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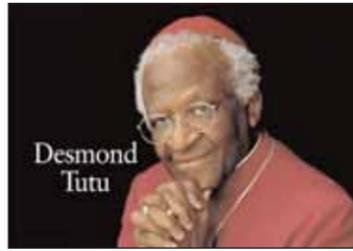
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Monsoon Journal

A parfait media publication

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January 2010

What's Inside **Monsoon**



2010 Winter Olympics



Need for emergence...



Who will Win ...



Canada Challenges...



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New Year Greetings and Inspiration from Ramakrishna-Vivekananda ideology and Tamil literature

by K.Thirukumar

Arise and awake to serve all people and to bring goodness to all is what all humanity could resonate, at this time of beginning of a new year - 2010.

Sri Ramakrishna said, cultivating higher life is denouncing discrimination and recognition of divinity in everyone and in everything, compassion for the down-trodden and spirituality is final solution to worldly miseries and universal love.

According to The Vedanta Kesari, A monthly issue published by The Ramakrishna Order, several parallels can be drawn between Ramakrishna Vivekananda ideology and twentieth century Tamil literature.

Swami Ramakrishna's deep

humanism has cast its influence on many literary compositions including in the works of Mahakavi Subramania Bharathi.

Drawing by a child who wants to be Bharathiyar. The drawing is hanging high in an office in Kalmunai, Sri Lanka -

Pic by: Dushiyanthini Kanagasabapathipillai

Just as Bhagwan Sri Ramakrishna called upon the youth of the country to arise and awake, Bharathiyar also wrote to Ilaya Bharatham (Young India).

Song by Mahakavi Subramania Bharathi, "Oli Padaitha Kanninai" (Thou with sparkling eyes), called upon the youth of the country to arise and awake to rejuvenate the land.

See Poem Translation in Page 20



Sri Lanka

Tamil Vote and the Presidential Elections...

"Tamils should use this opportunity to show their democratic voting strength and obtain maximum benefits for the community from the main candidates"

- Tamil Intelligentsia in Sri Lanka

TNA Decides to Support Sarath Fonseka

By Siva Sivapragasam

In a keenly expected close contest between the two main candidates, the Tamil Vote will undoubtedly play a crucial role in the forthcoming Presidential Elections in Sri Lanka.

With barely two to three weeks to go, majority of Tamils in Sri Lanka are still un-decided on their role in the forthcoming Presidential Elections.

They are faced with the following major options

- * Boycott the Elections
- * Vote for the incumbent

President Mahinda Rajapakse

* Vote for the Joint Opposition candidate Sarath Fonseka

* Vote for the Tamil candidate Sivajilingam

A former Sri Lankan High Court Judge and a well-respected Tamil and Religious scholar Justice Wigneswaran in his interview to a leading Tamil Newspaper in Sri Lanka on the forthcoming Presidential Elections has stated that the Tamils should exercise their democratic right of voting .

Contd. in Pg 4

Sri Lanka government continues with re detaining IDPs

Despite recent presidential polls motivated announcements by Sri Lanka Government of releasing IDPs, several reports continue say there are re-detentions and further release of hundreds of thousands still in internment camps are being indefinitely postponed.

A report on the BBC Sinala Service, Sandeshaya - one such report mentioned of relocation of IDPs to another camp, on Jan 5, 2010.

The Report as follows:
Over two hundred internally

displaced people (IDPs) had been relocated to a camp in Killinochchi instead of resettling in their homes, says one of the refugees who spoke to the BBC.

He told the BBC Sinhala Service, that they were taken from Vavunia to Killinochchi to be put in another camp.

"We were brought here from the Arunachalam camp in Vavunia. They told us that we would be permanently resettled in our own homes," he told the BBC.

Contd. in Pg 4

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RBC Royal Bank™

Kingston / Lawrence Branch - Official Opening Of New Location

By Siva Sivapragasam

Residents in the neighbourhood area of Kingston and Lawrence in Scarborough recently witnessed the official opening of the new conveniently located premises of RBC Royal Bank's Kingston/Lawrence Branch.

The day's function began with the cake cutting ceremony by Royal Bank's Regional Vice-President Lisa Gallacher and Stella Medina, Branch Manager both of whom were personally present welcoming customers, well-wishers and residents of the area. Addressing the guests present at the function, Lisa Gallacher welcomed them and outlined Royal Bank's role with the community. She emphasized RBC's activities in inter-acting with the community and the Bank's commitment towards community events and specially the financial donations the Bank has been making towards charitable organizations.

As a gesture of goodwill and commitment towards community interests and to mark the official opening of the new location, the Kingston & Lawrence Branch donated a sum of \$ 2,500 to the "Outreach House of Ghesig" Native Child and Family organization. The cheque presentation was made by Lisa Gallacher (Regional Vice-President-RBC) and Stella Medina (Branch Manager). The donation was accepted by Christine Etherington from the "Outreach House of Ghesig". The sum donated will go towards the Christmas celebrations of the Organization.

Fun activities for the children present at the event included animal petting and face-painting. A POW Dance was also performed by the children from the Native Indian community. Among those present at the function were Branch clients, members from the business community around the area and other well wishers.

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Cutting the Cake- Left - Ms. Stella Medina (Branch Manager) and Ms. Lisa Gallacher (Regional Vice President). The cake was donated by an RBC Client Mr.H. Beitinge.



RBC clients Mr. & Mrs. De Souza and their son with Olympian Ohenewa Acufu



An RBC Client with the Olympian Ohenewa Acufu



A child with face Painting



Cheryl Sealy- Manager, Client Care and Branch Manager Stella Medina with the kids from Native Indian community who performed a POW Dance



Regional Vice-President Lisa Gallacher and Branch Manager Stella Medina presenting a cheque for \$ 2,500 to Christine Etherington from the "Outreach House of Ghesig", Native Child and Family towards their Christmas Celebrations.

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From the Publisher's Desk ...

Jan 27: Honouring International Holocaust Remembrance Day and remembering the plight of Tamils

January 27th, 2010- This is day is observed as The International Holocaust Remembrance Day worldwide.

According to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, in 2005 the United Nations General Assembly designated January 27 as an annual international day of commemoration to honour the victims of the Nazi era.

The 2010 observance of the International Day of Commemoration in memory of the victims of the Holocaust will focus on a central theme that emphasizes the legacy that survivors will pass on to succeeding generations.

The United Nations states the following about this year's theme:

"Holocaust Remembrance: the Legacy of Survival" highlights the moral messages expressed by those who have suffered from Nazi persecution and denial of basic human rights.

As there are fewer survivors to tell their stories today, it is of primary importance that these universal lessons be shared with all fellow human beings. Only this will ensure that their legacy will continue to promote respect for diversity and human rights for generations to come.

Monsoon Journal joins the world humanitarian community in remembering and paying tribute to the victims of holocaust at the hands of Nazi Germany and in honouring survivors and to support the recognition of this day internationally.

In 2010 this day marks special significance to Tamils, seeing the escalated military onslaught by the mono ethnic Sinhala Sri Lankan armed forces claiming the lives of thousands of Tamil civilians under the guise of a "humanitarian operation".

The aftermath is seeing the continuation of Tamils in internment, sep-

aration of children from their parents and in detentions under incommunicado conditions.

An electioneering frenzy has let off several token releases and politically motivated announcements to win decisive Tamil votes by Sri Lankan presidential candidates, but the suffering of innocent Tamil civilians continues and several questions are being raised about the conduct of the war by Sri Lankan Government.

UN special rapporteur Prof. Philip Alston has said three independent experts had confirmed a video showing extra judicial killing by Sri Lankan soldiers was authentic, renewing calls for a war crime inquiry.

Sri Lankan opposition presidential candidate and ex-Army general Sarath Fonseka confirmed that surrendering LTTE Political leaders were killed along with their families in violation of international humanitarian laws.

And also of LTTE leader's octogenarian father dying in military custody all highlight the conditions of what many other Tamils face today at the hands of the Government of Sri Lanka, apart from the electioneering concessionary gimmicks.

Prof. Elie Wiesel, Holocaust Survivor and Human Rights Activist remarked in June 2009 on the plight of Tamils in a statement. He said:

"Wherever minorities are being persecuted we must raise our voices to protest. According to reliable sources, the Tamil people are being disenfranchised and victimized by the Sri Lanka authorities. This injustice must stop. The Tamil people must be allowed to live in peace and flourish in their homeland."

This year's International Holocaust Remembrance Day, is a time to remember Prof. Elie Wiesel's words about Tamils' plight.

Rudrakumaran calls upon youth to fully participate in democratic activity

A media briefing was held by The Canadian Committee for the Provisional Transnational Government of Tamil Eelam (PTGTE) on 23rd of December 2009 in Toronto.

V. Rudrakumaran, International Coordinator of PTGTE speaking via video conferencing called upon the younger generation of the Tamil community to fully participate in democratic work towards meeting long term goals.

He pointed out that the geopolitics brings changes in the

global arena time to time, and mobilizing and carrying out appropriate political actions rapidly is important; he added therein exist the opportunities for the formation of Independent Tamil Eelam.

Dr. Ram Sivalingam, Chairperson of the Canadian Working Committee of PTGTE announced elections for the 135 member Assembly of TGTE will be held in April 2010. He said 25 members will be elected to represent Canada.

Sri Lanka government continues with re detaining IDPs

Contd from Pg 1.

Tamil inmates from Vavunia say that they are frustrated about the situation.

"We had been here in this camp for over a month now. We were promised that we would be going home within days. Latest we heard is that it will happen in a month".

The refugee who spoke to the BBC from Killinochchi, said there are fifty two families in this camp situated at Killinochchi Central School.

"Once we arrived, we were given dry rations, now we get cooked food like any other camp. The perimeter of the school is guarded by the Army,"he said.

"My house is only 800 metres away from this camp. We are kept in the school while there is an army camp where my house was. This is a new camp established since the end of the war".

The refugees are not allowed out by the authorities, he says.

"After days of protest, they took us in a bus for a hair cut. The barber was only one hundred metres down the road. We were taken back to the camp immediately after the haircut".

The IDPs in Kilinochchi are waiting to go back to their homes says the refugee who spoke to BBC Sandeshaya.

Happy Thai Pongal

Best wishes from
Monsoon Journal for a
A harvest of happiness
and prosperity

Tamil Vote and Presidential Elections

Contd from Pg 1.

They should not boycott the elections as they did last time. According to him, fielding a Tamil candidate will not serve any useful purpose.

The Tamils are facing a dilemma in making a decision between the two major candidates who led the war against the LTTE which took a heavy civilian toll and created a flood of refugees. As a Tamil cynically remarked, "One ordered the shooting. The other pulled the gun". However, Tamils also feel that the Government is now making amends to woo the Tamils in the North by embarking on a post-war reconciliation programme. Thousands of IDPs have been released, The main highway has been opened for traffic and movement of goods, no passes are required for travel from the

North, Loans are being given for reconstruction, the railroad is being re-laid, security in the North is relaxed with lesser checkpoints, to name a few. Meanwhile, the Tamil National Alliance which has about 22 seats in the Parliament, has decided to extend its support to Sarath Fonseka. The decision was arrived after several deliberations and it is said that some members of the TNA are opposed to this.

Will the Tamils be prepared to forget the wounds of war and value peace so as to get on with their normal life and reconstruct the ravaged land?

This will be the million-dollar question before every North-East voter before he decides to cast his ballot!

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WHO WILL WIN THE LANKAN JAN 26 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION?



MONSOON NEWSLINES

Has President Mahinda Rajapakse miscalculated again? This is the question in the lips of many watchers of the Lankan enigma - both local and overseas. There he was, on top of the world post-May 19 last year, having divided the powerful UNP into several factions and the JVP into pieces. He used the war-victory to rout the UNP in the Provincial Elections in the UVA and thereafter in the Southern Province. He silenced the Monk-lead JHU and the Sinhala supremacist wings - both fundamentalist, xenophobic - with little sympathy or accommodation to the local minorities. Both these entities were able to have matters their own way, in spite of their small Parliamentary presence, both against previous President CBK and Rajapakse. Today, it is no exaggeration to state President Rajapakse is struggling for survival. His blunder after blunder in the past few days is indicative of the total disarray of the coalition he leads and the government's survival. What indeed caused the difference? Mao Tse Tung warned of "contradictions within" to avoid political disaster of popular regimes. The difference clearly was General Sarath Fonseka, his emotional twin in the victory-with-no-quarters-spared against the LTTE. They were inseparable in terms of approach to the "ultimate victory" and anything the General asked he simply got - without let. We are now told this included several armed officers from the Sri Lanka Army to guard the family of his son-in-law in far away Oklahoma, a foreign soil - something unheard of in Sri Lankan governance previously. Luxury Benz cars for Fonseka's wife (writing about which is said to have caused Lasantha Wickramatunga his life) houses and many other luxuries all for the mere asking. Clearly, the bitterness began when the General asked for an additional 100,000 men to his army - after the 6,000+ LTTE (Army figures) were done away with by May 19. Quarters close to Temple Trees say the events in Honduras when the President of that country was ousted, fears of a Coup from an oversized army and the General's own loud claim in public that "he alone won the war" He repeated this - when in public in the presence of the media when he was felicitated by his alma mater Dharmasoka College, Ambalangoda. This is believed to be a major reason contributing to his falling from grace.

The cunning and crafty former CBK strong-man Mangala Samaraweera, widely believed to be the architect of Rajapakse's Presidential "victory" in 2005, showed his organisational skill by



quickly enticing Sarath Fonseka to join the anti-Rajapakse forces in the next Presidential Election. Samaraweera was one of the first to be edged out by the Rajapakse ruling family trio - Defence Secretary Gothabaya and Senior Presidential Advisor Basil - because they feared he was an obstacle to their own consolidation of power to the Rajapakse family. Samaraweera resigned as Minister of Foreign Affairs and formed his own party with his side-kick Siripathy Suriarachy - who was to die mysteriously in an auto-accident a few months later. In a political atmosphere pregnant with intimidation and coercion, Samaraweera left the Island for a while determined to return and make his claims. The able British-educated political-fixer has done just that in the matter of a few months. Rajapakse succeeded in fracturing the JVP by enticing fire-brand Wimal Weerawansa and former Presidential Candidate Chandana Gunatilake (both JVP MPs from the Kalutara District) to his ranks with assurances of Cabinet Posts. Gunatilake was made Minister of Tourism to the dismay of the valuable tourism industry. He was nothing more than a street agitator while this industry requires highly educated men with proven management talents. Samaraweera, on the other hand, managed to get the larger section of the party with their senior leader Somawansa Amarasinghe (a politburo colleague of JVP founder Rohana Wijeweera), Tilvin Silva and other seniors to the anti-Rajapakse forces - that makes a tremendous difference in the current political landscape.

Samaraweera also went into talks with Ranil Wickramasinghe and the UNP in a common programme to oust the Rajapakse regime. Samaraweera and Wickramasinghe persuaded Rauf Hakeem, the Muslim MP battling Mrs Ferial Ashraff for the leadership of the now numerically strong Eastern Province Muslim voter bank. This left two important sections - the indigenous Tamils and the Plantation Tamils - whose votes will be vital to the making of the next President.



Arumugam Thondaman of the CWC and Chandraskeran of the UPF were already members of the Rajapakse Cabinet and predictably announced their loyalty to President Rajapakse the moment the nominations were announced. CWC's strongman and National Organiser R. Yogarajan and Deputy Minister Satchithanandan broke away and pledged their support to the General - a major blow. Further bad-luck has hit Rajapakse when UPF chief Chandrasekeran (52) died a few days ago of a heart attack leaving his party the UPF in turmoil. Former CWC senior Sathasivam with his able assistant Digambaram are moving to pick up the votes of the increasing educated youth in the Plantation disillusioned with the leadership of both Thondaman and Chandraskeran.

Political watchers in Colombo did not fail to notice the lighting of crackers on 31st December night was much louder and prolonged this time and put this to growing support that the people in the city - and by extension much of the country - are thirsting for a change.

The Cost of Living factor is yet another that is working against the government and is being carefully targeted by the General's supporters in the media and public meetings. The price of daily essentials is a sorry story and will trouble the administration. Prices last year and today are on the average like Rice per kilo (Rs.95 today/Rs.50 last year) Sugar (Rs.75/Rs.45) Dried Chillies (Rs.200/Rs.85) Red Lentils (Paruppu) (Rs.165/Rs.65) Sugar (Rs.75/Rs.50) Eggs (Rs.15/Rs.8) Keerai (Rs.40/Rs.10) Mutton (Rs.900/Rs.450) Regular Vegetables (Rs.65/Rs.30) Ordinary Bread (Rs.55/Rs.30) Ripe Plantain (Rs.95/Rs.45) Big Onions (Rs.150/Rs.55) The Minister in charge has not been much of a performer from the beginning but is retained their against even the protest of government members because he is said to be linked to the President by some distant family connection.

There was much speculation on the stand of the moderate

Tamil National Alliance identified with senior Parliamentarian R. Sampanthan. The government left no stone unturned to win them over in the past few weeks laying out several carrots that could have been conceded in the normal course. But in the recent culture of Lankan politics concessions are given only on a quid pro quo basis and that applies to even security retinue of political leaders. The TNA announced yesterday they are more inclined to support the General. Among other reasons cited the failure to release farm land the houses in the HSZ in Jaffna, the treatment of the IDPs and the charade of the utterly time-wasting APRC - just a few where President Rajapakse did little in the many years he has been head of the government although he had the powers to cause relief.

This, in no way, means the Rajapakse administration will give in. They are illegally using many facilities of the State to support their campaign machinery that includes State vehicles, the media, and government workers inter alia. State actors and their cohorts are losing little quarter in resorting to thuggery under the very nose of the police - as was witnessed several times recently at Kiribathgoda in Kelaniya where the much despised Mervyn Silva functions as the virtual Government Agent. Mervyn Silva, now Minister, is one reason for the decline of the once popular

Rajapakse as the former is openly linked to crime lords, drug-traffickers, kidnappers and the like. Most people in Kelaniya, even government supporters, are shocked the high and the mighty in the government encourage this delinquent politician to run amok.

It may be remembered it was Mervyn Silva's thugs who invaded and disrupted the events at the Kelaniya Raja Maha Vihare the day General Fonseka declared his decision to leave the army and enter national politics.

Yet another unfortunate feature of recent Lankan politics is the culture of vote-rigging and booth-grabbing that used to be a shortcoming that features in North Indian politics.

The government is likely to resort to this in the Central Province in particular and no less elsewhere. Former strong S.B. Dissanayake from the Nuwara Eliya District has openly claimed he is "vote-producing machine" and has recently joined the government - although he was part of the UNP leadership until then - to the dislike of many UNPers.

So all in all, it is going to be a do-or-die battle and the final and intense round is just about to begin. Sadly, in either event of victory Sri Lanka shows signs of yet another blood-bath in the South now that the army itself is divided along political sympathies.

Luxman-Arvind

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Raymond Rajabalan

The 2010 Winter Olympics, officially known as the XXI Olympic Winter Games or the 21st Winter Olympics will be held on February 12-28, 2010, in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, with some events held in the resort town of Whistler nearby.

The 2010 Winter Olympics will be the third Olympics hosted by Canada, and the first by the province of British Columbia. Previously, Canada was home to the 1976 Summer Olympics in Montreal and the 1988 Winter Olympics in Calgary. These will also be the first games to be held in a National Hockey League market since the league allowed its players to participate, starting at the 1998 Winter Olympics in Nagano, Japan.

Following Olympic tradition, then Vancouver mayor Sam Sullivan received the Olympic flag during the closing ceremony of the 2006 Winter Olympics in Torino, Italy. The flag was raised on February 28, 2006, in a special ceremony, and will be on display at Vancouver City Hall until the Olympic opening ceremony. The event will be officially opened by Governor General Michaëlle Jean.

Winter Olympic Games

The Winter Olympic Games are a winter multi-sport event held every four years. They feature winter sports held on snow or ice, such as Alpine skiing, cross-country skiing, figure skating, bobsledding and ice hockey. Cross-country skiing, figure skating, ice hockey, Nordic combined, ski jumping, and speed skating have been competed at every Winter Olympics since 1924. Other athletic events have been added as the Games have progressed. Some of these events, such as luge, short track speed skating, and freestyle skiing have earned a permanent spot on the Olympic programme.

Fewer countries participate in the Winter Olympics than the Summer Olympics. The first Winter Olympics were held in Chamonix, France. Figure skating and ice hockey had been events at the Summer Olympics prior to 1924. The Games were held every four years from 1924 until 1940 when they were interrupted by World War II. The winter and Summer Games resumed in 1948 and were celebrated on the same year until 1992. At that time the Winter Games split from the Summer Games. The summer and Winter Olympics are currently celebrated on alternating even years. The first Winter Olympic Games to be held on this new schedule was in 1994 in

2010 Winter Olympics



Lillehammer, Norway.

The Winter Games have undergone significant changes since their inception. The rise of television as a global medium for communication has greatly enhanced the profile of the Games.

Many countries have played home to the Winter Olympics. France has been host to the Games three times. The United States has hosted the Games four times, more than any other country. Several countries including Italy, Japan, Austria and Norway have hosted the Games twice. The next host city will be Vancouver, Canada in 2010. This will be the second time the Games will be held in Canada. The Games will then be hosted by Sochi, Russia in 2014. This will be the first time that Russia has hosted a Winter Olympic Games.

History

The first international multi-sport event specifically for winter sports were the Nordic Games, held in 1901 in Sweden. The Nordic Games were organized by General Viktor Gustaf Balck. They were held again in 1903, again in 1905, and then every four years there after until 1926.

Three years later, Italian count Eugenio Brunetta d'Usseaux proposed that the IOC stage a week with winter sports as part of the 1912 Summer Olympics in Stockholm. The organizers opposed this idea; their reasoning was two-fold: they desired to protect the integrity of the Nordic Games; and they were concerned about a lack of facilities that could accommodate winter sports. The idea was resurrected for the 1916 Games, which were to be held in Berlin. A winter sports week with speed skating, figure skating, ice hockey and Nordic skiing was planned, but the 1916 Olympics were cancelled after the outbreak of World War I.

The first Olympics after the war, the 1920 Games in Antwerp featured figure skating with the

addition of ice hockey. At the IOC Congress held the following year, it was decided that the organizers of the 1924 Summer Olympics, France, would also host a separate "International Winter Sports Week", under the patronage of the IOC. This "week" of events in Chamonix proved to be a great success. More than 200 athletes from 16 nations competed in 16 events. In 1925 the IOC decided to create a separate Olympic Winter Games, and the 1924 Games in Chamonix were retroactively designated as the first Winter Olympics.

St. Moritz, Switzerland was appointed by the IOC to host the second Olympic Winter Games in 1928. Fluctuating weather conditions made these Olympics memorable. The opening ceremonies were held in a blizzard. In contrast, warm weather conditions plagued the Olympics for the remainder of the Games the weather was not the only noteworthy aspect of the 1928 Games; Sonja Henie of Norway created a sensation when she won the figure skating competition at the age of 15. She became the youngest Olympic champion in history, a distinction she would hold for 74 years.

The next Winter Olympics was the first to be hosted outside of Europe. Fewer athletes participated than in 1928, as the journey to Lake Placid, United States was a long and expensive one for most competitors, and there was little money for sports in the midst of the Great Depression. These Games were also marred by warm weather. Virtually no snow fell for two months preceding the Games. It was not until mid-January that there was enough snow to hold all the events. Sonja Henie defended her Olympic title. Eddie Eagan, who had been an Olympic champion in boxing in 1920, won the gold in the men's bobsled event to become the first, and so far only, Olympian to have won gold medals in both the summer and Winter Olympics

The Bavarian towns of Garmisch and Partenkirchen joined to organize the 1936 edition of the Winter Games, held from February 6-16. 1936 marked the last year that the summer and Winter Olympics were held in the same country.

World War II

The Second World War interrupted the celebration of the Winter Olympics. Garmisch-Partenkirchen, the hosts of the previous Olympics, stepped in to host the Winter Games again, but both summer and Winter Olympics were cancelled in their entirety in November 1939 following Germany's invasion of Poland. The 1944 Winter Olympics, scheduled to take place in Cortina d'Ampezzo, Italy, were cancelled in the summer of 1941, due to the continuing World War.

1948 to 1960

The IOC selected the Swiss town of St. Moritz to host the first post-war Games in 1948. St. Moritz was untouched by World War II because of Switzerland's neutrality.

The city of Oslo, Norway, was selected to host the 1952 Winter Olympics. The Olympic Flame was lit in the fireplace of the home of skiing pioneer Sondre Nordheim. The torch relay was conducted by 94 participants and held entirely on skis. Bandy, a popular sport in the Nordic countries, was held as a demonstration sport though only Norway, Sweden, and Finland fielded teams.

After not being able to host the Games in 1944 due to the war, Cortina d'Ampezzo, Italy, was selected to organize the 1956 Winter Olympics. At the opening ceremonies the final torch bearer, Guido Caroli, entered the Olympic Stadium on ice skates. As he skated around the stadium rink his skate caught on a cable and he fell, nearly extinguishing the flame. He was able to recover and lit the cauldron. These were the first Winter Games to be tele-

vised. The Cortina Games were



used as an experiment on the feasibility of televising sporting events on such a large scale. These Games marked the debut of the Soviet Union at the Winter Olympics.

The IOC awarded the 1960 Olympics to Squaw Valley, United States. The opening and closing ceremonies were produced by Walt Disney. These Games were the first to have a dedicated athlete's village, and the first to use a computer to tabulate results.

1964 to 1980

The Tyrolean city of Innsbruck was the host in 1964. Despite being a traditional winter sports resort, warm weather caused a lack of snow during the Games and the Austrian army was called in to bring snow and ice to the sport venues. Soviet speed skating star Lidia Skoblikova made history by sweeping all four speed skating events. Her career total of six gold medals set a record for the most medals by a Winter Olympics athlete. Luge was first contested in these Olympics, although the sport received bad publicity when a competitor was killed in a pre-Olympic training run.

Held in the French town of Grenoble, the 1968 Winter Olympics was the first Olympic Games to be broadcast in colour. Frenchman Jean-Claude Killy became only the second person

to sweep all the men's alpine skiing events. The effects of television began to show at the Grenoble Games.

The 1972 Winter Games, held in Sapporo, Japan, were the first to be hosted outside North America or Europe. The issue of professionalism became very contentious during these Games. Canada did not send teams to the 1972 or 1976 ice hockey tournaments in protest of their inability to use players from professional leagues.

Originally, the 1976 Winter Games had been awarded to Denver, United States, but in 1972 the voters of Colorado expressed unwillingness to host the Games through a state referendum. Innsbruck, which still had maintained the infrastructure from the 1964 Games, was chosen in 1973 to replace Denver. Two Olympic flames were lit because it was the second time the Austrian town had hosted the Games.

The Olympic Winter Games returned to Lake Placid, which had hosted the 1932 Games. The threat of a boycott of the 1980 Summer Olympics clouded these Olympics, due to the fact that much of the debate regarding this eventuality took place during the Winter Games. American Speed skater Eric Heiden set either an Olympic or world record winning each of the five events he com-



In 1988 the Canadian city of Calgary, hosted the first Winter Olympics to span 16 days new events were added in ski jumping and speed skating, while future Olympic sports curling, short track speed skating and freestyle skiing made their appearance as demonstration sports. For the first time, the speed skating events were held indoors, on the Olympic Oval. East German Christa Rothenburger won the women's

1000 metre speed skating event. Since before World War II. At 16 years old, Finnish ski jumper Toni Nieminen made history by becoming the youngest male Winter Olympic champion.

In 1986, the IOC voted to separate the summer and Winter Games and place them in alternating even-numbered years starting in 1994. The Lillehammer Games were the first Winter Olympics to be held without the Summer Games in the same year. After the division of Czechoslovakia in 1993, the Czech Republic and Slovakia made their Olympic debut in Lillehammer, Norway.

The 1998 Winter Olympics was the first Games to host more than 2,000 athletes. The Games were held in the Japanese city of Nagano. The men's ice hockey tournament was open to all professionals for the first time. Canada and the United States, with their many NHL players, were favoured for the gold. However, neither nation won any medals, as the Czech Republic prevailed. Women's ice hockey made its debut at these Games, with the United States winning the gold medal. Bjorn Dæhlie of Norway won three gold medals in Nordic skiing. He became the most decorated Winter Olympic

athlete with eight gold medals and twelve medals overall.

2002 to present

The 19th Olympic Winter Games were held in Salt Lake City, United States. German Georg Hackl won a silver in the singles luge, becoming the first athlete in Olympic history to medal in the same individual event in five consecutive Olympics.

Canada achieved an unprecedented double by winning both the men's and women's Ice Hockey gold medals. Canada became embroiled with Russia in a controversy that involved the judging of the pairs figure skating competition. The Russian pair of Yelena Berezhnaya and Anton Sikharulidze competed against the Canadian pair of Jamie Salé and David Pelletier for the gold medal. The Canadians appeared to have skated well enough to win the competition, yet the Russians were awarded the gold. The judging broke along Cold War lines with the exception of the French judge, Marie-Reine Le Gougne, who awarded the gold to the Russians. An investigation revealed that she had been pressured to give the gold to the Russian pair regardless of how they skated; in return the Russian



judge would look favourably on the French entrants in the ice dancing competition. The IOC decided to award both pairs the gold medal in a second medal ceremony held later in the Games.

The Italian city of Turin hosted the 2006 Winter Olympics. It was the second time that Italy held the Winter Olympic Games. South Korean athletes dominated the short-track speed skating events at these Games. Sun-Yu Jin won three gold medals while her teammate Hyun-Soo Ahn won three gold medals and a bronze. In the women's Cross-Country team pursuit Canadian Sara Renner broke one of her poles. When he saw her dilemma, Norwegian coach Bjørnar Håkensmoen decided to lend her a pole. In so doing she was able to help her team win a silver medal in the event. Norway finished fourth Duff Gibson of Canada became the oldest athlete to win a Winter Olympic gold medal in an individual event. He won the skeleton event at 39 years of age

Future

In 2003 the IOC awarded the 2010 Winter Olympics to Vancouver, thus allowing Canada to host its second Winter Olympics. With a population of more than 2.5 million people, Vancouver will be the largest metropolitan area to ever host a Winter Olympic Games. Vancouver is a low-altitude, seaport city with a relatively mild oceanic climate. Most of the venues will be located in the Vancouver metropolitan area, with the exception of the alpine, Nordic, and sliding events, which will be held in Whistler

The decision for the location of the 2014 Winter Olympics was made on 4 July 2007. Sochi, Russia, was elected as the host city over the other two finalists: Salzburg, Austria and Pyeongchang.



peted in. Hanni Wenzel won both the Slalom and Giant Slalom. Her country, Liechtenstein, became the smallest nation to produce an Olympic gold medalist. In the "Miracle on Ice", the American hockey team beat the favoured Soviets and went on to win the gold medal

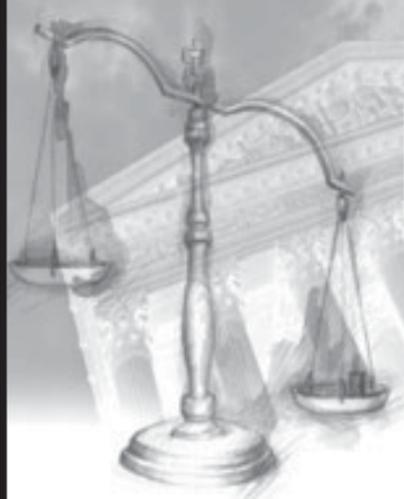
1000 metre speed skating event. Seven months later, she would earn a silver in track cycling at the Summer Games in Seoul. She became the first and only athlete to win medals in both a summer and Winter Olympics in the same year.

The 1992 Games were the last to be held in the same year as the Summer Games. They were hosted in the French Savoie region. Political changes of the time were reflected in the Olympic teams appearing in France. This was the first Games to be held after the fall of Communism and the dismantling of the Berlin Wall. Germany competed as a single nation for the first time since the 1964 Games, and former Yugoslavian republics Croatia and Slovenia made their debut. Most of former Soviet republics still competed as a single team known as the Unified Team, but the Baltic States made independent appearances for the first time

1984 to 1998

Sarajevo, Yugoslavia was chosen to host the 1984 Winter Olympic Games the Games were well-organized and displayed no indication of the war that would soon engulf the country. Yugoslavia also won its first Olympic medal when alpine skier

The Republic of China had boycotted the 1980 Olympics due to a conflict with China over the use of the name "Republic of China". They returned to the 1984 Games after an agreement was reached that the athletes would compete under the new name "Chinese Taipei", and use a special flag and national anthem.



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Communication Styles

People respond to and communicate their symptoms in a wide variety of ways. Some individuals, for example, may not allow themselves to react to or communicate their symptoms related to pain and illness, while others do so frequently. When individuals choose to ignore their symptoms and keep them unknown to others, they may experience undue hardship, especially if they're already in distress, as a result of trying to cope with their symptoms in addition to other responsibilities. This can seriously strain their coping resources, and make them vulnerable to increased symptoms or other effects of stress. As well, they may not allow themselves to be assisted by others, although such assistance may often reduce their burden and help foster a more rapid recovery.

In situations where symptoms are communicated often, the "constant communicator" may isolate him or herself from others because of what may be perceived by others as continuous

COMMUNICATING YOUR SYMPTOMS OF PAIN OR ILLNESS TO OTHERS

complaining, attention-seeking, or negativism. This type of person may push away otherwise supportive individuals and eventually as a result may have to cope with the burden of stress alone. Coping with such stress without the support of others may fuel anxiety and may lead to depression.

Striking a Balance

The goal when developing a strategy for communicating symptoms to others should be to strike a balance between these two approaches, by controlling the amount of discussion that focuses on your symptoms and at the same time inviting others' assistance to ease the burden of stress. Such a strategy can contribute to a quicker recovery.

Communication Tips

"Constant complaining turns others off. It is best to communicate only those things which are of greatest concern to you. It is also essential that you help others to understand what you are experiencing. Avoid describing the symptoms themselves; instead, explain how your symptoms make you feel and relate your situation to a similar event in their life in order to generate discussion regarding how the other person coped at the time. Sometimes he or she may give you some ideas

to try.

"Don't just tell people about your difficulties; let them know clearly and simply what they can do to help. You might try saying for example "it really helps when you encourage me to go out," or "it helps when you make me laugh," or "would you mind helping me with the groceries".

"Exchange chores or do a favor for a friend in exchange for your help. For example, if you are not working and he or she is employed, it may be helpful to do something for him or her during the day that is difficult to accomplish after work. Such an exchange will likely make the other person more willing (and less resentful) to do something for you.

"When something bothers you, avoid criticizing others, but let them know how their actions affect you or make you feel. You might say, for example, "when you play the music loudly or shout, it makes me nervous, and it makes my pain worse." You might also explain that, because you are not feeling well, you are more easily hurt by criticism or more likely to become angry when somebody opposes your view.

"Encourage others to help



you problem-solve or give you tips on what helped them in similar situations. If there are certain activities (chores, hobbies, sports, etc.) that you feel you can no longer do, speak to others about these things to help you think of other ways to engage in the activity (with or without their help), or engage in other enjoyable activities that can replace the old ones.

"Seek people who are supportive and who are willing to help you. Spend less time with those people who seem less supportive, who are critical of you, or who tend to be down a lot themselves. With less supportive people, you may wish to engage in activities that require less conversation and take the focus off your difficulties. For example, go to a

show, play cards, go to a movie, or play games.

"Request the support of others to encourage you and to give you a push when you are having a difficult day. Often, once you get going on an enjoyable activity, you will feel much better, even if you initially wanted to be left alone or did not feel like being active. Having someone to give you a gentle push when you are down can be tremendously helpful.

Ultimately, research has clearly shown that having a supportive and positive social network can promote a faster recovery and a longer, healthier life. Always look for ways to use and improve your social support in times of both good and poor health.

Stay safe while shovelling this season



When you consider that a shovelful of snow weighs 5 to 7 pounds, you realize how much weight you have to lift to clear your sidewalk or driveway - on average, several hundred pounds!

Shovelling snow can be a pain in more ways than one. These tips will help keep your back in top shape:

o Don't let the snow pile up: If the weather report calls for several days of snow, frequent shovelling will allow you to move smaller amounts of snow at once. It's far less strenuous in the long run.

o Pick the right shovel: Use a lightweight pusher-type shovel. If you are using a metal shovel, spray it with Teflon first, so snow won't stick to it.

o Push, don't throw: Always push the snow to the side rather

than throw it. That way you avoid lifting heavy shovelfuls of snow, and sudden twisting or turning movements.

o Bend your knees: As with any heavy object, you need to use your knees, and leg and arm muscles to do the pushing and lifting, while keeping your back straight.

o Take a break: If you feel tired or short of breath, stop and take a rest. Shake out your arms and legs. Stop shovelling immediately if you feel chest pain or back pain. If you have back pain that is severe or that persists for more than a day after shovelling, see a chiropractor. If you have chest pain that is severe, see a doctor immediately.

This winter, have fun and stay fit

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ski and snowboard bindings are adjusted for your height and weight. Always check the weather conditions and watch the trails for icy patches and other potential hazards.

Dress for the weather. Layered clothing works better to keep your muscles warm and your skin dry so you don't get chilled. You may want to invest in clothing designed specifically for winter outdoor activity (available at your local outdoor or sporting goods store), or layer garments made of natural fibres (like cotton, wool and silk).

Know when to rest. Rest when you feel tired. Stop your activity immediately if you experience sudden or prolonged pain in any joint or muscle. Cool down by stretching, and change into dry, warm clothes.

Stay hydrated. Don't be fooled by the temperature! Your active body needs plenty of fluids even though it's cold outside. Be sure to drink lots of water or juice before, during and after winter sports. Follow these tips, and you're well on your way to having a safe and healthy winter.

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Cooling Down

By Mithura Anandarajah, PT
Registered Physiotherapist

As the high of the holidays pass us by, we enter the lows of January. It isn't just the winter blues that we struggle with. We also have to cope with the lows of temperature - blustery cold winds, freezing frost and the impending snow. We run from home to car, scurry under the bus shelter or avoid the elements as much as possible. Our teeth chatter, and throughout our body, we start to shiver. The hairs stand upright and the skin feels cold, clammy and bloodless. All this is our body attempting to preserve heat.

Humans are generally tropical creatures and aren't made to tolerate the cold. We do so by our behavioural adaptations such as wearing warm clothing or building shelters. There are two important factors allowing us to cope with extreme cold temperatures. One is being able to generate heat by burning food. The other is to prevent or minimize the loss of heat. In the human body, the hypothalamus is a tiny gland in the brain that acts as a thermostat. Even the smallest drop in temperature will trigger a series of responses which are designed to protect the body.

So what are the different responses to cold? Perhaps the one that we all relate to is the action of shivering. Shivering is an involuntary muscle contraction that occurs throughout our body, designed as a protective mechanism to generate heat. If you don't work the muscles, the body will do it for you. While shivering can produce up to five times the body heat, it does have drawbacks. The act of shivering requires fuel in the form of high energy food. Also it does increase blood flow to the

extremities, instead of reserving it for the core organs.

As the core temperature drops, there is a notable increase in metabolism. Metabolism is the processing of food into fuel, which then supplies the muscles. As the core temperature drops, the metabolic process slows down. To compensate for this, the body's metabolic rate increases slightly in order to supply the demand of muscle and organ function.

Another reaction you may notice is that when the skin tem-

perature falls below about 10°C, the surface blood vessels dilate (get wider) rather than constrict. If the temperature falls further periods of blood vessel dilation alternate with periods of constriction. This is because your body is trying not to lose heat from the extremities, but at the same time wants to supply the skin with blood for oxygen and nutrients. This phenomenon explains the red cheeks and nose characteristic of frosty weather. Eventually however, the body stops the dilation of the blood vessels to the skin. The skin temperature can then drop to the surrounding temperatures and frost nip or frost bite may occur. This process is the body's way to sacrifice the extremities in order to protect the core.

Goose pimples are an obvious sign that a person is feeling cold. They are caused by the tiny erector pili muscles attached to the base of the hair follicles covering



the body. The scientific name for this is horripilation. In man it has no effect as we don't have enough hair to make a difference. For animals with a dense coat of fur however, it improves the insulation considerably.

Avoiding the cold, while desirable is not really practical. We do still have to work, commute, shop and shovel. However understanding how temperatures affect us may help us prepare better. We certainly should be dressed appropriately for the winter, armed with hats, gloves and heavy coats. It is important to eat energy rich foods, which can fuel us when needed. Be aware and then adapt.



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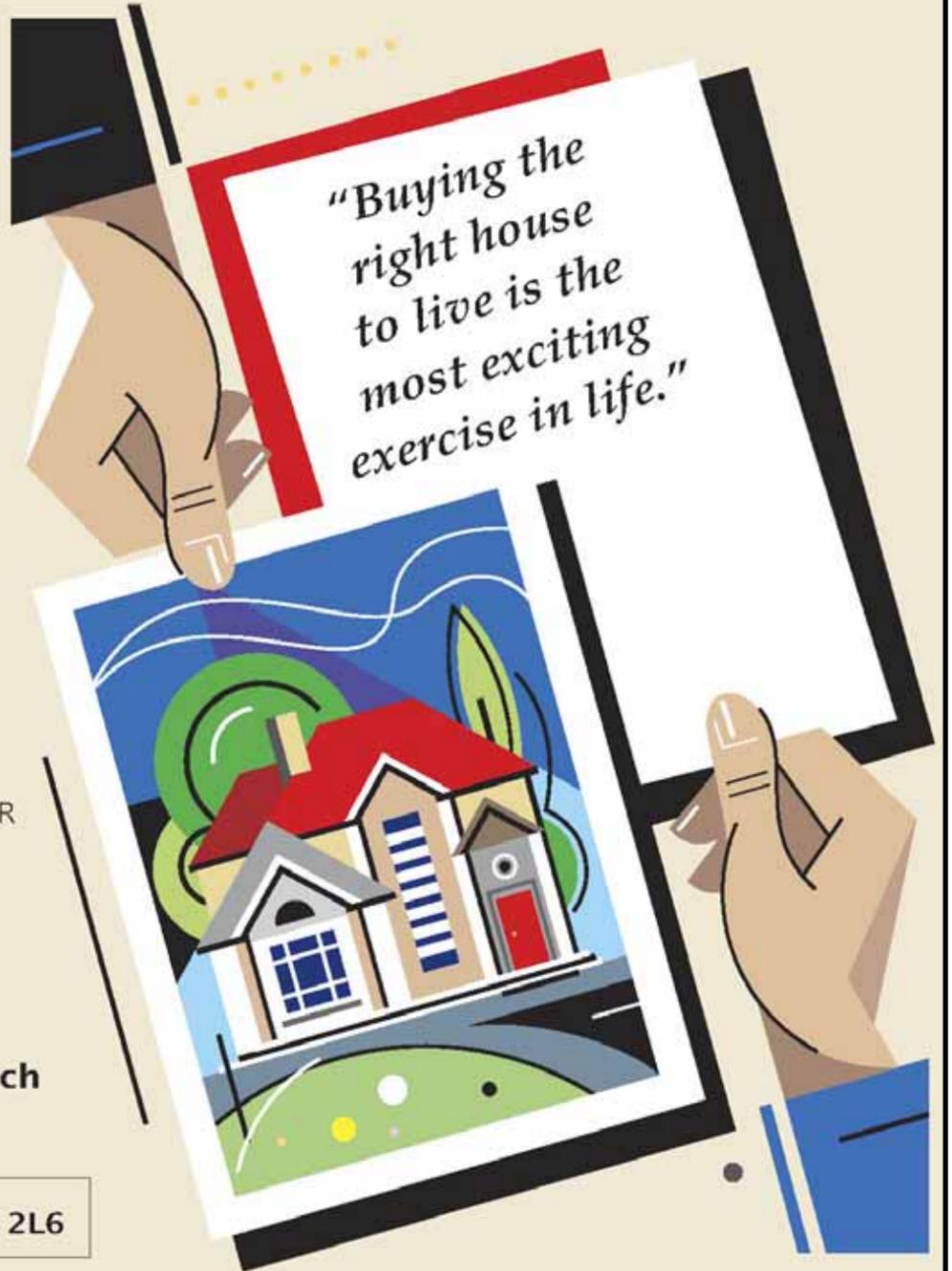
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Annual Awards Celebration of Homelife GTA Realty



The Annual Awards Celebration Gala by Home Life GTA Realty, one of the leading Real Estate Brokerage was held on Wednesday, December 9th, 2009 at Jasmin Banquet Hall. Brokerage owners Raja Mahendran and Eddy Woo organized the event well and it was attended by many prominent Lawyers, Corporate Bankers, Builders and Mortgage Brokers. Some of the prize winners receiving awards are shown here.

Photos by: Gname-Digital Touch



(L-R) Raja Mahendran, No 2 Producer 2009 Mr Gnanendran & Judy Gnanendran receiving Award from Sam Fung, Senior Marketing Manager-Tridel and Eddy Woo



(L-R) Raja Mahendran, Top Producer 2009 Siva Sivagnanam receiving Award from Sam Fung, Senior Marketing Manager-Tridel and Eddy Woo



(L-R) Eddy Woo, Gold Winner Nel Ketha receiving Award from Gary Anandasangaree and Raja Mahendran



(L-R) Eddy Woo, Gold Winner Tammy Surendran receiving Award from Gary Anandasangaree and Raja Mahendran.



(L-R) Eddy Woo, Gold Winner Justin Williams receiving Award from Gary Anandasangaree and Raja Mahendran



(L-R) Eddy Woo, Gold Winner Kumar Sinnathamby receiving Award from Gary Anandasangaree and Raja Mahendran



(L-R) Raja Mahendran, No 3 Producer 2009 Neil Modi receiving Award from Sam Fung, Senior Marketing Manager-Tridel and Eddy Woo



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SENIOR THAMILS HONoured



Scarborough Senior Tamils' Association honoured eight Seniors of the Association over 75 years of age during the Annual Christmas Day celebrations held on 21st December, 2009 at the Recreation Hall of the Neilson Seniors' Apartment at 1315 Neilson Road, Scarborough.

The President of the Association S. Navaratnam presided. The Chief Guest, Rev. Issac Selvaratnam delivered the Christmas message. The Guest of Honour, Toronto City Councillor Dr. Raymond Cho presented plaques to M. Thevarajah the Past President of the Association and Naga Ramalingam Commu-

nity Development Worker at the Family Service Toronto in recognition of their commitment and valuable contribution to the Association.

Legal Advisor of the Association Manuel Jesudasan, Barrister and Solicitor and the President of the Malvern Seniors' Club Thambo Venayagaratnam also addressed the meeting. The grand children of the members participated in the Christmas Day Celebration and entertained the Seniors.'



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MONSOON FEATURE

Arun Senathirajah

ACIB, MBA (Banking Mgmt)

After the threat of Western financial crisis (not really a global financial crisis as portrayed by Western Bankers), now the momentum has arisen to focus for the need for a new global currency. A global currency should serve as the world's reserve currency in which major economies can have place confidence in it. This is what now lacks in slipping US dollar, although about 64% of the reserves by nations are held in US dollar. About 27% of the reserves are held in Euro. Other important function of the global currency is that the currency in which vast majority of international transactions would take place. Since US dollar is weak in value compared to Euro and Yuan the impetus is being gathered for the replacement of US dollar as a world's new reserve currency. EU countries in the last few months have generated reserve surpluses by increased exports. European financial market policy makers have now shifted their attention to their strong Euro and the undervalued Chinese Yuan. Head of the IMF International Monetary Fund) Dominique Strauss-Kahn has stated 'The imperative of greater global currency stability means the world can no longer rely, as it has done since the end of the gold standard, on a currency issued by a single country.' The U.S. dollar remains the currency

standard, but globalization demands a new global currency that provides representation for the growing importance of a variety of major economies, Mr. Strauss-Kahn said during his recent visit to China.

Dominant Currencies

It is asserted gold was the world's first global currency. Collapse of the international gold standard just after the World War I had significant implications for global trade. Since the Bretton Woods Agreement of 1944, exchange rates around the world were pegged against the United States dollar, which could be exchanged for a fixed amount of gold. This reinforced the dominance of the US dollar as a global currency. Since the collapse of the fixed exchange rate regime and the gold standard and the institution of floating exchange rates following the Smithsonian Agreement in 1971, most currencies around the world have no longer been pegged against the United States dollar. Even then USA remained as the economic superpower, most international transactions continued in US dollar, and it has remained the de facto world currency. During the 1980s, the Japanese yen became increasingly used as an international currency, but diminished with the Japanese recession in the 1990s. More recently, the euro has increasingly competed with the United States dollar in international finance. Since 1999, the dollar's dominance has begun to be eroded by the euro, which represents a larger size economy, and has the prospect of more

Need for Emergence of a New Global Currency



countries adopting the euro as their national currency. The euro inherited the status of a major reserve currency from the German Mark (DM), and since then its contribution to official reserves has risen as banks seek to diversify their reserves and trade in the Eurozone continues to expand. Currently undervalued Chinese Yuan (also called Renminbi-RMB) has caught the attention of the economists, bankers and the trade partners.

Emergence of Chinese Yuan as a Stronger Currency

China has its most investments, including US bonds issued by US treasury for US budget deficits in US dollar. It is estimated China has \$1.6 trillion as foreign exchange reserve. Every time the dollar slides down the Chinese value of the investment is stashed away. China is not happy with living with the dollar, but it can't live without it. Since it uses US dollar as the reserve currency,

China has caught in a dangerous trap. In the last four months alone from February 2009, China has signed currency swap agreements worth more than \$95 billion (650 billion yuan) with an array of nations - including: Argentina, Brazil, South Korea, Indonesia, Malaysia, Belarus and Hong Kong - that are only too glad to move away from the increasingly shaky U.S. dollar. China as a nation, not having a universally accepted currency is a huge issue. The yuan's de facto peg to the dollar is unsustainable in the long run, but Chinese academics have doubt on what would replace it. USA argues that an undervalued yuan is exacerbating economic imbalances that were a root cause of the global financial crisis. But He Yafei, China's vice foreign minister, defended China's policy of keeping the yuan on a tight rein. "In the process of tackling the financial crisis, keeping the RMB stable not only was a

contribution to fighting the crisis but also helped stabilize global financial markets," he said. China's reserves are so large that diversifying out of the dollar and into the euro, or any other currency, isn't feasible because those other markets aren't big enough or deep enough to accommodate its cash. And even a hint that China was poised to dump dollars would send the greenback spiraling further downward, deepening losses on the country's offshore holdings. Therefore, the reality is that China needs to have the U.S. boost the value of the dollar - even as the United States needs to have China do all it can to maintain the dollar's value. European Central Bank President Jean-Claude Trichet says a steady rise of China's yuan currency would help rebalance the world economy. Mr. Strauss-Kahn reiterated China needs a stronger yuan as part of a package of policies to help rebalance its economy by

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promoting domestic demand. China has kept the yuan pegged around 6.83 per dollar since July 2008, following a 21 per cent rise over the previous three years, to help its exporters weather the global economic crisis. The World Bank President Robert Zoellick welcomes China's effort to make it currency more international and warns against abrupt unilateral moves that could worsen the fragile global financial situation. When yuan is left to decide its value to be decided by the market, its true value would be reflected on it. By then it is good to bring yuan in the basket of newly thinking SDR emerged global currency. By that yuan would take a place as a trusted currency for reserve purpose as well.

World Currency Unit (WCU)

The World Currency Unit (WCU) was proposed by Lok Sang Ho of Lingnan University, Hong Kong in 2000 as a new global currency. The WCU is an indexed unit of account (unit of account) that stands for a unit of real global purchasing power. Since each unit by design represents a stable unit of purchasing power, the stipulated interest rate on WCU-denominated bonds represents a real interest rate. In principle, the common denomination of bonds by issuers from different parts of the world using the WCU, as well as the greater transparency of real interest rates, will produce more efficient capital markets, as savers and borrowers around the world converge in their understanding of what each basis point of interest means and are protected against two key sources of uncertainty, namely inflation and exchange loss risks. The WCU proposal has not gained much attention of the western policy makers who play dominant role in global economic order.

SDRs (Special Drawing Rights)

A Special Drawing Right (SDR) is the monetary unit of the reserve assets of the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The unit was created in 1969 in support of the Bretton Woods system of fixed exchange rates to alleviate the shortage of U.S. dollar and gold reserves in the expansion of international trade. The SDR unit is defined as a weighted sum of contributions of four major currencies, reevaluated and adjusted every five years, and computed daily in terms of equivalent United States dollars. Special Drawing Rights are not a currency, but they represent potential claims on the currencies of the IMF members. SDRs obtain their reserve asset power from the commitments of the IMF member states to hold and honor them for payment of balances. When Special Drawing Rights were created in one SDR was defined as the value of 0.888671 grams of gold. After the breakdown of the fixed exchange rate system, SDRs were defined in terms of a basket of major cur-

rencies used in international trade and finance. The SDR is currently being used as an internal IMF exchange unit. Today, the SDR has only limited use as a reserve asset, and its main function is to serve as the unit of account of the IMF and some other international organizations. Rather, it is a potential claim on the freely usable currencies of IMF members. Its current composition of basket (value of 1 SDR) set for the period 2006 to 2010 is USD 44%, EUR 34%, JPY 11% and GBP 11%.

Enhancement of SDR as the New Global Currency

International Monetary Fund (IMF) managing director Dominique Strassus-Khann has said recently 'The days of one country's currency as the global benchmark are numbered. The dollar remains the currency standard, but globalization demands a currency that provides represen-

tem. Zhou Xiaochuan has suggested creating a "super-sovereign reserve currency" to replace the dollar over the long run. This would sharply enhance the global role of special drawing rights (SDRs), the international asset created by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in the late 1960s. These are the first big proposals for international monetary reform from China or indeed any emerging-market economy and deserve to be taken seriously for that reason alone. The idea of a supranational reserve currency is also, it appears, supported by Russia and other emerging markets. And a United Nations advisory committee has argued for a new global reserve currency, possibly one based on the SDR. Several other Asian countries, Brazil, and Russia have expressed support for Mr. Zhou's ideas.

Group of 20 countries and the Call for New Global



tation for the growing importance of a variety of major economies.' He is of the opinion a new global currency might evolve out of the special drawing right, the Fund's in-house unit of account. "That probably has to be a basket," Mr. Strauss-Kahn said of the eventual replacement for the dollar. "In a globalized world there is no domestic solution," he told a forum. Mr. Strauss-Kahn expressed concern that political willingness to overhaul the international monetary system will falter if, in a year's time, the visible signs of the economic crisis have faded. Former IMF Chief, Michel Camdessus, said time was of the essence to embark on reform of the global monetary system. Camdessus gave broad backing to a recent proposal by Chinese central bank governor Zhou Xiaochuan that an expanded SDR could eventually replace the dollar as the global reserve currency. As a corollary of a strengthened role for the SDR, governance changes were needed at the Fund to shift power to big emerging economies, Mr. Camdessus said. Zhou Xiaochuan, the governor of the People's Bank of China - China's central bank, recently suggested that replacing the dollar with the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) special drawing rights (SDR) as the dominant reserve currency would bring greater stability to the global financial sys-

Currency

With a view to restoring financial stability, World leaders have called upon the Group of 20 countries (G-20) to instigate a new global currency based on the IMF's SDRs. In the global currency consensus BRIC countries (Brazil, Russia, India and China) are expected to participate and in the revamping of the international monetary system. Russia and China have put forth "proposals" which have been highlighted as possible alternatives to the dollar. China has proposed the formation of a new global currency based on a reform of SDR system. Li Rouge, Chairman of the Export-Import Bank of China has mentioned "It is a feasible plan to reform the present SDR and make it into a real settlement currency, a universally accepted 'currency basket' that would replace the dollar at the heart of the monetary system." On the other hand, Russian President Dmitry Medvedev has explicitly questioned the composition of the SDR basket and has called upon the IMF "to expand the currency basket of SDRs to include the Chinese yuan, commodity currencies and gold in order that it matures into a reserve currency."

Leading to Single Global Monetary Policy

Richard N. Cooper Maurits C. Boas, professor of international economics at Harvard, in a 1984

piece for the CFR journal Foreign Affairs entitled "A Monetary System for the Future," Dr. Cooper has baldly proclaimed a radical alternative scheme for the next century might have a common currency for all of the industrial democracies, with a common monetary policy and a joint Bank of Issue to determine that monetary policy. Cooper went on to acknowledge that a single currency is possible only if there is in effect a single monetary policy, and a single authority issuing the currency and directing the monetary policy. Independent states need to turn over the determination of monetary policy to a supranational body the IMF. Global monetary control, as proposed by Cooper, Bergsten, Zhou Xiaochuan, would lead rapidly and ineluctably to global political control - a world government

Keeping Dominance for Dollar and Euro

In Eastern Europe, the former Soviet Union, the Balkans extending into Central Asia, the dollar and the Euro are competing with one another. Ultimately, control over national currency systems is the basis upon which countries are colonized. While the U.S. dollar prevails throughout the Western Hemisphere, the Euro and the U.S. dollar are clashing in the former Soviet Union, Central Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East. With the election of pro-US governments in both France and Germany, a political consensus seems to have emerged with regard to the Middle East war. In turn, this consensus regarding the US-NATO military agenda favors greater cooperation and integration between the US and the EU in global financial and monetary affairs. Would this potential "alliance" between powerful overlapping American, British, European and Japanese banking interests lead to the integration of the Euro and the dollar into a single global currency? This integration would lead to reinforcing the hegemonic control of a small number of global banking and financial institutions over the process of money creation. This, in turn, would overshadow the functions of national central banks, encroach on the sovereignty of the Nation State and eventually lead to a new phase of the global debt crisis. If SDRs emerge as a global currency, it would no longer be an accounting unit but a unit of currency in a basket. Actual central banking functions, however, would not necessarily be transferred to the IMF, but, they would remain in the hands of four constituent central banks - The US Federal Reserve, the European Central Bank based in Frankfurt, the Bank of England and the Bank of Japan. The IMF is a bureaucracy which serves the interests of major private financial institutions. While the IMF would formally be responsible for overseeing a global currency, the IMF would not actually be responsible

for monetary policy. Under the existing SDR composition, the central banking functions would be divided between four central banks. These central banks are in turn controlled by a handful of private banking interests. A global currency based on the existing SDR arrangement would not fundamentally change the global monetary order. The SDR would be a proxy currency. Under the present composition of the SDR, what we would be dealing with is an alliance between US, British, European and Japanese banking institutions, ultimately with the US dollar and the Euro predominating. Assertion of Fred Bergsten, director of the Peterson Institute for International Economics is that the world economy (means western economy) is in trouble unless there is some central steering mechanism is taken place. By bringing global control over international financial system by western bankers under the IMF umbrella they still have the motive to uphold the value of US dollar and Euro.

Global Geopolitics and International Monetary System

Some extremists of the view that the dollar which is the foundation of white power and American hegemony shall fall and the so-called great nation of America will join her in the fall. Global Geopolitics bears a relationship to the international monetary system. Control over money creation is an instrument of economic conquest. The invasion and occupation of Iraq was to exclude rival Russian and Chinese interests from the Middle-East and Central Asian oil fields. The reform of the international monetary system is a project of the dominant financial elites, which is discussed behind closed doors. It is unlikely that Russia and China, which in large part remain subordinate to Western banking interests, will perform a significant role in central banking functions at a global level. Moreover, this initiative occurs at a time of East West confrontation, amidst veiled US-NATO threats directed against Russia as well China. The establishment of a new global currency and central banking system is an instrument of global economic domination which is intimately related to the broader US-NATO military agenda. While the SDR basket composition could be modified or revised, it is unlikely that the Yuan and the Ruble would be allowed to perform a role as major reserve currencies. What is more likely to occur is the formation of a global proxy currency predicated largely on the Euro and the US dollar. In response to the Dollar-Euro hegemony, Russia, China and the member states of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) may decide to develop bilateral trading arrangements in Rubles or Yuan. Although Indian economy is also growing as well it still keeps silent as sleeping tiger.



OTTAWA - Prime Minister Stephen Harper today highlighted Canada's upcoming leadership of major international events in 2010, including the Olympic and Paralympic Games as well as the G-8 and G-20 Summits. Canada will also host the North American Leaders' Summit.

"The world will turn its gaze on Canada in 2010. In February and March, we will be hosting the Olympic and Paralympic Games, and in June, the G-8 and G-20 summits," said Prime Minister Harper. "We plan to use these two summits to continue playing a leadership role on issues of importance to Canadians."

Canada will chair the G-8 Summit, which will be held in

2010: AN INTERNATIONAL YEAR FOR CANADA

Ontario's Muskoka region. Immediately afterward, Canada will host the G-20 Summit, which will take place in Toronto. The leaders of the world's most industrialized countries gather annually at the G-8 summits to discuss a broad range of issues, such as fiscal and monetary policy coordination and international development. Industrialized and leading emerging countries also meet regularly at G-20 meetings, which have become an important international forum to advance economic cooperation.

"The G-8 and G-20 summits in 2010 are opportunities for Canada to contribute to discussions aimed at reaching a consensus on common global issues," said Prime Minister Harper. "They also provide unique opportunities for Canada to exercise its leadership



on the world stage, while enabling it to promote Canadian values such as human rights, democracy and the rule of law. We will also meet with our North American partners and our discussions will focus on the economy, energy and climate change, and security."

India Goes Green, Ontario Gets Green Jobs

New Partnerships Worth \$650 Million Will Create Green Tech Jobs In Ontario

Ontario's trade mission wrapped up its eight-day visit to India in Hyderabad early December 2009, delivering new deals that will create jobs in Ontario and a greener environment for all.

All together, the 27 businesses and institutions on the mission signed agreements totalling \$650 million -- with additional Memoranda of Understanding that will see Ontario and India firms continue to develop stronger ties into the future.

One major highlight of the trade mission was the International Indian Film Academy's announcement that their 2011 awards ceremony will

be coming to Toronto -- the first time this ceremony has taken place in North America. The festival will bring 40,000 visitors to the city, millions in revenue and reach a worldwide television audience of 350 million people.

While in Hyderabad, Premier McGuinty participated in a plenary session and signing ceremony.

Later in the day he joined a roundtable discussion at the Indian School of Business for a discussion on global trade.

He ended the day with a tree-planting ceremony at the Confederation of Indian Industry's Sohrabji Godrej Green Business Centre.

"The agreements we've

signed here in India will mean good jobs for our families back home in Ontario. But they'll also help India meet its goals of building a greener, more sustainable economy. And that benefits not only Indians, but Ontarians and people all around the world."

- Dalton McGuinty

Premier of Ontario

QUICK FACTS

Hyderabad is the fifth largest metropolis of India.

The Financial Times recently ranked the Indian School of Business one of the world's top 15 business schools.

More than 2,600 environmental technology companies are based in Ontario.

Canada and Ontario Partner to Build New Arts and Cultural Centre

Investment will create local jobs, stimulate the economy and contribute to the revitalization of Regent Park

A new 68,000 square foot arts and cultural centre will be built in Toronto's Regent Park, as a result of a joint Canada-Ontario investment announced today by the Honourable John Baird, Canada's Transport and Infrastructure Minister, and the Honourable Aileen Carroll, Minister of Culture for Ontario, on behalf of the Honourable Gerry Phillips, Minister of Energy and Infrastructure for Ontario. The project will create jobs in the short term and benefit the community of Regent Park for years to come.

"Under the leadership of Prime Minister Stephen Harper, our Government has announced hundreds of infrastructure projects throughout Toronto that will stimulate the economy and create jobs," said Minister Baird. "Regent Park's new arts and cultural centre will be an important part of this community once complete, and is among many remarkable projects in Toronto we are proud to be investing in."

"The McGuinty Government understands the tremendous impact of arts and cultural initiatives on communities and neighbourhoods," said Minister Carroll. "We are therefore investing in the Regent Park Arts and Cultural Centre which will impact the neighbourhood and Toronto in a wonderfully positive way."

The Governments of Canada and Ontario will each invest up to \$12 million towards the project. The contribution from the Government of Canada will be under the new \$4-billion Infrastructure Stimulus Fund, which provides funding to construction-ready infrastructure projects that



Hon. John Baird

can be substantially completed by March 2011. The contribution from the Government of Ontario will be from the two-year, \$32.5 billion infrastructure commitment laid out in the 2009 provincial budget, Confronting the Challenge: Building Our Economic Future.

The construction of a new arts and cultural centre is part of a multi-phased revitalization of the Regent Park neighbourhood, and will help to improve cultural infrastructure while creating local jobs in Toronto. The new centre will include office space; a multi-purpose arts space to accommodate a wide variety of performances, festivals, celebrations and events; as well as space for not-for-profit arts and cultural organizations to lease studio or rehearsal space. Construction will begin in early 2010, with completion expected by March 2011.

To date, the Governments of Canada and Ontario have announced close to \$11 billion in joint funding for more than 2,600 infrastructure projects across the province to stimulate the economy and create jobs.

Rocco Rossi to run for Toronto Mayor

Rocco Rossi, the former National Director of the Liberal Party and former CEO of the Heart & Stroke Foundation wants to be Toronto's next Mayor.

Rossi was the first high profile candidate to file his nomination papers recently for the Mayoral Elections to he held this year. Rossi, born to Italian immigrants, graduated from, McGill University

and Princeton. He held senior positions in the private sector which included Boston Consulting, the Toronto Star and Labatt's.

Rossi is considered a very capable individual, a good fundraiser to attract both big bills and small donations and a very experienced and effective administrator.



New Year Greetings... Page 1 Poem Translation

Thou with sparkling eyes come, come, come
Strong hearted thou come, come, come
Thou with sweet words come, come, come
And with firm shoulders come, come, come.
Thou with serene mind come, come, come
Seeing smallness thou rage come, come, come
Thou with compassion for poverty come, come, come
And with mounting pace come, come, come
Young Bharatha come, come, come
Unmatched vigor thou hold come, come, come
Thou waiting to rise in rayless land
And like the rising sun come, come, come
Razed heartland to spruce afore
Restore splendor thou come, come, come
Thou as having seen all illustriousness
And come illustrate with your eyes come, come, come

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Sri Lankan Accountants Association of Canada



7th Annual Dinner Dance of Sri Lankan Accountants Association was held on Saturday, December 5th, 2009 at Claireport Banquet & Convention Centre in grand scale attended by its members, their family, friends and guests. Some of the photos are given here.



Suba Satgunaraj CGA, welcoming guests to the 7th Annual Dinner Dance



Rajon Tharmarajah CGA, President SAAC, addressing the participants at the 7th Annual Dinner Dance held at Claireport Banquet Hall



N Nandakumar CGA, VP SAAC, Toasting to Canada, at the 7th Annual Dinner Dance



Lagan Arumugam, FCMA, Treasurer SAAC, Toasting to the Membership, at the 7th Annual Dinner Dance held at Claireport Banquet Hall.



Kandiah Mathitharan, CGA, Toasting to the guests, at the 7th Annual Dinner Dance



Walton Rajah CGA, VP SAAC, delivering the vote of thanks



Mrs. Carmen Jacques CGA, Business Development Manager, CGA-Ontario, presenting one of the door prizes.



Mrs. Carmen Jacques CGA, Business Development Manager, CGA-Ontario, presenting one of the door prizes.



Master of Ceremony, Umesh Vallipuram CA, at the 7th Annual Dinner Dance

Coalition for Tamil Elections Canada holds poll on Vaddukkoaddai Resolution

99.82 percent of 48,583 voters mandated independent and sovereign Tamil Eelam in the poll conducted in 31 centres across Canada by Coalition for Tamil Elections Canada, on Saturday, Dec 19, 2009.

The poll was based on "The Vaddukkoaddai Resolution" which was declared by all Tamil political parties in 1976 after having had several meetings with Tamil organizations and it was endorsed by an overwhelming majority of Tamils in the 1977 General Election in the

island of Sri Lanka.

Coalition for Tamil Elections Canada on its website states, the question is once again being put to the Tamils in Canada, "to find out the current validity of the political fundamentals set by the Vaddukkoaddai Resolution of 1976 that called for the creation of Tamil Eelam".

OFFICIAL POLL RESULTS:
Total Voter turnout: 48, 583
48,481 Voted YES, 85 Voted NO
99.82% YES And 0.18% NO



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Canadian Tamils' Chamber of Commerce

www.ctcc.ca

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To become a member and to learn more about the Chamber, please call,

Sam Thiru 416-321-3333

Sritharan Thurairajah 416-918-9771

Ken Kirupa 416-294-9322



Rejoice. After 77 years of trying, India is finally No 1 in the ICC Test cricket rankings. A 2-0 victory over Sri Lanka in a three Test series makes you feel real good. Here's a review of the series:

We have a lot to celebrate after our cricket squad's decisive victory over Sri Lanka in the three-Test series at home. The triumph has made India the world's No 1 outfit in the Test rankings. This singular accomplishment is the outcome of a collective endeavour. In terms of a grand individual effort in a team event Virender Sehwag has added to our joy by coming close to achieving a record third triple 100s. Before we return to his gallant deed let us savour the team conquest first. This is the first time that India has achieved the first position in the Tests. It has thus wound up 2009 in the Test area on a remarkable note.

Now the challenge before it is to stay on top in 2010 and afterwards. This is something easier said than done. First, there are other nations too in the field itching to occupy the slot. If South Africa beat England 2-0 in their upcoming series, for instance, it will regain the top spot again. As it turns out India on the other hand does not have a hectic Test schedule ahead --- just two tests against Bangladesh in the next six months. Given the paucity of the Test schedule it may find it difficult to keep the present glory in tact. That is something beyond the team's hands. There is no doubt what we have presently is the country's best ever cricketing side so far with a solid batting line-up up to No 7. It has a formidable bench strength because of which Gautam Gambhir can be allowed to take off from one match and Harbhajan Singh can be taken off an entire series. Little giant Sachin Tendulkar, who has been part of successive Indian teams for more than two decades now, has rightly put it: "I would not hesitate to say that this is the best team I have ever played with." At the same time we must realise our inherent problem. We may win the No 1 slot in all forms of the game but invariably we are not able to stick to it.

A thin Test schedule apart it is our form which is perpetually open to question because of its inconsistency. The best of our match-winners miserably collapse at times. The impression about the team is that it is very difficult to be tamed in its den. What is left unsaid is that it is vulnerable on the outside turf. Sri Lanka's deputy coach Stuart Law is not the only one to admit this: "It's difficult to play them in their own backyard, as you get found it." Before him Australian captain Ricky Ponting has echoed similar sentiments: "They definitely play a lot better at home than they do when they travel." It is another thing that he proved himself wrong in the seven One-day Internationals against India in India not very long ago this year.

It is, therefore, in the interest of Mahendra Singh Dhoni and his colleagues to keep in mind all that the veterans of the game have to say. Sunil Gavaskar has made a pertinent point: "Getting to number one

Can India sustain Number 1 position?

is hard work. But they would have to work harder to stay there because others would try to knock them off the pedestal. They would have to be lot more consistent but it's not beyond them. They have got the skills and talent and it's application which is not always 100 per cent." Ajit Wadekar counsels: "We have to sustain this position as long as possible. We have been doing well in international cricket but in recent times, we have been much more consistent, which has truly reflected on our top position today." E.A.S. Prasanna says the same thing: "There is going to be added pressure on the team now. We need to do lot of homework now on to sustain that position with the knowledge that other countries are also developing faster." All of them are grateful to the team for having realised their dream. That is why they are concerned about the future. It is in this context that one takes heart from Dhoni's assertion. The Indian captain believes: "To be the number one team we have to keep on doing well."

The difference that just one man can make is evident from the example of Virender Sehwag. He is one reason that the India-Sri Lanka series will be talked about for long. He nearly became the first batsman in the world to score three triple centuries --- his double triple 100s (against Pakistan at Multan and against South Africa at Chennai) have already brought him on a par with Australian legend Don Bradman and West Indian great Brian Lara. Another triple century would have put him ahead of them. He missed the target in the third Test by just seven runs. Nevertheless his has been "an epic knock." His 284 runs in a single day ranks only behind Walter Hammond's 295 and Bradman's 309. His 200 - reached in a mere 168 balls - is the second quickest in Tests. And, 443 is the most runs scored by India in a day in Tests and its major share has come from Sehwag. He has hit Murali Muralitharan, doubtless one of the greatest spinners, so mercilessly that one of the Sri Lankan cricketers has admitted that he has never seen something like this before. It is being said for a long time that Murali lives on his reputation rather than his actual performance these days. This observation is not at all meant to demean him. Any such thought is far from our mind. All of us tend to lose energy and skills with advancing years and Murali can't be an exception to this natural phenomenon. We are, therefore, not much appreciative of Sehwag's remark that offence is the best policy against Murali --- in his heyday the latter has been a scourge of batsmen. Nevertheless we must give Sehwag the credit he deserves immensely for his own enterprise. He has also let out a secret of his resounding success: "I always tell myself to bat the full day, and if there is a ball to be hit, just hit it." Such confidence will enable India prove that its current achievement is not just a flash in the pan.

Like Sehwag, MS Dhoni often doesn't get much credit for what he does for the team and the country. I agree that the Indian captain's batting style is pretty ungainly. But

can anyone doubt its efficacy? Both his centuries were crucial to the team's cause - the 110 in Ahmedabad took India to a position of relative safety; his 100 in Mumbai ensured that Murali wouldn't be able to take a second shot at us. Why complain about methods when it gives you the right results?

The best thing about Dhoni is his level-headedness. At the post-match interview, he told Ravi Shastri that maintaining the No 1 position would be the real challenge. That's a leader with a vision. I would reiterate, make him the captain till the 2011 World Cup.

Dravid's contribution in the series was second to none. His 177 saved us in the first Test. Otherwise, we might have had a totally different end to the contest. He had another ton in the second Test and scored 70 plus again in the third. We saw a new Dravid this time - he was ready to be more aggressive, more adventurous. One would have liked to know what really brought about the change in his attitude. So why not him? Why does he have to be in the shadows every time?

Two factors clearly went in our favour in this series. Our catching, as Dhoni too pointed out, was pretty good. Unlike the Lankans who were surprisingly butterfingers, we snapped up nearly everything.

The umpiring decisions, especially in the third Test, also went much in our favour. I would say, it made a difference to the outcome. Dilshan got two rank bad decisions in Mumbai. If something like that had happened to one of our top batters, we would have had a national debate. Besides, Dravid and Tendulkar and others also got decisions to their advantage. That surely helped our cause.

Of course, there was the Sehwag factor. He can make batting look as easy as drinking tea. He deserved the man of the series award. Without his pacy knocks, the outcomes would have been different. At least in Mumbai, the Lankans could have escaped with a draw. He is a game changer. Barring one, each innings had a strike rate of 70 plus, amazing by Test standards. The 319 against South Africa in Chennai last year had come off just 304 balls - the fastest triple hundred ever scored. In terms of strike rate, not even Sir Donald Bradman had done better. When Sehwag is at the crease, anything seems possible. Like making Murali look like a club bowler. Like almost scoring 300 runs days in less than a single day's play. Like smashing the first three balls he faces on tour for sixes as he did in New Zealand earlier this year. When he hits the fastest ever ODI century by an Indian, it is almost expected. Sehwag is the only current batsman in international cricket with two Test triple tons. Both were scored at breathtaking speed against respectable attacks: Pakistan and South Africa. He is a more prolific "big" innings player than anybody in world cricket. Twelve of his last 13 hundreds have been 150 plus: 284 not out, 131, 201 not out, 319, 151, 180, 254, 201, 173, 164, 155, 309, 195.

Sehwag too is a dominator, a game changer. In bowlers, he

induces a fear factor. No other batsman has reduced world-class bowlers to helplessness as consistently in all forms of the game recently as the Delhi opener. Only the finest can achieve a strike rate of 100 plus in ODIs after playing over 200 games - 102.09 in 211 games. His overall ODI average of 33.98 may be modest by his own standards, but in the last 20 innings, he has nearly averaged 50. That's despite being a relative failure in the just-concluded series against Australia.

Our bowling rose to the occasion. Pragyan Ojha bowled brilliantly. His wickets were well earned. He wins battles in the air. That makes him an all-wicket bowler. He should be an asset to the side for years.

Sreesanth won us the game in Kanpur. That's really cool. But let us see whether he can keep his discipline and intensity intact. Zaheer was disappointing for much of the series. But then he was making a comeback. He surely made amends on the last day with 4 wickets in hand. Hopefully, he will bowl with more penetration and venom in the future. Harbhajan bowled better than he has been in recent times. He got India crucial breakthroughs. So good for him.

Unfortunately, the special triumph comes at a time when Test cricket doesn't figure high in the priority of anybody in India: neither BCCI nor the cricketers, neither sponsors nor the fans. Apart from Kanpur, the turn-out of spectators was pretty disappointing.

India's top position in the Test rankings will hopefully increase spectator interest in the largest format of the game. With some luck, it will also spur BCCI to show more sense in the scheduling of the matches. In Ahmedabad, the Test began on Monday and ended on Friday. In Kanpur, it began on Tuesday, and as luck would have it, again ended on Friday. That means there was no Test cricket on weekend in either of the cities. In the 1970s and 80s, that was unthinkable. I know the BCCI has more dates to manage now. But surely with a bit of intent, weekend dates might have been accommodated. Clearly for BCCI, Tests are no priority.

You could almost hear a nationwide sigh of disappointment when Virender Sehwag spooned a catch back to the bowler within sniffing distance of a triple hundred. The regret was possibly most acute for hacks in newspapers and television channels who had been dreaming up banner size headlines and special shows from the night before. They were literally willing Sehwag to take a crack at cricket immortality by crossing the 400-run barrier. But the man himself had other plans, as he always seems to. Just seven runs short of what would have been a record-breaking triple even better than the Don himself Sehwag holed out. Not for him the boring accumulation of records and statistics. He had said that he wanted to score a double century in this game. Deed done, he headed back to the pavilion.

Should we have been surprised? Not one bit. Have we forgotten that this was the same man who along



Kanyalal Raina

with Rahul Dravid had come perilously close to breaking one of the oldest records of the game the highest partnership in Tests, incidentally scored by an Indian pair in the 1950s. But a few runs away from the record Sehwag threw it away. Later he confessed that he was unaware of the record. And what's more he hadn't heard of either Vinoo Mankad or Pankaj Roy, the legendary duo who held the record.

It's this uncluttered approach that typifies Sehwag. In interviews he has repeatedly said one thing if the ball is there to be hit he will do so. And if records tumble along the way, so be it. It can't get any simpler, can it? It's worth recalling a story about the days when Sehwag was playing county cricket, recounted by none other than Shane Warne. It so happened that Sehwag was facing one of the many Pakistani practitioners of reverse swing. He went up to his batting mate and said he had a plan to counter the swing. The next ball was whacked out of sight. The ball was duly replaced and the reverse swing successfully nullified.

Earlier, during the disastrous 2002-03 series against New Zealand, he was the only Indian batsman to get two match-winning ODI hundreds on violently seaming tracks. Dravid, Laxman, Ganguly and Sachin collectively scored 215 runs at an average of 10.75. None of them scored a single knock above 25. Tendulkar managed only two runs in three innings at an average of less than 1. Sehwag scored 299 runs at 42.71 out of the team's 916, almost 1/3rd of the team's tally.

That's what makes Sehwag so special, and any predictions about him so utterly futile. After his last innings, most cricket pundits are finally beginning to take out the ifs and buts that inevitably crept in when one discussed Sehwag. He's being compared with the all-time batting greats. It's time too that we do away with such epithets as the Nawab of Najafgarh, which is so often used to describe Sehwag. Yes, he might have grown up in the outskirts of Delhi, but do we geographically limit a Sachin or Lara? Let us accept that Sehwag is up there with the very best.

Let us hope India retains this number 1 position through its own hard work and by learning and understanding the lessons from Australian who held this number 1 position for a pretty long time.

Kanyalal Raina

Brampton based marketing and engineering consultant

Significance to reaching age 65

I was lying in bed early one morning, thinking how it was just a couple of hours before I turned 65. I had reached a point in life where nothing mattered much. What has growing up done to me? Phew! Slowly, I drifted into my childhood. Back then, I was careless and free, the sky was my canvas. I troubled my mother endlessly, was my father's darling right from the moment I arrived in this world. My parents smothered me with love, sang sweet lullabies, and gently cajoled me out of the cradle and into the walkie-talkie world. Days turned into months and months into years. I was transported back in time when my young sisters and I would sneak towards the pandals (platform) where Ramlila would be enacted in full swing, where those mythological legends held sway, leaving an impact on the psyche in that subdued way.

To this day, I remember the varied details of many a legendary tale not because of what lay fitted in those textbooks but what I saw and heard on those roughly erected platforms and pandals. There were not many distractions either as those were simple times. The idiot box had yet to emerge, the Internet and computer games were unheard of, and malls were yet to come up with their gaudy, distracting fare.

As I grew up, it seemed I had been growing rather swiftly. I had my education, nice job, started a career as a businessman, consultant, travelled to various countries, almost all the countries and many a time during the Christmas holidays I had been away from my home country and celebrated my birthday in a different place amongst clients and or friends.

Now finally in Canada it seems my kismet and destiny has been switching hands. I must have done something very good in my past life as I am now at Shri Ram Mandir. It is normally believed that good thoughts lead to good habits, which lead to good actions and these actions, when directed well, lead to good intentions, which make you who you are and that leads to one's destiny. Here I am trying my best in everything that I do but I do not worry about the results. A saying I firmly believe in is: *Kyon dare zindagi mein kya hoga, kuch na hoga to tajurba to hoga* (What is the point in being apprehensive of what will happen? If nothing, you will be richer by experience). Our experiences are also based on our past-life karma. We try to correct our wrongs and approach life positively. Karma and kismet are closely interlinked thus.

Thinking about all this, I walked into the bathroom and accidentally set my eyes on something pasted on the mirror. I knew it was my wife's little happy-birthday-surprise. I realised, that she had organised a treasure hunt for me. I felt so many things at the same time - excitement, surprise - I was delighted and also touched. I read the clue, it was easy and I ran to find the next clue.

I started scanning each and every corner of the kitchen; I knew the next clue was nearby. With all the noise I was making, my wife came out from another room, alarmed, and told me she had just

begun planting the clues and that I would have to wait. The hardest thing for me to do is to wait.

I tried to figure out what could keep me busy for the next 15 minutes. I picked up a nail cutter and began to cut my nails. I walked out of the room with a confident smile and very pathetically done nails.

I ran to the kitchen again, turning things around, picking up something. After effective guidance and some brainstorming, I found my next clue. My wife, who found all this passé, watched with a 'What you are up to?' expression.

I was so engrossed in finding my clues that I didn't realise when the clock struck 8:am, I didn't hear the mobile and telephone ringing, as my daughters from India were calling me to say Happy Birthday, nor did I hear my wife singing, "Tum Jiyo Hazaaro Saal..."

I was in my world, where I was a pirate looking for my treasure. I finally did find the treasure; I felt I had earned my childhood back.

My wife very implicitly made me realise that I was 65 only on paper. "3 idiots" is a perfect example, where you see 44 year Aamir acting as a 22 year young on his very first day at the Imperial Engineering College to escape getting ragged. An Edison-in-the-making, he believes in striving for excellence, which, in fact, is the core message of the film. But I am all grown up and as long as I wore my glasses I am viewing the world differently. The sky could still be my canvas as long as I dared to hold a brush even when I 'looked' old. The rational part of me argued that this birthday was no different from any other day. The condition of the world the day before I reached this milestone was qualitatively the same as the day after my 65th birthday. And yet, is there any significance to reaching the age 65?

Maybe with age and daily life chores we become too used to playing the different 'roles' we are expected to. I've always wondered at the almost robotic way of life that I have functioned all these years. I forgot the imaginary world I once lived in. Now, 65 is just another number!

It was now time to go to Shri Ram Mandir. It was Sunday and Pandit Roopnauth Sharma the spiritual leader, as usual was at his best, whose sermons are listened to by hundreds of devotees, with great interest here. I then realised that Gurinder Singh our youngest tabla teacher was also celebrating his birthday he completed his quarter century (25 years), Tara Maharaj, (secretary of Shri Ram Mandir's committee and Director of Canada Hindu Heritage Kala Niketan School of Performing Arts) who completed her half century (50th year) and myself who turned 65 now walked into the seniors league. So while announcing our birthday, he sang his favourite "Happy Birthday" song to the delight and joy of over 400 strong devotees, who had assembled to hear his pravachan, and everyone participated too, in the birthday song in a chorus.

Reaching 65 is indeed significant, but much of the significance is symbolic or inferential, established more by societal norms than by an



individual's experience of turning 65. Some things do change on that birth date. Historically there is some public policy significance to age 65; you qualify for being called senior citizen, start getting pension- social security payments, and senior discounts on public transportation and at selected malls and you get to sit in the senior citizen seats in the subway, trains or bus. You qualify for OHIP Health coverage, Income tax concessions, little things yes, but you notice. Something tells you, things are different now. At this age, you cannot afford to be rude and cranky.

Coming back to the issue of age 65 being seen as synonymous with old age, my personal issue with the age 65 designator is not that it is false (for indeed I am undeniably 65) but with a correlation of this birth date with the onset of a social phenomenon labelled "Old Age." More precisely I am concerned about the connotations that attach themselves to the category old age. Even a cursory review of contemporary writings expresses what one felt to the characteristic of old age.

Some 30 percent of ages 65 and older experience some loss of bladder control. Over age 65, sleep tends to be more fragmented and achieving dream sleep or deep sleep is more difficult. Stroke has been the 2nd most leading cause of death in people above 65. A study made by pioneering sexologist Alfered Kinsey showed that about twenty five percent of males are impotent by age 65, fifty percent at 75, and seventy five percent at 80. By age 65 estimated 35 percent of us produce no stomach acid at all.

Not to say there are not some good things about what we might expect when we reach 65.

About two thirds of migraine sufferers stop having attacks altogether by age 65. Patients over 65 who still have migraines report drastically decreased severity, duration and frequency in their attacks. Self employment increases with age, with the most dramatic jump occurring at age 65.

I may be making a big deal about an issue no one cares about. So what possible difference could it make in our day-to-day lives if we are thought of in some socially derived normative measure to be a manifestation of old age? Does our age dictate what we feel, or do, or think? And is "Old Age" quantitatively different from "middle age" or any other marked period of our lives?

I believe the right answer is, "NO!" It makes no difference that we have reached 65. No we do not think old age, we do not act old age and we do not feel old age. "No," may be the "right" answer; but not, at least in my case, precisely the correct answer. We may object strenuously, that 65 is no portal to old age in today's world. The age may have held some importance in the past, but not today. The moniker of old age was coined at a time when people faced a relatively limited lifespan and 65 was indeed a very old in relation to that expected life span.

Before leaving the point of significance of age 65, it may be well to understand our choice of words and meanings here - our attitudes towards the age may turn on what we think we are talking about.

I like to start my search for definition by going to the source: "The Oxford English Dictionary." The definition given in that master piece of compilation in this:-

Old Age: The later part of life; the period of life after youth and middle age; the state of having existed for a relatively long time, usually with reference to deterioration.

Other definitions:

Old Age: The latter part of (human) life, old age begins with deterioration of physical abilities such as sight, hearing, walking (stick required) etc., or by definition at a certain age (e.g., 65 in present time) and ends in death.

For the sake of argument- let us accept the definition of old age as time following the passing of one's 65th birthday. What kind of issues we may deal with, if we suspend our incredibility at the thought of being of old age and think about our future life? At 65, what are the questions we may now think of for our remaining life? Generally speaking one way of looking at life is that man enters the world from one door and leaves it from another. Man enters the world when he is born, he grows up, gets educated, obtains a job for his living, gets married, brings up children, gets old and leaves the world by another door at the end of his life span.

Another way is life is a battle because no one will give room to you; we have to create it for ourselves. Human life is not programmed. We have a free will to be what we want to be. When we look inwardly we find that we are fighting the inner battle continuously. Fighting the outer battle of life means tackling our day to day problems, I am relating this to us, our family, our profession and our society. Since, we live in two worlds the outer and inner; simultaneously a battle has to be fought, firstly to evolve oneself and secondly to become a useful member of society while contributing towards its efficiency. The hardest battle you have to fight is the battle to be just you.

A poignant tale as told by a Mumbai-based film actor who happened to be one of my relatives. According to him he was shocked when one day outside a studio he saw a leading star of yesteryears frantically introducing him to passers-by. "Do you know me? I am ..., " he would say and then go on



reeling off the names of his movies. There is another equally telling incident. One day when he was sitting in his office another hero of the previous decades walked up to him and literally begged him of a brief role. Both these stars shall remain nameless here. Suffice it to say that in their haydays the two were crowd stoppers.

In the first instance, what we come across is the inability of an old man with the decline in his fame. In the other happening the man is not just bothered about what he has been in the past. For him the battle is that of survival. How does one explain this phenomenon? Does it not remind us of the American poet Emily Dickinson: "Fame is a bee; it has a song; it has a sting; ah, it has a wing too?" One thinker has put it succinctly: "Fame is a vapour, popularity an accident, and riches take wings. Only one thing endures and that is character." Just think over it. Ancient wisdom is still relevant that one should not lose oneself while seeking fame.

So what difference does a day or a year make? What happened to me on that day when I turned 65 and for the days following was a dawning realization that somehow, I had slipped into old age and shall continue in this way till death knocks me down.

Is this a correct way to describe life? Many believe in this way of living life mechanically from birth to death. The fact is that life is much more than a sheer mechanical living. Life provides plenty of adventure and opportunities to those who live every moment of it mindfully. So what exactly is life? We have a few options to describe life as perceived by our men of wisdom. Life could also be compared to a train journey where all are traveling towards our destination. We meet new people who enter our compartment and then there are those who leave our compartment at different stations never to meet again. This happens in worldly life where we meet some for the first time and loose some of our dear ones for ever. Our relationship in life is not permanent as people come and go from our life. Some time the train passes through green fields and sometime later through barren ground, sometime through a tunnel. This compares with the pleasant and unpleasant situations which we meet in life. There are some in the train who are traveling in a higher class while the majority is traveling in the lower class. Those who are traveling in higher class are those who are spiritually evolved.

The number is very small as compared to the worldly people who are in the majority and are traveling in the lower class in the train. While doing so we should listen to the advice of Lord Krishna. He gave to Arjuna in Bhagavad Gita that we should live life in spirit of Yajna or Sacrifice doing our best to look after the welfare of others. We should develop sun like affection, river like generosity and earth like hospitality.

Kanayalal Raina



MONSOON FEATURE

John Boddy Homes has been voted 'Best Builder' in Ajax/Pickering for the thirteenth year in a row in this year's Readers' Choice Awards and will be releasing its final phase early next year at their Eagle Glen community in Ajax. Located just minutes east of Toronto Eagle Glen combines the closeness and convenience of city living with a suburban feel, and its prime location makes it a great place to call home. Classic two-storey homes are available, as well as side and back splits, bungalows, and future semi-detached and townhomes. Homes start at 1,701 square feet and range up to a spacious 3,858 square feet, some with three car garages. John Boddy Homes offers traditional size lots with a minimum of 105 feet in depth and a limited selection of wide shallow lots and pond lots. With such a broad range of house sizes and

EAGLE GLEN

A FAMILY COMMUNITY BY JOHN BODDY HOMES



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

For their homeowner's convenience, most John Boddy Homes include main floor laundry rooms, laundry chutes, kitchen breakfast bars, private water closets, interior garage access, high

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

Innovative floorplan designs combined with an extensive array of standard features included with every new home have become a corporate trademark of John Boddy Homes and 'Eagle Glen'. Not only does a John Boddy Home offer such striking standard features, there are also a wealth of opportunities to upgrade, making their homes as unique as each individual homeowner. The 'Eagle Glen' Sales Office features a Décor Centre that contains a wide range of upgrade items to select from in order to customize your home. Their high-tech electrical

and décor consultants allow homebuyer's to make upgrade selections on site, enabling them to conveniently personalize their home.

In fact John Boddy Homes has been the proud recipient of "Best New Home Builder" in the annual Reader's Choice Awards for Ajax/Pickering for the past thirteen years in a row!

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

For a limited time only John Boddy Homes is offering an incentive package including an upgrade master ensuite with separate shower and upgrade tub plus \$5,000 in free upgrades. Also currently available is one

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

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

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

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

With five fully furnished model homes to view, a visit to Eagle Glen is a must. Drop by the Sales Presentation Centre located on Stevensgate Drive, north of Rossland Road West, one half kilometre west of Westney Road three kilometres north of Hwy 401.

Sales office hours are Monday through Thursday 1:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.; Friday, Saturday, Sunday and Holidays 11:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Let their friendly knowledgeable staff help you determine which of the many home styles available is perfect for you and your family and get set to join the ever-growing 'Eagle Glen' family community. For more information, please call (905) 619-1777 or visit the website at www.johnboddyhomes.com.

Rendering of Model
Homes designed by
JOHN BODDY HOMES



**5
FURNISHED
MODELS**

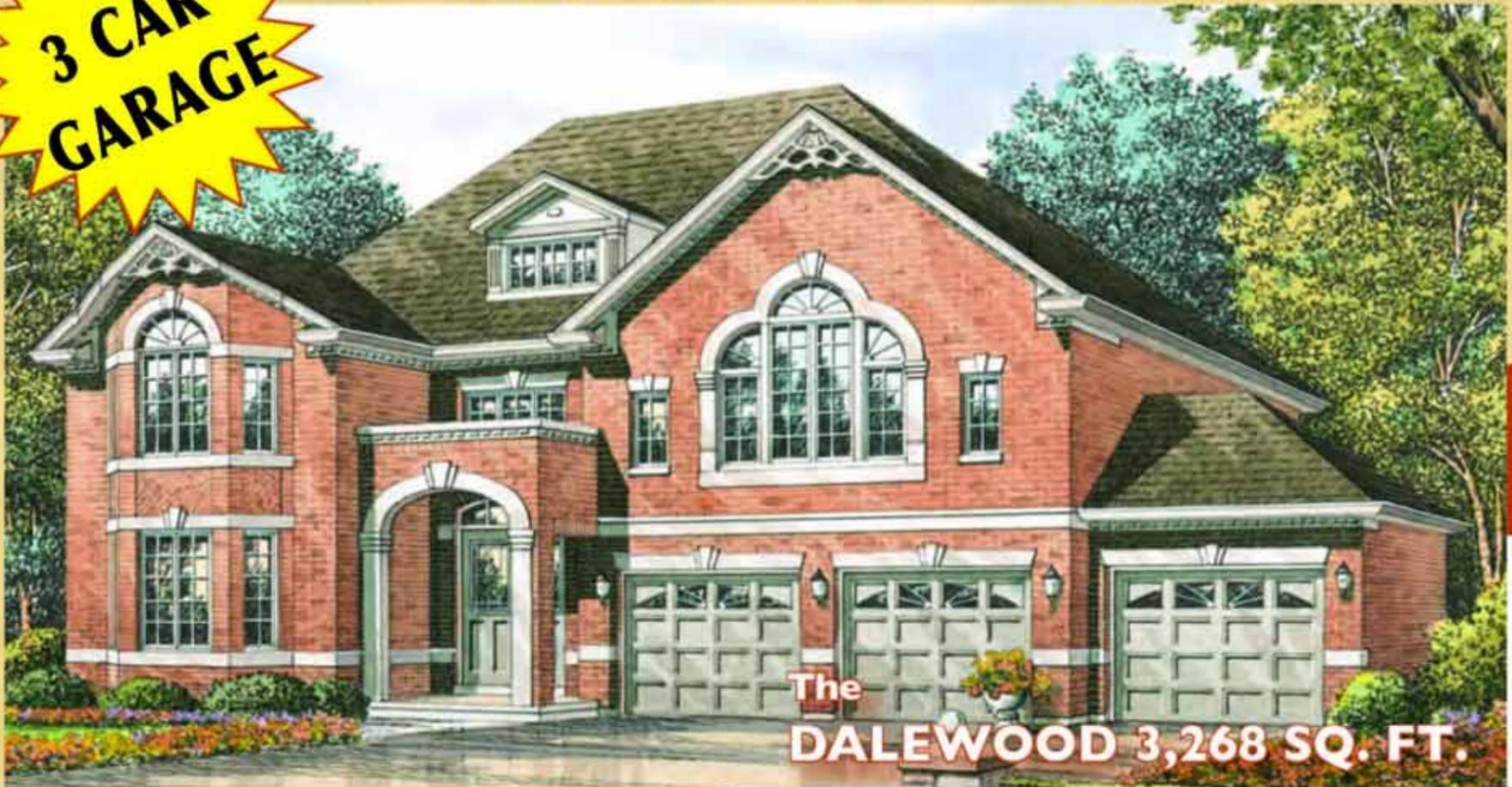


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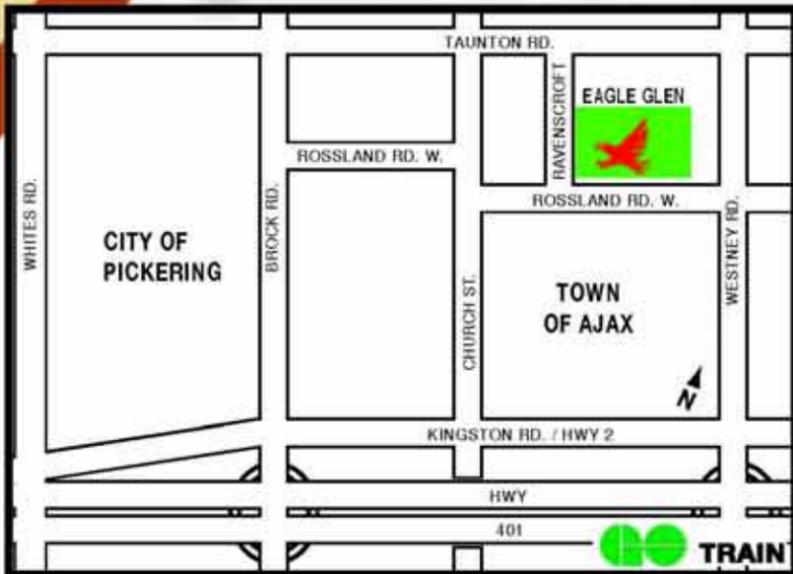
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Hypnosis Works

Before
345 lbs



After
260 lbs
85 lbs lighter



This Toronto Man Got Serious about His Weight and Lost 85lbs and 14 inches!

Andres Dienesch was feeling down and out. "At 345lbs, who wouldn't be?" he remarks. "I felt like I didn't have any energy anymore, I was tired and overwhelmed." Andres was carrying 85lbs of excess weight. The hotel maintenance manager and father of three had been overweight for more than 20 years. "I was eating all the time because I was depressed and bored... I was in a vicious circle!" confesses Dienesch.

He claims he did everything in the book to lose the weight, but eventually was left feeling disappointed. "I was constantly aware of my weight and how I looked and it wasn't good!" Dienesch recalls. "The results were always the same. I would lose the weight and gain it back all over again, nothing worked permanently," he reveals.

One evening, while sitting at home and browsing on the web for a more natural way to lose weight, "I came across the HypnosisWorks website," Dienesch remembers. "When I looked at the testimonials and saw the results I thought I'd give it a try."

Curious, Dienesch booked a consultation. "I was nervous at first because I didn't know what to expect from hypnosis and to be honest I was sceptical," he says. "But by the end of the first session, I wasn't nervous anymore

and it just got better. In a year, I lost a whopping 85lbs!"

Dienesch says his outlook on eating changed instantly. "My first session was excellent. Hypnosis got rid of my cravings and I started seeing results on my first day. A week later, I went out to dinner and requested some salad and baked salmon instead of the usual junk and I ended up leaving most of it on my plate," reflects Dienesch.

According to Dienesch, the program has also benefited him in ways he hadn't expected. "I'm more relaxed now and I sleep soundly at night," he continues. "I exercise every day and I have more energy at work. Even my doctor is proud of me," he exclaims. "When I saw him last, he was astonished by how I'd changed. My blood pressure had lowered and my cholesterol levels were down!"

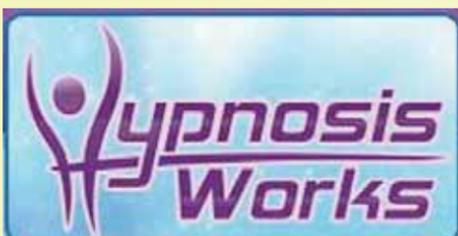
For Dienesch, hypnosis was the answer to a 20 year old, painstaking problem. "Hypnosis put me back in control of my life. I have more energy and I can do things I couldn't before. My mindset is different. Now when I eat, I eat because I'm hungry not because I'm bored or depressed, and I feel so much better about myself," Dienesch says. "My family and friends are impressed with how I look. I'm even giving away my 'big clothes' because

I don't need them anymore."

"The difference between HypnosisWorks and other programs is that I don't have to count calories or look at the back of boxes in the grocery store," mentions Dienesch. "I eat nutritious foods, because it's what I want now. The weight comes off naturally. At HypnosisWorks they cared about me. They understood and listened to what my goals were and they were always positive about my progress."

Dienesch says hypnosis turned out to be one of the best choices he ever made. "I use the tools I learned at HypnosisWorks in every area of my life. It's been amazing. If anything is bothering me, I use hypnosis to get through it," he expands. "HypnosisWorks was a great investment. I'm ecstatic about the results and I feel like a whole new person! I'm proud of what I've achieved thanks to my program at HypnosisWorks."

According to him, the change is permanent. "There's no going back this time, I feel different from the inside, like I'm supposed to be slim," says Dienesch. "HypnosisWorks gave me the real tools I needed to succeed. I give my full support to HypnosisWorks and their programs."



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Notebook of a Photojournalist:

THE WAVE OF KILLER, AND THE WAVE OF COMPASSION



Detstroyed Satkottai Thurgai Amman Temple.



Media was kept busy



Watching the damaged properties



The villagers of Satkottai gathered to witness as the boats are being removed from the sea shore.



witnessing the devastation wrought on her country by December's Indian Ocean tsunami



These children lost their homes in the tsunami

By K. Thirukumarar

The aftermath of the Dec 26th 2004 tsunami and the continuing devastating impact on all affected communities in Sri Lanka's North, South and Eastern provinces have been brought via pictorial journals on HumanityAshore.org since January 2005. No other journal has covered all areas of Sri Lanka in this extensive manner.

HumanityAshore featured places such as Pathirajagama in the South, Satkottai in the North, and Alles Garden in the East among several others in the photo essays by Dushiyanthini Kanagasabapathipillai.

“I heard a noise and everybody started to run. I also ran and climbed on a tree. I saw my little sister under that tree. And later she was washed away. I witnessed it. But I never saw her body. I was told that, she died on the way to the hospital”

Today's pictorial, “Nobody's people” caught in the “buffer zone” discusses the plight of people in Sainthamaruthu, in the Eastern Province on the fifth anniversary of the tsunami.

But a run down the memory lane today helps us remember the tragic aftermath, tasks that were ahead

Pix: Dushiyanthini Kanagasabapathipillai
dushi.pillai@gmail.com
 courtesy: humanityAshore.org

then and the humanitarian challenges that come in the aftermath of humanitarian sufferings.



“Queen of the Sea” was bound from Colombo to Matara on 26th of December 2004. It was roared by the Tsunami in Peraliya. Approximately 1,500 people were killed.

In the following article Journalist Dushiyanthini Kanagasabapathipillai writes about her experiences of beginning to cover the tsunami by recalling the immediate aftermath:

“I feel guilty, that I could not save Arabi. I lost control and let her die. I am responsible for her death. I cannot forget her, because I loved her so much” says 13 years old Niranjala Balakrishnan and she burst into tears in Mullaitivu, North East of Sri Lanka, under the control of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam.

“Tender Sprout” was located in the coastal area of Mullaitivu, North East of Sri Lanka. This home for the war orphans had 175 children when Tsunami hit, now only

30 children are alive. And they are relocated to a different place inland now. Most of the children here are affected by the Tsunami. Either they have lost their beloved brothers and sisters or struggled to survive. They can't eat, sleep or play. The cherished memories of the loved ones keep bothering these children. They are unable to forget the past. The lost loved ones stayed, ate, slept and played together. They get up in the night and shout.

Mullaitivu was one of the worst affected areas by Tsunami.

“I was putting cover for the new exercise books, and getting ready for the new school term, which was supposed to begin in early January 2005.

See Page 30...



Mass grave on the sea shore for the people, who were killed by the Tsunami in Manatkadu-Jaffna District, North of Sri Lanka.

AB Legal Services Annual Party held during December 2009



Photos by Kugan Studio



Children at stage singing



Guests at event-Chiropractor and his wife



Guests at function



Guna Ehamparam, Kauvsegan Ehamparam, Bas Balkissoon, MPP, Scarborough Rouge River & Jeyadevan



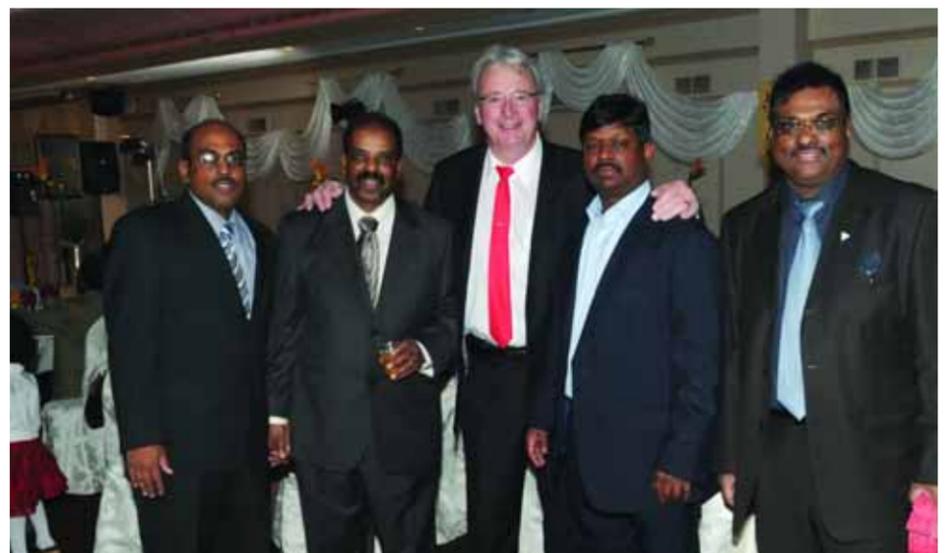
Guna Ehamparam, Kauvsegan with some guests for group photo



"Lighting the Lamp" Ceremony



Ms. Shagana Ehamparam performing at AB Legal Services Event



Yuvanthan, Guna Ehamparam, Chiropractor, Kulam and Jeyadevan

In Thiraaimadu, Batticaloa:

Self-confidence and courage amidst multiple tragedies

by Dushiyanthini Kanagasabapathipillai

“I lost my house in Tsunami in 2004 in Kallady. I built the house not with my sweat, but with my blood” recalls Rajeswary Sithravadivel.

“I took a big loan & built the house, I could not bear it was completely destroyed” says Rajeswary Sithravadivel with tears filled eyes.

She got some help from the Government & an NGO and managed to build a

ticaloa Teaching Hospital. Her average monthly income is Rs.18,800/=

Triple sister became widows in 1990. Rajeswary Sithravadivel and her two elder sister's husbands went missing from Batticaloa in 1990.

“It was a tragedy. All three of us with children had to face the same situation. We consoled each other” says Rajeswary Sithravadivel

At 44 Rajeswary Sithravadivel is still struggling to survive with her daughter. She got her husband's death certificate after 10 years.

small house in Thiraaimadu, where Tsunami resettlement houses are built.

She got displaced twice in her life-In 1983 from Colombo to Batticaloa after Black July riots & in 1990 from Batticaloa to Colombo.

She went back to Batticaloa in 1996. She works as a minor staff at the Bat-

At 44 Rajeswary Sithravadivel is still struggling to survive with her daughter. She got her husband's death certificate after 10 years.

“It was an arranged marriage. My husband was from Velanai in Jaffna. We led a happy married life. When my husband went missing, I was lost”.

“But I have decided to live, because of my daughter. Now she is grown up, she is 21 years-old & I have to find a good job and life partner for her”.

“I have searched for my husband, but found him nowhere. I began to cultivate self-confidence and led my life all alone from 18th June 1990”.

“I raised my daughter alone with so many difficulties, and educated her. She lives a life without father's love”.

“I have double tragedy in my family, and I wish nobody in the world should face the same situation. It's heartbreaking!”.

She makes candles & incense sticks at home & sells in order to earn an extra income to support her family and earns monthly Rs.8,000/= - Rs.10,000/=.

She encourages single women to have self-confidence, and work hard. She advises fellow women to not give up under any circumstances.

Pix: Dushiyanthini

humanityAshore.org - Dec 26, 2009



Residents with houses in the 65 meter “buffer zone” established after the tsunami, still languish in squalid camps in Sainthamaruthu, Eastern Sri Lanka



Tsunami monument on the shore of Kaaraitheevu



Tsunami warning tower is established in the coastal line all over Sri Lanka

The Wave of Killer.... (Pg28 cont...)

I heard a noise and everybody started to run. I also ran and climbed on a tree. I saw my little sister under that tree. And later she was washed away. I witnessed it. But I never saw her body. I was told that, she died on the way to the hospital” says 9 years old Susi Sinnathurai, who burst into tears.

There are more children, who do not know what has happened to their loved ones. These little children are already affected by the two decades of ethnic conflict.

I was in London in December 2004 undergoing training, when Tsunami roared Sri Lanka.

I had a very late night on 25th of December 2004, at my uncle's house in London, as we had a Christmas party. I could not fall asleep at all, as I was thinking of traveling to Manchester to see my uncle and aunt who have come from Toronto to see their daughter.

I got up at 4am and had a shower. I packed my bag, and got ready to catch the coach to Manchester, where my cousin lives., whom I have not seen for many years. I was planning

to be with her, and my uncle who came to Manchester from Toronto. I made a cup of coffee.

And switched on the television, and watched BBC World. Then I found out that Tsunami has hit Sri Lanka.

I immediately called my parents in Colombo to see whether they were keeping well But the telephone lines to Sri Lanka were not east to get through.

I informed my uncle and aunt that I have to return to Sri Lanka as soon as possible. Then

When I left London the death toll has already gone up to thousand. And it kept on increasing.

I have decided to cancel my trip to Manchester, and return to Sri Lanka.

I called my cousin and uncle to say that, “I am not coming to Manchester as I have planned”.

They were not happy to hear that from me, but there was no other choice. Then I called my good friend and former colleague Frances Harrison and explained what has happened in

Sri Lanka. She wasn't happy either. And later my mobile was jammed. I was unable to get through to anybody from my mobile or others couldn't get through to me on my mobile.

But I managed to send text messages to my colleagues. And I have already started to make arrangements to my colleagues, who were rushing to Sri Lanka for news coverage. Further I informed everybody that I am returning to Sri Lanka. My uncle and his children came to the Heathrow airport to bid goodbye.

But my aunt couldn't come to the airport, as she was not feeling well.

I can still remember very well, that she advised me “Dushi I know that, you have taken risks in the past. But make sure that you take care of yourself, while being on the field and keep us informed how you are keeping”. I boarded the Emirates flight.

The President of Sri Lanka Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga, flew on the same flight. I called home, and my sources from wherever and whenever possible to update myself.

And watched the television in the flight. When I left London the death toll has already gone up to thousand. And it kept on increasing. I arrived at the Katunayake International airport on 27th of December 2004 morning.

I went to the office straight to pick up some equipments. I pulled out some hot weather friendly clothes from my bag, as I had all winter clothes to wear in London. And went to the Ratmalana Domestic airport to catch a military flight. The scheduled flight was cancelled due to the bad weather.

Managed to speak to the Sri Lankan Air force officers and got the permission to fly to Koggala Air Force Base in the South of Sri Lanka. I flew with the military officers, who were dropped off at Peraliya, where the train accident took place. I saw the devastation from the aerial view first, while flying to Koggala.

And I started to click, by using my little Canon, which produced **See Page 32...**

Relieve Stress by Art



The connection between Creating Art and reducing your stress levels is very systematical and scientific. It is simple as expressing what's really going on inside you through colors and brush strokes or something abstract or spiritual.

There were always people like the pope. They serve a certain function, of course. They subsidize us. But, they don't create anything and they must never be allowed to stop the artist from creating. Creativity can solve almost any problem. The creative

strike, but more like something which manifests itself inside those who learn to foster it and create the right conditions for it to prosper.

Creativity in children encourages free expression, problem solving skills and open thinking. Creativity needs to be nurtured to thrive. Kids love the creative freedom of open-ended art projects. When they engage in self-directed art activities it encourages them to explore and express themselves without rules. Parents can encourage free expression in

write name and then go back over the lines over and over again thickening them and making them different with each pass. Your hand is making something happen and your eyes are satisfied with what it sees, thereby sending a message back to your brain and hand to keep working because it is relaxing, stress free activity. Even those who have absolutely no artistic ability can color or paint with no specific goal in mind and still get the benefit that art relieves stress.

If you plan to relieve stress by

This sets your mind up for disappointment and more stress because it will not find any satisfaction when it keeps expecting one thing and getting another. Art relieves stress when it is allowed to be anything that comes out of the artist's hands.

Human mind has the amazing ability to block out extra external stimuli and focus on one thing. You can practice a stress relieving art activities at any time or place- just make sure you have a piece of paper and pen.

Start with a blank sheet of paper and a writing instrument.

Might Not Win an Award. But you watched it grow from nothing into something and you were the creator, there is satisfaction that satisfaction equals a reduction in stress.

Color is a living energy and property of light. Light is absorbed and reflected we end up with different colors. Human body has energy fields (charkas) and organs are comprised of vibrating atoms. Humans have own unique energy system and organs have different vibrational patterns.



Dr. Fonseka and his wife with Logan Velumailum at Solo Art Show held during Oct 2009



Statue Pinton Holy Family



Professor Emeritus JUAN PASCUAL The Developmental Processes Lab at York University describing art in psychoanalysis way



Love (23X35) Acrylic On Canvas \$ 500

act, the defeat of habit by originality, overcomes everything and Creative minds have always been known to survive any kind of bad training.

It may not be able to be taught directly, but what you can get better at is frequently aligning the circumstances of life which foster the greatest chances for true creative expression. Creativity is not like a lightning

kids by providing them with materials that can be used in various ways including: paint brushes, modeling clay, paper, markers, scissors, pencils, paint, collage materials and old magazines.

The biology of Art relieves stress by creating endorphins on your body through the hand eye movement and satisfaction it gives. Grab a pen or pencil and randomly draw a line or even

art don't expect a Masterpiece. When seeking to reduce stress with creative activity, those who do not have God given artistic talent might feel stressed at the thought of trying to make art for fear that it will "come out bad".

If given the opportunity of at least few minutes, anyone can grab some paper and create anything even if it is just a scribble.

Make large swirling or zigzag movement all over the page for about 5-10 seconds. Stress reduction by creativity must be done without any expectations of what should be on the paper.

Now you have something to color in- use anything and start coloring. Try anything- solid, striped, polka dots, wavy lines, scribbling, try putting the paper on a textured surface and color over that. If you have some handy- try different colors.

This can be done anywhere- watching TV, in the dining room, subway, cafe, alone, or in a loud room. Our eyes are the most dominant sense- so if it is a loud room- the activity the eye is focused on will be the most important to the brain at the time.

The art you create is not for the general public However it

Colour as a Therapy is a truly holistic, non-invasive and powerful therapy which dates back thousands of years; evidence of this can be found in ancient India, China and Egypt. Colour as a therapy can be used for any problem whether, physical, mental, emotional or spiritual for specific problems. The primary colors reflected in the rainbow carry their own unique healing properties. The sun alone is a wonderful healer. Imagine what life would be like without sunshine. Lack of sunlight contributes to depression for some people.

Every child is an artist. The problem is how to remain an artist once we grow up. ~Pablo Picasso
Dr. Fonseka - Clinician
fricanada@gmail.com

In Maruthamunai:

TEARS, TRIAL AND TRIUMPH OF HUMANITY



A scene in Maruthamunai, a fishing village in the east of Sri Lanka, which is completely washed off. About 3,000 people killed here.

by Dushiyanthini Kanagasabapathipillai

“Lost 12 family members in Boxing Day Tsunami in 2004 including my parents” Abdul Hameed Sithy Quatha (30) in Maruthamunai.

“Lost our house as well. Human loss is irreplaceable. I managed to save my sister’s baby” cries & describes her unforgettable memories of Tsunami

“The waves hit the height of a coconut

tree in Maruthamunai. When I screamed “Sea waves are coming to our place, nobody believed me”.

“I immediately ran while asking everybody to leave, and took nothing except my sister’s just born baby”.

“I survived standing on an empty piece of concrete slab at few feet with the baby tightly held to my both hands”.

“I used to have nightmares after Tsunami. I did not want to live, but others gave a moral support to rebuild my

“I got a house from an organisation. I miss living with my beloved parents. It is very difficult to forget the memories of Tsunami”.

“I want to educate my daughter, I want her to become a teacher. I sew and earn some money. My husband is very supportive”.

“My prayers are always with the families which lost its loved ones. We have to be prepared to face disasters” says Abdul Hameed Sithy Quatha.

Abdul Hameed Sithy Quatha burst

“I immediately ran while asking everybody to leave, and took nothing except my sister’s just born baby”.

life. I got a sewing machine”.

“I began to stitch dresses. I started to concentrate on my life slowly. I got married in 2006. My daughter Ayesha Setha was born in 2007”.

into uncontrollable tears, and queries continuously whether the mankind has not treated the ocean well?

Pix: Dushiyanthini

humanity@shore.org - Dec 26, 2009



Ibra Lebbe Abdul Rahim, 62 years old weaver from Maruthamunai in the East of Sri Lanka, lost his house and job. He had a weaving mill in his house. And he lost his daughter in law and mother in law as well. He says that he has no way of feeding the family.



In Maruthamunai, East of Sri Lanka. A cd is sold for Sri Lankan Rs.500.

The Wave of Killer... (Pg30 cont...)

enormous amount of unimaginable images from North, East and South of Sri Lanka later.

Landed at the Koggala Air Force Base at 6.30pm. But there was no transport to go to Galle, South of Sri Lanka., because the roads were devastated. I saw foreigners who were on holidays in the South, were queuing up at the Koggala Air Force Base to fly to Colombo as soon as possible.

Spoke to Air Force officers, and they provided a jeep to get myself dropped at Galle Light House Hotel, where my other colleagues were staying.

I traveled in the jeep, which had food parcels for the affected people. But they have already started to spoil, as time flew by. The road was deserted. It took three hours to get to Galle. I went to the Light House Hotel in Galle at 12 midnight. I had to start work immediately.

I went to the Karapitiya Base Hospital in the morning. I witnessed dead bodies coming endlessly to the hospital. The hospital morgue and corridors were full of dead bodies. Most of the bodies were beyond identification. Wailing relatives rushing to the hospital to identify their loved ones by their belongings such as rings, clothes, identity cards, and wrist watch. I witnessed the mass burial in the South and in the North later.

The dead bodies were wrapped in polythene sheets. The military was transporting the dead bodies from the sea shore to the hospital and burial place in the South. But

in the North the cadres of Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam cleared the area quicker than expected, disinfected the places, and transported the survivors to a safer place. I saw nobody in Mullaitivu town, except the cadres who were carrying out their duties and dogs, which were searching for their owners.

And especially in the nights it was very disheartening to see a place, which was bustling after the Ceasefire Agreement signed between the then Government of Sri Lanka and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam in 2002.

Then I went to the eastern province of Sri Lanka, where the most number of people killed by the Tsunami.

Witnessed the suffering by all three communities- Tamils, Muslims and Sinhalese. There was no proper place to stay in the east, unlike other places in the country. The roads were cut off by water. I managed to find a guest house to stay in Kalmunai, East of Sri Lanka. But there was no water to drink or bathe. I used mineral water to bathe. The owner of that guest house knows my dad very well, as he comes from the same place as my dad's. Therefore he was extra hospitable to us.

As the shops were shut, he served us French fries, sausages and coca cola. But I didn't have any appetite for food, because what I have witnessed so far started to bother me so much. Especially I witnessed in Kalmunai that the dogs have started to eat the

dead human bodies which were unattended, which was staggering to see. I immediately informed the relevant authorities, but no action was taken. As a Hindu I even respect a dead body.

So I have decided to do the mass burial for five females, three males and three children - one male and two females. My parents, brothers and relatives live in Sri Lanka and abroad kept calling me to keep themselves updated. I requested all of them to send anything possible from edible to money to Sri Lanka as soon as possible to help the survivors.

They acted very promptly and quickly. Some of have decided to sponsor Tsunami orphan through out the life time, widowers and men who lost their livelihoods. And some of them lobbied in their countries and got long term monetary assistance for the tsunami affected victims in North, east and South of Sri Lanka, for which I salute all the kind hearted human beings who extended their fullest cooperation to me, without any hesitation.

Further, from the day one I have fully dedicated myself to the people of all communities. As I travel widely to the Tsunami hit areas very often people recognize me by my name, especially in the North, where I call my home always. Most of them call me in Tamil "Amma"-Mother, "Magal"-Daughter, "Thangachchi"- Younger Sister, "Akka"- Elder Sister, "Monai"-Dear, and share their heart breaking sad stories without any boundaries.

I still treasure those unforgettable and unhappy memories. And I gathered new experiences in my a decade long career, by covering the worst ever natural disaster-Tsunami, and the largest ever relief operation in the world. I had the opportunity of working with several world renowned Journalists.

On 26th of December 2004- boxing day, Tsunami shook the world for seven hours. Approximately 200,000 lives killed, so many million people made homeless and many of them still live in the temporary shelters. In Sri Lanka about 38,000 people killed, and most of the survivors still live in pain while thinking of their lost loved ones' memories.

And most of their voices are still to be heard, by touching the peoples' lives with passion. There were two waves, the first was a wave of killer, and the second was a wave of compassion.

Nine months flown by since Tsunami, but the nightmares are never far behind them!

In my journalistic career, I have tried my best to live up to Walter Lippman's dictum "Facts are sacred; Opinion is free!"

The above article was written based on the experience of covering "Boxing Day" Tsunami, which hit the Indian Ocean on December 26th 2004. The article was first published in December 2005.

Octogenarian father passes away in Sri Lanka military custody



Thiruvengadam Veluppillai Parvathamma Veluppillai, Prabhakaran, Madhivathany and son Charles Anthony-Reuters pic

Thiruvengadam Veluppillai breathed his last on Wednesday January 6th night. The 86 year old father of the LTTE leader Veluppillai Prabhakaran's birthday was on January 10th.

The octogenarian hailing from the northern coastal town of Valvettithurai and his wife Parvathamma were held in Sri Lankan

Army custody Panagoda.

The Veluppillais along with Mrs. Erambu, the mother of their daughter-in-law Mathivathani had been detained at Panagoda since July last year.

Several commemorative events paying homage to Thiruvengadam Veluppillai are being held in Toronto and around the globe.

Neethan Shan announces his candidacy for City Councillor in Ward 42

Neethan Shan, a long time community activist and a public school trustee, registered his candidacy for the position of Councillor for the City of Toronto in Ward 42 at City Hall recently.

In announcing his candidacy, Neethan stated, "I am running for this position so that I can bring the necessary profile and resources to Ward 42 and address a huge need to meaningfully connect the residents of the ward to the City Council".

Neethan Shan has been working in Scarborough for the past ten years in many fields including education, children and youth work, employment, immigration and poverty reduction.



Coalition for Tamil Elections Canada holds poll on Vaddukkoaddai Resolution

99.82 percent of 48,583 voters mandated independent and sovereign Tamil Eelam in the poll conducted in 31 centres across Canada by Coalition for Tamil Elections Canada, on Saturday, Dec 19, 2009.

The poll was based on "The Vaddukkoaddai Resolution" which was declared by all Tamil political parties in 1976 after having had several meetings with Tamil organizations and it was endorsed by an overwhelming majority of Tamils in the 1977 General Election in the island of Sri Lanka.

Coalition for Tamil Elections Canada on its website states, the question is once again being put to the Tamils in Canada, "to find out the current validity of the political fundamentals set by the Vaddukkoaddai Resolution of 1976 that called for the creation of Tamil Eelam".

OFFICIAL POLL RESULTS:
Total Voter turnout: 48, 583
48,481 Voted YES, 85 Voted NO
99.82% YES And 0.18% NO

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INDIA MOURNS SOUTHERN FILM STAR VISHNUVARDHAN

The film industry in southern Indian state of Karnataka is in mourning following the death of one of its super stars, Vishnuvardhan on Dec 30th, 2009.



Vishnuvardhan

A report by By Omer Farooq of BBC-News.com announcing the passing away of this "Kannada" Super star said:

Cinema halls, schools and studios were closed and a holiday was declared by the state government.

Vishnuvardhan, 59, died of a heart attack in the early hours of Wednesday Dec 30th in the city of Mysore where he was under treatment for leg pain.

He is survived by his wife, also a popular actress.

Thousands of the actor's shell-shocked fans lined up at a Bangalore college where his body was kept in state.

At one point vehicles in the city were attacked as frenzied fans jostled to catch a last glimpse of their hero. Police baton-charged fans who were trying to close shops and businesses in the city.

Karnataka Chief Minister BS Yeddyurappa was the first to reach actor's home to pay tributes. He announced a state funeral for him.

Describing Vishnuvardhan as "a born actor", the chief minister said "Karnataka has become poor in his death".

Vishnuvardhan acted in 199 films in a career spanning 37 years, portraying a wide range of characters including that of an angry young man, a rebel and a reformer.

Born in September 1950 as Sampath Kumar in Mysore, he renamed himself as Vishnuvardhan after beginning his film career.

Vishnuvardhan, whose 200th movie "Apatha Rakhshaka" is now ready for release, was especially liked for his simplicity and humble manners.

He was seen as the biggest star of Kannada movies after fellow thespian Rajkumar.

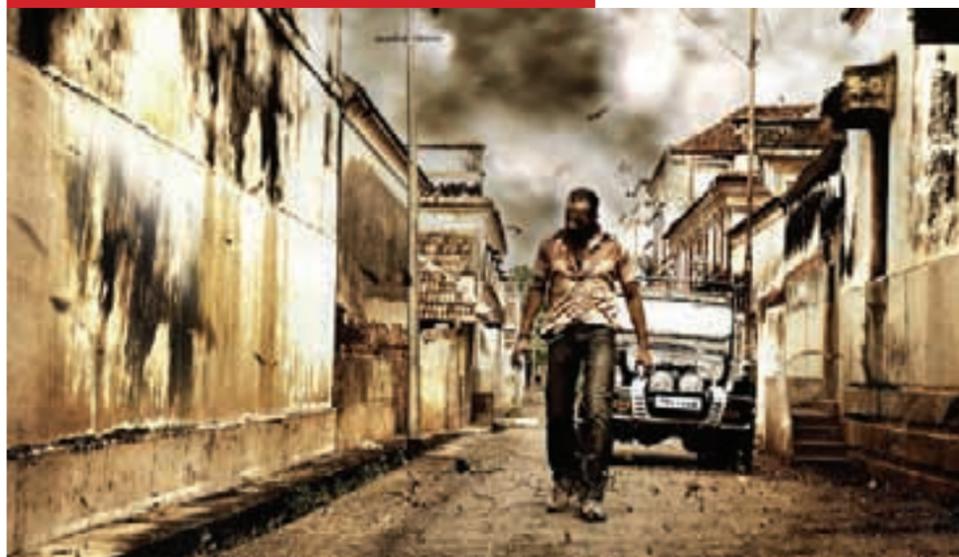
Vishnuvardhan was especially renowned for his versatility and was an accomplished singer.

He won seven state awards, five Filmfare awards and was given a honorary doctorate by Bangalore University in recognition of his achievements.



Fans of actor Vishnuvardhan mourn his death at Chikmagalur in Karnataka-Photo PTI

Battle begins from Pongal Porkalam



The world is a battle ground where only the fittest survive, so it is said. Porkalam is about a man who fights against odds to stamp his supremacy, says debutant filmmaker Bandi Saroj Kumar.

Produced by Bharani Minerals, Porkalam features Polladhavan-fame Kishore Kumar playing the lead role along with comedian Sathiyam. Tinnu Anand, Smitha, Lal, Biju Menon, Ponvannan, Santhana Bharathy and Sampath form part of the cast.

The movie is complete and would hit the screens this Pongal. The director who also handles the story and script claims that there are certain elements in the film which have not been tried before in Tamil cinema.

Talking about Kishore, Saroj Kumar says, 'I saw him in Polladhavan and felt that he was

just right for this role. He has performed with ease and poise. 'The film is a dark story of love and revenge'.

Yuvan Shankar Raja has scored the music. 'He was very excited and agreed to do it as soon as he heard the script,' says Saroj Kumar.

The film has been shot partly in Thailand and in Karaikudi, Rameswaram and Madurai. 'Though we completed the shooting in just 78 days, the post-production work took a long time. We were careful that each shot should be different and convey a meaning', he adds.

Dwelling further, he says, 'I want my film to be technically-rich. I would have tried this theme in the Telugu industry. But everyone encouraged me to do it in Tamil for the audience here are more informed and encourage and patronise such attempts'. [newstodaynet.com]

At her classical best



When Deepika Potrazu, a budding Kuchipudi dancer, also a third generation Indian-American settled in USA, decided to make her rangapravesham, she didn't give it a second thought.

Instead of finding a venue at famous Sidwell Friends School in Washington, where she is a 11th grade student and US President Obama's children attend, Depika opted Chennai's Music Academy as the venue.

'I managed to be a dancer by giving priority to various things. When it comes to my debut

performance, I gave priority to Chennai,' says Deepika Potrazu, whose arangetram takes place on Saturday at Music Academy, Chennai.

Despite being in United States, Deepika has trained on daily basis in the traditional gurukulam style for many years with teachers coming from India to US.

'Every day she was trained at least for three hours and her deep veneration towards the art form Kuchipudi is what made her a talented dancer,' says Dr Sreedhar Potrazu, her father and the prime sponsor of the Music Academy Dance Festival since its inception.

'It is not just about dance, but also about a way of life,' he adds. Deepika, a rising star in Kuchipudi, had the opportunity to establish a strong foundation in the fundamentals of dance under the guidance of guru Vempati Chinna Satyam and Guru Vempati Ravishankar.

She also had the distinct opportunity of participating recent productions and programmes of Kuchipudi Art Academy in India and USA. Deepika's mother Jyotsna Potrazu, is also an accomplished Kuchipudi dancer.

[newstodaynet.com]

Angadi Theru for January

Filmmaker Vasantha Balan, who made waves with Veyil is all set to release his long pending Angadi Theru by January 2010. The film has newcomer Mahesh in the lead, pairing with Anjali of Kattradhu Thamizh fame.

This Ayngran International Production venture is the story of a salesgirl and salesboy of a popular saree store in Chennai. The director had even erected a realistic set that resembles T Nagar Ranganathan Street with the help of art director GK.

The film's audio is interestingly done by both G V Prakash and Vijay Antony and was launched at a grand event recently. G V Prakash is working with the director for the second time after a successful debut in Veyil. Writer Jayamohan has written the dialogues for the film.



Magesh and Anjali (Angadi Theru)

Sources close to the production house confirm that the film will be released on 25 January. On the other hand, director Vasantha Balan is discussing his next venture with his associates.

[newstodaynet.com]



Fresh feel PUGAIPADAM

Campus love stories in Tamil cinema are cliched as a rule. Romance blossoming among students has to be either frivolous or full of mushy sentiments. Pugaipadam, the latest flick in the genre, has broken some of these ground rules.

The movie speaks of friendship among college students with a fresh approach and gripping style.

Debutant filmmaker Rajeshsivalingam, a former associate of Selvaraghavan has helmed the film with a cast full of new faces.

Pugaipadam is an interesting tale interspersed with the requisite twists and turns. With experienced hands like Gangai Amaran scoring the music and B Lenin handling the editing, the film turns out to be a quality

Guru (Sivam), Nandha (Nandha), Bala (Harish), Krishna (Amjadh), KK (Yamini) and Gowri (Mrinalini) are all students of an engineering college.

They are close buddies and hang out together most of the time. Enters Shiny (Priya Anandh), the daughter of George (Shanmugasundaram), a head of department of the college. Shiny gets

acquainted with Guru and his team and befriends them. As days go by, Nandha falls for Shiny's pleasant ways. She too reciprocates.

The time comes when they have to part ways. At the valedictory function, Nandha and Shiny announce their decision to get married. Everyone in the gang is amused by the news. But the twist in the tale is Bala's sudden decision to end his life. Why he does this and what happens to his friends then forms the climax.

The newcomers have played their part well, Sivam, Nandha and Harish are impressive while Priya Anandh is good at times. Shanmugasundaram plays a Malayalee professor. Neelima, Venkat and professor Gnanasamandham are also in the cast. Young Vijay Armstrong's lens brings us fresh views of the beauty of Kodaikanal.

Pugaipadam is entertaining as it is rich in emotion. Rajeshlingam belongs to the Selvaraghavan school of cinema, having been mentored by the latter and it shows in the finesse of his work. Three cheers to him.

[newstodaynet.com]

WORDS OF PEACE

How to Be Complete

As human beings, we can only experience life to the fullest when we are truly whole, says Maharaji, who has spent a lifetime bringing a message of peace to the world.

"We cannot be complete without knowing, without understanding, without feeling the value, the essence of ourselves," Maharaji says. "Without that, nothing makes any sense. We function like robots, doing whatever others tell us to do."

"What's the most important part of a boat? There is a plug at the bottom of some boats, and it has to be screwed in. If it isn't, forget it."

"A long time ago, I used to have a small boat that we stored on land on hooks. One day it rained, and the boat filled up with water. Somebody thought, 'Let me drain the boat.' They undid the plug and put it somewhere. Some dog must have got hold of it."

"The next day, we put the boat in the water, and off we went. All of a sudden I said, 'Where's all this water coming from?' Then I realized we had to keep that boat moving. As soon as it came to a stop, water would start bubbling in."

"How expensive do you think that plug is? It's very cheap, but its importance is amazing. If you lost the engine, the anchor, or the rudder, you'd be adrift, but okay. If you lost your engine and that plug, you'd have no chance."

Similarly, Maharaji says, human beings can't function well without understanding and feeling their own the value.

Maharaji's travels, from the world's great cities to remote villages, have brought him before millions of people over the years. No matter what the composition of these audiences, his message remains simple and direct.

"I want to tell you to have peace and joy in your life," he says. "My words are not just words. When I say a person should feel peace, I can make that happen. There's something that can put you in touch with the



you will do what others tell you to do.

Life is not about what somebody else says to us, but what wells up from the bottom of our hearts. The day you accept this, you will wish, thirst, yearn for happiness, for peace, for joy-not anger and fear.

Q: If peace is fundamental to being complete, why don't we automatically feel it all the time?

A: It's difficult because so many people don't court or invite clarity in their lives. If we had clarity, we would see that what our hearts want is fulfillment. We would know that it's a fulfilled human being who will make the best father or mother, the best

real joy that is inside of each and every human being."

Maharaji often answers questions from those interested in his message.

Q: Maharaji, I'd like to experience more joy in my life, but I have a lot of fear and anger in me. How can I get beyond that?

A: What makes people afraid? Fear and anger are traits of ignorance-telltale signs of ignorance, of not understanding. Why do people do some of the things they do? Because they're afraid of the consequences if they don't. That's what the world has slapped into people's heads--consequences, consequences, consequences. Without knowing, without understanding the essence of yourself,

friend, the best spouse, the best daughter or son. We try to be all these things, but someone who is not complete is not going to succeed.

It's up to you. All I can do is inspire. I want you to understand your own passion for peace, your own journey, your own life-and its importance. The things we think are secondary are not. They're primary. That's all it is. It's basically about how we think, how we approach this life.

To learn more about Maharaji, visit:

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Flowers are significant, worship or no worship. If you look at it biologically, flowers are just reproduction. You may be thinking these flowers are wonderful ornaments for your gods, but as far as the flower is concerned, it is just trying to attract the bee and reproduce itself. If you look at it just biologically as the scientists are looking at it, flower is just another attempt to reproduce. So that's one way to look at it.

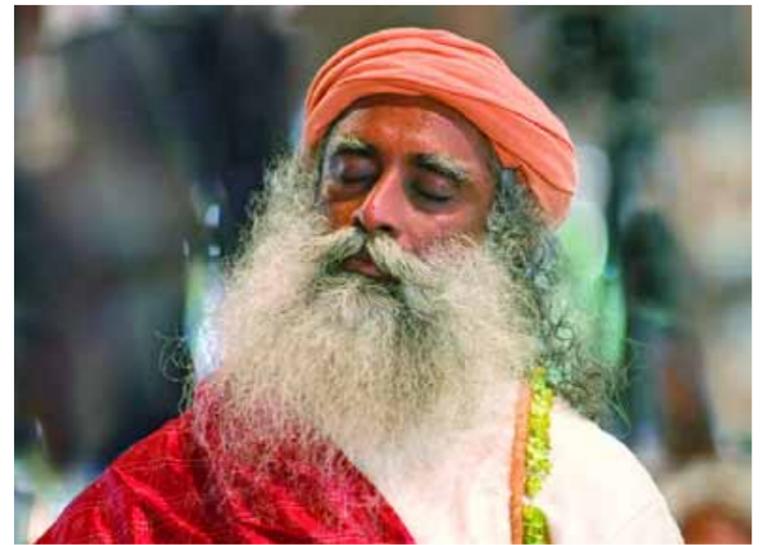
Another way is: a flower is the height of expression. For somebody, flower may be God's own face. For the scientist it is just a stupid attempt for reproduction, but for a mystic, it is divine blooming in its highest way. Why flowers



flowering of consciousness, because fruit is always intending in terms of, something must happen; you must get something out of it. That aspect is very dominant in the fruit. There is a deep pleasure-seeking in the fruit. But a flower, somebody who just enjoys life, he enjoys flowers. It is just a simple expression of life and a glorious expression of life. No real purpose, no usefulness.

Flower is not useful for any-

A Flower is the height of Expression



Sadhguru Vasudev is a realized master, yogi and mystic, who has founded Isha Foundation, an international public service organization that strives for ultimate human well-being. For world-wide program information, visit www.ishafoundation.org

Toronto local contact 416 300 3010 or email Toronto@ishafoundation.org

are used for worship? Why not stones, pebbles, leaves or something else? See if a person is always thinking of multiplying things, his interest would be in seeds. If somebody is always thinking of shelter and security, his interest will be in the trunk and branches of the tree. If somebody is thinking of pleasure, his interest will be only in fruit. Such people, when they keep the mango sapling today; they sit and think, 'When the mango comes, how sweet it'll be?' They're not interested in the root of the plant, the plant, the leaves or anything else. They're just waiting when the fruit will come. They will never enjoy the process of the plant growing; every leaf coming out is not a joy for them. It is joy only when the fruit comes.

Flower is the most fragile aspect of life, most momentary. In morning you see a flower in one way; by evening it's not the same. If you want to see this in particular, you have to get up early in the morning and see it. If you get up at ten o'clock in the morning, it won't be the same. It's so fragile. So, who is interested in a flower? Always spiritual process is referred to as a flowering. We don't say fruiting of consciousness. We say

thing. It has no use if you look at it that way, but it's the most beautiful dimension of the life process of a plant. It's the peak of its life. So, when you offer something to that which you consider as divine, you want to offer that which is the peak. You'd like to pull out your heart and offer it. You don't want to put your toe there, isn't it? Whatever is the peak in you, whatever is the highest dimension in you; that you want to give. So, in a plant the highest dimension of its life is flowering. So that's what you offer, not the root, not the stem, not the branches, but the flower.

So in your life, the greatest thing that you can do to yourself is not to become like a trunk, not to become like a root, not to become like a seed, but to become like a flower because flower is most useless but most accessible. If you're passing this way, even if you're not willing, it enters your nostrils. You have no choice about it. Even if you're insensitive, still you feel something happening. All the other aspects don't have that. The whole effort of any spiritual process, any religious process is to become like a flower. So, flower has become symbolic, flower has become synonymous with offering.

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CANADA- CHALLENGE'S THE CHALLENGERS

This is the first time in recent years that I have been woken up at 5.00 am daily (except on the week-ends) by my bedside alarm clock to report for my new assignment as the live news commentator on the early morning show with Tamil One television in Toronto, Canada. The TV station is located only 10 minutes away from my home in Scarborough and while driving in the morning, just before the early rush hour not engaged in cell phone conversation (on blue tooth of course!); my idle mind wondered about the current challenges faced by my beloved nation Canada.

The first thought that came into my mind was if it was appropriate for me to spend my time and resources commenting on the responsibilities of the elected officials in the three levels of government and just let them carry out their designated assignments and keep myself engaged with some other valuable concerns? While mentally battling these issues, the program on my car radio carried a news item regarding the book used for the Canadian citizenship examination. It was originally entitled "A Look at Canada" and has been replaced by a modified version entitled "Discover Canada". It was focused on the rights and the responsibilities of a Canadian citizen. It was then that my mind began to explore this issue and I came up with the idea that at minimum, one main responsibility is to cast our vote in the parliamentary election. I have always advocated for this on community television and radio programs just before any election, not because I got myself engaged in politics or ran for office but because the right to vote is an important privilege.

Democracy works effectively and accurately when the masses get involved by directly electing their members of parliament and the councilors for the municipal councils and not to wait for the next election and leave all political matters to be dealt with by the elected officials without having constant input on ongoing socio-political and economic matters. We should not limit ourselves only to participating in the election and wash our hands of the rest. Instead, we have to assert more effort in guiding and advising the politicians and we have the responsibility in keeping the checks and balances in our hands. This prompted me to believe that it is not only our right but rather our responsibility to actively participate in all possible political events.

The fast and drastically changing global situation highly demands instant and carefully drawn decisions and timely actions, like the players in the World Cup match in the last few minutes of the game. It is quite a test when both sides have an equal score and at the end, the heat settles down. Whereas in the game of politics, it is a constant back and forth movement without any break though at times it does slow down and can regain its speed at any time.

In many cases, the priorities placed by the media may be parallel to the masses and at times, would not even be close to what the

public wants. These days the human rights violations regarding the detainees of Afghanistan handed by the Canadian soldiers to the Afghanistan government for trial has been very much elaborated on, extensively narrated and sensitively opinioned and received prominent positioning in the media and has made headline news.

The current human rights violations of the detainees who were submitted by the Canadian forces in Afghanistan to the Afghanistan authorities got the top most attention of the Canadian media and some, have gone to the level of portraying a magnified version of events. Many members of the media have reviewed critically, researched extensively and blame the government for not taking necessary timely actions to protect the victims. I guess Canadians had some serious concerns about this though some have very little idea about what has been going on in Afghanistan in relation to Canadian involvement in these human rights violations.

Of course Canada has its own reputation in terms of respecting universal human rights charters and has given top most priority in maintaining them within its power and advocating for them around the world at times even forgoing economic benefits. Our forefathers contributed significantly in developing the human right charters and executing them. Canada has a very high reputation around the globe for having such an elevated position on respecting human rights and condemns human rights violations. For example, Canada addressed and expressed its grave concerns on human rights in South Africa when the apartheid government in South Africa practiced racial segregation. Our right honorable Prime Minister Steven Harper once apologized on behalf of the Canadian nation to the Chinese community for the crippling head taxes placed on the Chinese immigrants long ago. But when it came to the invitation to participate in the 2008 Summer Olympics in China, he declined to visit. Although he categorically did not mention his reason for not participating, it is crystal clear that human rights violations in China would have been if not the only reason at least one of the reasons. When he attended the British Commonwealth Nations Summit in Pakistan, he boldly condemned the human right violations then and there itself.

Whatever is said and done, the involvement of Canadian soldiers though, not a part of a coalition fighting team, has been a grave and dangerous undertaking. The Canadian soldiers have been carrying out their assignments under much strain. The Canadian government is very concerned about its assignments and its future planning and is concentrating on carrying out the mission and aiming to have better results in Afghanistan. It is well known that human rights violations in Afghanistan are very rampant. The war against terrorists in Iraq and Afghanistan has multi dimensions. It has been addressed by some critics that the war against Iraq by George W Bush was an

invasion and shelling and bombing the civilians indiscriminately was a human rights violation and he is another human rights violator and has to be put on trial.

There are some extremists who claim Canada is a colonial nation having the reserve of the First Nations as its colony and some of the natives proclaim that the Winter Olympics is going to take place on their stolen land. No country or government is immune to some kind of human rights violations but the degree and the gravity varies. Harper's government has been trying to maintain a balance between national and international performance. The engagement as peace keepers, aid workers, reconstruction workers, and many other constructive capacities Canadians in uniform have discharged these duties around the globe and in some these countries, human right violations existed and this wing of the United Nations were forced to mind their business.

The accusation that the media and the opposition parties have put forward have some sense of the wider range of confinement that would have been practiced. At this juncture, the arguments that have been raised are: That the Canadian government was aware of the human rights violations and they covered up the actions of the Afghanistan government from the eyes of the world. The Canadian government had some knowledge about this but did not have any proof to ratify any action that would have been made because they did not know the depth of the matter. Another opinion is that the Canadian government may have left this matter for the concerned bodies to take the necessary measures. Still another view is that the government was notified but hesitated to take any appropriate actions and showed a blind eye to it. And the list goes on.

I do understand the concerns over the Canadian reputation around the globe and the motives behind them. However, I am very much disappointed in how politicized and magnified the issue has become. The main challenge that Canada has been facing at this time is of coping in the middle of a global recession. Although comparatively Canada joined late and the signs are clear that we will get out of this slump earlier than the other developed nations; still the adverse effects have hit the masses from top to bottom and all sides with job losses, budget deficits, increases to the government debt, increased expenditures of social services, keeping sovereignty intact, obstruction of the implementation of global warming measures, maintaining cordial relations with America without compromising national integrity, preparation for the G-8 and G-20 summits and the 2010 Winter Olympics.

In my opinion, this issue has been over emphasized with the intention of degrading the Harper government and trying to prevent the downgrading of public opinion because the only other alternative, bringing down the minority government, would make the situation move from bad to worse, because



the majority of Canadians are not up to the degree of dissatisfaction with the Harper government, rather they find that Mr. Harper has been very astute in handling national and international issues very steadily.

When he dissolved the former minority government by himself due to the inability in implementing the complex and controversial election promises made such as the senate reform, the degree of reduction of corporate taxes and boosting the economy and so on.

He still said at that time that either the Liberals or Conservatives has to have a majority government, not a minority government. Unfortunately, consecutively the third minority government was elected by the voters. In a democracy it is expected that the will and the wish of the citizens are those of the government, though this is not always mandatory but under the usual conditions it is beneficial to both parties. The opposition parties were very furious at the beginning and were determined to overthrow Harper's government and formed a coalition, on the simple common ground of overthrowing the government, not the best interests of the nation. On the road each party began to think of the next election and did not want to lose the importance of their identity and slowly backed out and the main opposition party that could be the only other alternative in becoming the ruling party slowly deviated from the rest of the opposition parties and unilaterally extended conditional support to Harper's government. This was the end of the coalition drama and the curtain was brought down.

In the second round, the actors crossed over and played alternative roles. In the second drama and when the budget of 2008/09 was presented in the House of Commons, the Liberals were adamant in bringing down the government and brought forward a non-confidence motion, the NDP did not extend its traditional support and the government survived and the reaction of the people was very negative towards the Liberals and the popularity of Mr. Ignatief drastically dropped. Members of the party silently reconsidered the leadership because the replacing of Stephan Dion by Ignatief achieved the result of the Liberals going back to square one. It has come to the stage where bringing down this government would do more harm than good and the only way to find some method to discredit this government is the issue of the human rights violations of the detainees by the Afghanistan government. This has become a convenient path for the opposition to send their bulldozers charging but the road blocks are so strong, they will not get in. Let's be realistic and accept the caliber of

the leaders we have in politics and let us, as citizens play our role beyond political boundaries with the best interests of the nation at heart and this will certainly benefit all of us irrespective of which camp we belong to. The expression of our concern in the advanced technological world has a very high influence in making decisions and this can help us leave aside our political differences and work towards our common interests on national issues. Comparatively our operational methods in politics is well above average developed nations and there are times major political parties have sacrificed their party interest for the sake of national well being. But the international challenges that have come up these days are critical and they require a new approach and deeper thinking. These days the world is not divided into two ideological camps as we had during the cold war era with Marxism and Capitalism. The world under globalization shares a sizable position on many things and agree to disagree on some fundamental issues, without making permanent demarcations and boxing themselves into their camp and looking at the others in the next camp as enemies.

Canada has certain international issues that are very important and have to be handled in a timely way. As a mentioned in one of my articles that was published in February 2009 before the first official foreign visit by president Obama that " President Obama is nothing more than a typical American president and with his adamant protectionism policy it would harm more than benefit Canada". These days it became true when Mr. Harper made a state visit to the USA and held bilateral discussions on various issues. When it came to having some consideration of Canada on the protectionist policy held by the U.S, Obama did not pay much attention to these concerns. On another occasion, when briefed about his foreign policy on Afghanistan, he contacted some foreign leaders, including non NATO members such as India, China and Indonesia, he ignored our Prime Minister as Mr. George Bush Senior did to Chrétien. He did the same thing recently when he had a meeting in Copenhagen with some of the world leaders regarding climate change, he ignored Harper. Harper did not bother or pay much attention to this and being down to earth, said we will work together with the USA on climate protection measures.

To sum up, I believe that it is best for all concerned Canadian citizens and our political leaders that we give due consideration to our own national issues. This is not to say that international issues are to be ignored. But it is imperative that we get this great nation Canada back on track. We know that our reputation is solid and we need not worry. Now is the time to focus on ourselves. This is not selfish, but it is in our national Self Interest.

Samy Appadurai is a renowned broadcast journalist, author, educator and public speaker who makes his home in Toronto

New Life for 170 Children

RELEASE OF DIFFERENTLY ABLE CHILDREN FROM VAVUNIYA IDP CAMPS
OFFICIAL PRESS RELEASE BY GODS OWN CHILDREN FOUNDATION



On 30 December 2009, the first batch of Differently Able Children was released to Gods Own Children Foundation, a secular, non governmental, social service organisation working with differently able and disadvantaged children in the Jaffna Peninsula.

It was a long wait, but very well worth it. 170 Children were released from Zones 0 and 2 of the Chettikulam, Vavuniya IDP Camps. The Children were officially taken over by Dr. B. Anandkumar and Mrs Anne Mary Jecintha Anton. The Children from Zones 3 and 4 could not be taken over on that day due to time constraints and logistical problems.

It was a day of joy for the staff and volunteers of Gods Own Children Foundation and Relief International (An American based NGO who assisted GOCF), who had been working hard for the past 6 months for the release of the Differently Able Children from the IDP Camps.

The well experienced Chairman of Gods Own Children Foundation ensured that GOCF obtained support from all quarters to complete this gigantic task. With approval from the Government of Sri Lanka, the Military Command, the Tamil Diaspora, Local Community and the Children themselves, GOCF was able to walk on the middle path and achieve this gigantic task.

More than 30 staff and volunteers of GOCF were involved in fine combing the IDP camps for the past month, and GOCF were able to identify many disabled children. Due to budgetary constraints GOCF are only taking out 500 children. Many staff and volunteers broke down and cried, when they had to discriminate select the 500 from many. Most of the staff worked under difficult conditions and were down with Malaria as well.

-On 30 December, the 170 children left Chettikulam at 4pm, and arrived in Omanthai at 5.30pm. with Special Military Clearance to travel on the A9 road during the night. The convoy stopped at Mankulam for a break, and proceeded non stop with Military Escort to Puloly via Kodikamam. The convoy arrived in Ubhayakathirgamam, Puloly at 8.30pm. An Official Welcome ceremony including performing of the leading school bands were cancelled due to the convoy arriving four hours late. The Official Welcome ceremony will be held when the balance children arrive next week.

The Children will be housed in a large cluster of adjacent houses, which were modified to resemble a Children's Village - officially named as Puloly Children's Village, where the main section is now named Naga Letchumi Children's Facility, an ancestor of the main donor.



Possess Nothing, enjoy Everything

Do you respect a beggar? Do you disrespect a rich man?

In today's world, people are evaluated only on the basis of their possessions and status. A person's worth in society is decided on the basis of how much he or she owns. Apart from his physical wealth, his power and influence become important. Success in life is related to ownership of assets and extent of influence.

In reality, nothing can be more damaging to a person's real success in the world than possessions and status. The desire to possess rises from comparison and jealousy. If your neighbor buys a new refrigerator your house gets warmer. From early childhood we are conditioned to desire what others have.

When we are not able to possess something, we are unhappy and consider it a failure. We become happy when we do acquire what we want. This happiness, however, lasts for a brief period. It lasts till we find one more thing to covet. Happiness seems to be in the acquisition, in the chase rather than through enjoyment of what we have.

Ramana Maharishi says: Till you get something you want, it looks as big as a mountain. Once you get it, the same thing becomes the size of a mustard seed!

Greed drives us. Greed and envy are the root cause of all our sorrow. Gautama Buddha said that all suffering is caused by human desire. Buddha was not referring to genuine need based desires when he said this; he was referring to the unending stream of wants that we develop based on comparison.

Joy is the natural state of a human being. Joy happens when there is no comparison. Joy happens when there is no attachment to an acquisition. It gives rise to sorrow when the desire for possessions imprisons us within the boundaries of time and space. When we recall a happy time, we keep trying to possess that time again. A desire rooted in the past becomes the driver of our present state of mind.

Stop wanting to acquire more and more. Enjoy what you have. I keep saying this: Enjoy what you have; there is no need to renounce what you already pos-



sess. Renounce only what you do not have. You do not have to move into a forest as a monk or sanyasi to find happiness. You can find it in the middle of your worldly comforts.

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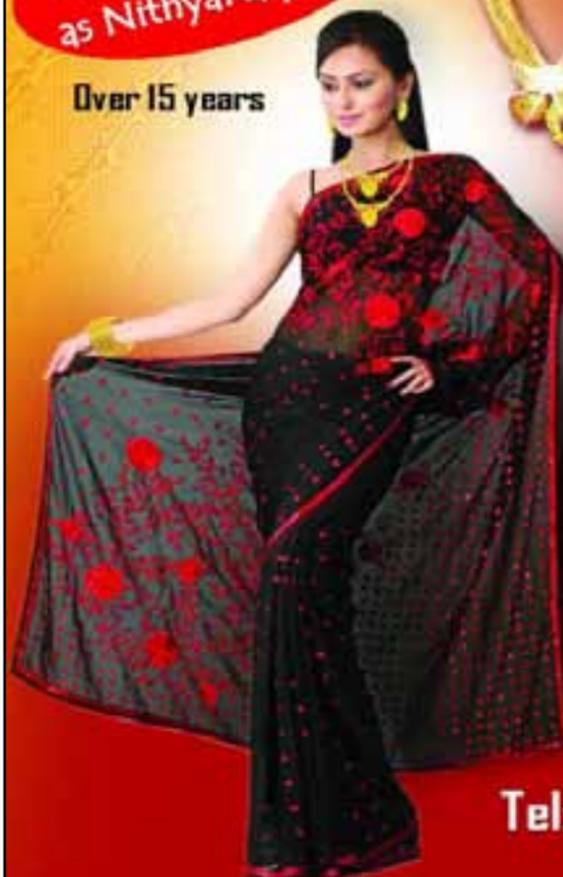
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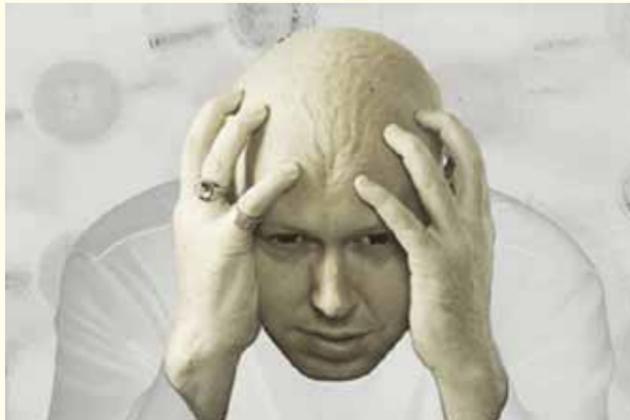
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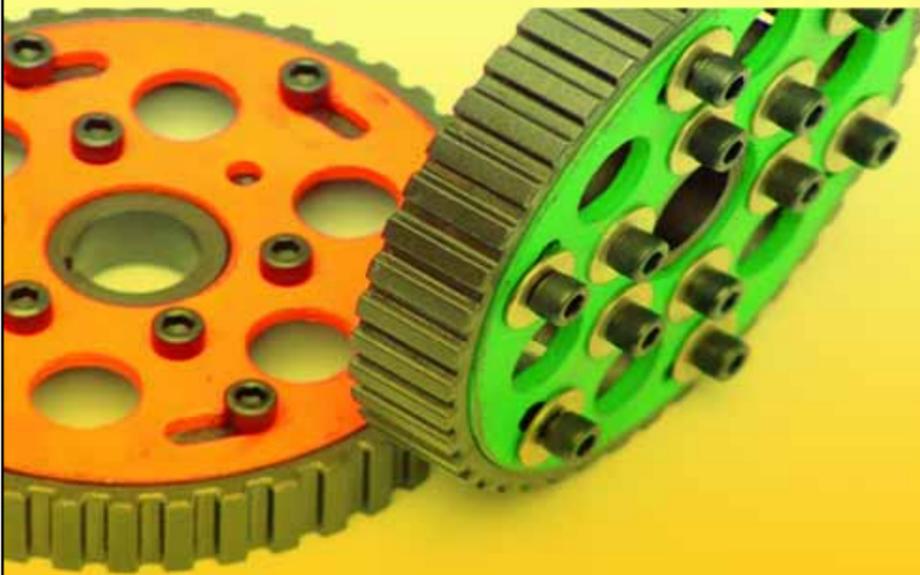
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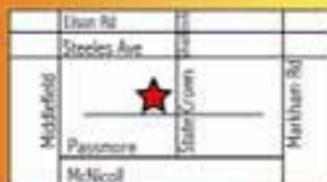
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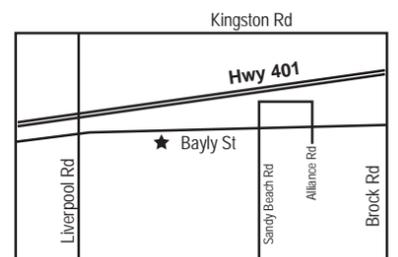
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As we light the traditional Kuthu vizakku with the Nirai kudam arrangement welcoming the pleasanter days with bountiful harvest all brought in piled in the house, we face the world with renewed hope. Many a wedding bells chime and happy faces everywhere.

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WATERLOO NEWS

"It was the first day of January 1886. As the master felt rather well that day, he expressed a desire for some time. It was a holy day and householder devotees came one by one and in groups, shortly after midday. Thus when the master came downstairs at three in the afternoon, more than thirty people were engaged in conversation in the garden under the trees, or inside the house. As soon as they saw him, all got up out of reverence and bowed to him. He came down to the garden path through the western door of the hall on the ground floor and was slowly proceeding southward to the gate when all followed him at a little distance. When he came to the middle of the path leading to the gate, he saw Girish, Ram, Atul and a few other, sitting under the trees to the west of the path. They also saw him and saluted

him from there and came joyfully to him. The Master addressed Girish, all of a sudden before anybody had spoken a word, and said, "Girish, I find, you say to one and all everywhere so many things about 'this' (that I am an incarnation of god) what have you seen and understood (about me) to make you do so?" Girish remained completely unmoved, and kneeling down on the ground near the master's feet, said in a choked voice with his hands folded and face turned upwards, "What more can I say of him, whose greatness vyasa and valmiki could not find words to express?" The Master was charmed at this fervent utterance of the devoted Girish and blessed all the devotees assembled there through their representative, Girish: "What more shall I say to you? May you all be blessed with the spiritual awakening" Beside himself with love and compassion for the devotees, hardly had he said those few words when he entered into Bhavasamadhi. Those words of profound blessing, untouched by the slightest tinge of the ego-sense, directly entered the devotees' hearts,

KALPATARU DAY

where they raised high billows of bliss. They forgot time and space, forgot the disease of the master, forgot their previous determination not to touch him till he recovered, and were aware only that, an extraordinary divine Being, out of sympathy for them in their plight, feeling excruciating pain at their misery and overflowing with compassion for them, had come down from heaven and called them affectionately to Him for giving protection, like a mother sheltering her children against all ills by covering them lovingly with the upper part of her sari. They became eager to bow down to him and take the dust of his feet; and filling the quarters with cries of "victory to Ramakrishna" began saluting him one after another. As they were thus bowing down to him, the sea of the master's compassion transcended all bounds and brought about a wonderful phenomenon.

From: SRI RAMAKRISHNA
THE GREAT MASTER.



Kalpataru Day celebration and note book distribution to students at Thalaguda village



From the streets of Portugal to the good life in Canada

By Greg Mercer,
Record staff

OSPRINGE - If you're a stray dog living on the streets of Portugal, you can almost certainly count on a hard, short life scavenging for scraps.

But Lucky was more than just a little, err, lucky.

Fifteen years ago, the little black terrier crossbreed was destined to be just another mangy, flea-ridden mutt without a home in San Miguel when she scampered up to a Canadian family on vacation. She had been following two police officers across the street, in a country where strays rank somewhere above mosquitoes on the nuisance scale.

But something about the hungry dog with the pleading eyes tugged at Deb Davies's heart, and she fed the animal some bacon. She took Lucky inside, where she got a bath, and was treated for ticks.

"She was so skinny when we fed her," Davies said. "She just kind of stuck around after that."

Her two sons, Brandon and Todd, fell for the mongrel. They played with her every day and soon decided they couldn't leave her behind when their vacation ended.

The family bought a crate and an extra airline ticket and flew her away from the Azores, a cluster of islands about 1,500 kilometres off the coast of Portugal. After a month in quarantine, a government vet released her to her new home in Breslau. She learned to live inside a house, and she slow-



Deborah Davies snuggles with her dog, Lucky, at her home near Ospringe, Monday. Davies found Lucky as a stray in Portugal in 1994.

ly adjusted to her cold, new country.

Lucky has been living the good life ever since. She was fattened up on Pedigree Pal dog chow and travelled with her new owners to horse shows across the province. Today, she lives out on a horse farm east of Guelph, and she's outlasted the other pets she joined here.

They named her Lucky, which seems to be fitting description for her charmed life.

"She kind of won the game," said Davies. "She's been a healthy dog ever since."

But after what they figure is about 17 years, Lucky is showing signs of her age. Her liver is failing, as is her eyesight and her

hearing. Arthritis has attacked her little legs, though she gets some help for that with traditional and homeopathic medicines, acupuncture, Reiki, and a special magnetic bed designed to ease her pain.

Because her back end is a little weak, Davies has laid out blankets on the floor to keep her comfortable. She figures Lucky is in her final year of life.

Still, Davies is sure that's much longer than the dog would've had if it had stayed homeless back in San Miguel.

"We've been lucky to have her, because she's been such a wonderful dog," she said. "We're amazed that she made it this far."

gmercerc@therecord.com

GO Transit launches six more eastbound routes between UW and Mississauga's Square One



By Melinda Dalton,
Record staff

WATERLOO REGION -

GO Transit is rolling out more options for travellers looking to head to Mississauga for the weekend.

Starting on Saturday, GO is expanding its Kitchener-Waterloo route to include six more eastbound trips between the University of Waterloo and Square One mall in Mississauga on Friday afternoons as well as three new trips from the mall back to the university on Sundays.

"Students are our customers so we try and service wherever the demand is," said GO Transit spokesperson, Robin Alam.

The commuter service started offering bus trips from the region to Mississauga and the Milton GO train station in October.

November ridership numbers show that about 325 people a week on average are using the buses, the majority heading to the Mississauga terminal.

December ridership numbers haven't been released.

"It is meeting our expectations," Alam said. "We're happy people are taking advantage of it."

In addition to the expanded trip schedule, changes will also be

made departure and arrival times of existing trips starting Saturday. The changes were made to better reflect actual travel time, Alam said.

GO Transit consistently analyzes ridership and route data and makes schedule adjustments about four times a year, he said.

GO buses currently pick up and drop off riders at four stops in the region:

* University of Waterloo, at the Davis Centre bus station on the east ring road.

* Wilfrid Laurier University, at the iXpress stops at University Avenue and Hazel Street

* Kitchener at Charles Street transit terminal

* Cambridge at the Wal-Mart power centre, Hespeler and Pinebush roads, at the iXpress stops.

GO also operates express buses that travel direct from University of Waterloo to Mississauga.

A one-way ticket to Union Station via Milton cost \$14.35. A ticket to Mississauga costs \$11.85.

For a schedule, see GO Transit's website at www.gotransit.com.

Waterloo area best for real estate: Report Toronto ranks 8th on list

The Kitchener-Waterloo-Cambridge area is the best place in Ontario to buy a house or invest in a business property with hopes of making money, according to a report released Friday.

The report was issued by the Real Estate Investment Network, a consulting organization that provides investors with property information. It assessed the potential for real estate properties to appreciate in value in communities across Ontario.

The reputation of the Kitchener-Waterloo-Cambridge area's reputation as a technology hub is responsible in large part for its desirability, said Don Campbell, head of the Real Estate Investment Network.

"You're seeing [BlackBerry maker] RIM and seeing the high-tech industries still continue to grow and hire," he said. "And at the same time, they're revitalizing the downtown of the old cities of Cambridge and Kitchener and now they're talking about [light rapid transit]," he said.

Ranked No. 2 is Hamilton - a town traditionally defined as an industrial hub, not so much a haven for homebuyers.

"You're seeing an increasing number of people moving into the region, and now that the GO Train [commuter transit system] is going to be adding extra trains, ... it's an affordable place for people who are going to work in Toronto to live," Campbell said.

Scarborough tops in Toronto. Toronto, meanwhile, placed eighth on the list. While it is a



diverse, vibrant city, it didn't place further up on the list because of its high prices, according to the report.

Scarborough, a district in the east end of the city, presented the best opportunities for buyers, the report said.

"There are some neighbourhoods - i.e., Scarborough and the Junction - that would be higher up on the Top 10 list, where some of the other regions where it's newer ... [and] Rosedale, etc., where they're not great investments."

The 10 top towns for real estate investment are considered to be:

1. "Technology Triangle":

Kitchener, Waterloo, Cambridge

2. Hamilton

3. "Simcoe Shores":

Barrie, Orillia

4. Brampton

5. Durham Region: Whitby, Pickering, Ajax

6. Ottawa

7. Brantford

8. Toronto

9. Vaughan

10. Whitchurch-Stouffville

Who was that man in the white tuque?

Chuck Howitt, Record staff
KITCHENER - In her mad quest to get a photo of her kids with the Olympic Torch as it passed through Kitchener on Sunday evening, Linda Janssen was not going to be denied.

She had already missed two opportunities earlier in the day, first in Tavistock as the family was returning from London, then moments earlier in downtown Kitchener as the torch relay passed by while she and the kids' father, Jeff, frantically looked for a place to park.

Handing her his BlackBerry, Jeff told Linda to jump out with the kids and grab a photo while he searched for a parking spot.

Amid the crowds on King Street near Queen Street, Linda spotted a group of onlookers surrounding a torch bearer. With children, Emma, 6, Ryan, 9, and Sarah, 11, in tow, Linda rush up to get the prized picture.

As the seconds ticked by, Linda frantically tried to work the suddenly confusing smartphone.

"Does anybody know how to use this stupid BlackBerry?" she blurted out finally, holding up the wireless device.

Nervous chuckles echoed from the crowd as the torch bearer stepped forward. "Let me help you with that," he said kindly, as Linda sheepishly admitted, "I'm not very technically inclined."

Punching a few keys, he handed the device back to Linda, ready for the money shot.

While others posed for photos with the Olympic Torch, Linda

practised a few shots only to realize she had messed up the device again.

At this point, another stranger came to the rescue. He volunteered to take the shot using his camera and email Janssen the results.

It was smiles all around as Linda and the kids gripped the



RIM co-CEO Jim Balsillie holding Olympic torch, flanked by (clockwise from top) Linda Janssen and children Emma, 6, Ryan, 9, and Sarah, 11.

torch along with the beaming torch bearer. Clad in a white tuque and snow suit, he was starting to look familiar but Linda wasn't sure.

As the torch moved off, it suddenly dawned on her who it was: Jim Balsillie, co-chief executive officer of Research In Motion, maker of the very BlackBerry she

had just criticized.

"Then I realized what a fool I'd made of myself," she said Tuesday in an interview. "He never let on who he was."

The comment about the BlackBerry didn't appear to faze him at all, she said. "He was smiling. He was very kind."



Waterloo women have left on Christmas day for a pilgrimage of peace in the Middle East

Laura Ashfield and Hannah Carter will be travelling to Gaza to join a thousand international participants for the Gaza Freedom March.

Ashfield said one of the purposes of the march is to commemorate the anniversary of the bombardment that began on Dec. 27, 2008 and lasted 23 days, killing about 1,400 people and damaging or completely destroying thousands of homes and businesses.

"The other is to bring attention to the siege and the closed borders and the horrible humanitarian situation," she said. "And the last one is to show solidarity with the people there and let them know the world hasn't forgotten them."

The march is being staged by a coalition of organizations and will include notable personalities such as Pulitzer-Prize winning author Alice Walker and 85-year-old Holocaust survivor Hedy Epstein.

The march also has a long list of high-profile endorsers, including Naomi Klein, Howard Zinn, Noam Chomsky, filmmaker Oliver Stone and Canadian artist Charles Pachter.

On its website, the group bills itself as a non-partisan coalition that does not take any stand for or against any political party or solution to the overall conflict between Israelis and Palestinians.

"It's an extremely complicated and politically-fuelled situation," Ashfield said. "A lot of people see it as being way too complicated, and it can never be solved because it's thousands of years old, and blah, blah, blah ... but that's a really defeatist attitude."

Ashfield is a graduate of the global studies program at Wilfrid Laurier University, Waterloo who attended an international youth conference in Jerusalem in 2008 and then had the opportunity to travel throughout Israel and the West Bank.

She also got a chance to

spend 24 hours in Gaza, though it was difficult to get in. She waited with eight other Canadians at the Erez terminal, but even with the proper permits, they waited ten hours before half their group was allowed across.

"The whole experience was completely overwhelming. They can't get medicine in, they can't get food in, they can't get cement in to rebuild. About 80 per cent of the people who live in Gaza are refugees that depend on humanitarian aid that can't get in," she said.

"And that was before the bombing. I'm going to be seeing a completely different Gaza strip than what I saw before. It's hard for me to imagine a worse humanitarian situation than it was already."

Carter and Ashfield will be meeting the rest of the marchers in Egypt and, barring any complications, crossing into Gaza as a group. On Dec. 31, they will join an estimated 50,000 Palestinians



in a march to Erez, calling on the Israeli government to open the border.

The two women will be staying in Gaza after the Freedom March to volunteer with an organization working on a hospital rebuild. They'll also be distributing school supplies that were collected by students at Huron Heights Secondary School.

Both Carter and Ashfield

admit they have faced some difficulty in supporting human rights for Palestinians, including claims that they are anti-Semitic, or supporting terrorists.

"I think that's just an excuse, a distraction people use to silence what people like me and Hannah have to say; to discredit what we have to say," Ashfield said.

Carter is a photographer who has also travelled to Jerusalem and the West Bank, has Israeli friends, and said a charge of anti-Semitism could not be farther from the truth.

"I had someone say to me once, 'Well, as a Christian, it's your job to defend Israel.' And I said, 'No, as a Christian it's my job to live the life that Jesus would, by loving people.'"

Carter is the founder of the movement "From Palestine with Love", created to educate Canadians using her stories and photographs.

"My interest is in the Palestinian people in general, and quite frankly in human rights," she said. "Right now it's the Palestinians who are really hurting and really need an international voice."



By Gwynne Dyer

The year 2009 was most notable for the three bad things that didn't happen. First, the financial melt-down of late 2008 did not plunge us all into a 1930s-style depression, although there were plenty of pundits predicting that less than a year ago.

As Stephen Schwarzman, head of the private equity company Blackstone Group, said last March: "Between 40 and 45 per cent of the world's wealth has been destroyed in little more than a year and a half." But all he was really saying was that a very specific kind of financial bubble has burst. All the land and houses are still there, and so are most of the factories and jobs.

There has certainly been a deep recession in the developed countries, and the current slow recovery may be a false dawn: a "double-dip" recession is still entirely possible. Moreover, the vast amounts of money spent by Western governments to save the banks has left them with a staggering burden of debt. But the worst has been avoided, and in the developing countries there was scarcely even a recession.

The second predicted disaster that did not come to pass was a killer global pandemic like the 1918 strain of influenza. Something of that order is probably still lying in wait for us down the road, but the H1N1 flu turned out to be much less lethal than was initially feared. Considerable credit should go to those who made a vaccine available much faster than was thought possible, but basically we just got lucky.

And the third bad thing that didn't happen? The same bad thing that hasn't happened every year since 2001. There was no mass loss of life (by which I mean more than a thousand people murdered in a single incident) due to terrorist action in any Western country.

Even a relatively large death toll like that should not be a reason for any government to go berserk and start invading foreign countries. A thousand people is a lot to lose, but it really isn't the end of the world. A thousand people die of natural and accidental causes in the United States (to pick a country not entirely at random) about every three hours. Terrorism is different, of course, but a rational and measured response is still required.

You know very well that it would be neither rational nor measured. Although an over-reaction is precisely what the terrorists are seeking to provoke, domestic political realities in the target country still make it likely that the response would be hugely stupid and violent. So we go from year to year waiting for the terrorists to succeed again on the scale of 9/11, knowing that Western countries will go crazy again if they do. But it didn't happen in 2009.

What did finally happen at the beginning of 2009 was the long-overdue departure of the George W.

World was spared some really bad things

Bush administration. Almost everybody outside the United States, and many people within it, were profoundly relieved by that, but it imposed a huge burden of expectation on the shoulders of his successor as president, Barack Obama.

It's been a difficult first year for Obama, who presumably expected to have both his health-care reforms and a climate change bill through the U.S. Congress by now. His problems with Afghanistan, however, are largely of his own making.

Calling Afghanistan the "good war" (in contrast to Iraq) during the election campaign was a useful tactic to deflect accusations that he was too peace-loving, but now he's stuck with it. He has already ordered a doubling of US troop numbers in Afghanistan, and he is now on a very slippery slope. This war is unwinnable, and it could destroy him politically.

In the meantime, Obama does small but useful things that do not require congressional assent, like cancelling the Bush plan to put a missile defence system into eastern Europe. He even tried to launch a new Middle East peace initiative, although that was doomed from the start.

The Middle East, with only a 10th of the world's people, continued to generate more than its fair share of the news. The Israeli punishment attacks on the Gaza Strip that began on Dec. 27, 2008 continued through most of January, leaving over 1,300 Palestinians dead. More than half of them, according to all estimates except the Israeli military's own, were civilians. Israeli fatalities from all causes, including friendly fire, were 13.

The Israeli election in February delivered Binyamin Netanyahu, the leader who had buried the Oslo accords in the late 1990s, back into the prime minister's office, and any remaining hope for an Israeli-Palestinian peace deal evaporated. Netanyahu is politically dependent on right-wing Jewish settlers in the occupied territories, and would be most unlikely to compromise on their demands even if he were personally so inclined (which he is not).

So the 25-year dream of a "two-state" solution gradually fades, and the prospect of a third intifada grows. It didn't happen this year, and it probably won't happen next year either. But the Israeli military occupation has entered its fifth decade, and another generation of Palestinians is growing up so full of rage that they will confront Israeli power despite the obvious fact that they cannot win.

At the other end of the Middle East, Iran was hardly ever out of the news in 2009. The old question of whether or not it is seeking nuclear weapons stayed high on the international agenda, but it was overtaken by the new question of whether the present leadership could stay in power. President Mahmoud Ahmedine-jad's implausibly high level of voter support in the June election ignited protests that have shaken the regime's hold on power.

If it is a revolution, it's a slow-motion one. The protesters are not out on the streets every day, or

even every month. Most of them do not even want to overthrow the Islamic system; just to reform it. But they keep coming out, most recently just this week, and they are not deterred by mass arrests and systematic rape of detainees, nor by Revolutionary Guards shooting to kill in the streets.

This is the way that the Shah was overthrown: by slow degrees, over a period of many months. It may not end the same way this time, but it looks like the same pattern - and the best thing everybody else can do is not to meddle. Iranian protesters do not need foreign support, and they certainly do not need foreign trade sanctions to be applied right now, because that makes them look like foreigners' puppets.

In Iraq, Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki emerged as a genuine strongman, centralizing power in his own office, staffed by his own party and clan. In Afghanistan another American nominee, President Hamid Karzai, embarrassed his patrons by rigging his re-election last August too blatantly, but they had to accept him in the end. And in Fantasyland-on-the-Gulf, aka Dubai, they could not make interest payments on some \$50 billion in loans until Abu Dhabi bailed them out.

Europe had a quieter year (as it generally does). Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany swept back into a second term in September with a "dream coalition" that freed her from having to compromise with the left. France became the largest economy to impose a carbon tax on individuals and businesses using coal, gas or oil, with the explicit intention of changing people's patterns of energy use. The tax is 17 euros (US\$24) per tonne of emissions now, but it will rise over the years.

Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi had a miserable year, being accused (probably correctly) of consorting with minors and with high-class prostitutes, sued for divorce by his wife, and struck in the face by a model of Milan cathedral. More seriously, an Italian court struck down the umpteenth law he had pushed through parliament to allow him to escape prosecution for corruption. But he would win another election today. Italian voters are very tolerant, or something.

At one extremity of Europe, Northern Ireland was threatened with a slide back into chronic violence as radical Catholic groups who reject the IRA's commitment to power-sharing tried to lure the Protestants and the British army back into the fight by committing random acts of terrorism. At the continent's other extremity, the Georgian government was found guilty of starting last year's war with Russia by an investigating commission of the European Union.

The EU as a whole finally ratified the Treaty of Lisbon, which streamlines the operation of the organization to cope with a membership that has now expanded to 27 countries. It took eight years, two Irish referendums (they got the answer wrong the first time), and some face-saving concessions to the Czech president to get it through. The EU, it would appear, is



still not ready for prime time.

The principal political events in Asia were the Indian election in May, which gave the ruling Congress Party a resounding vote of confidence, and the August election in Japan, which brought the opposition Democratic party to power after 52 years of almost uninterrupted rule by the Liberal Democratic Party. But there was almost no connection between these two elections in anybody's mind: Asia is still little more than a geographical expression.

Elsewhere in Asia, the most important military events were the Sri Lankan government's decisive victory over the Tamil Tiger insurgency in May, which brought a 26-year civil war to an end, and the North Korean nuclear weapons test in the same month. The North Korean regime was mainly using the test as a way to blackmail the major powers into guaranteeing its future, and those powers are playing along as usual. They have no choice.

Thailand is caught up in a deepening struggle between the poor majority and the old royalist anti-democratic elites, incarnated in the recurrent street clashes between the Red Shirts and the Yellow Shirts. In Burma, pro-democracy leader Aung Sang Suu Kyi, though still under house arrest, has supported efforts by the United States to open up channels of communication with the military junta. A military mutiny was successfully put down in Bangladesh in February.

In Pakistan in December, an amnesty for corruption charges that had protected hundreds of politicians including Prime Minister Asif Ali Zardari was overruled by the Supreme Court, and the country was plunged into fresh political turmoil. The Maldives held a full cabinet meeting underwater in scuba gear to dramatize the threat posed to the low-lying island country by rising sea levels. The Nepalese cabinet, not to be outdone, held a meeting on the slopes of Mount Everest to dramatize the threat posed to the country by melting glaciers.

China's emergence as a world player continued, with attention focused in particular on its expanding investments in Africa. The imperial powers saw this as neo-imperialism, but the ex-colonies themselves mostly took a different view. They understood that China was trying to secure long-term sup-

plies of food, fuel and minerals for a future in which it believed that all those commodities would be scarcer, but at least the Chinese paid well and didn't subject their suppliers to hypocritical lectures on human rights.

A blow-by-blow list of all the things that went wrong in Africa in 2009 is depressing: a military massacre in Guinea, a coup in Madagascar, blood-drenched anarchy in Somalia, mini-wars between the police and extreme religious sects in northern Nigeria, and much more in the same vein. But it feels less hopeless if you recall that most of Africa's 52 countries are at peace - and that African economies have been growing at an average of five per cent a year since 2000, compared to only one per cent in the previous decades since independence.

Much the same observation applies, in a minor key, to Latin America. What little news makes it out of the continent tends to be bad: the brutal war between the state and the drug cartels in Mexico, the alleged threat of war between Venezuela and Colombia, the messy sort-of-coup in Honduras, and so on. But most of the region is at peace, more or less democratic, and even making progress economically. Which may explain why it exports so little news.

Finally, Copenhagen. The vast, 192-country conference on climate change in December was a total failure in terms of its declared objectives. There is no new treaty to replace the Kyoto accord. Even modest Kyoto-style national targets for cutting greenhouse gas emissions were omitted from the vague declaration that was cobbled together by the two biggest emitters, the United States and China, on the last day. Neither are there any deadlines for further action.

"The Chinese hate numbers," as one participant put it - and the United States was quite happy to let China get the blame for killing a deal that Washington couldn't have delivered on either. The problem is that nobody really knows where we go from here, and time is running short. If there is one thing that 2009 is remembered for, it may be for the historic failure at Copenhagen.

Gwynne Dyer is an independent journalist based in London, England.

Sri Abiramy Waterloo Dancers were part of the Kitchener Olympic Torch Relay Celebrations



Sri Abiramy Dance Academy was invited by the City of Kitchener as one of the entertainment group for the Kitchener Olympic Torch Relay festival on December 27th 2009.

City of Kitchener was one of the 200 official "celebration" com-

munities as the torch makes its way across the country up to the start of the Winter Olympics in Vancouver, Feb 12-28, 2010.

At Kitchener City Hall (200 King Street west, Downtown Kitchener) the torch celebration began at 4 p.m. with activities

and entertainment.

The torch arrived at 7 p.m., with Kitchener Pat Doherty, 81 running the final 300 meters to City Hall.

The run resumed on Monday from Kitchener to city of Guelph. After the Olympic Torch has run

its course locally in Cambridge and Waterloo on Sunday Justin Harris, a city of Kitchener bylaw officer carried it through Orangeville on Monday.

Sri Abiramy Waterloo dancer's entertained the crowd with their 15 min Fashion dance and in the

sprit of Olympic torch their Light Dance very well symbolized the whole Olympic atmosphere.



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- Week 5, Feb. 20: Physical Health and Nutrition, Adam Rauf

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WHEN: Jan. 23-Feb. 20, 2010
Saturdays, 3-5pm

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GEMS: Purposes and Influence on Human Life (5)

By Prof. Saran Ghai

CAPRICORN

(December 22 to January 20)

Lucky Gem: Blue Sapphire

Lucky Colour: Dark Blue

Lucky Number: 8

Natives who are born under the Capricorn sign in between the dates December 22 to January 20, the blue sapphire works for them as the gem for life. Besides other benefits best of all is that it ensures them long life. The blue sapphire stone is actually a compound of aluminum and oxygen. There is a quantum of cobalt mixed in it which gives it the blue colour. In India, the best quality blue sapphire is found in Kashmir. Besides India Sapphire is also found in Burma, Sri Lanka, Australia and some other countries. In Sanskrit it is known as Neelam, Indraneel, Nilmani and in Urdu/Persian it is known as Yakoot and in English as Sapphire.

When buying a blue sapphire the buyer should know that the stone should be transparent, clean and without any defect. It is advisable to buy a blue sapphire on a Saturday.

The blue sapphire should not be worn in gold or silver. It is

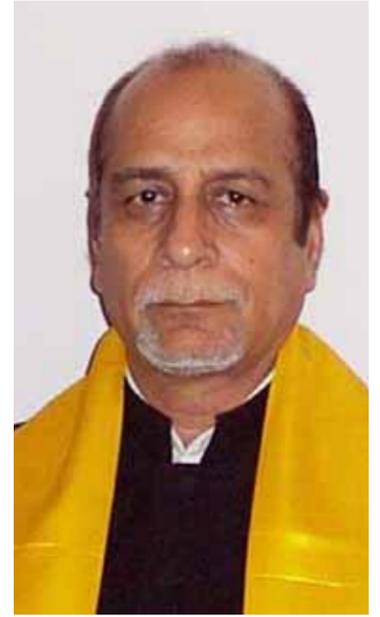


because in contact of gold the blue sapphire gets cheated in purpose and in the contact with silver, it earns defects as being mixed up with Moon, each trying to gobble the other. Wearing a defected Sapphire can prove dangerous. The blue sapphire should be worn in an alloy (triloha) which also pleases Saturn. The blue sapphire should be bound in a piece of blue silk cloth for about a week and thereafter should be

worn on a Saturday after examining its effects. Blue sapphire ring should be worn in the middle finger.

According to Jataka Paarijaata Saturn has its favourite gem in the blue sapphire. Among the five great gems it has its special place to ascend. Saturn plays a big role in changing somebody's luck from one extreme to another within no time. It can make anything from positive to negative very instantly

and vice-versa. It can turn a pauper to a rich and a rich to a pauper in no time. It can cure a deadly sick man of all his ailments. In the same manner it can also turn a healthy person to an instant death through an accident or an incident of the same kind. Therefore, it is advised that whenever a native decides to wear a blue sapphire, should be very careful. It should be worn in an auspicious manner and a puja



is a must.

Please note: You can wear less expensive or low quality gems but you should not expect the same results as you can expect from the true and purified gems. You can contact me in case you are looking for a ring, necklace or ear-ring having a particular gem in it.

(Continued in the next issue.)

Palm Reader and Meditation Guru Prof. Saran Ghai thoughtfully understands your circumstances, family and financial conditions and advises energized lucky stones accordingly.

For all services contact Prof. Saran Ghai. Ph: (905) 794-4488, (416) 816-5559, E-mail: businesschambers@gmail.com Website: www.muktupathmeditation.com.

The Ontario Black History Society
31st Anniversary

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HEAL YOURSELF HEAL THE WORLD

By Devadas Chelvam

Our world is seriously sick at present. Though it can easily feed everyone, millions of people including children are starving or are undernourished. Thousands are dying daily due to malnutrition, AIDS, cancer and many other illnesses, for which many are too poor to obtain medical care. Corruption and violence are on the increase, especially in Africa and Asia.

Mother Earth is being exploited indiscriminately with consequent air pollution, soil degradation, and destruction of many species of animals and plants. Our leaders condone and excuse immoral and evil acts to combat opposing evil. Thus evil increases significantly in society.

The present state of affairs may leave us despondent, as we view the world helplessly, with frustration and despair. Instead, we need to look within our mind and heart to find the roots for the sickness in the world. Man's ignorance of his true nature and consequent selfishness is the cause of all the evil.

Man is essentially connected to all humanity and the whole of creation. To think that he is separate from others is an illusion and ignorance. In the words of Einstein, "a human being is a part of the whole that we call the universe, a part limited by time and space. He experiences himself, his thoughts and feelings, as something separated from the rest, a kind of optical illusion of his consciousness. This illusion is a prison for us, restricting us to our personal desires and to affection for only the few people nearest us. Our task must be to free ourselves from this prison by widening our circle of compassion to embrace all living beings and all of nature"

Since most are victims of such an illusion, it appears to be normal, in spite of producing much misery and havoc in our lives and in the world. The sense of separateness makes us feel fearful and insecure. As a compensation, we cultivate superiority complexes claiming that our race, religion, language, culture and country are superior. Jealousy, hatred, conflict and wars are the logical consequences.

Like Lord Buddha in ancient time, the modern time saw Ramana Maharshi, an enlightened sage heal the hearts and minds of people who came to see him in hundreds at Annamalai in South India. His face glowed with an unearthly light exuding peace and love.

Most people forgot about their problems in his presence. A few voiced their concerns, requesting clarification or some solution. The sage's invariable reply to the people with concerns and questions was: "find out who you are, who

is asking the question, then you will be able to solve all your problems"

Who am I? Whatever changes or can change cannot confer true identity to me. Name, fame, positions, possessions can change. The body and mind too keep changing constantly. Hence they are all superficial to our true Self, and necessarily incapable of giving us contentment and lasting peace.

The enlightened sages like Ramana Maharshi and Ammachi declare that we are essentially one with the Source of our being. Truly we are the embodiments of infinitude, peace, love and joy. To think that we are limited by anyone or anything is a false conclusion. "The soul is in a sense everything" said Aristotle. Oneness with everyone and everything can be experienced in the depths of our being.

What the sages say about our true Self may be easily forgotten, since it is not a personally realized truth for us. Fortunately they point the way to Self-realization, to heal ourselves, and free us from the false ego of fear, selfishness, pride, greed, anger, hatred, conflict and misery.

It is quite easy to indulge in our sick attitude and behavior. That is what most of us are accustomed to. Following the common rut, we will continue to contribute more or less to the sickness of the world, unless and until we are determined to heal ourselves, and thus heal the world. Our thoughts and feelings affect the world immediately either for good or evil. Hence the importance of healing ourselves in order to heal the world.

How do we heal ourselves and realize our true Self?

1. Realize that Self-realization is your first duty. It is the primary purpose of life. Self-realization is unmixed joy, endless ever new bliss. All the virtues and spontaneous creativity will flow from inner peace and joy.

2. Believe in the luminous life and words of Self-realized sages like Lord Buddha, Sri Krishna, Christ Jesus, Ramakrishna, Ramana Maharshi, Yogananda and Ammachi. Belief has little value if it remains mere thoughts and words. It must become an intensely lived inner experience, a realized truth that shines through our being. We can open our hearts to such an experience by reading and contemplating the life and words of the Masters on a daily basis.

3. Develop devotion to the sages, especially focusing on one particular Master. Visualize their living form being within and around you. Surrender your life by offering all that you do to them. It is a wonderful habit to whisper endearing words to them, bringing into awareness



their infinitely loving presence within you.

4. Thank God or the Masters who are absolutely one with God for all the good and bad you encounter daily. The bad happens due to the wisdom and love of God in order to purify you.

5. Cultivate caring and compassion towards all those who suffer, not only human beings, but animals and plants as well. One and the same Self, Life or Consciousness courses through all the creatures. God is all pervasive. There is nothing in which He is not.

We cannot realize our true Self or be close to God without compassion. When we empathize with those who suffer, and help others without expecting any return, our hearts will easily open to God's peaceful and loving Presence.

6. We need to introspect daily and become aware of our negative habits like anger, pride, jealousy, greed, regrets, anxiety, fear, and worry. Blaming ourselves and others is a waste of precious time and energy.

Indulging in negative judgments about others is an insidious



habit that makes us feel proud, and ignore our own defects. Lord Jesus warned his followers about this harmful habit. "Why do you notice the little piece of dust that is in your brother's eye, but you don't notice the big piece of wood that is in your own eye" (Mt. 7:3)

It is quite hard to overcome our bad habits. However, we must not succumb to discouragement." The saint is a sinner who never gave up," said St. Teresa. God sees how sincere we are in the struggle against evil. We may not see success in spite of intense effort, and may feel utterly helpless. Then His grace will intervene to make the path easy and enable us to reach the goal for certain.

Self-realization or experiencing God's presence here and now is the only way to heal ourselves and the world. Everything else is a game we play in self-deception and deception of others. It entails more soul-sickness and world-sickness. Hence sincerely and intensely yearning for God is fundamentally important for our well-being.

When the goal of Self-realization or God-experience is kept uppermost in our mind, we find the inner strength to deal with whatever problems life may throw at us. Then we begin to feel peace and harmony in our lives. Heal yourself and heal the world through whole-hearted yearning for Self-realization or God consciousness.

New Year Baby at Centenary Hospital



At 12:01 a.m. on January 1, 2010, Rouge Valley Centenary in Scarborough welcomed the first baby to be born at its Birthing & Newborn Centre this decade. Baby girl Anika Karthik was born weighing 7 lbs. 5.1 oz to mom Raghavi Mahalingam Sundar and dad Karthick Vanithurai.

Rouge Valley Health System (RVHS) - The best at what we do

RVHS is an excellent acute care community hospital with

many programs, including 24/7/365 emergency, cardiac care and mental health. Rouge Valley consists of several health sites, including two community hospital campuses: Rouge Valley Centenary in east Toronto; and Rouge Valley Ajax and Pickering in west Durham. Together, a team of physicians (224 general practitioners and 325 specialists), 1,000 nurses and many other professionals care for a broad spectrum of health condi-

tions. Working in consultation and partnership with community members, other hospitals, health care organizations, the Central East Local Health Integration Network and the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, Rouge Valley continues to improve its programs and cater to the needs of the growing communities of east Toronto, Ajax, Pickering and Whitby.

MONSOON FEATURE

Murugave Paramanathan hails from Vallipuram, a pristine village in Eelam, in the vicinity of the famous Krishna Temple, Vallipura Kovil. He is a Teacher by profession and spent his spare time in spiritual reading and recital on varied cultural and religious topics. Coming to Canada about just about 10 years ago, he has authored and released several books. And many awards and appreciations have been rendered for his dedicated services. The humble, polite and soft spoken Paramanathan is very well liked by all of his friends and families and often invited to preside over at temple and cultural events.

One of his recent works was launched recently.

"Ealathu Sitharkall" book release was presided by T. Sivapalu Master and released by Prof. Elayathamby Balasundaram on November 8th, 2009 and reviews and speeches were delivered by many other prominent intellectuals from Canadian Tamil Community, Sivanesan Sinniah, Kathir Balasundaram, N. Subramaniya Iyer, Kumarathas Kurukkal, Dr. Lambotharan, Adiyar, Pon Ganeshalingam. Mr. Paramanathan in his concluding

Book Release

"Eelathu Thabothanargal" - "Sidhars of Eelam" : Book Release by Writer Murugave Paramanathan



Adiyar being presented with the book by Author M. Paramanathan and Prof Balasundaram in centre



Dr. Lambotharan being presented the book by Author M Paramanathan, Prof Balasundaram in centre

speech said how he endured several challenges in researching about the Sidhars of Eelam. Mr. Paramanathan's book on Sidhar - "one who has attained perfection and bliss", "Sidhars of Eelam" is very much appreciated and well received by readers.

This book in Tamil, is a keep-sake documentary for generations to come and treasured. It is also recommend for the libraries to stock as reference book.

Anyone interested in these publications, contact the author at: 416-412-7458

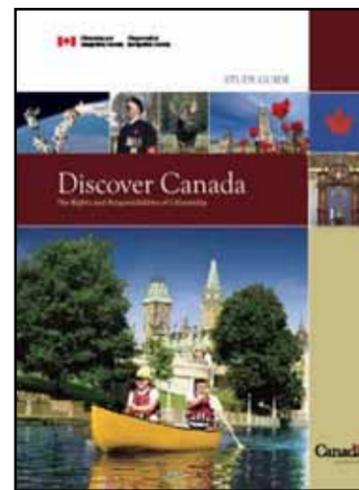
Discover Canada

By Siva Sivapragasam

Moving into a new country requires courage, enthusiasm and interest. Over the years several thousands from all parts of the world have made Canada their country of adoption. In their quest for a better way of life, they have integrated well to the new culture in their new country.

Having moved into a new country, these men and women need to know the Rights and Responsibilities of citizenship in Canada. This is where the new Guide for citizens published by the Ministry of Citizenship and Canada becomes a valuable guide for it's citizens. The immigrant population in Canada has contributed to the diversity and richness of our country, which is built on a proud history and strong identity. Canada is often referred to as a land of immigrants because, over the past 200 years, millions of newcomers have helped to build and defend our way of life.

By coming to Canada, the immigrants have taken an important step in their life and helped to write the continuing story of Canada. Canadians enjoy many rights but also have responsibilities. The new Guide published by the Ministry of Citizenship and



Immigration outlines these responsibilities. The pages in the new Guide takes you through a long journey beginning from applying for Citizenship ending with details of Canada's regions. One of the highlights of the Rights of Canadians is the great tradition of Liberty, which dates back to the signing of Magna Carta in 1215 in England.

The new guide talks of First nations, multi-culturalism, the importance of immigration and the significance of landmarks and events that have shaped Canada.

"Discover Canada" is certainly an invaluable guide, specially to the new comers who have ventured to make Canada their new country of adoption.

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J11 Hosts "Client Appreciation Day"

As the year 2009 comes to an end, staff at J11 IT Solutions invited all their clients and celebrated the holiday season to extend their gratitude. "90% of our clients are referral based" says Suresh Kumar, President/CEO of J11 IT Solutions Inc. "Therefore we build a foundation of friendship with our clients that lasts forever. One aspect is by inviting our clients to our office and celebrating our success"

J11 IT Solutions, formerly known as Computek Systems is an IT firm specializing in Domain Name Registration, E-Commerce Solutions, Graphic Designs, Web Hosting, IT Support and Marketing. With over 250 customers in Canada and the United States, J11 has been providing services since the year 2000. In addition to those services listed above, we provide ongoing maintenance, updates and enhancements to their existing clients' sites so that they are able to have a completely up-to-date web presence. J11 offers flexible content management solutions by either managing content for their clients or providing a Content Management System that allows specific sections of a site to be updated by individuals outside of the organization. Some of J11's clients are, West Parry Sound Health Centre Foundation, AIDS Committee of Durham, the International Development and Relief Foundation (DRF), Canadian Protection Provides, Best Limo, and Ontario Vegetarian Food Bank. To learn more about J11 IT Solutions, visit www.j11.ca, e-mail them at info@j11.ca or call 1-877-721-8910



Geoff Claydon, President of Web Communications with his wife Jane and Suresh Kumar.



Prasanna Suththaanathan, former Project Manager at J11, and Muhunthan Sathasivam of Athma Creations Photography.



Suresh Kumar, Raadei Kugurajah and Prasanna Suththaanathan with Geoff and Jane Claydon.



Umesh Sivakanthan of Bathurst Bowlarama, Suresh Kumar and Ashok Parameswaran of Sedna Globe Inc.



Raadei Kugurajah, Charles Deva, Editor of Tamil Mirror, Suresh Kumar and Pramod Purushothaman.



Smiling for the photos, Charles Deva, Ashok Parameswaran, Prasanna Suththaanathan and Muhunthan Sathasivam



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