences of betrayal continue to this very day. From time to time a few great men dare to be the guiding light for the oppressed people but their noble intentions continue to be blocked by traitors who want to safeguard their interests at any cost. There have been numerous such instances throughout the history but as always at the end the truth will prevail.

The enemies of Jesus Christ scored a temporary victory by crucifying Him to death. However, what they considered to be their victory finally proved to be a huge victory for Jesus

over death. The death of Christ on a Friday turned out to be day of victory over sins and that is why, we can consider it to be a Good

Friday since it has brought so much good to the mankind.

On the third day when Jesus rose to life, Jesus, the King of Kings He had victory over death. Jesus rose to life, to the disappointing of the jubilant high priests, to the joy of the sorrowing poor, to the delight of the frightened disciples.

He rose to life, to be with us. He rose to us counsel us, lead us out of difficult situations, fulfill our needs and to wipe our tears. Of course one may have to undergo unbearable pain and great sacrifice before we can see a light at the end of the tunnel. The death of Jesus very clearly proves this to us.

Many of our Saviour's most profound teachings are counterintuitive. "Love your enemies" is an example. The solutions that our minds are prone to develop are often different from those the Lord would have us pursue. "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord" (Isaiah 55:8).

When we encounter roadblocks in our efforts it is usual to lose hope but if we accept the fact that the thought and plans of God are different from ours, it will give us strength to bear the present agonies with the hope of a bright future.

The struggle for Justice and freedom from oppression cannot be stopped by crosses, torture and horrific killings. This has been proved over and over again throughout the history. All the sacrifices of any suffering people in every part of this world have always ended as a great uprising resulting in great freedom. This is the lesson that the death of Jesus teaches us.



WORDS OF PEACE



The Address to Peace

People shouldn't have to be told about something they already have, says Prem Rawat—yet that's precisely what he does. For decades, he has traveled the globe to speak about an experience of personal peace and fulfillment within inside every human being.

"I am of the opinion that I shouldn't need to be doing what I do," he says. "I shouldn't be going around talking to people about happiness. I shouldn't talk to anybody about peace. I shouldn't talk to anybody about being fulfilled. I think it's really sad that we have forgotten those fundamentals, and that somebody has to come along to remind us that each of us should be fulfilled."

"How," Mr. Rawat asks, "are we going to listen to anybody when we don't listen to ourselves? What did Socrates say? He said, 'Know thyself.' He was the one who also said we should question everything. The more questions someone asks, he said, the better it is. Yet the saying

he's most often remembered for isn't a question. 'Know thyself' doesn't sound like a question, does it? It sounds like an answer. Maybe we can finally have an answer that doesn't need a question.

"I'm not here to preach. I'm not here to say I have solutions to anyone's problems. I don't! Yet I know a place inside where there is a lamp—and it is lit. Any time it gets dark, we don't have to try to create a sun. A tiny lamp will do the job.

"Whatever anyone decides to do in his or her life is, of course, up to them. What I say to those who listen to me is: Please learn how to turn on that lamp within. Among all the things you know, also know the self. It just makes good sense to also know the self. That's what I'm talking about. Once you do, then you will find peace. That's the address to peace.

"People say, 'This happened in my life,' or 'That is happening in my life.' When we are not focused on life but focus on everything else that is

happening because of life, we are bound for a wreck. Is that wisdom? No, it's common sense. I understand that things that happen can be painful, but even in that pain, there is a fact. That fact is like a lit candle in incredible darkness. Even in incredible pain and suffering—which is darkness if there is anything that can be defined as darkness—there is a beautiful candle that is lit within. Even in that pain, we have not been abandoned.

"Whatever happens in your life—good times, bad times, right times, wrong times—I suggest you long for clarity. Long for clarity; long for joy. Long for this beauty within. Long for this gift—to be able to recognize this gift. Long to be fulfilled. Long to be in the light that is lit inside. We don't need to be afraid of the darkness of this world, because there is a light that each of us carries inside. It is the light of knowing—knowing that life is a gift, knowing that we are alive, knowing that we are so fortunate.

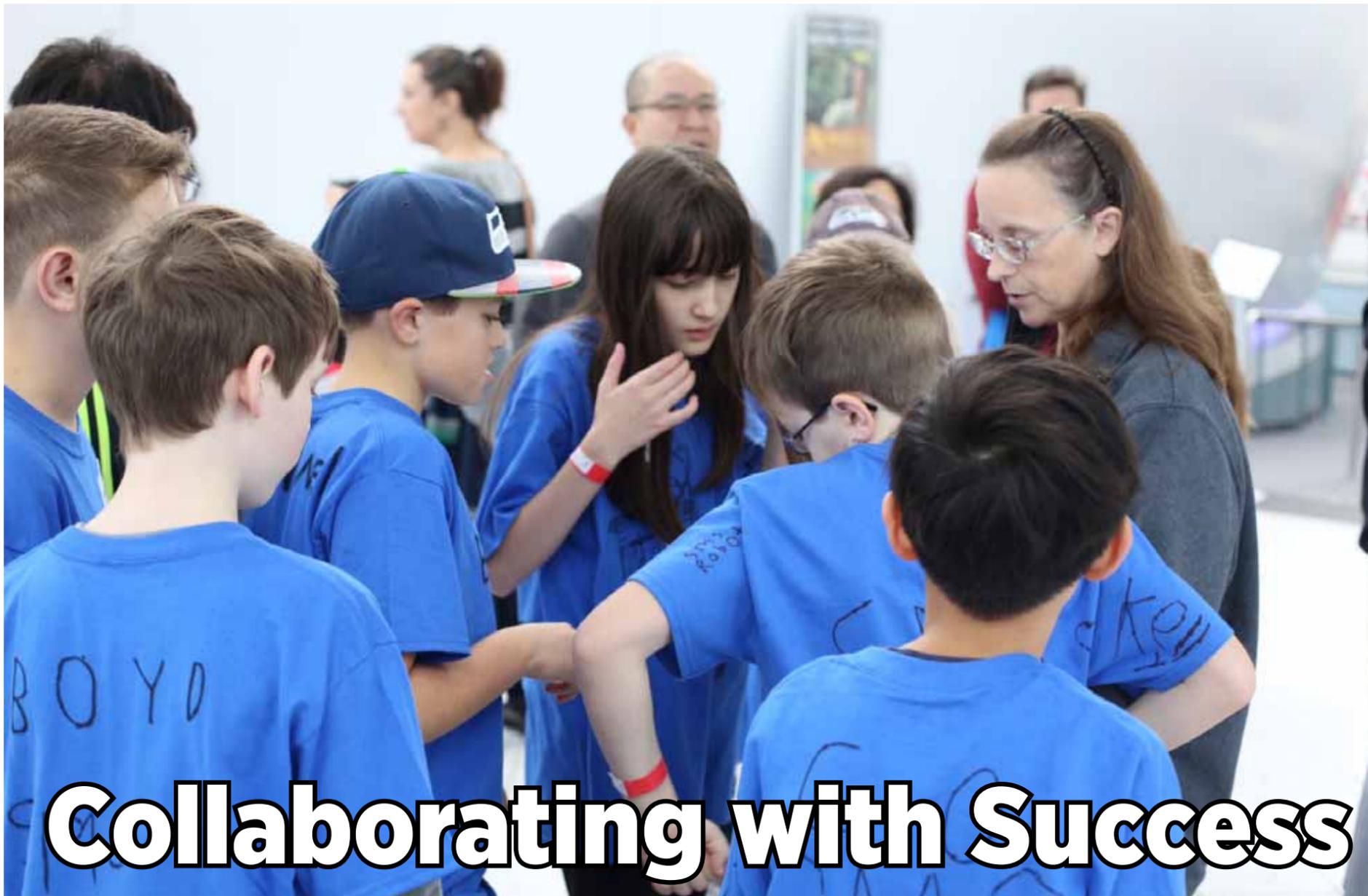
"It's in each of us. That's all. That's how simple it is: that we carry in us all the clarity we will ever need, all the joy we will ever need.

"When people tell me they've been searching, I ask them what they are searching for. They say they are searching for peace, for joy, for happiness.

"Well, that is rather pointless, because those qualities are already within inside. Searching isn't needed. How do you search for your own face? Do you climb mountains? Do you do penance? No. It's right there. All you need is a mirror. Look in the mirror, and what will you see? Your face. What do I offer? A mirror to find what's within. This is the way to know the self."

To learn more about Prem Rawat visit:

www.wopg.org
www.tprf.org
www.premrawat.com
www.timelesstoday.com



Collaborating with Success

By: Janani Srikantha

Group work, some students love it, and others don't. As we get into the midst of the second term, more assignments involve collaborative work. Whether students enjoy working with others or not, there are benefits to being part of a team. It allows students to approach multi-faceted, complex problems which they may not be able to do so on their own, and as a group they can break complex tasks into smaller roles. By doing this, students are able to take more risks in their approaches to learning and communication. This allows each student to reflect on their strengths, and learn to be comfortable with delegating tasks which centre around others' strengths. Students can consolidate their knowledge and skills, while sharing diverse perspectives of the issue. As a group they are able to debate a topic, challenge each other's assumptions, and learn to communicate their stance and rationale. In addition, students have to plan and manage their time when they are part of a group, and are held accountable to complete their tasks. They will be able to use peer feedback evaluate their work and adjust their product or performance accordingly. As students develop their own voice and a shared identity with the group, they will learn strategies to resolve differences. Each of these transdisciplinary skills is not only important at school, but pertinent

to the real world that we are preparing students for.

However, as we all know, group work doesn't always go according to plan. At times one person does all of the work, while others take equal credit. There are differences of opinions that lead to a product that isn't focussed. And, lack of communication and accountability creates a sub-par product. So, how can we help students develop their collaborative skills?

Choosing the right team

In instances where the team is not assigned, students need to understand who they work best with. Sometimes, the best friend is great to play during recess with, but not the best partner option for getting work done. This is true for me too. I have friends who I enjoy spending time with, but I know that we won't do our best work together in an academic setting. It is okay to acknowledge that and have 'play friends' and 'work friends'.

Know your strengths and ask for help

Students need to actively reflect all year and understand their strengths. They also need to know that it's acceptable to not be good at everything. They need to become comfortable with asking for help and letting someone else take an active role. Once students hone their strengths, they can find a team where they can contribute and let others help with the task. I, personal-

ly, am terrible at drawing or anything artistic. I have always sought team members who are extremely creative as that helps me improve my work. I have learnt so much from them, while working in a group, and I have respect for their talent. Together, our accomplishments are of a higher quality as we each contribute our strengths.

Get to know your team

How can we ask for help if we don't really know what others are good at? There have been instances where I have asked children about their peers, and they say, "Oh, I don't know them," even though they have been in the same homeroom class for six months. If students get to know their group members, not just in the classroom but outside as well, they can build a rapport that will allow the partnership to thrive. They don't need to be best friends, but they do need to understand who the other person is and what they are good at. The process of knowing each other also helps exponentially when resolving differences and conflicts.

Delegate and be accountable

Now that students are aware of each other's strengths and also know where they need assistance, tasks can be delegated. It's important for students to learn how to take a large project and break it down into smaller sections. They need to know how to create a chart to set various deadlines and to keep track of their completed tasks. There are many digital tools

such as Padlet, Mural, MindMeister, and Stormboard, that allow students to access a document which can be edited whether they are in the classroom or working at home. This gives students a visual representation of each group member's responsibilities, and helps each member remain accountable to complete their task.

As students begin to be more comfortable working in groups, they also develop skills that are essential throughout their lives. Vince Lombardi said, "Individual commitment to a group effort - that is what makes a team work, a company work, a society work, a civilization work".

Janani Srikantha is a certified teacher who is experienced with the Ontario curriculum and the International Baccalaureate. She provides tutoring using personalized learning plans based on students' needs.



She is knowledgeable on integrating technology to redefine learning that is inclusive of all students. Janani has led workshops for educators and parents on topics that address different facets of education. For more information or queries on how to help your child with learning, please email info@thinkshif.edu or visit Thinkshift Edu on Facebook.





Special Feature

Kamal Haasan Launches Political Party 'Makkal Needhi Maiam'

Actor-turned-politician Kamal Haasan on Wednesday, February 21st formally announced the name of his political party in Madurai, Tamil Nadu. He said his party will be called Makkal Needhi Maiam.

Kamal Haasan unfurled his party's flag at the event, featuring six united hands — three each in white and red — with a white star in the middle. He said the six hands indicate six States or territories (Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana and Puducherry) of South India and the star is the people, he said - explaining the party logo featured in the flag.

The party website, www.maiam.com now calls for volunteers with slogans like "Let us unite to build a progressive Thamizh Nadu," interestingly spelling "Thamizh" with "zh" instead of "Tamil" used commonly.

"The rest of my life is for you. That's why this hurry and I want it succeed in my lifetime," Kamal Haasan said at the inaugural rally. "This party, registered in the Election Commission, will not be the one which ends with me. It will



go on for at least three-four generations more."

Video clipping of Kerala Chief Minister, Pinarayi Vijayan's felicitation was played at the venue. Vijayan said Kamal Haasan is dear to him and people of Kerala. Kamal Haasan started his film career in Malayam industry, he pointed out.

"Kamal has been a unifying factor for Tamil Nadu and Kerala. Tamil Nadu has witnessed several social and political reforms that has impacted Kerala too. He hoped that Kamal Haasan's entry into political arena would enrich Tamil Nadu. He exuded confidence that the new party upholds secularism democracy and pluralistic society where all voices are heard," Chief Minister, Pinarayi Vijayan said.



Tamil film icon Kamal Haasan with Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal during the launch of political party "Makkal Neethi Maiam" in Madurai.— pic: via PTI



Kamal Haasan visited former President Abdul Kalam's home before launching party name



People gather in support of Tamil film icon Kamal Haasan as he announces the launch of his political party 'Makkal Neethi Maiam', in Madurai.

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New Business Centre Netwyn Place opens in Scarborough

By Siva Sivapragasam

A unique work space in a shared office community offering a number of office and business services is the concept of Netwyn Place, the new business centre that opened in Scarborough recently.

Small businesses, entrepreneurs, professionals and anyone in between will be provided shared office working conditions with necessary tools, space and other office services to achieve their goals.

Business persons, professionals, industry leaders, corporate leaders,

chamber representatives and members of the Media were among the guests who were present at the official opening recently and were provided a tour of the virtual office. The new business centre offers both short and long term rental with event space for meetings, lectures, product demos and training facilities.

Among the variety of office services offered by Netwyn Place are Use of Business Address, Mail Handling and Parcel Handling, Telephone Answering, Message Forwarding, Hot Desk or Boardroom Access etc.

Business persons and profes-

sionals who would like to utilize the services of Netwyn Place are also assured of Boardroom facilities including Video Conferencing, Hourly Rental, Natural Lighting, Catering Services.

The official launch of Netwyn Place witnessed Ontario Provincial Minister Tracy MacCharles who is also the MPP for Pickering/Scarborough East gracing the occasion as the Chief Guest and making a speech followed by presenting Kula Sellathurai, the CEO of Netwyn Place a certificate of Greetings for the new centre. Kula Sellathurai explained

to the guests the concept behind the new business centre and how it will be of use to business persons in moving to a virtual office with all upto date facilities that will assist them in promoting and developing their business ventures. Several guests present signed up for membership at the event.

Netwyn Place is situated at 10 Thornmount Drive, Scarborough.

(Seen here are some pictures taken at the event.

Picture Courtesy: ADDS Pool)





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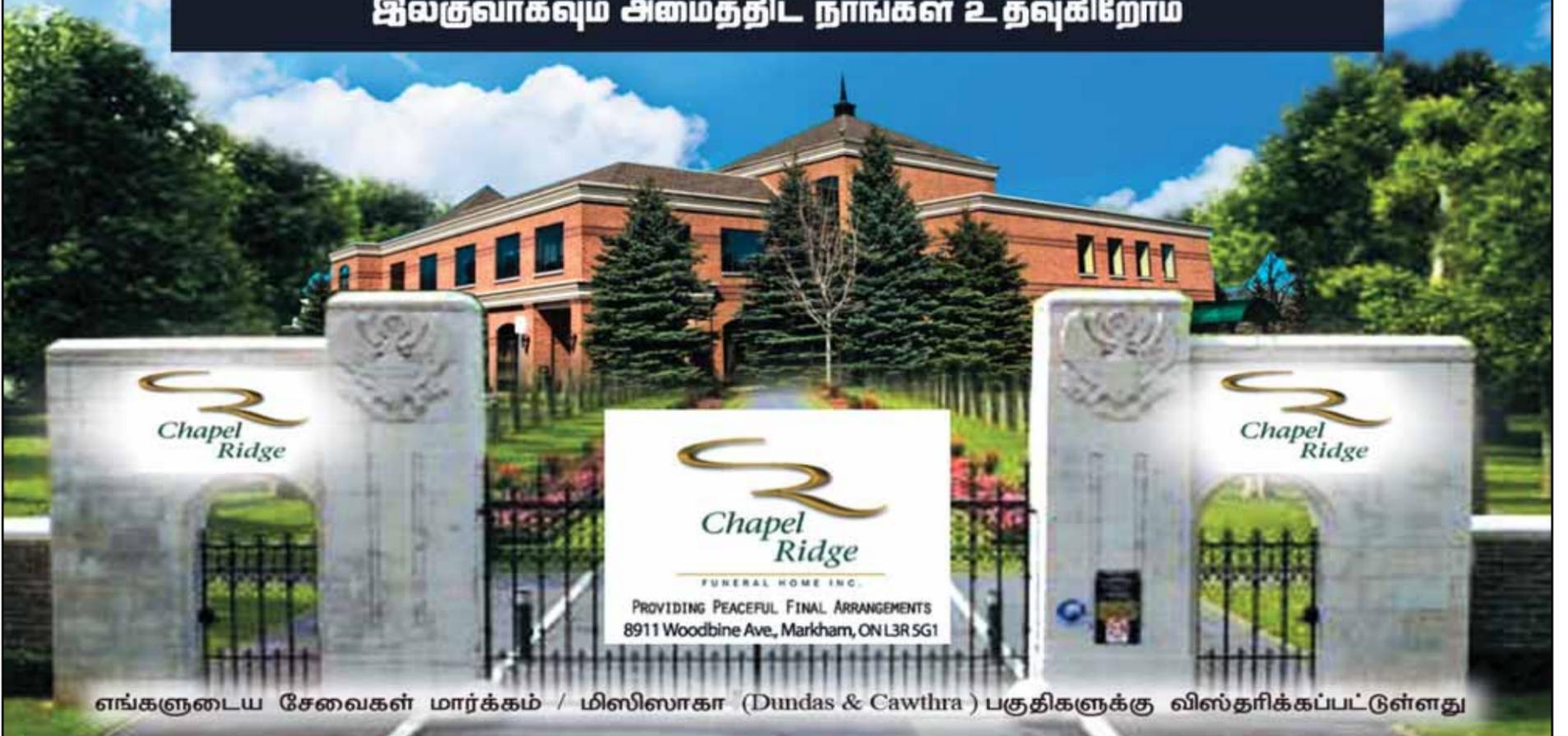
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FAREWELL WINTER! WELCOME SPRING!

**“If winter comes can
spring be far behind”**
- Percy B. Shelley



By: C. Kamalaharan

The severe cold winter
Has made my life bitter
Kept me in house detention
Leading a life of tension
Inhaling the exhaled air
While sitting in cushioned chair
Viewing the tensed cricket
Lying under cozy blanket
Or viewing the illogical tele serial
While eating a bowl of hot cereal
And munching savoury junk food
In addition to all types of seafood
That leads to uncontrolled gluttony
What a life of continuous monotony!
Daily I spend sleepless nights
Wearing thermal winter tights
Longing for the refreshing daybreak
To role out of bed and be awake.
Peeping through the window panes
Saw the sights of deserted plains
Where skeletal trees remain bare
As though without any one to care.
Snow falling on the grounds
Piled up in large mounds.
The whole area remains misty
Resembling a ghost city.
In my twilight years
I spend my live in tears
Unable to meet my peers
And spend time with ‘Cheers.’
With the approach of winter’s sunset
The environment seems well set
The whole area will be alive
And dormant creatures will thrive.
Winter will soon give way
To spring that’s on the way.
While activities in winter will cease
Its nothing but nature’s way of designing
Winter for planning and spring for
executing.





FAITH IN GOD



‘Thanak kuvamai illathan tharl sernttharkkalal,
Manak kavalai mattal arithu’

(Kural: 1-10)

Those who seek refuge in God can escape the anxieties or worries of the mind. The alphabets begin with the letter ‘A’. In like manner, the universe begins with God. The Bible acknowledges the fact that God is the origin and source of life itself. “I am the Alpha and the Omega” (Revelations: 2:16). Learning and scholarship are no value, if it does not lead one to worship at the feet of the Almighty. The psalms of the Bible reiterate the idea that the human soul thirsts for God like the thirsty land. The right knowledge invariably takes us to God. Those who seek

God diligently will be able to find eternal life in this world and the next. Those who have taken refuge in the feet of the Almighty (who is above the frailties of desire and hatred) will not be faced with the problem of being overcome by evil. The twin deeds of dark illusion, will not affect those who delight meaningfully in God’s praise.

The central message of Baghavath Gita gives the idea “that He who rejoices, nor hates or grieves, nor desires, renouncing good and evil, full of devotion, he is dear to Me”. Those who tread the path of the one who

is immune to the five senses and the evils thereof, will attain lasting life. Except those who have found the feet of God, who is the fountain of all virtue, cannot hope to cross the seas of sin. The head that does not bow before the Lord of all the eight attributes (self-independence, immaculate body, natural understanding, omniscience, infinite detachment, infinite mercy, omnipotence, limitless bliss) in prayer, is like a body with all its senses defunct. Those who meditate on the Lord’s feet will cross the sea of birth; others will not.



Valluvar’s Views



Rev Thaninayagam Adikal Memorial Lecture held in Jaffna, Sri Lanka North

Rev Thaninayagam Adikal Research Centre held the Rev Thaninayagam Adikal Memorial Lecture on Saturday 17th of February in Jaffna, Sri Lanka North at 10:15 in the morning.

In this occasion, Rev Dr Amuthan Adikalar from India delivered the speech on the Roving Ambassador of Tamil, "Thaninayagam Adikal's work on the spirituality of Tamils."

In his speech, he pointed out that

the Roving Ambassador of Tamil Rev Thaninayagam Adikal travelled to many countries and carried out studies and research. Rev Dr Amuthan Adikal said that Rev Father Thaninayagam espoused the existence of Tamils, their antiquities, spirituality and Tamil mythology in the limelight for the world to see.

The chief guest at this occasion Rev Dr Fr S.J. Emmanuel along with the

special guest Rev Dr Amuthan Adikalar spoke on the services of Rev Fr Thaninayagam Adikal.

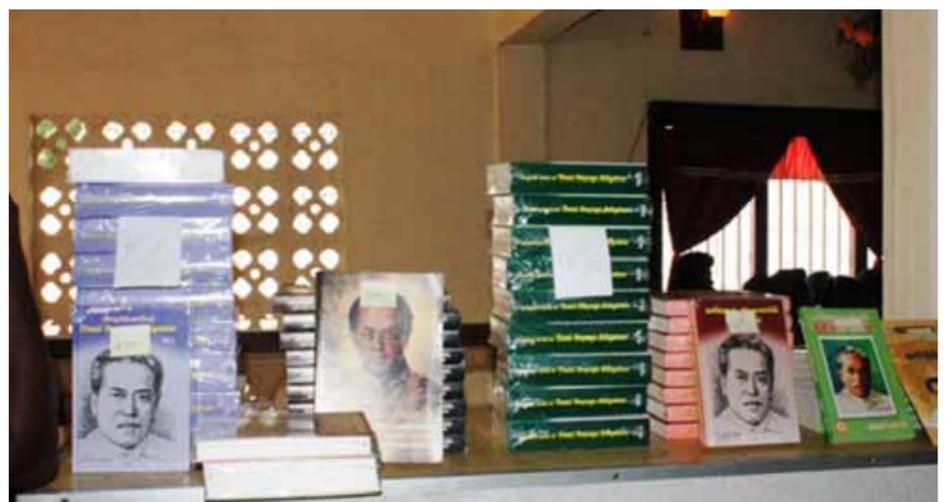
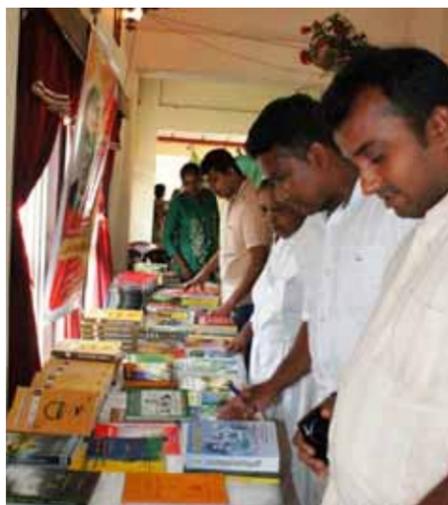
Other guests of honour included senior journalist Mr. Rajan Philip; Mr. Anton Philip Sinnarasa participated as the chair of the assembly. Rev Dr Fr S.J. Emmanuel's and Rev Dr Amuthan Adikalar were felicitated with golden shawls.

Emmanuel Arnold, Member of Jaff-

na Municipal Council also attended the event.

At the end of the event, a book fair featuring several the Tamil language-specific booklets of Rev Thaninayagam Adikal were also held.

Hundreds of students, teachers, journalists, priests and monks participated in this event. The entire event was coordinated by of the 'Arudpani' Jayasekaram Adikalar.



The Failure of Utopian Societies

By: Kanisha Sritharan

Achieving utopia has long been the ideal society humanity has wished to attain. However, one could argue that the modern society has evolved to quite the contrary – a dystopia. Dystopia is a term coined and first used by Sir Thomas More. It is based on the world “utopia”, which is derived from the Greek term, “ou-toopas”, meaning achieving a state of perfection. The modern world is currently quite far from the ideal society, and this is accredited to the flawed nature of humanity. One could state that all efforts to achieving a utopian society would be futile as a result of human tendencies. Loss of individuality and the quest for utopia always results in dystopia and chaos. This will all accumulate to the mass failure of such a society.

Human nature is one with several flaws. It is in one's nature to make mistakes and learn from such faults to better oneself. However, in a utopian society, committing any errors will result in a failure of this system. By not enabling one to make any mistakes and to learn from such errors, the individual is thereby restricted in any actions that they make. Such limitations will pose large barriers in the expansion of humanity as well as improvements to society. The course of life and evolution will be restricted as a result of imposing such limitations. Furthermore, to truly attain a utopian society, every individual at fault must truly be eradicated from society, or cast away, to attain such a state of perfection. However, all of humanity must therefore not be a part of such a society, as all individuals do commit error simply due to the fact that it is inevitably a vital component of human nature. Without the ability to make mistakes, to learn and to grow from these errors, humans would lose the ability to change and better themselves, thus losing one's individuality.

The loss of individuality is a primary concern based by the creation of utopian societies. To live in a perfect society, the inhabitants must also be perfect. The creation of the ideal human will result in the loss of one's true self. All of humanity must assimilate into the same homogenous population. The eradication of various religions, beliefs, cultural values, and difference in opinions will destroy possibilities of differences between humans. The lack of difference between each individual aids in resolving any disputes as a result of such differences from occurring. However, historically, such acts of eradicating difference between humans only furthered chaos and disruption, such as the Holocaust. Equality, a very crucial element in every society must be upheld and is the basic right of

every human. However, when humanity must lose its morals, values, and religious upbringings to attain equality. This leads to mass eruptions of violence. Equality amongst humans should be an element that enables one, despite their religious beliefs, ethnicity, or values, to be treated equally. When one must lose their individuality, it leads to destruction and the loss of equality.

The quest for a utopian society has led to the creation of dystopic environment. When an individual becomes fixated with simply achieving one idea, as soon as it becomes a failure, it often leads to several problems, shaping into a destructive force. To create a utopian society, if an individual becomes too deeply rooted with the idea, it could lead to one committing malicious deeds to achieve this state of life. Historically, humanity's deep fixation to achieve such a society has led to mass chaos. In many wars, particularly during the 19th Century, this is demonstrated in the heinous acts of cleansing society of unwanted individuals, particularly of certain races or cultures, leading to the death of many innocent lives. Humanity's obsession in living in the ideal society causes one to commit irrational actions. It furthers the dystopic environment, causing turmoil. The concern of individuals to elevate society to perfection has been proven to create massive backlash; thus, emphasizing not the need for perfection amongst human beings, but rather, the importance of harmony between perfection and imperfection.

The inability to accept failure has been a root cause of the creation of destruction and a vice of human nature. As a result, an individual when unable to achieve what they have desired, often destroys themselves or those surrounding them.

The creation of a utopian society will forever be an ongoing process as the needs of every individual and society as a whole is continuously changing. Many values and beliefs of past centuries have not been adapted into today's society. Likewise, in a utopian society, as needs and wants also evolve, this society will no longer be perfect. As a result, society will need continuously undergo changes and reform, leading to confusion and disputes amongst individuals. Society for every individual cannot be created to be more perfect. However, it is crucial to evolve and create a more efficient environment for everyone.

Achieving a utopian society seems impossible. However, creating a more efficient and positive environment is the duty of every individual. It is human tendency to make errors, and it is these mistakes that enable individuals to learn and grow



together. Rather than turning to methods, such as futile assimilation, it is important for humanity as a whole to realize the grave dangers and destruction. All in all, it is crucial to create a society that

is willing to accept others, adopt to the ever-changing needs of humanity, and to learn from these mistakes; therefore creating a positive society for all.



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PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERS DAY

By: **Uthayan Thurairajah**

Ontario Society of Professional Engineers (OSPE) received formal recognition from the Legislative Assembly of Ontario that March 1, 2018, will mark the first official Professional Engineers Day in Ontario. Professional Engineers Day marks a significant win for Engineers and an important day for professional engineers from coast-to-coast as the first day of its kind in Canada.

Granville Anderson, MPP (Durham) sponsored the motion with the support from the Professional Engineers Ontario (PEO), for making Professional Engineers Day a reality. Members of the Government, the Official Opposition, and the Third Party all stressed the importance of recognizing the vital role that professional engineers play in Ontario.

It is time for engineers to get credit for all the great things they do. A day to officially recognize and thank professional engineers for their significant contributions to the society. This accomplishment marks a significant milestone for professional engineers.

Who is Engineer?



The word engineer came from the Latin words *ingeniare* ("to contrive, devise") and *Ingenium* ("cleverness"). Engineers work in a variety of fields to analyze, design, develop and evaluate large-scale, complex systems. It can mean to improve or maintain current systems or creating brand new projects. Engineers will design and draft blueprints, visit in the field and manage projects.

The professional engineer (P. Eng.) license is the engineering profession's highest standard of competence, a symbol of achievement and assurance of quality. Engineers must complete a four-year University degree, work under a Professional Engineer for at least four years, pass two intensive competency exams to become licensed.

Why Engineers are Important?

Engineers are essential in the society who create a new world. We can save an engineer over a politician, an athlete, a celebrity, and others. Not only engineers are essential, but also we know that the engineer would quickly design something to save the other sinking person.

Some engineering quotes from some of the best Engineering minds in the world. "A doctor can manage to kill one person at a time, but an engineer can kill thousands" – Anonymous. "A pessimist will tell you the glass is half-empty; An optimist will tell you the glass is half-full, and the engineer will tell you the glass is twice the size it needs to be" – Anonymous. "Engineers create the world that has never been; Scientists study the world as it is." - Theodore von Kármán.

What is The Role of an Engineer?

The engineer spent their time on researching, finding, applying, and transferring information. During the design process, the responsibilities of the en-

gineer may include defining problems, conducting research, analyzing criteria, finding and analyzing solutions, and making decisions.



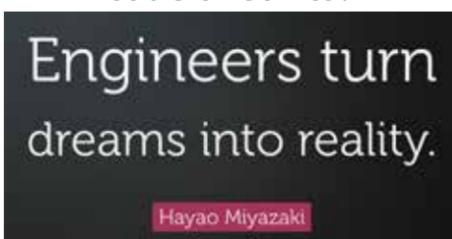
The practice of engineering has an essential impact on society. Engineering work is based on that relationship with the community. An engineer's conduct toward employers, toward other engineers, toward clients, and toward the public is an essential part of the life. The education process and professional societies pay inadequate attention to the area. Professional competency is an integral part of the engineering process.

Why Ethics is vital for Engineers?

Engineering is an important profession and expected to exhibit the highest standards of honesty and integrity. Engineers must perform their duties under professional conduct that requires adherence to the highest principles of ethical behavior. Engineering ethics is a system of moral laws that apply to the practice of engineering. The field examines and sets the obligations of engineers to society, to their clients, and to the profession.

Ethics is a theory of moral values. We can see ethics as a more detailed form of morality. A specific organization, within the broader social group, will often establish ethical rules to define a code of behavior that will govern its operation.

What is the purpose of the code of ethics?



A code of ethics is a professional order as a way to protect the public and the reputation of the professionals. Indeed, people who breach their code of ethics incur disciplinary actions that can range from a warning to dismissal or expulsion from their professional order.

Ethics is vital to every society as it plays a critical role in shaping the individual's behaviors within the organization. Human conduct and ethics are no exception to this rule. Ethics of the old days have been poisoned and are inadequate for business self-governance due to changes in the environment and cultural norms.

What is good engineering practice?

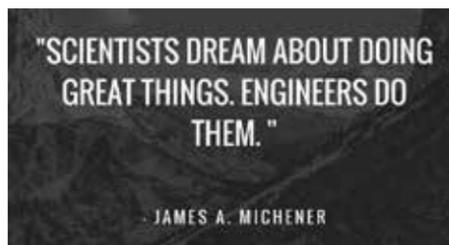


Uthayan Thurairajah, Ph.D., RSE, LC, P.Eng., is a Project Manager at WSP with over twenty years of experience in Electrical Engineering and Lighting field, and he also holds a Lecturer position at Ryerson University & professor at Centennial. Uthayan is a member of several Canadian and international professional association including Professional Engineers Ontario (PEO) and Association for Prevention Teaching and Research (APTR). He has worked on multi-disciplinary lighting and electrical projects for various clients. He researches the subject of light and lighting and taken part in several projects. He also has extensive research experience in the value of lighting design in the mental, emotional, and social well-being of a person. He is a frequent presenter and author of lighting design & health. He is passionate about integrating science and health into the lighting design.



"Good engineering practice (GEP)" is engineering and technical activities that ensure that a company manufactures products of the essential quality as expected. Sound engineering practices apply to all industries that require engineering. A method for determining the

and indeed to the world. OSPE will continue to be at the forefront of advancing the professional and economic interests of engineers across Ontario, driving investment, job creation as well as recognition for professional engineers.



features and metrics that can be used to evaluate the quality based on analysis of customer preferences and needs.

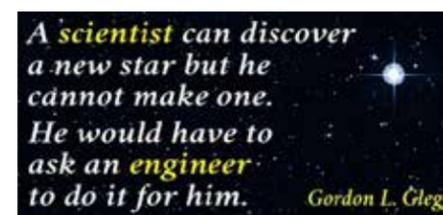
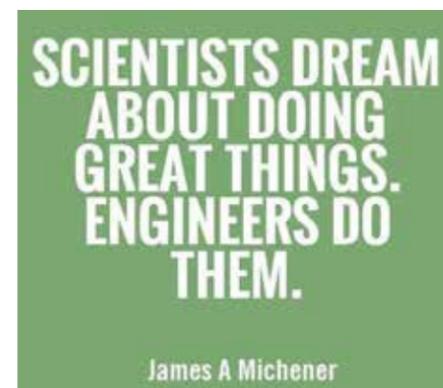
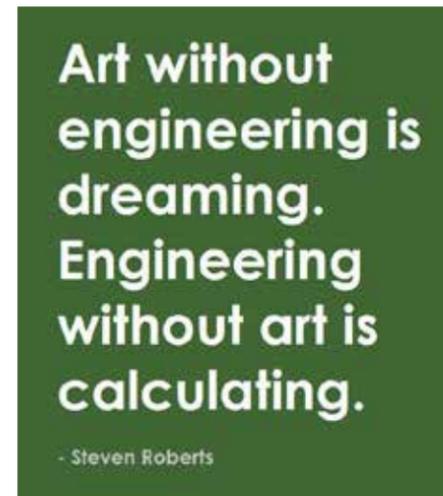
Engineering is one of the most impressive and possibly profitable professional paths. It is also demanding to gain the required skills and knowledge to get a foothold in the enterprise. Engineering, like most math and science-based careers, is slightly more rigid. Potential applicants need to have appropriate qualifications and also to present proof that they hold other skills.

The "top" engineers have different strengths and weaknesses that they bring to their teams and projects. However, they have some essential skills in common which allow them to work on the significant engineering projects all over the world.

significance of engineers day

Ontario has over 85,000 professional engineers. The engineers day recognition would increase public awareness of engineers contribute to society, through wealth and job creation, innovation and productivity while protecting the public interest. Ontario's engineers deserve recognition for their contributions in the province. The timing of this coincides with the start of National Engineering Month.

Now, OSPE has secured approval of a Professional Engineers day from the Ontario government. OSPE plans for more significant promotion and recognition of the value that Professional Engineers bring to the province





MANAGING YOUR MONEY

Building your portfolio

Achieve investment goals with less volatility

OVERVIEW

Choosing between risk and return is one of the most important decisions that an investor has to make. To reap higher returns, you must generally accept more risk; however, in many stock markets around the world, stocks with the highest volatility have not necessarily been the best performers over many time periods. During some periods, the least volatile companies have actually done better. This has added further uncertainty among investors regarding how to effectively invest their assets.

What is a low volatility strategy?

When market volatility occurs, recovering from a decline in a portfolio value takes time. The larger the decline, the greater the market gain that must occur to break even again. Since the market declines of 2008, many investors look to reduce risk in their investment portfolios, but realize that moving to bonds may not achieve the returns that they desire. A low volatility strategy is designed to participate in stock market growth, but limit the downside risk compared to the broad market. For example, if your investment incurred a loss of 50% in the stock market, your investment would have to grow by 100% to recover your loss, while a less significant decline of 20% requires a much lower margin of recovery. Reducing the level of volatility your investment could incur is a primary objective of low volatility equity funds. Because low volatility funds tend to experience smaller relative declines, they are expected to recover more quickly than higher risk investments. Consequently, a low volatility strategy is expected to deliver results that afford investors a smoother ride towards achieving their long-term investment goals. This lower volatility approach often appeals to investors who are drawing income from their portfolios and have had to sell during a decline, resulting



in a greater loss.

Low-beta stock selection

Beta is a financial term that relates to a stock's sensitivity to broad market movements. Where the market is assigned a value of 1.00, a beta less than 1.00 is viewed as less risky than the broad market.

Studies have shown that less volatile U.S. stocks have outperformed higher-risk U.S. stocks over the last 30 years. Some have referred to this as an anomaly because high-risk stocks are expected to outperform in the long term. Regardless, during the last thirty years, less volatile stocks have benefited from smaller declines during several market corrections while still benefiting from market growth during advancing markets. The end result is that low-beta stocks tend to have higher risk-adjusted returns than the market over time.

Options strategy

These Low Volatility Equity Funds use an options strategy to help control volatility.

Puts are purchased to limit the fund's decline relative to the market should significant volatility occur. Put options are financial contracts between two parties that give the fund the right, but not the obligation, to sell a specified amount of an underlying stock at a specified price within a specified time period. This is equivalent

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to paying for insurance against an extreme equity decline. While it can be expensive, it is worthwhile because when the value of stocks decline, the fund is able to exercise its right to sell shares at a certain price, even though certain stocks may be trading below that price.

The funds also sell call options, which can be an effective strategy for improving their absolute and risk-adjusted returns. A call option is also a financial contract between two parties. In this instance, however, the fund would be obligated to sell an agreed quantity of a particular stock to the purchaser of the option at a certain time and for a certain price (strike price). Call options are typically sold when it is believed there is limited upside left in a particular stock. While a certain amount of profit might be given up should the stock continue to rise in value, the premium that has been paid for the option is expected in most instances to offset further gains. Plus, the fund still incurs a gain up to the strike price.

Low volatility stock selection

Beta is only one measure of assessing risk. There are different schools of thought that feel there are other methods that are equal if not better at reducing market risk compared to lowering beta alone. Low volatility stocks are identified through such factors as valuation, leverage and a variety of quality and risk metrics, which are good indicators of future risk. Low volatility stocks may also have a low beta as a byproduct of the aforementioned factors, but it is not the sole criteria for identifying lower risk.

Who should invest in low volatility funds?

Investors are increasingly looking for options to minimize risk within their equity portfolios without necessarily sacrificing returns. One option for investors is to consider investing in lower volatility equities. Low volatility equity funds are ideal for investors who want exposure to equity markets due to the higher growth potential that stocks offer, but want to avoid the excessive market risk that is associated with more traditional equity funds. When investing in low volatility funds, it is recommended that they be held within a well diversified portfolio. This would include allocations to equity investments from around the world as well as an appropriate allocation to fixed income that will provide further risk reduction over the long term. It is important to note that the expected risk associated with these low volatility funds is relative to their corresponding equity benchmark and that these funds will not totally eliminate market volatility, but attempt to remove a portion of it. As a result, this investment strategy may not be appropriate for investors who are not comfortable with any level of investment risk due to their need for capital preservation. Circumstances such as those would likely warrant an investment in a money market fund or perhaps a GIC, with the lower return expectation that they bring.

Disclaimer:

This report specifically written and published as a general source of information only, and is not intended as a solicitation to buy or sell specific investments or insurance, nor is it intended to provide investment advice. For more information on this topic and/or to arrange a free educational seminar please contact me.

CONSUMER PROPOSAL AND ITS IMPACT ON CREDIT RATING

Consumer Proposal and Its Impact on Credit Rating

Overwhelmed with debt and looking for relief? Wondering if bankruptcy is your only option? Well the good news is that it's not. Increasingly, individuals struggling with debt issues are finding consumer proposals are a solution with some real benefits over filing for bankruptcy - like a reduced impact on their credit rating.

Understanding Possible Credit Ratings

Your credit rating in Canada is indicated by a scale of numbers ranging from 1 to 9, prefixed by the letter "R". Each creditor you owe money to assigns you a specific score on your credit report based on the following rating system:

1. R1 means you pay your loan on time.
2. R2 means your payments are 30 days late.
3. R3 means your payments are 60 days late.
4. R4 means your payments are 90 days

late.

5. R5 means your payments are 120 days late.

6. R6 is typically not used.

7. R7 means you are in a consumer proposal, debt management plan or a consolidation order.

8. R8 means that a secured creditor has taken steps to exercise their security options (e.g. repossessed your car).

9. R9 means bad debt placed for collection or considered un-collectible, or you are bankrupt.

This means the ideal credit rating you want on your credit report is R1 anything higher is increasingly negative. Some of the most common concerns that comes up during initial consultations revolve around how a consumer proposal will impact the clients credit rating. This apprehension is generally due to the misconception that once a consumer proposal is filed it might not be possible able to attain loans or secure credit.

Well, this is not the case.

Imagine you get into a minor car accident. In financial terms, it means you will not be able to pay your creditors in the promised time. Now imagine the same person gets into a second accident a few months after the first accident. Will he be able to get a loan or car insurance? Possibly, but there might be higher insurance interest rates attached until the person's record improves.

Similarly, entering a consumer proposal will only affect your credit for a time. Once you have fully paid off a consumer proposal, your credit rating will be impacted for the next three years. During this time, financial institutions will scan through your two-year repayment history and then make judgment whether you are eligible for a loan or not. Secondary lending institutions might be willing to lend you money shortly after you filed the consumer proposal, though the interest rates may be higher. With careful management,

an individual should be able to rebuild his credit rating.

Will I have to wait three years to apply for another loan?

The ability to borrow once you are done with your consumer proposal depends on many factors like your current income, amount you are borrowing and the value of assets you will be pledging as security.

It is best to consult your credit counselor, or review a list of lenders able to lend you money upon your consumer proposal completion. Provided that you have sufficient income and appropriate down payments, and with two credit cards with a minimum limit of \$1,500, it is possible that you may qualify for a new mortgage as soon as two years after completion of your consumer proposal.

Please visit our website www.gtacredit.com or contact Mark at 416-650-5400



CHANGES TO INCOME TAX RULES FOR 2017

BY: ARI A. ARIARAN, CPA, CGA

Canadians will ring in this year with a number of tax changes that will affect the bottom line of federal and provincial governments. Here's a look at some of them. Be aware of changes to the income tax rules that will affect your 2017 filing. If you have kids, you're going to see a major change in your tax credits. You will no longer be able to claim some child-related expenses such as art, fitness, education, and textbooks. However, you will see the newly implemented Canada Child Benefit, which will be paid out in a monthly sum determined by your income.

Income splitting with your spouse is now no longer an option on your federal taxes. Previously, you would be able to tack on some of your own income as a higher earner, to your spouse, who would be a lower earner's income. This would lower the taxes you would have to pay on your own income. From now on, though, you will have to claim all of your own income and your spouse all of their own income and pay the taxes on them individually.

Tax Credits

The child tax credit for arts and fitness is gone. Since this tax credit was capped at a maximum of \$500 for fitness and \$250 for arts per child in 2016, its removal will not likely have a major impact on most people's 2017 return.

Education

The tax credit for education and textbooks for full- or part-time students was eliminated effective December 31, 2016. Taxpayers with unused tax credits from 2016 or prior years will be able to carry them forward and apply them against future taxes. The tuition tax credit is, however, still in effect.

In recognition of the need to support education in technical skills, the number of courses eligible for the tuition

tax credit will be increased. Occupational courses provided by post-secondary institutions within Canada will be granted the tax credit. If a bursary is provided, the amount will likely qualify for either the full or basic scholarship exemption. Examination fees paid to take an occupational, trade, or professional examination to obtain a professional status recognized by federal or provincial statute, or to be licensed or certified as a tradesperson, to allow you to practice in Canada, may also be eligible for the tuition tax credit. However, if your fees were paid by your employer or the employer of one of your parents, or by a government program and not included in your income, you cannot claim the credit.

Public Transit Tax Credit-Elimination

Currently, a non-refundable tax credit of 15% is available to an individual in respect of the cost of eligible public transit passes. The budget proposes to eliminate this tax credit for costs incurred for the use of transit services after June 2017.

Indexing

RRSP contributions, tax brackets, and various tax credits will increase in 2017 to reflect the adjustment for inflation as measured by the Consumer Price Index (CPI). The percentage increase for 2017 has been pegged at 1.4% (i.e., the 2017 personal exemption will increase to \$11,635 from \$11,474 in 2016).

The notable exception to the inflationary increase is the Tax Free Savings Account that will continue to have a \$5,500 per annum maximum contribution limit.

Caregiver Amounts

Prior to 2017, three credits were available for those in need of assistance:

- caregiver credit
- infirm dependent credit
- family caregiver tax credit.



To simplify the process and to recognize the need to provide financial support to caregivers, a new Canada caregiver credit will provide a 15% non-refundable tax credit maximizing at \$6,883 of expenses for the care of parents, brothers and sisters, adult children and other specified relatives who have infirmities. An additional tax credit up to \$2,150 on expenses is available for the care of a dependent spouse, a common-law partner, or a minor child with infirmities. The tax credit will be calculated using a formula that reduces the credit dollar for dollar once the dependent's net income exceeds \$16,163.

Intangibles

Prior to 2017, any gain from the disposition of intangibles such as goodwill or trademarks, was treated as regular business income and was not subject to the capital cost allowance rules. Now, any gain from the disposition of goodwill and trademarks will become fully taxable as investment income. Companies will now be required to transfer the cumulative eligible capital pool as at December 31, 2016, to a new capital cost allowance class 14.1. This pool will be depreciated at 7% annually on the declining balance for the first 10 years, then at 5% annually thereafter. For the expenditures incurred after December 31, 2016, a 5% depreciation rate will apply.

Ontario Liberals nix provincial HST from hydro bills

Ontarians will get an eight-per-cent rebate on rising hydro bills and see the

maximum total cost of borrowing for a payday loan lowered to \$18 per \$100 borrowed from \$21 per \$100.

The province is also doubling the first-time homebuyers' maximum land transfer tax refund to \$4,000 and is introducing its carbon cap and trade system.

The working income tax benefit (WITB) is a federal refundable tax credit for low-income individuals or families with working income over \$3,000 (base amount for most provinces and territories). The tables for 2017 have been confirmed to CRA amounts. The tables for 2018 are our calculations based on the 2018 indexation factors, and will be confirmed when WITB amounts are available from CRA in November 2018.

The per-kilometer amounts that may be paid tax-free to employees or officers as reimbursement for motor vehicle expenses incurred while traveling for business purposes using their personal vehicle will increase by 1 cent, to 55 cents per km for the first 5,000 km and 49 cents per km for each additional km. For the Territories, the rates are also increased by 1 cent, to 59 cents per km for the first 5,000 km and 53 cents per km for each additional km.

T4s

Prior to 2017, employers were able to supply employees with their T4 information slips electronically if the employee gave permission. Effective 2017, the employer will not need permission. The employer must, however, have safeguards in place to ensure confidentiality and provide paper copies to former employees or employees on leave or upon request. Employees must ensure the information received is correct in order to avoid penalties and interest if they file an incorrect T1 tax form.

Should you need any additional tax related information Ari can be reached at 647 893 8295.

Becoming a Canadian Citizen is now easier for Minor Children

The Canadian government is encouraging all immigrants including the minor children, who meet the requirements to apply for Canadian citizenship.

In June 2017, the royal ascent of Bill C-6 immediately brought into force a legislative amendment that removed the requirement to be 18 years old to apply for a grant of citizenship for an immigrant minor under subsection 5(1). This made it easier for minors to apply for citizenship on their own behalf.

In this regard, the fee for minors applying for citizenship under subsection 5(1) of the Citizenship Act has been reduced from Canadian \$530 to Canadian \$100 bringing them into line with the processing fees for minors applying for citizenship under subsection 5(2). This ensures that there is no difference in the fee paid by citizenship grant applicants who are minor regardless of whether they have a Canadian parent, are applying with a permanent



resident parent or are applying on their own behalf.

Anyone who already paid the \$530 fee for a minor applying under this subsection on or after June 19, 2017 will be reimbursed the difference of \$430.

The Department of Immigration will contact these applicants directly to outline the process for receiving a refund.

Source: Immigration News

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NEW LIGHT FOR OUR KITH & KIN

Puthiya Velichcham Provided a Path for the Suffering People in the North & East of Sri Lanka

By Uthayan Thurairajah

Navajeevan Anantharaj did excellent leadership to give improvement to the Sri Lanka war survivors who have affected by painful memories of war and subsequence day-to-day living challenges. It is a great thing to think about others within the today challenging world. Many people welcome this as the most critical step and timely work. Many have benefited from this initiative. People are happy that this is a rare effort to help others in a meaningful way.

What is New Light?

The destructive war in Sri Lanka has brought the untold story of misery and darkness. Navajeevan is carrying this thought, take the challenge, and strive to change this situation and provide required educational and psychological services to the affected people to move forward with their normal life. There are several people are working hard to achieve this objective. However, Navajeevan objective to take the Puthiya Velichcham torchlight stand out in several ways.

He visits almost every year since 2010 to conduct workshops on learning development, the promotion of small enterprises, and the international marketing of local products. This year, in addition to the educational and psychological counseling to the war affected people, he has initiated to conduct seminars on Organic farming to the people of north and east of Sri Lanka.

"You can't get rid of poverty by giving people money." —P. J. O'Rourke. You cannot get rid of the pain and poverty of the people by giving food and money. It can only provide temporary relief. People can take care themselves if they have the required resources, knowledge, motivation, and strength. This is where Puthiya Velichcham stand out.

New light arranged and conducted seminars and Guidance Workshop for Students, Teachers, and Natural Agricultural Guidance Training for Farmers.

The following individuals held Agricultural-training workshops under the guidance of Mr. Bamayan:

- 1) Bamayan (20 years' experience, 25 books, 5 acres of farming)
- 2) Sundaramaan (25 years' experience, instructor 11 acres of farming)
- 3) Ramakrishnan (18 years' experience, instructor, 30 acres of farming)
- 4) Ravi (25 years' experience, instructor, 5 acres of farming)
- 5) Sathurakiri (10 years' experience, instructor, 9 acres of farming)
- 6) Professor Dr. Sriskandaraja, Scientist & Emeritus Professor from Sweden

The following individuals held educational Training Workshops under the guidance of Dr. J. Balakrishnan:

- 1) Dr. Adiyodi Balakrishnan
- 2) Dr. Jayanthasri Balakrishnan
- 3) Mr. Sharon Shakkila Swarnavathy
- 4) Dr. Devasigamani Ebenezer
- 5) Dr. Rathnasamy Dharani

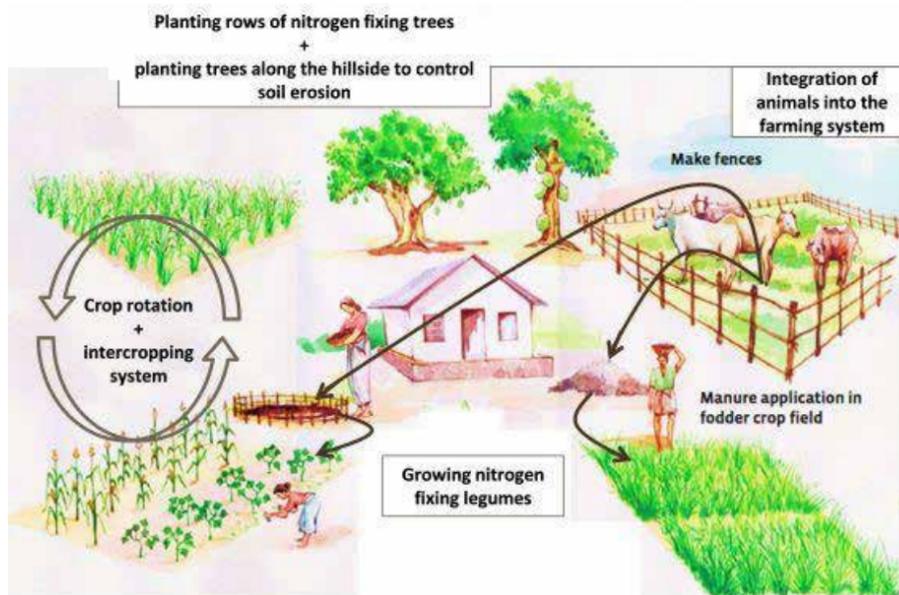
Education & challenges

Students Learn How to Learn to master any subjects. Students learn how the brain uses two very different learning modes and how it encapsulates informa-

tion including the illusions of learning, memory techniques, dealing with procrastination, and best practices.

If you wanted to become better at anything, this course would help serve as your guide. New Light for Learning How to Learn is more focused on learning. New Light for Mindshift is more career focused on the students who has completed their education and trying to find a job or further improvement.

Student engagement is significant for



the learning process. It increases their attention and focus, and it will motivate them to practice critical thinking and promotes essential learning skills. Teachers who adopt a student-centered approach to teaching increase opportunities for student engagement. It will help everyone more successfully achieve the course's learning objectives.

Promoting student engagement through active learning needs students' participation instead of sitting and listening quietly. There are several strategies including brief question-and-answer, discussion integrated into the lecture, impromptu writing assignments, hands-on activities, role-play, experiential learning and more. New Light provided training and inside learning tools to students and teachers. Professor Dr. Jayanthasri Balakrishnan and team provided excellent job on achieving this objectives.

Agriculture & challenges:

Organic farmers in Sri Lanka produce vegetables based on their abilities, resources, and production processes. Customer orientedness and demand-driven production are rarely checked. The poor performance of this product in established outlets is due to poor packag-

ing, inadequate differentiation and lack of reliable certification. Also, customers in Sri Lanka aren't willing to pay a higher price for organic vegetables. Sellers' knowledge about organic produce is poor. Farmers do not meet the final customer and marketing information is conveyed through marketing agents. Customers are concerned about the degree of damages, cleanliness, freshness, packaging, and convenience of purchasing. There are Strategies need to be intro-

duced in order to bring a quality organic vegetables. There are number of areas need improvement. Some of the actions are offering an assortment of organic vegetables, processing to add value, supply direct to large organizations, the establishment of proper organic product certification service, the popularization of product and production processes, introduction of new technology, increasing cropping efficiencies and development of farmer organizations for collective production. Puthiya Velichcham is trying to achieve some of these objectives by educating farmers and public about the organic farming. In this venture, five experts from Tamil Nadu under the leadership of Pamayan came to provide required training and resources to the farmers of North and East of Sri Lanka.

What is next?

Discussion of "What Next?" was held on January 22, 2018, at the Scarborough Convention Centre. Prof. Dr. Srikantharaja participated and presented the scope of work and what has been achieved so far in the homeland and ini-

tiated the discussion about "what Next".

The "what next" is organized a discussion amongst friends and social activists in Canada to put forward the experiences gained at these workshops and to inform them about the current situation of the people. He thanks all those who participated and shared their thoughts, opinions, and wishes at that discussion. He expects more support from the community to brightening our community in Sri Lanka.

The needs are enormous. People are affected by many problems including internal violence, drug abuse, illicit sexual relations, child abuse, religious conversion, a deficiency of capable teachers, suicides, disinterest in studies and work, desire to move abroad, and more.

Conclusion:

The participants are from all walk of life including students, teachers, farmers, widows, and ex-combatants. It is incredibly challenging to motivate people and change the people mind to normal life after many years of war, which traumatize people life in every area including social, economic, psychological and more.

Most people do not understand their agony and experiences. It is necessary to understand their problem, risk, and needs. Therefore, others can plan and provide needed assistance.

The "What Next" emphasizes the need through healthy discussions and to bring forth the importance of conducting necessary programs in future. The immediate needs for the war-affected peoples are Psychological, Social, Educational, and Economical. Most of the Widows do not have any skills or knowledge to work. Their only motivation to live on this earth is their children. The workshop supports them to increase their faith and courage and move forward with their life.

In this non-profit venture, Prof. Dr. Jayanthasri Balakrishnan group were willing to participate and offer their services. They are well versed in providing psychological counseling and motivational support. Mr. Pamaiyan Group and Professor Sriskantharaja provided enough information and training to the farmers.

This program provides a renewed attitude, faith and courage after participating in the counselling. As per Navajeevan, women-headed families are entirely affected by the war and carrying all sorts of wounds. He went to meet the people with the dream to disperse the internal darkness and open a new path to Progress and prosperity. It is our social responsibility to encourage those who do such a novel job with a great heart.





Monsoon Kitchen



GENIE SISTERS SAMAYAL SANTHAI

Welcome to our recipe corner! We sisters will entice you with recipes that we have fallen in love with and teach you a little Tamil along the way, as all the ingredients will have their Tamil names. Both of us love to cook and we have developed very different styles. Niranjini has a very refined palate and cooks more contemporary world cuisine with an Asian touch. Rajini is a seasoned homemaker who loves making traditional dishes for her friends and family. Follow us on Instagram: @ninjaeatsfood and @tamil_food

Eat more, learn more!

Sisters Niranjini Thirunesan and Rajini Nathan are both food enthusiasts from England. Niranjini, who lives in London, has a degree in Human Biology and is a trained chef. She makes it her business to know everything about what she eats, from nutritional value to source producers. Follow her food obsession on Instagram @ninjaeatsfood.

Rajini, lives in Toronto and has a background in psychology. Her speciality is in Tamil food from around the world, catch up on her meal ideas on Instagram @tamil_food.

BADAM PAALKHOVA

Paal Khova is a milk based dessert that is a true labour of love. Although it is time consuming, the end product will definitely impress all that you serve this too. The addition of badam (almond) gives this dish extra nutritional value. It is an ideal dish to make for special occasions, especially if you're serving a banana leaf meal (Vaazhai ilia saapaadu) This recipe will yield quite a small amount, but given its richness, you might not want too much anyway.



Ingredients:

- 50gms almonds (Badam)
- 1 ltr Full fat milk (paal)
- 150gms sugar (seeni/sakkarai)
- ¼ tsp cardamom powder (elakkai podi)
- Salt to taste- uppu

Method:

Soak the almonds for eight hours, remove the skin, dry them over night and grind into a fine powder (alternatively you could use readily available almond flour- but that's super expensive) On a medium flame heat the milk in a heavy based pan till it reduces by half- keep stirring it occasionally to avoid burning the milk; this should take about an hour approximately. Once the milk has reduced add in the sugar and the ground almond powder and cook for a further 30mins. Don't forget to stir and scrape all the milk solids (paalaadai/ malai) back into the pot. Slowly the milk will solidify like halwa and at that point you can add the cardamom.

Garnish with almond flakes and enjoy.

Try making this recipe this month and do hashtag #monsoonjournal on Instagram and send us your pics, comments and feedback. Spread the love (and recipe!)



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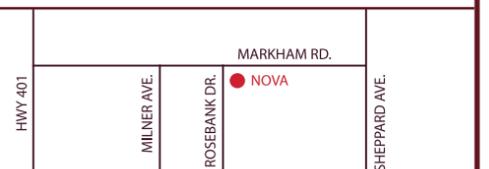
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Special Feature

Sridevi obituary: From Bollywood actress to Indian icon

Sridevi's rise to stardom was an extraordinary chapter in India's film industry, Sudha G Tilak, a Delhi-based independent journalist wrote on BBC online:

In the heat of the cruel south Indian summer, Sridevi cut a cool figure. It was the early 1990s and she was in a white, flowing dress in the famous Prasad Studios in Chennai (Madras), the city that spawned her career.

Tall and statuesque, she was almost regal, her hair styled to resemble a cloud - as was the fashion at the time.

As a young reporter, I found her sitting on set between takes of a Bollywood song-and-dance sequence, ready for the interview, her expression giving away nothing.

Despite my prodding her monosyllabic answers shed no light on her life in Bollywood and she remained painfully shy of opening up.

But on screen Sridevi - who was known by her first name, like most south Indian actors - was very different.

With a filmography of close to 300 movies in at least five Indian languages, she held her own as a leading lady, a box office magnet from the 1970s to the late 1990s.

Sridevi's life on screen began with a successful early stint performing in all the four south Indian film languages and she graduated to an extraordinary career in Bollywood, where she knew neither the language nor the culture of the Hindi film industry.

When she took a break from films, after her marriage to producer Boney Kapoor in 1996, Sridevi was rumoured to be the highest paid in her field and her star power and charisma persisted for years to come.

She embodied feminine mystique and that classic screen-goddess combination of beauty, mystery and intrigue. She lit up the screen with her vivacity and charm, while off it she remained fiercely private.



(Born: Shree Amma Yanger Ayyapan - 13 August 1963, in Sivakasi, Tamil Nadu
Died - 24 February 2018)

Film directors repeatedly spoke in awe of her acting prowess, which followed no method but sheer intuition and instinct as she sparkled before the cameras and retreated into a shell when the lights were off.

Like film legend Greta Garbo, the Art Deco icon of her times, Sridevi was glamorous and beautiful but reclusive and intensely private.

Her glittering costumes and dazzling presence on screen, coupled with her sculpted dance performances in Hindi movies, found die-hard fans among young girls and women.

Her burlesque comic acts and vaudeville capers in films such as Mr India and Chaalbaaz delighted adults and children alike.

And her vulnerable sex appeal brought her female and male adulation, while her intuitive skill for acting made her a box-office sensation in Bollywood.

Sridevi's screen career began at the

age of four in a 1969 Tamil-language film. The eldest daughter of a small-time Tamil lawyer and a Telugu-speaking mother, she had an active career as a child actor. At just 13 she was cast in the role of a woman avenging her lover's death and as the young wife of an older man in the Tamil film *Moondru Mudichu* (Marriage).

Sridevi's fan base is fiercely regional, too. Her south Indian fans claim that her best acting phase was in the southern language films, especially Tamil and Telugu, where she played unglamorous and complicated roles.

Notable film roles include:

Moondram Pirai (Rare Phenomenon): The story of a modern young woman who loses her mind in a car accident

Varumayin Niram Sigappu (Red is the colour of poverty): An ode to the gritty ideals of the left among a bunch of Tamils in north India

Gaayathri: A tragic tale of a wife tricked into marriage

Pathinaru Vayadinile (Sweet Sixteen): Following the youthful indiscretion of a village belle seduced by a city slicker

Sigappu Rojakkal (The Tamil Psycho): A garments saleswoman captures the attention of a humble man who has a dark side

Johny: A love story between a popular but lonely singer and a petty thief

Meedum Kokila (Again Kokila): An orthodox Tamil Brahmin woman fights to rekindle the love of her husband

However, Sridevi's fans in the north say it was her Bollywood career that really allowed her charisma and glamour to shine.

In 2012, her comeback Bollywood film *English Vinglish* was a huge hit, once again cashing in on her unique combination of charisma and fluid acting talent.

She notched up several awards, including the Padma Shri, India's fourth highest civilian honour.

Sridevi's screen profile was glamorous but her private life was one of heartbreak, loss and estrangement.

The Bollywood gossip mill relentlessly spoke of her not being good at conversation, and listed her romantic liaisons and heartbreaks - as well as her bouts of cosmetic surgery.

Her secret wedding in 1996 led to a 16-year hiatus in her film career. She turned to family life and gave birth to two daughters, Jhanvi and Khushi.

In recent years she had taken up a variety of roles - and her sudden death at a family wedding in Dubai - has come as a huge shock to India.

Her fans will be devastated to learn that the cause of death was accidental drowning, according to a Dubai forensics report.

But in the hours before she died Sridevi's Instagram posts were alive with her pictures.

Bewelled and in shimmering culture, her glittering smile lit up the screen as it always had. - **bbc.com**

Indians Pay Tribute to Bollywood Icon Sridevi

By Anjana Pasricha

A sea of mourning fans turned out in Mumbai Wednesday, February 28 to bid an emotional farewell to famed Bollywood actress Sridevi Kapoor, four days after she drowned in a hotel bathtub in Dubai, where she had gone to attend a wedding.

The sudden death of the 54-year-old actress, who won the hearts of Indians with a string of box office hits in the 1980s and 1990s, has prompted an outpouring of grief in India, where Bollywood is a rage.

In the morning, tens of thousands of grieving fans, some clutching flowers, waited patiently in serpentine lines to pay tribute to her at a private club where her body was kept so they could catch a final glimpse of her.

Huge crowds also stood on the roadside or followed a flower-bedecked truck bearing a giant poster of the star as it began its six-kilometer journey to a crematorium amid a tight security cordon. Sridevi's body was draped in the Indian flag as she was cremated with state honors. Her sendoff befitted an actress who was called Bollywood's first female su-

perstar.

Geetanjali Prasad, 33, is one of the millions who have been in mourning since waking up Sunday to news of Sridevi's death.

"We've grown up watching all her movies and danced on so many songs of hers. I am getting emotional as I speak right now," she said. Besides ordinary people, a steady stream of Bollywood celebrities paid tribute to Sridevi. Her death was first attributed to cardiac arrest, but later authorities in Dubai called it a case of "accidental drowning."

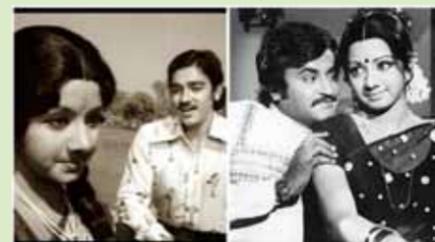
The actress had been lavished with praise and titles reserved for those who make it to the very top in Bollywood: "Icon," "Queen of Bollywood," and "Megastar."

What made her win her way into Indian hearts? "There is a genuine connection people had with her," according to Bollywood filmmaker, Sudhir Mishra, for whom the actress "epitomized the Indian film star" and an era of "popular filmmaking in India."

"You take her in a musical, in a dance film, take her in an absolutely realistic film, take her in a romcom (romantic



Sridevi in 16 Vayathinile



Sridevi in Moondru Mudichu

comedy); here is a person who is so malleable and so versatile and so skillful. She was a brilliant actress and a star," Mishra said, adding with a touch of regret, "They don't make stars like that anymore."

Sridevi starred in about 300 films in her career, starting out as a child actor

in south India, and making her debut in Bollywood in 1978, where she soon made her mark. She is best remembered for her role as an investigative journalist in the 1987 blockbuster *Mr. India*. Besides Bollywood, she starred in many films in southern India and was awarded the country's fourth highest civilian honor, the Padma Shree.

Not only were many of her movies massive box office hits, she was one of the first people to win accolades for carrying films to success on her own shoulders in a country where film heroes tend to play the lead role.

She retired from acting after her marriage in 1997, but returned to prove her mettle yet again in two movies - *English Vinglish* in 2012 and *Mom* last year.

"She was truly pan-Indian," filmmaker Mishra pointed out as millions of people from household maids to executives took out time to watch television coverage of her funeral or just share a thought about her. "What the film industry does -- it is one of the things that binds the country in a sense in a complex nation. It is quite important, these all India kind of icons," he said. - **VOA News**

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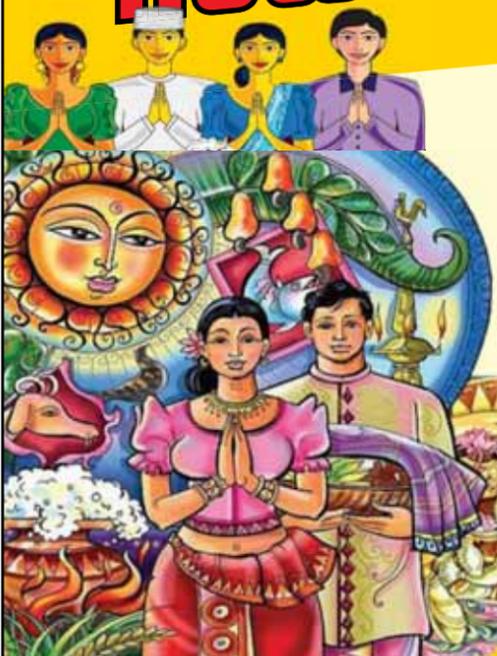


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Republic Day of India – Celebrations in Canada

Republic Day Celebrations was jointly celebrated by Rajasthan Association of North America (Canada) -RANA and Arya Samaj Markham (ASM) at the Vedic Cultural Centre.

There was an overwhelming response by the community as many people attended this auspicious celebration. Mr. Mahendra Bhandari the President of RANA welcomed the Indian community and congratulated them on this historic day. Senator Asha Seth also attended the event and stressed the importance of celebrating such important moments in our

history.

The cultural program began with a puja and Havan followed by a group performance of all the artists singing the Canadian and Indian National Anthem. Artist Director Sanji Piranthapan presented a welcome and classical dance. RANA choreographed several beautiful patriotic dances. ASM displayed a colourful Indian fashion show representing the various states of India, devotional songs by seniors, patriotic dances by the youth and ladies, and the children quoting several freedom fighters. Event concluded

with a stunning saree drill performance displaying the vibrant colours of the Indian Flag. Masters of ceremony Jaya Khanna and Pratap Purohit kept the audience excited and engaged throughout the entire event.

Mr. Amar Erry President of Arya Samaj Markham thanked the wonderful team of organizers, performers, volunteers, and supporters for making this community event a grand success. This joint community event ended with delicious Indian food.





BY THULASI MUTTULINGAM

HUMANS OF NORTHERN SRI LANKA

PLEASE LOVE ANIMALS TOO

Humans of Northern Sri Lanka The face Book Community page "Humans of Northern Sri Lanka" is a pictorial page by Thulasi Muttulingam. Thulasi Muttulingam is a journalist based in the North of Sri Lanka. Having grown up away from her hometown of Jaffna, it is currently her mission to research and document as much of her culture and heritage as she can. If you are similarly interested, check out more of her work at the facebook page - Humans of Northern Sri Lanka: To follow the updates, "Like" the page at: www.facebook.com/pages/Humans-of-Northern-Sri-Lanka

Over the years we have gotten used to people, including vets, treating us like dirt for not treating abused, stray animals like dirt.

There is something wrong with us apparently for being willing to reach out to them.

Thankfully we have found a precious few vets like Dr. Tishanthan and Dr. Yazevan who are excellent, compassionate animal doctors, but they are not the norm.

Today my sister Vidhya Muttulingam got a call from a fellow animal lover Jo Niro about a mange infested dog with maggots falling out of where its ear should be, on the roads near her house.

They had taken the precaution of calling the government vet clinic nearest to where the dog was sighted to see if they would handle the case (they said yes) then spent an hour on road looking for the fellow.

My sister is a freelancer for precisely this reason. Jo Niro took leave from her job to do this today. Neither of them knew the dog.

The three wheeler hired (specifically due to the driver's known compassion for animals) could not fit the dog. The driver then organized a van from one of his friends. Kudos to them too.

Most drivers would not allow healthy dogs into their vehicles much less sick strays.

At the clinic however, the team had been treated to scorn and a blanket refusal to treat the animal.

Aspersions like "Yuck! Who in their right minds would touch a dog like that?" And "Why would you go round picking up strays you don't know? We don't treat strays here" had been thrown.

I remember a time when I used to cower before such blastings, but Vidhya is made of sterner stuff. As is Jo Niro apparently.

They had given the vet and her assistants an earful back.

"Why did you study to be a vet if you can't stand diseased animals?" and "Do you have a board here proclaiming that you will treat only high breed, home owned animals with minor ailments?" had been lobbed back.

They won the day (somewhat) because the vet did ultimately treat the dog, although the team suspect that she was unnecessarily rough with the dog in her handling.

In Vidhya's words, "She took her anger with us out on the dog."

Oh well, baby steps in our society's improvement. Today, they went to the Jaffna Government Agent directly after this rescue and petitioned him for land and a building to start an animal shelter. His response was affirmative. There is hope. Let us see.

In the meantime people who work in health services, whether it be for animals or people - try to understand why you are working in health services in the first place.

Too many damned doctors running around, who studied just to be called 'doctor' without the matching aspirations to heal, to follow suit.

I hit upon the surefire way of getting out of eating / drinking anything by claiming to be fasting.

We Hindus have several different deities to fast to every day of the week - and we can choose to fast at will to whichever deity we want for however long we want - or for however long our astrologer tells us to :)

Ha! Brilliant.

"Have some lunch now that you are here dear."

'No, thanks aunty. I am fasting today.'

Worked flawlessly for a while.

Unfortunately one day the aunty I was visiting asked me which deity I was fasting to, on a Wednesday?

I froze. I had no effing clue which deity you are supposed to fast to on a Wednesday.

Got obviously caught out in a lie and had to go check up on that one.

Wednesdays are dedicated to Lord Ganesh. Sigh!



(Via: [facebook.com/animalloversofjaffna](https://www.facebook.com/animalloversofjaffna) - A request dear Human Lovers, Please love animals too. Start by liking this page first. We need support in various ways, in our efforts to make Jaffna a more animal friendly place- Feb 23, 2018)

Tea Tales

Speaking of offering tea and refreshment to visitors, until the age of 21, I took for granted that people in our culture actually meant it when they offer meals, tea or snacks to guests - and are happy if the guests partake with gusto.

Not much has changed, I still do believe that many Sri Lankans are genuinely hospitable, but I had to relearn it after more positive experiences to offset a particularly bad one.

For a brief, torturous period I had to live under the roof of a relative, who let us say did not fit the stereotype. She too would cloyingly smile and invite guests to eat / drink tea - but after they went away would curse, "Why didn't they have the manners to decline? Don't they think I have anything better to do with my time?"

I was so badly jolted by the experience that for years afterward, I wouldn't eat / drink at other people's houses unless specifically invited over for lunch or dinner. If I happened to visit on my own and they offered refreshment, my first instinct was to politely refuse.

Yet there was a dilemma. How to politely refuse? What excuse could I possibly give that would not cause offence in any way?

Thank God for the Hindu Pantheon of Gods and Goddesses.

Hospitality matters

Sis and mom are often mortified that I absentmindedly forget to offer tea and refreshment to visitors. A cardinal sin in Sri Lankan hospitality.

The last time a visitor came, I offered snacks but completely forgot the tea. Sis is still grappling with the shame of it.

"I just can't believe you remembered to serve snacks, then forgot tea. How could you?"

'Well, its not as if I can easily serve tea either thanks to your embargo on processed sugar and cow's milk in the house.

Come to think of it - that's what I told the visitor who came before that.

That I can't serve them tea because you have gone vegan now, and so we don't stock milk and sugar.'

"You WHAT? Why can't you make the tea with coconut milk and kittul treacle the way I do now?"

'Because I have never tried that recipe and don't know how to make it. I simply gave up drinking tea when you started on your vegan kick.'

"So your friends now blame ME for the lack of hospitality extended from this house? Why don't they just ask for vegan tea if you are going around saying we don't stock non-vegan items?"

'Probably because they think as a vegan, you consume only nuts and berries. You do have your advantages to me at times.'



MARKHAM FOOD BANK & VEDIC CULTURAL CENTRE

Arya Samaj Markham

Vedic Cultural Centre's Kids & Youth of Arya Samaj held their Annual food drive. They approached the community to donate as much food as possible since hunger affects many who families who do not have access to food or they simply cannot afford it.

Kids, Youth and their families delivered collections of non-perishable foods of cans and dry goods to the Markham Food Bank. While sharing heartfelt stories of bringing hope to many families, they volunteered to distribute and sort various bins of food products. It was an inspiration to everyone knowing EVERY BIT COUNTS and that they had made a difference in the lives of many people. Special thank you to Markham Food Bank, Ms. Janet Gilkes, and the community for providing the children with such a wonderful opportunity to serve their community.

Thank you to everyone for their generous support for this worthy cause.



THE HINDU TEMPLE SOCIETY OF CANADA

Richmond Hill Ganesha Temple



THE BENEFITS OF TEMPLE WORSHIP FOR HINDUS

Compiled by Kidambi Raj, Life Member of the Temple

Why are Temples needed?

In response to questions on, "Swamiji, since God is omnipresent, what is the need to build large temples to worship God? The cost of construction is large, plus you have the ongoing cost of monthly maintenance that has to be met, Couldn't all that money be put to better use?", Satguruji Bodhinatha Veylanswami, responded like this: "Good question! Yes, it is true that God is everywhere, permeating everything. By looking intently around us, we should be able to experience God, right? But look around you now. How many of you can see God? They all smiled and admitted they could not. Practically speaking, God's omnipresence is at a very subtle level, too subtle for most of us to experience without a lot of experience in meditation".

He further explained the need for the Hindu Temple saying, it is a special space in which the inner and outer worlds commune and we can experience Divinity. If we want to see a distant galaxy, we can go to an observatory and look through a powerful telescope. To see the nucleus of a cell, we go to a laboratory and use a microscope. Similarly, to know God, we can go to the temple and experience Divinity through the sanctified Murties. The temples are especially sacred for three reasons: *construction, consecration and continuous daily worship*.

God may be everywhere, but can we experience his presence everywhere? Water is present everywhere in the atmosphere as water vapor, but can we just stick our tongue and take the water vapor whenever we feel thirsty? No, we have to go to a place where the water is made accessible to us, like a tap.

Similarly if we want to purify ourselves and benefit from the presence of God, we need to go to a place where He is made accessible to us, the Temple.

How are Hindu Temples built?

Hindu temples are built by commissioning the hereditary temple architects, called as Stapathis, to design and construct the temples. They do them by strictly adhering to the sacred architectural guidelines found in the Agamic scriptures. Once the temple is built, consecration occurs through the powerful ceremony called Kumbhabhishekam, with several priests performing elaborate rituals for several days.

Kumbhabhishekam refers to the Hindu ceremony that is performed to consecrate (sanctify) a temple. The name alludes to the sprinkling (abhishekam) of the temple with the sacred water from the pot (Kumbha). This ceremony is done to inaugurate a temple or to re-consecrate it after its initial inauguration. It is to be done at the appropriate time on an auspicious day in a prescribed manner.

Why do Hindus go to the temple to worship when they can worship at home?

Temple is the place where Gods and Goddesses are invoked. In Sanskrit this invocation process is called *Prathishta*. During the prathishta, Gods and Goddesses are invited to the place where the temple has been built and are requested to be in *Vigraha* (Idol) form that are made of Black stone or marble. All this process of inviting Gods and Goddesses to be in the vigrahas is done with Veda Mantras, Sacred Rituals, and Homas (fire sacrifice/prayer). It is the power of the Veda Mantras that recited and chanted

by learned priests that transform mere stone forms into Gods and Goddesses.

Just as food, clothing and shelter are the basic needs of the body, peace is a basic need of the mind. Today, there is practically no system to provide for this basic mental need. Worse still, our fast-paced, stress-filled life style agitates our mind a lot. No wonder the World Health Organization (WHO) has declared that the greatest medical challenge of the current century will not be AIDS or cancer but mental health. The temple is one of the few places where one can immediately experience a deep peace just by going into premises.

When we go to a temple we will see many devotees who come to worship and pray. Because of the presence of the gods and goddesses, there is already enormous amount of energy that doesn't exist at home. Every person carries some amount of energy. When enormous energy of the gods and goddesses and little energy of humans combine at one confined place, the amount of energy that is combined becomes huge. In addition to this, chanting of the Vedic Mantras, reciting Stotras, singing songs in praise of the deities, bhajans etc. add extra energy to the place.

We need TEMPLE for Tranquility, Education, Medication, Purification, Love and Engagement

The temple is not just a place for religious worship alone; it offers many valuable services to the society. These services can be summarized in the acronym (Tranquility Education Medication Purification Love Energy):

Tranquility:

The temple atmosphere with its soothing vibrations of holy chants and sanctifying presence of the Deities serves as a tranquil retreat centre. It offers essential refreshing breaks that empower people to face the stresses of life. Why not spend money on arranging spiritual breaks that offer similar and arguably better refreshment for many religious people?

Education:

The temple serves as a centre for higher spiritual education wherein people learn principles and practices for leading life of moral and spiritual integrity. This education in foundational values enables people to use all their education for socially beneficial purposes. When we consider establishing new universities for material education, a sign of national progress, then why not similarly celebrate the building of a university for spiritual education (the Temple)?

Medication:

The temple acts like a hospital for the mind. The medication it provides healing the diseased mentality that impels people to addiction and criminality, both of which cause an enormous drain on the national economy. If we recognize as a social necessity to build hospitals that heal the body, then why not similarly recognize as a social necessity the establishment of hospitals that heal the mind (the Temple)?

Purification:

The temple purifies the hearts of those who visit it regularly. This purification inspires talented people with leadership potentials to blossom into pure-hearted, selfless, principle-centred leaders. When leaders with character are acutely needed in every

organization from the family to the government, then why not welcome an institute (the Temple) that can produce high-quality leaders.

Love:

The temple offers us a glimpse of the kingdom of God, where we are all together as family members in God's family. In a vibrant temple, people learn to form relationships at the spiritual level. This leads to the experience of a profound God-centered love that provides them deep satisfaction and dramatically improves their relationships. When relationship conflicts are causing unprecedented misery in society, then why not support an institution (the Temple) that can provide a solid foundation for lasting relationships?

Engagement:

The temple provides people various satisfying engagements that preserve our national culture, and also productively channelize their talents and energies. When our national culture is being lost at an alarming rate, then why not help a forum (the Temple) that is not only protecting but also reviving it?

Ten Tips to make the most of one's visit to Temple:

1. Try to go the temple at least once a week. Experiencing the divine energy of Gods and Goddesses on a regular basis helps keep you pure and strong in your religious commitments.
2. Dress in traditional Hindu clothing. This helps put you in a religious mood.
3. Make your travel to the temple a religious time. This prepares you to arrive in a spiritual frame of mind. Don't focus on problems or projects at home, work or school. Try to listen to religious music or chanting while in transit.
4. Bring an offering. Ideally, bring a flower, or fruit. The act of giving makes you receptive to blessings.
5. Put energy into what you offer. Buying a garland is good, but making one yourself is even better. When the priest puts your hand-made garland on the Idol, it is almost like you are touching the Deity yourself.
6. Focus on the worship service and the priest's chanting. Don't let your mind wander. When singing bhajans, keep focused on the meaning of the song.
7. Try to stay for a while after the ceremony instead of rushing away. Sit and bask in the divine energy of the temple.
8. Always light an oil lamp in your place of worship when you get home. This brings the devas who were at the temple right into your sacred space. They will bless the family and strengthen the spiritual force field of your home.
9. Watch for auspicious days. The Deity's presence is stronger on some days than others.. For example, blessings are especially strong during the annual days.
10. Gain strength by taking vows. It is common to take a vow, or vrata, during festivals. A typical vrata is to fast during a day of temple ceremonies and break the fast that evening.

Let Lord Almighty's Blessings be on all !!!



TAMIL HERITAGE MONTH CELEBRATION IN WATERLOO, ONTARIO

TAMIL HARVEST FESTIVAL - THAI PONGAL BRINGS THE COMMUNITY TOGETHER



Tamil festival in the Region of Waterloo is always colourful. The hall had Indian decorations, Mango leaves on the doorway along with traditional Villakku and Kumbam. The entrances were adorned with kolam design. Ladies and Children wearing traditional South Indian cloths and Men in their Veshtti. The clay pongal pot was decorated with Mango and Yellow Saffron leaves. Tall sugar canes, with leaves, in a triangular shape gave the feeling

of back at home. Members, Shyamala and Dharini invited the children to offer first rice after boiling of milk. Kids enjoyed and were shouting Pongalo Pongal.

The festival was held on Sunday, January 14 at the Lutheran Hall in Waterloo. Members of Tamil Cultural Association of Waterloo Region traditionally celebrate Mattu Pongal at a farm. But this year, changed the venue and did a traditional main pongal festival.

The Secretary of the Association Mr. Dennis Loyola welcomed all. To enable non speaking Tamils to understand the tradition, a slide show was presented. It was followed by a beautiful Folk dance by Waterloo students of Sri Abiramy Dance Academy, Carnatic Tamil Songs and Music by the Waterloo Tamil language students. The president Mr. Ragu Sivaramakrishnan invited the Mayor of Waterloo Hon. Dave Jaworsky to the stage and introduced the com-

mittee. Also in attendance was Mayor of Kitchener Hon. Berry Vrbanovic and Minister of State Minister of Small Business and Tourism and the Member of Parliament for the riding of Waterloo Hon. Bardish Chagger. The minister also presented the greeting letter from the Prime Minister of Canada on the occasion of Tamil Heritage Month.

The day ended with serving rice pongal, sweets and snacks. Close to 300 guests attended the festival.



TYLP Leadership group, Family Day Trip to Ontario Science Centre

TCASD Leadership Group visited the Ontario Science Centre on Family Day. We were small group but highly motivated to learn, even on the Family Day.

Our bus trip started from Whitby, and we had lot of fun in the bus. Once we arrived at the OSC, in between raindrops, we walked to the Science Centre.

Much to our happy surprise, there were many special exhibits on for the Family Day. It was fascinating to see many young visitors like us and as well

as many young Scientists. We learned a great deal about technology, space shuttle, environment, anatomy, plants, and animals. We had an opportunity sit and drive a single seated space vehicle; it was most enlightening for many of us. We all felt the trip was very interactive and learning experience in many ways.

We were very organized and carried-out all the assigned duties, which were among youth, parents and program coordinator. Our first program started at 11:30 AM, then we had a 30 minutes

lunch at 12:30PM with home made food, there after we watched "amazon adventure" movie in the most impressive theater at 1:00PM, some of the programs were missed due to the time schedule, however; realistic arrival and departure times had allowed us to explore majority of our scheduled programs. We had an excellent Family Day by learning on TYLP style.

TYLP's peaceful path and an on-going progress of our young kids leadership quality have exhibited a steadfast willingness to explore new ventures

and trips, such as Parliament of Canada, Senate of Canada, Supreme Court of Canada and now Ontario Science Centre. Through these trips we are able to deliver value to our young Tamils. Over all, our leadership program provide a unique skills and equip the young leaders to be a full human being; reflects values such as integrity, community service, excellence in academics and success in life.

By: Tom Thiru, Program Coordinator





Durham Tamil Association offers seniors computer classes

Durham Tamil Association is offering seniors computer classes at Ajax and Pickering Library in both English and Tamil by weekly. DTA youth and adult volunteers who are IT professionals and social media experts help the seniors learn the basics and keep in touch with their loved ones around the world.

For more information please check at www.durhamtamils.com 905.428.7007 DTA thanks Monsoon Journal for helping to get the word out to seniors.

(Contributed by NanthiniKail)



Durham Tamil Association Presents

Annual Gala Night

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Durham Tamil Association Presents

Annual Gala Night

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CTHA hosts its 1st meeting for Adopt-the-village Project

On February 23rd, the Canadian Tamils' Humanitarian Association (CTHA) made a step forward with the Adopt-the-Village project. Since the construction of the building for the community centre is nearing its' completion. We thought this would be a crucial time to get the people of Pavatkodichenai more aware of its importance to them as a community. Most importantly in empowering the women of Pavatkodichenai. Hence, we met with the Women's Association of Pavatkodichenai to talk about our next steps as well as their needs that could potentially be met through the community centre. Special guests for the meeting included Mr. KrishnapillaiThurai Rajasingam, the ex-provincial Minister of Agriculture and Irrigation, and Sutharshana, the Agriculture Inspector for the Pavatkodichenai and its neighboring villages, as well as two organic farmers from the village.

One of the most important issues we addressed and discussed was regard-

ing the promotion of growing various organic crops in their village. Many people of the rural areas are caught up in the city life, they forget to look at what their land can offer. With the consultation of the Agriculture Inspector, we expressed to the ladies that their soil is very fertile, and many crops can be grown. However, the concern of elephants breaking into their home gardens came up. That problem was tackled with the advice given by the Agriculture Inspector and the existing farmers. To start, they should grow lime plants and orange plant to act as a fence. The elephants do not like the smell nor the thorns. Another issue that came was the lack of water. The other farmers and the Agriculture Inspector tackled that as well; water can be saved while cooking and doing other things. Where there is a will there is a way! In addition to that, Mr. Thurai Rajasingam has promised to talk to his department and see if there is any possible ways water can be provided for ag-

ricultural purposes. We hope this will work out in favour for the members of the village. All the guests shared such insightful information and definitely motivated the ladies by giving them the assurance that many crops can be grown in their homes. The organic farmers further motivated them by giving the ladies advice on making their soil richer through compost so that the plants can be healthy and organic. They were bringing back the old techniques. They do always say old is gold!

Secondly, we addressed the purpose of the vocational training centre. We asked the ladies what they wanted to learn so they can improve their livelihood. Many of the ladies have stopped their education with O/L exams. Only some have chosen to further their studies by taking grade A/L exams. They wanted tailoring classes, cake & icing classes, and beautician courses. They said these skills are needed in their villages, and its something they can do in their comfort of their homes. Some

also expressed learning computer skills. Since these requests are coming straight from the ladies of the village, we have asked them to compile the exact numbers, and we would look for teachers willing to come to the village to teacher as well as arrange for the equipments required for them to learn. Example: Sewing machines, computers etc. We hope to bring this vocational training centre to life with these classes.

Last but not least, we discussed the need for all to work together to help the whole village rise. We addressed the importance of women and their role in motivating their family. We talked about how their encouragement is important in bringing up their children and pushing them towards completing their education. Everyone agreed this cannot be done alone, it can be done with the effort of the whole village. CTHA is merely a support; the success is in the hands of each village member.



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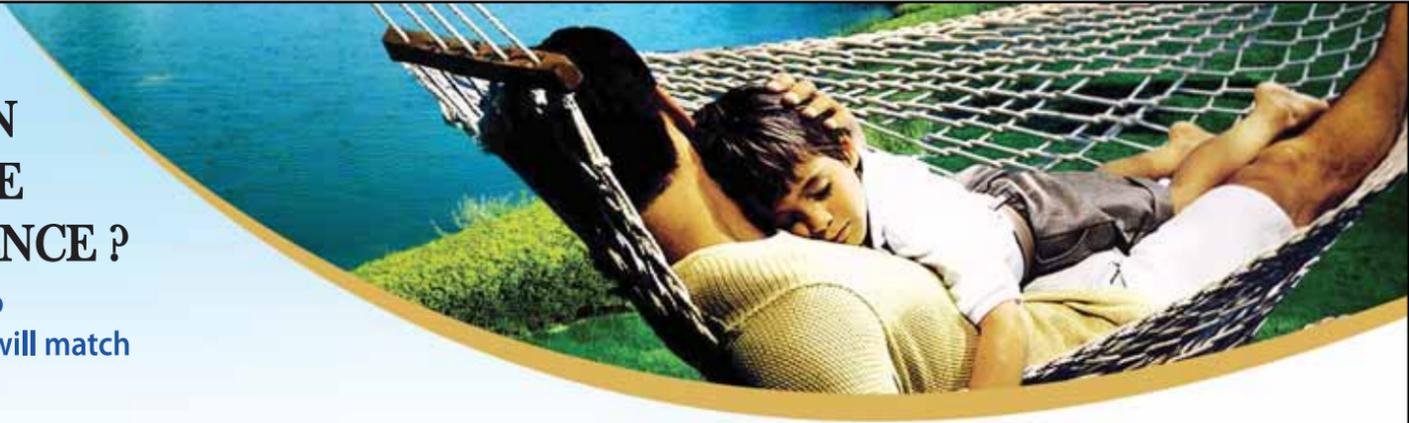
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