



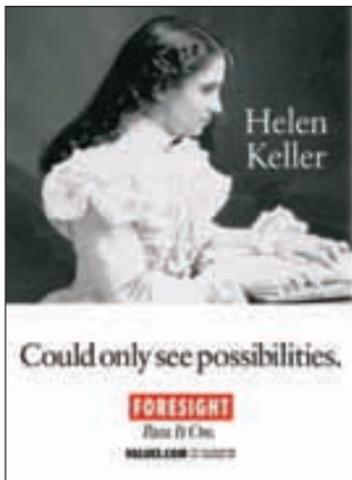
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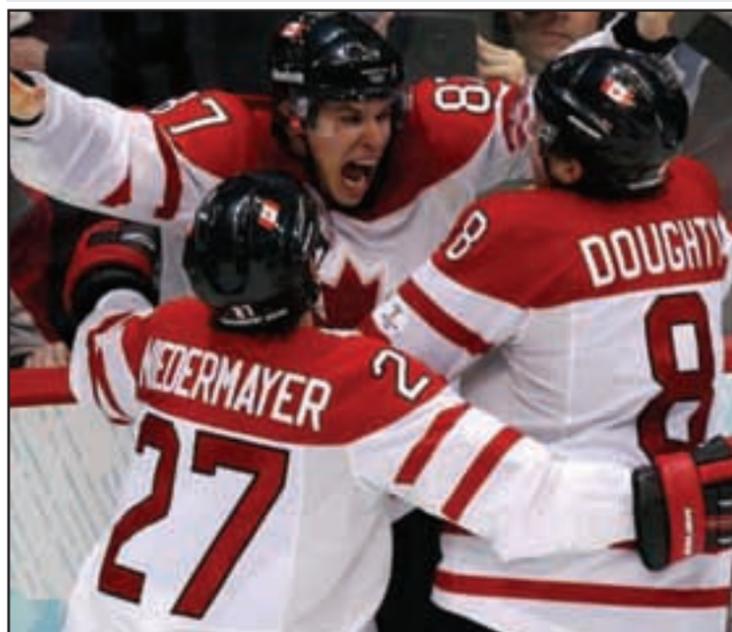
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Canadians Create Winter Olympics Record with 14 Gold Medals

Top three Countries who won the most medals are listed here:

United States	9 Gold	15 Silver	13 Bronze	Total 37 Medals
Germany	10 Gold	13 Silver	7 Bronze	Total 30 Medals
Canada	14 Gold	7 Silver	5 Bronze	Total 26 Medals

Monsoon Journal publishers desk...the Olympic Inspiration..By Shiyam (see page 4) & More Olympics News (see page 28)



Sidney Crosby (C) #87 of Canada celebrates with teammates Scott Niedermayer #27 and Drew Doughty #8 after scoring the match-winning goal in overtime during the ice hockey men's gold medal game between USA and Canada on day 17 of the Vancouver 2010 Winter Olympics at Canada Hockey Place on February 28, 2010 in Vancouver, Canada. (VANOC/COVAN)



Sidney Crosby #87 of Canada waves a national flag following his team's 3-1 overtime victory during the ice hockey men's gold medal game between USA and Canada on day 17 of the Vancouver 2010 Winter Olympics at Canada Hockey Place on February 28, 2010 in Vancouver, Canada (VANOC/COVAN)

Rights experts to advise U.N. Secretary General Ban-Ki-moon on Sri Lanka

U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon plans to ask a panel of experts to advise the world body on "accountability issues" relating to possible human rights abuses in Sri Lanka, his spokesman said on Mar 5th. In a telephone con-

versation with Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapaksa on Mar 4th evening, Ban said he intended to "go ahead with the establishment of a panel of experts," Ban's spokesman Martin Nesirky said. "He also explained that such

a panel would advise him, the secretary-general, on the way forward on accountability issues related to Sri Lanka," Nesirky said. Commenting on the UN move, Rajapaksa's office said in a statement on March 6th:

"President Mahinda Rajapaksa has pointed out that the intention of the U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki-moon to appoint a panel of experts to advise him on Sri Lanka is totally uncalled for and unwarranted"

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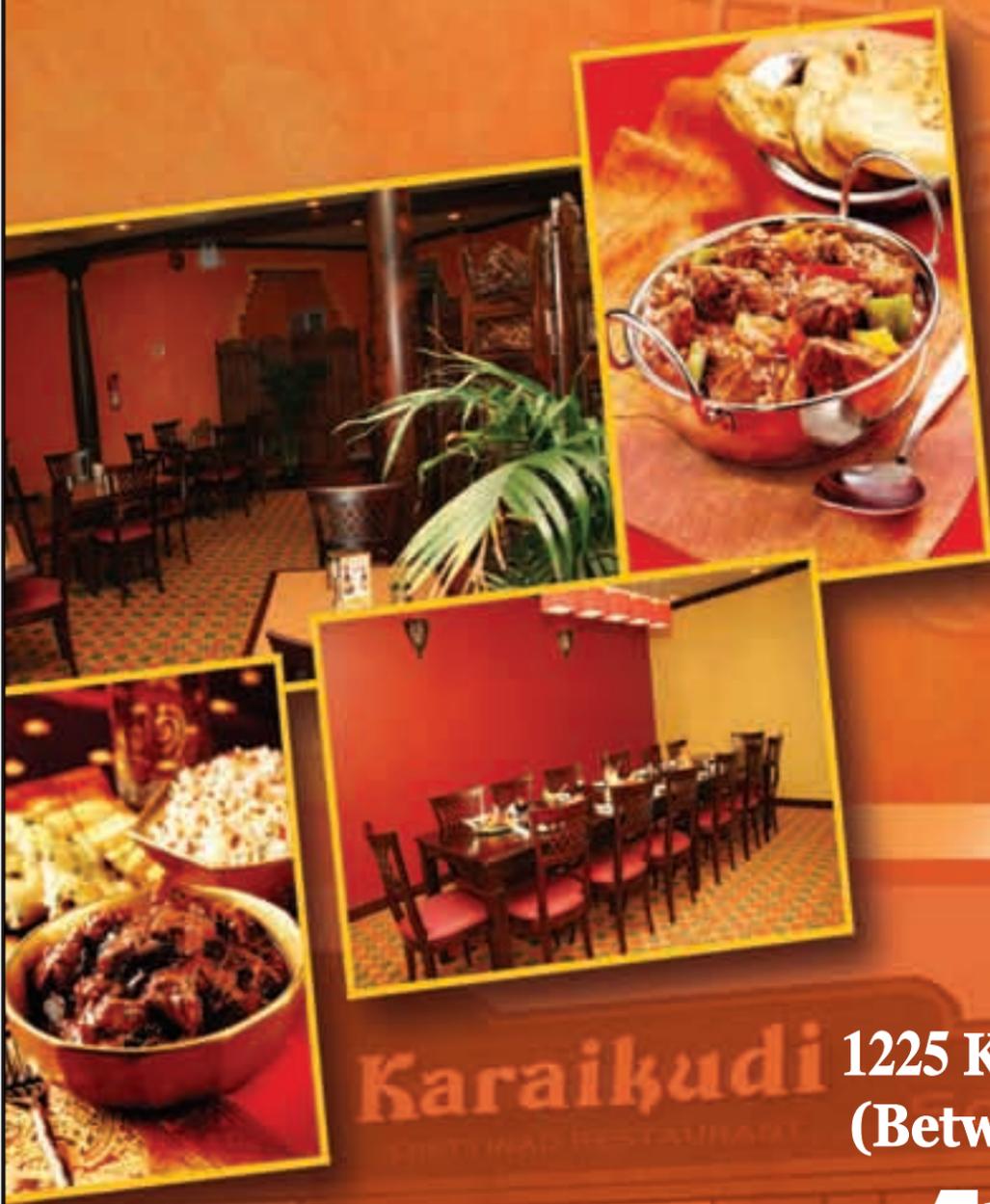
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Poetess

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From the Publisher's Desk ... The Olympic inspiration

The 2010 Winter Olympics Games in Vancouver have now come to an end. It's very inspiring for us to watch the athletes compete and perform with such grace and passion. Olympic games are always a momentous occasion in that they come once every four years. We don't get the benefit of watching them on a yearly basis like the traditional sports such as football, basketball, and hockey. Neither do the athletes get the added benefit of coming back year after year to compete. Perhaps it's these factors that

make the Olympic games the special occasion that it is. These athletes train long and hard for years leading up to the events. While training for the Games, it takes a lot of hard work, mental focus, and determination. They are constantly pushing themselves and making great strides to become the best that they can be and it's all worth it once they make their mark at the Olympic Games.

We can't help but notice the look of hope and victory in the eyes of the athletes leading up to the Games. In their mind, they

are already victorious for simply having the opportunity to compete in Vancouver. These athletes started with a dream and a vision. They could have easily settled for mediocrity and thought, "Well, what person doesn't want to compete in the Olympics. What are the chances that I would even make it?" They didn't accept those negative thoughts of defeat, they pushed beyond the odds and the fear and because of this, their passion took them a long way.

These Olympic athletes are no

different than us. They started out at the same place we did, they applied themselves and took the extraordinary measures to accomplish the level of success in which they've arrived, something we all should be inspired to follow. A wise man once said, "The sky is the limit to what you can have."

The Monsoon Journal joins in the call that ushers the Olympic Inspiration; to turn that inspiration into motivation that will push and propel yourself forward into your journey of success.

- **By Shiyam Loganathan**

MONSOON OPINION & LETTERS

Time to back Tamil National Alliance (TNA) in Sri Lanka parliamentary polls

By Chanackiyam

The end of the 26-year civil war has left Tamils on the island of Sri Lanka and around the world at a critical juncture in our collective history. Tamils have not only lost tens of thousands of our own, but the community's position at the bargaining table has been weakened. As Tamils in Sri Lanka and Diaspora go forward, the question becomes how the community rebounds to become a political force to be reckoned with once again.

If the community hopes to bargain with strength about our future, it is essential that Tamils stand together, in unity won through open and vigorous debate, from the North to the South to the East to the West.

The road ahead will not be easy as forces against this unity are many. Since 2005, President Mahinda Rajapaksa has used all types of methods to strengthen his power and weaken all those who opposed him. During his first term, he weakened the opposition in the South, UNP and JVP and today, he is applying the same theory in a different way towards the Tamil polity.

On the ground, divisions have emerged. Before May 2009, the Tamil National Alliance (TNA) had 22 MPs. Two of the 22 were sacked, M.K. Sivajilingam and N. Sri Kantha, while the other three joined with Rajapaksa: Kishore Sivanathan, Kanagasabai Kanagaratnam and Thangeshwari

Kadirgamar. Meanwhile, one, Jayananda Moorthy stayed overseas. Only two were denied tickets, Selvarajah Gajendran and Pathmini Sithamparanathan.

Is a fair reason to split a formidable force like the TNA over two nominations?

Furthermore, the only party contesting every electorate in the traditional Tamil homelands is the TNA.

Areas like Trincomalee, Ampara, and Batticaloa are already particularly in danger of losing Tamil representation due to colonization, militarization and interference from Colombo. During the last 100 years, the Sinhalese population in Trincomalee, Ampara, and Batticaloa has increased substantially and the Tamil population has been reduced to a much smaller majority. The most vulnerable of these areas is Trincomalee, which the TNA won last time through fielding two candidates. If the vote is split and a non-Tamil candidate is elected in Trincomalee, the little voice that Tamils in Trincomalee, dubbed as the capital city of Tamil Eelam, will be weakened even further. But things will not stop there. Already, these divisions have created havoc in the vulnerable areas such as Ampara, Batticaloa, Vanni districts.

This writer is pretty sure if we don't do the damage control and back TNA whole-heartedly, the Tamil representation on the whole

island in the upcoming parliament will be weakened forever and the ultimate losers will be the Tamil population.

If Tamil National Liberation Alliance (TNLA) had genuine concerns, it could have fielded candidates in all areas in the traditional Tamil homelands and asked for the mandate from the community. But the TNLA's decision to field candidates in only the vulnerable constituencies such as Trincomalee raises serious questions. Is there a hidden hand behind them to weaken Tamil representation on the island of Sri Lanka?

Who will their actions benefit the most?

This is the time diplomacy and logic must be used to get back into the political scene instead of succumbing to emotional and inaccurate arguments and becoming a spent force.

The accusations the TNLA throws around revolve around TNA leader, R.Sampanthan, being out of touch with core nationalism principles.

Hello Editor,

Being a regular reader of Monsoon Journal, I wish to congratulate you as Managing Editor and Publisher for its contents and coverage and also for being a partner of the Greater Toronto Job Fair that will be held on March 10, 2010.

Further, I also wish to comment on the nice article written by C. Kamalaharan of "Anna" Nadarajah in Jaffna. I became friendly with him



Rajavarthayam Sampanthan

Anyone who listens to his speeches or reads TNA's statements knows how false this argument is.

Sampanthan has stayed true to the traditional Thimphu principles and no one can find fault with him for that. However, TNLA is fielding candidates who have stood against Tamil nationalism and switched parties. In contrast, the TNA is fielding candidates who have impeccable records when it comes to the people and the nationalism question.

It's our historic duty to back the TNA and help ensure the Tamil representation grows strong on the island of Sri Lanka so Tamils can be a political force to be reckoned with in the years to come.

during my banking career in Jaffna (1977 / 1990). As stated in the article he is a simple, religious, honest and hardworking human being. Reading this article brought back nostalgic memories of my period in Jaffna and association with him. Please convey my regards to the writer.

I wish you success in all your future endeavours.

Regards, **Thiru**

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Heart Treatment Complex opens at Jaffna Teaching Hospital

International Medical Health Organization made the following announcement in its newsletter issue No: 11, regarding the opening of Heart Treatment Complex at the Jaffna Teaching Hospital:

We are very excited to share with you news out of Jaffna, where the Jaffna Teaching Hospital Heart Treatment Complex was officially unveiled this week, thanks to the hard work and commitment of Jaffna cardiologist Dr. Lakshman. IMHO was proud to be a part of a large collaboration between various NGOs, aid agencies, and local doctors in making this project a reality. As many of you may remember, IMHO committed a significant amount of time and resources over the past 2 years towards helping to establish a cardiac catheterization lab at the Jaffna Teaching Hospital. We first brought this issue to the attention of supporters like you in 2008 and shared the need for enhanced cardiac care facilities at the hospital, which directly serves an area of 500,000+ persons and indirectly serves millions through the Northeast. We chronicled these needs in our appeal, which appeared on our website back in December 2008

Through continued networking and helping local doctors to leverage funds from other sources to the maximum extent, this project was able to come to fruition.

With this in mind, we are thrilled to announce that on Tuesday morning, February 9th, the Canadian Ambassador to Sri Lanka, Mr. Pruce Levy, officially opened the newly built Heart Treatment Complex at the Jaffna Teaching Hospital (JTH). The new complex was funded and constructed by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) under the UN Development Programme (UNDP), with early support and attention being drawn to this need by Dr. Lakshman and IMHO.



In contrast to other foreign emissaries visiting Jaffna amidst heavy police and military protection, Mr. Pruce Levy was observed to be modest and simple in conducting his affairs in the peninsula, TamilNet reported.

This building will soon house a state-of-the-art cath lab unit, the equipment for which is soon to be donated by the aid wing of the French government. It also sets the foundation for starting a cardiothoracic unit at the Jaffna Teaching Hospital where open heart bypass surgeries may be performed in the future.

IMHO is constantly in touch with visionary leaders on the ground like Dr. Lakshman, who are able to push important projects like this forward. Jaffna Government Agent K. Ganesh, who spoke at the event, said that the long standing need for a heart treatment facility is being met with the opening of the new complex. The Director of the Jaffna Teaching Hospital and many others participated in the opening.

On behalf of all of us at IMHO, and all of those in Sri Lanka who will benefit from this new cardiac treatment center in the many years to come, we thank you for

your support and commitment. What an important milestone this is! IMHO was happy to play a small but important role in this effort.

During this crucial time in Sri Lanka and around the world, as we face monumental challenges in providing better access to quality medical and health care for those most at-risk populations, we need YOUR HELP now more than ever. With just \$10/month you can help save and improve lives in Sri Lanka and elsewhere. Please consider making a donation to IMHO today. You can donate online via PayPal as a one-time or recurring donation (the amount & frequency of which are up to you). On the web: <http://www.theimho.org>

You can also donate via mail by sending a check made out to "IMHO" to the following address: IMHO, IMHO Treasurer, PO Box 61265, Staten Island, New York 10306, United States

Dengue fever rides high in Sri Lanka North

Four hundred and fifty five cases of dengue have been detected in Jaffna district from February 1 thru Feb 17th while eight hundred and fourteen cases had been reported in the month of January.

This shows an increase by about fifty percent, according to Health Ministry official in Colombo.

733 dengue cases have been reported from Colombo and 833 from Gampaha from January 1 till February 17.



Health authorities said the two districts had had high number of cases last year as well.

The total number of dengue

cases reported was 6,638 while the number of dengue deaths was 42 since January, ministry official said at a media briefing.

By Siva Sivapragasam

"I am the President of this country and the TNA has to talk to me. Otherwise new leaders will rise and I will have to deal with them," says Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapakse.

In an over two hour interview with Editor Ram of the "Hindu" newspaper, President Rajapakse spelt out some candid opinions on a variety of issues facing the country.

Speaking about the 13th. Amendment, he remarked that it was already in the Constitution and implementable except the Police powers. He promised to talk to all parties after the General elections were over to consider it's full implementation. He wants the TNA to talk to him and that



Sri Lanka-TNA has to talk to me, says Sri Lankan President...

they have no other choice because "I am the President of the country and they must have a dialogue with me".

Referring to India, he stated that "India is my relation and other countries are my friends". My relationship with China and other countries is for development.

On the Sarath Fonseka episode, he painted a dangerous picture had Fonseka won. "There would have been a blood bath with bodies everywhere and houses burning. Even Public servants had been threatened, Sarath

Fonseka is kept in a comfortable flat with all amenities provided. Had he won, I may have been put in a cell in the Bogambara prison", the President added.

When Editor Ram asked him as to who should get credit for winning the war against the Tigers, Rajapakse does not mince his words. "By the way the people voted for me, they gave credit to me for winning the war. Who is remembered for building the Taj Mahal (Shahjehan, the Emperor)/ Not the mason or the Chief Engineer, he says.

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TORONTO

An investment in new digital technology has made The Scarborough Hospital (TSH) the first in the world to run two key diagnostic imaging systems on an integrated platform—a major benefit for cardiac patients who can now get faster, more accurate diagnoses and treatment.

The advanced system allows for the digital sharing and analysis of cardiology and radiology images on a secure network, enabling physicians to consult with colleagues in real time. It also means patients who undergo diagnostic tests such as echocardiograms at one TSH site can have the results quickly reported to a physician at the other campus. "Faster reporting is probably the key benefit for both patients and physicians," says Dr. Jim

New diagnostic imaging system at The Scarborough Hospital a world-wide first

Cherry, a cardiologist at TSH. "Any time we can speed up that process, we are able to diagnose and treat sooner."

And that, says Martin Goldstein, the hospital's Patient Care Manager, Diagnostic Services, is already resulting in better patient-centred care.

"From the time we have an image to the time a report is available...is now a lot faster. It can mean the difference between days and hours."

The system combines Agfa Healthcare's IMPAX 6.3.1 and Cardiovascular 7.7, which integrates a Radiology and a Cardiology Picture Archiving and Communications System (PACS) into a single unified platform. Traditionally, these two systems are run as separate entities, each with its own operating system.

Agfa's system can manage image data from a variety of dif-



ferent modalities including angiography, echocardiography, nuclear medicine and cardiac CT and MR systems.

"The IMPAX system puts us on a path where our next software upgrade could mean the capability to use almost any diagnostic imaging modality on this single platform," says Goldstein.

Being the first hospital in the world to adopt the combined IMPAX system is "revolutionary," says Dr. Cherry.

"We probably skipped a few generations of technology to upgrade to this point," he says, adding that in the past, echocar-



Dr. Ho Ping Kong, a cardiologist at the Birchmount campus of The Scarborough Hospital, reviews a patient's echocardiogram on the new IMPAX diagnostic imaging system workstation.

diogram images were stored on VHS tape. "Now, we have quality digital images that can be shared, and we have new measurement tools not previously available to us."

This is proving particularly valuable for diagnosing heart failure in patients of the hospital's

Heart Function Clinic.

For more information, please contact:

Dave Bourne, Manager,
Corporate Communications
The Scarborough Hospital,
(416) 438-2911 ext. 6836
dbourne@tsh.to

The health spending account may be one of the best-kept secrets when it comes to tax-free breaks

These accounts were first introduced in 1986 by Canada Revenue Agency, aimed at both the self-employed and employees at companies. Essentially, they are like a special savings account where a capped amount of money is deposited to be used exclusively for health issues, everything from dental expenses to eyeglasses, and is a non-taxable benefit for the employee.

Employer contributions to an HSA do not constitute a taxable benefit and all claims paid are tax-free benefits (except for

Quebec residents). The HSA can help self-employed Canadians deal with health costs and assist companies in focusing their health-care spending on their workers.

"We think it's of tremendous value for people to be putting money aside for their own health-care needs and wants," said Marla Schwartz, co-president of Benecaid, an employee benefits provider that specializes in health spending accounts.

"Basically, what you're doing is you're taking your out-of-pock-



et, after-tax expenses and converting them into pre-tax expenses."

Let's say you've quit a job where you had a generous health benefits package, including dental and eye care. You can't take advantage of your previous group benefits plan but you can arrange to have money deducted from your earnings on a pre-tax basis.

But you must use a third-party to administer the benefit, like Benecaid, in order to take advantage of the tax-free status.

This is not an insurance plan - you still have to pay the dentist for your filling, but the money comes from pre-tax dollars.

And there are caps on contributions.

"It's \$1,500 per adult covered by the plan in contribution per calendar year and \$750 per dependent child under the age of 18," said Schwartz.

The contributions can be used for a wide variety of medical issues, including such things as routine dental expenses, eye exams, glasses and dental bridge-work. The money can also be used for things that aren't typically covered in traditional health benefit plans, such as dental implants.

"Predominantly people use it as their form of self-directed health benefit plan," said Schwartz.

And just because you're working for yourself and no longer part of a group plan, you can take the money in your account and use it to buy insurance.

"Just because you're using it for a self-directed benefit plan doesn't mean that you shouldn't take precautions and protect yourself and your family against any unforeseen and or catastrophic risks," she said.

"So you may buy insurance to

provide that protection and pay for it through the plan."

There is already a mechanism in place for Canadian taxpayers to get a tax credit for medical expenses called the Medical Expense Tax Credit. Only expenses in excess of the lesser of \$2,011 or three per cent of net income can be claimed. The lowest tax rate is applied to the medical expenses to determine the amount of the tax credit.

But Schwartz argues it can be more effective to use your Health Spending Account.

"Let's say whether you're incorporated or unincorporated, you put \$3,000 into the health spending account for 2010. If you have a \$1,000 medical bill, you would try and deduct the \$1,000 medical bill from your tax return - but you would not meet the minimum threshold for the medical tax credit... so there's no benefit to you."

Schwartz says Benecaid also has many companies as clients who want to offer a more personalized level of employee health benefits. In other words, instead of paying a flat premium to an insurance company for a set menu of benefits, a company pays in money to individual HSA accounts.

That means that an employee who has perfect eyesight and doesn't need a vision-care option could instead opt to pay for a smoking cessation program.

"It's called consumer-driven health care," she said.

"Premiums are driven by claims. In this case, you have budget certainty. You know exactly what your health plan is going to cost you as an employer."



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Re-opening schools a priority as thousands return to class in Sri Lanka's North

By IRIN news

Thousands of children have returned to school in northern Sri Lanka, where efforts are under way to restore the area's battered education infrastructure.

The Government of Sri Lanka aims to have all children from the five districts of Jaffna, Kilinochchi, Mannar, Vavuniya and Mullaitivu back in school by the end of April.

At the same time, authorities are working to address the infrastructure needs of schools damaged in the decades-long civil war.

"Assessments have been done and schools will be completely rehabilitated by mid-[2010]," Susil Premajayanth, Minister of Education, told IRIN.

According to the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), more than 48,000 children of school-going age, most of whom were in camps for displaced people (IDPs), have returned to their districts in the Northern Province.

The school year started on 5 January and so far, 43,469 students between the ages of five and 18 have registered. However, thousands more are still out of school, the agency says, although no firm figures are available.

"Restoring full access to education remains a key priority for children," UNICEF Sri Lanka Representative, Philippe

Duamelle, told IRIN.

In the Vanni region, which comprises the districts of Kilinochchi, Mannar, Vavuniya and Mullaitivu, 94 schools have re-opened, with 14 in Jaffna District.

Before 2008, when major displacements began, there were 1,014 schools in the Northern Province, some of which were damaged by the conflict or gradually shut down, says UNICEF.

As part of the efforts to restore education, the education ministry and the National Institute of Education (NIE), with support from UNICEF, are developing an accelerated learning programme.

The programme targets about 100,000 students in resettlement areas in the northern and eastern provinces who lost up to two years of education due to multiple displacements, where teachers will be helped to condense two years of curricula into one.

"Schools need to be renovated and furniture and supplies delivered. The quality of education is also critical - both teacher training and the lack of teachers also need to be addressed," said Duamelle.

Some US\$24 million is needed to repair or rehabilitate more than 300 schools in the north, many of which lack essential materials such as furniture, and teaching and learning aids, according to provincial education authorities.



Education is a major challenge in conflicted-affected northern Sri Lanka



Thousands of children are still living in camps more than nine months after the conflict ended

Most of these schools were looted for materials such as wood and roof tiles, or were damaged by fighting, while a small number have been neglected over the years.

A major challenge in restoring education is the lack of teachers in the Vanni, especially in key subjects such as English, mathematics and science.

"There is instability and depri-



vation of all kinds and all levels. The same applies to schools," said Kumuduni Padmasekera, a voluntary teacher at a school in Kilinochchi, which lacks teachers.

Although many children are now back at school, there are still thousands in the IDP camps in the north, where there is a serious shortage of teachers.

In Menik Farm alone, the largest IDP camp, there are 25,539 registered students.

"All children within IDP camps will be shifted to newly constructed or rehabilitated schools or host schools elsewhere within three months," said education minister Premajayanth.

The government is also trying to cater for internally displaced children living outside the camps, said GA Chandrasiri, governor of the Northern Province.

"We believe in offering equal access to education for children. Those with relatives outside the camps were deprived for a while but soon things will improve," Chandrasiri said.

(IRIN - Integrated Regional Information Networks, is part of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, but its services are editorially independent.)

Hundreds need reconstructive orthopedic surgery in Sri Lanka

Report by Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) - Doctors Without Borders

Many patients who had surgery during the time of fighting between the Sri Lankan army and the Tamil Tigers (LTTE) that were operated on initially under emergency conditions have developed infections, particularly of the bone. The wounds, mostly caused by exploding shells and bullets, have not healed.

Infections occur frequently in war wounds

Dr. Inga Osmers, an MSF orthopedic surgeon, stops by a patient's bed and reviews the X-ray. An internal plate is clearly visible, attached to the bone beneath the skin. "We can see on the X-ray that the two bones are still far apart and we can see this little hole on the skin, which we call a fistula," the surgeon explains. "It is a sign of infection, a natural discharge channel. It is not very visible or striking, but underneath it, the infection has already done quite a bit of harm."



Dr Inga Osmers works with a patient in Sri Lanka. December 2009
Photo by Anne Yzebe/MSF

Infections are very frequent in the case of war wounds, when a foreign body enters; here, most often, small shell fragments. The risks are even higher when there are many wounded patients at one time and not enough surgical resources to intervene quickly under optimal conditions.

Speaking to the patient, Inga says, "Here's what I can do: open the wound, clean it, remove the internal fixator and replace it with

an external one to reduce the presence of foreign bodies in the wound. But that means you'd have to stay in the hospital for at least another several weeks. The other possibility is to wait and hope that the wound will heal, with the fistula allowing pus to drain out. I'll let you think about this for a while. Do you know when you have to go home?" The answer is no. Over the last few weeks, large numbers of dis-

placed persons have been returning home. MSF patients are worried that hospitalisation will prevent them from going back. That's why the medical staff is careful not to perform lengthy treatments - except in the case of medical urgency - without talking it over with the patient first.

Clean, stabilise and treat to encourage healing

Leaning against the bed of an 18 year-old patient, Ingma explains the situation to the young woman. "We cleaned the wound by removing the infected tissues and bits of bone, and placed an external fixator on your leg to stabilise it. During the operation, we also took tissue samples for analysis. This will tell us what kind of infection you have and which antibiotics will be effective."

Wounded on April 20, this young woman had been transferred to a functioning hospital more than three days later. There, she would not agree to amputation. Five weeks later, she left the hospital with a cast and crutches. She was in constant pain, but it was bearable. The pain worsened in early November. She went to a clinic at the Menik Farm camp, where the Ministry of Health doctor referred her to the MSF hospi-

tal. She learned that the wound had not healed inside the cast and that pus was seeping out. An X-ray at the hospital revealed that the bone had not set and had become infected.

Finding patients who need surgery

In many cases, patients return home before having an operation that could ensure they would have the best possible use of their limb. "There are certainly several hundred patients who need reconstructive surgery," says Dr. Patrick Herard, an MSF consulting surgeon. "There is really no urgency. It's more a question of future quality of life than of life or death. However, they would have to agree to new operations, which will mean weeks, even months, of hospitalisation to preserve or improve the use of the wounded limb. We have experience in this kind of operation, specifically with our program in Amman, Jordan, for wounded Iraqis. MSF has developed expertise in second and third-line surgery for war wounds."

When these wounded patients return to their families and their homes, requests for this kind of surgery will probably increase.

[msf-uk]



By: Dr. J. Douglas Salmon, Jr.

*Adapted with permission from Multi-Health Systems & Dr. J. Douglas Salmon, Jr. from Rehabilitation Education and Coping Pamphlet Series

Difficulty with sleep is very common following many kinds of injuries, illness and during stressful periods in life. Pain, dizziness, stress, worry, medications, depression, change in daytime activities, and inactivity are all factors which can affect people's sleep by waking them or preventing them from falling asleep.

The table below shows the three main types of sleep problems, and provides a number of strategies to assist individuals in dealing with them:

Strategies for Coping with Sleep Difficulties

Control of Sleep Conditions

This technique conditions the individual to "link" the bed with sleep, by allowing only sleep and sexual activity to take place in bed (as opposed to reading, crosswords, watching TV, eating, etc.).

" Go to bed only when sleepy and immediately turn out the lights.

" Do not, for example, read, eat, knit, chat, or watch television while in bed.

" If not asleep in 10-15 minutes, get up and go to another room. Don't go to bed again until sleepy. If not asleep in 10-15 minutes, repeat the cycle as often as necessary.

In order to develop a consistent bodily rhythm, get up at the same time each morning regardless of the time you go to bed and no matter how you feel.

" Do not take naps during the day.

" Follow these recommendations for at least 4 weeks.

" If desired, supplement this technique with other techniques.

Sleep Scheduling

Sleep scheduling is a technique used to control an individual's bed time and waking time. It should result in falling asleep more easily and produce more consistent sleep-wake bodily cycles. It is especially helpful for people who keep irregular sleep hours.

" Avoid naps.

" Go to bed at the same time daily.

" Wake up at the same time daily.

" Do this for at least 4 weeks.

" If desired, supplement this technique with other techniques.

Systematic Relaxation Training

Coping with Sleep Difficulties



Systematic Relaxation Training includes a number of techniques, such as progressive muscle relaxation, autogenic training, guided imagery, rhythmic breathing, or muscle scanning. If desired, the training techniques can be altered to suit an individual's comfort. These techniques are described in many self-help books on relaxation and stress management.

" Select one of the relaxation techniques.

" Practice twice per day before bedtime, adjusting the frequency to your needs.

" Use this technique also to help unwind at other times during the day.

" Practice for at least 4 weeks; 6 month's practice is necessary for lasting results.

" If desired, supplement this technique with other techniques.

Other Techniques

Several other methods that have been helpful with sleep difficulties are described next. If you decide to adopt one of these methods, give the method the best chance by trying it several times over an extended time before deciding if it works for you.

Repetitious Background Sound

This technique makes use of simple repetitive sounds such as a fan, an audio tape of waves or raindrops or relaxing music to help lull the person to sleep.

Paradoxical Intention

In this technique, the individual attempts to remain awake for as long as possible.

Imagery

This technique combines focusing the individual's attention

on a specific relaxing scene or message, with deep relaxation.

Sleep Charting

Recording information about your sleeping habits can assist in determining factors that are helping or hindering your sleep.

For Pain Related Sleeping Difficulties

A support pillow may provide extra support for the neck muscles, preventing neck pain and headache that may interfere with sleep. Use of a hot or cold pack, hot bath/shower, or massage may help to reduce pain upon awakening, and help sleep initially.

General Tips to Cope with Sleep Difficulties

" Determine whether you are truly getting enough sleep. For example, ask yourself if you are experiencing fatigue during the day. If not, perhaps you don't

need as much sleep because of a less active lifestyle than you once had.

" Avoid consuming alcohol and beverages that contain caffeine, such as colas, coffee, tea, and cocoa, before bedtime.

" Do not eat too soon before bed time.

" Try different sleep positions.

" Adjust your pre-bed time habits by either avoiding or trying to take walks, chatting, or listening to music, depending on what your current habits are.

" Do not take naps as they may affect your sleep by changing your regular sleep-wake pattern.

" Maintain a consistent bedtime on weekends as well as during the week.

" Avoid sleep medications as, eventually, most of them worsen a sleeping problem.

" Avoid worrying, thinking, or planning your next day/ week before going to bed.

" Get regular exercise, as well-toned muscles enhance one's ability to relax.

" Turn the light off immediately.

" Commit yourself to developing a strategy and practicing it for at least 4 weeks before deciding that it does not work.

Bear in mind that no single sleep remedy works for everyone. A comprehensive plan combining several techniques is often necessary. If the problem is ongoing, or if you feel that breathing difficulties may be causing you to sleep poorly, speak to your family physician about the possibility of a sleep laboratory examination.

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Twist and Turn - Is it for Olympic Athletes?

You may not have to be an Olympic athlete. It could be on the dance floor as you twist and turn, or perhaps on a sandy beach. You could just be taking a step or it could be as intensive as running a sprint. You could be young or old, inactive or an athlete. Whatever the mechanism of injury may be, an ankle sprain can happen to the best of us. It can happen quickly, painfully and limit our mobility for days and even weeks. All it takes is an awkward movement or an uneven surface. Caused by the sudden twisting movement of the foot, an ankle sprain is one of the most common orthopedic injuries.

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

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

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

During rehabilitation and

By Mithura Anandarajah, PT
Registered Physiotherapist



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

safely, without flaring up the injury and causing more pain and swelling. During the recovery of an ankle sprain, it is important to work on balance and propriocep-



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

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



Mithura Anandarajah, PT, CAFCI
Clinical Director / Physiotherapist

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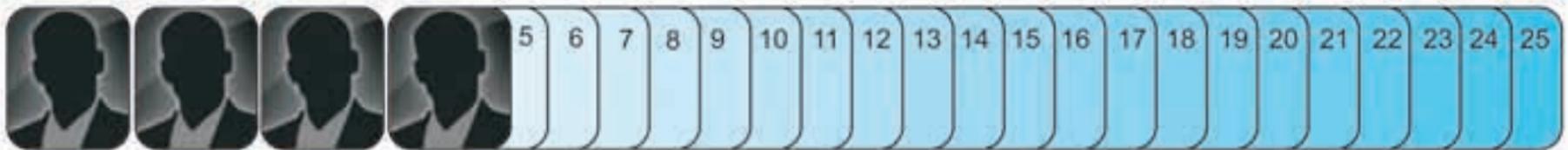
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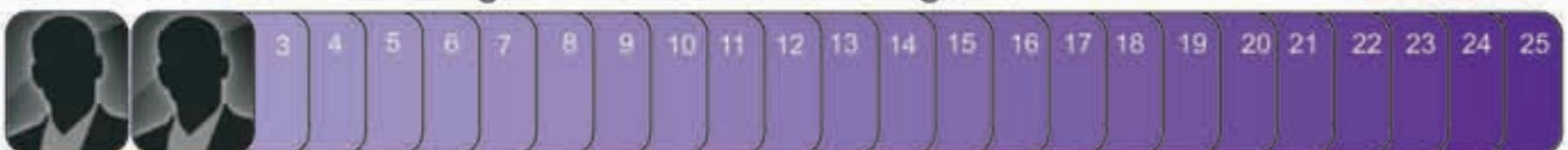
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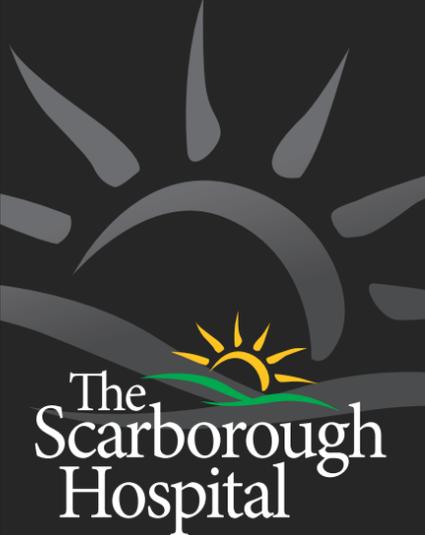
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Current annual members wishing to vote at the AGM on June 22nd must renew their memberships before March 24th.

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- The President's Office, The Scarborough Hospital, General campus, 3050 Lawrence Avenue East
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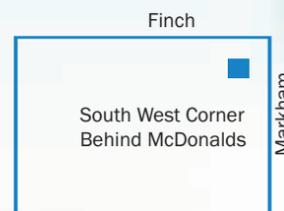
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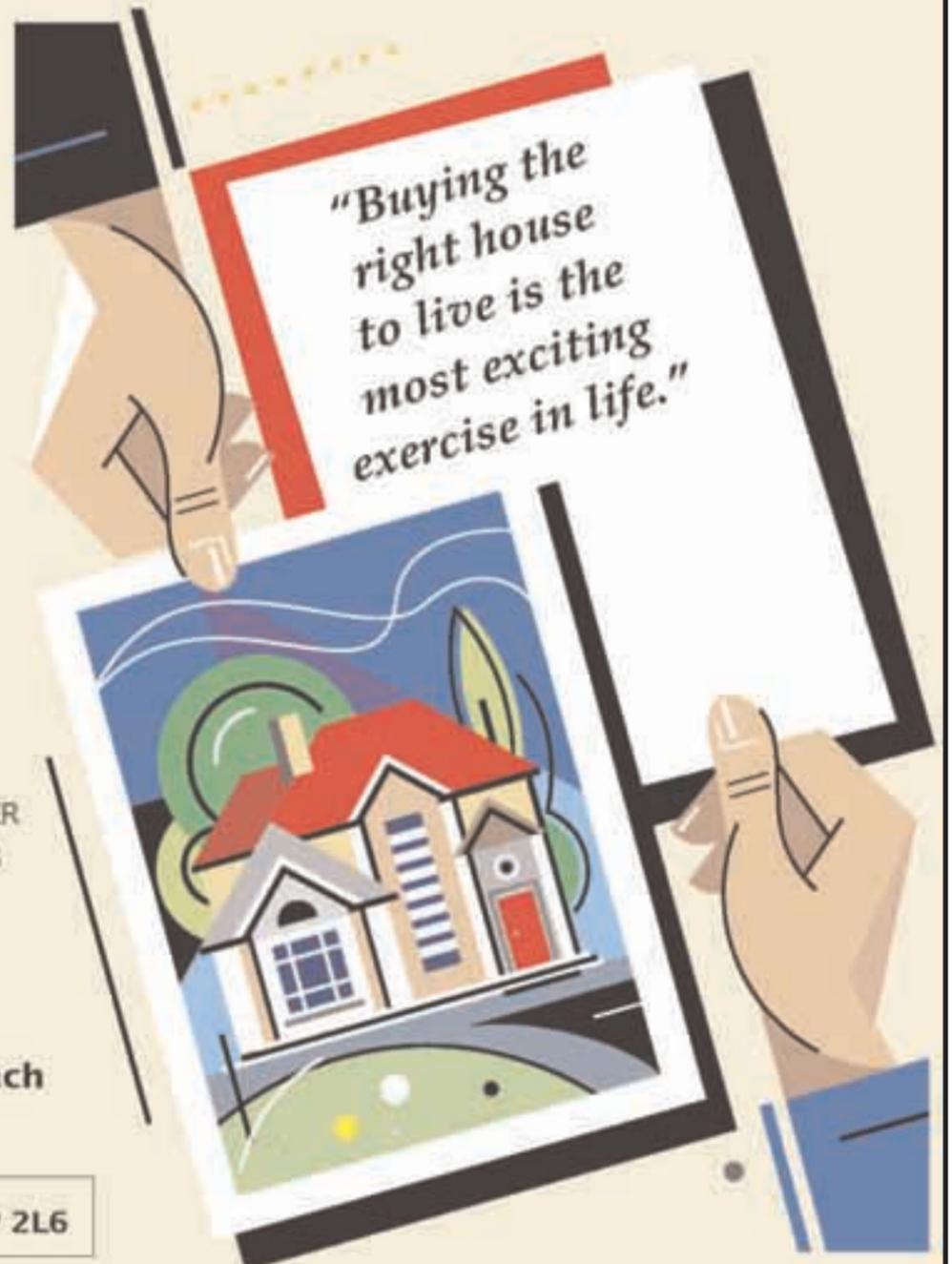
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- a: மாடியின் குளியல் தொட்டியில் ஒழுக்கு b: திரவ ஒடுங்கல் (Condensation)
c: தண்ணீர் பாதையில் ஒழுக்கு (water line leakage) d: மேற்கூறிய அனைத்தும்

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Opening of Clinicare Discount Pharmacy...

Clinicare Discount Pharmacy is a new Pharmacy that was recently opened in a strategic location near the Markham Rd, and Finch Avenue intersection. The Pharmacy is owned and managed by Mr.Saeed Patel, a qualified Pharmacist with several years of experience in this field.

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Malini among Asia's 25 greatest artistes

Sri Lankan veteran film star Malini Fonseka has been named by CNN among Asia's 25 best film artistes of all time.

Indian stars Amitabh Bachchan, Nargis, Meena Kumarai, Pran and Guru Dutt are also on the list, which includes actors from China, Hong Kong, Japan, Korea, Singapore, Thailand, Malaysia and Cambodia.

The CNNGo.com website said: "In the history of the Academy Awards (airing on March 7th), only two Asians have ever taken home a Best Actor or Actress statue (we don't count Ben Kingsley as a true Asian).

Yet Asia has produced incredibly talented thespians that have changed the course of their nation's cinematic history. In anticipation of Oscar night, we've narrowed the list of greats to 25."

Referring to Malini Fonseka, the portal added: "The Queen of Sinhalese cinema had a diverse career that spanned many decades, beginning with her moving performance in 1968's 'Punchi Baba'. She was the first Sri

Malini Fonseka



Lankan actress to reach international heights, winning awards at the Moscow International Film Festival in 1975 and New Delhi Film Festival in 1977.

Her best role was in 'Nidhanaya' (1972), which is known as one of the best works in Sri Lanka's cinematic history. Fonseka memorably played a guileless lady who meets a man and stumbles into tragedy.

The popular film star is likely to become an MP next month as the ruling UPFA alliance has included her name in its National List for the upcoming general election.

Dreams of celebrating 100th birthday in home village

By IRIN

This time last year- (in March 2009), Arulamma Thambyraja, 99, was among tens of thousands of civilians trapped in Sri Lanka's north by fighting between government forces and the since-defeated Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE).

When the fighting reached her village of Navajeevanam, near the town of Paranthan in Kilinochchi district in January 2009, her family fled deeper into areas controlled by the LTTE. She was carried on a chair by her sons and grandchildren during most of their journey.

In April 2009, she entered a camp for internally displaced people (IDPs) with her family and was there until January this year. She now lives with a relative near the capital Colombo, where she told IRIN of the fighting and her dreams to return home:

"Things were deteriorating by the minute, there was shelling from all sides. I never expected to survive. Every second was like a lifetime there.

"My sons were carrying me. We could not stay in one place for



Arulamma Thambyraja, "I have seen things I never thought I would, so much death"

long, it was very difficult. Food was hard to find ... going to the toilet was risking death.

"It is with God's grace that I am here, nothing else. I don't know how I made it out, it was terrible, there were people everywhere running scared. I just closed my eyes every time there was a loud sound; I never expect-

ed to open them. It was a like a very long, very bad dream.

"So many things have happened in my lifetime. The war began when I was already a grandmother and in my 60s. I have seen things I never thought I would, so much death, so much destruction.

"When the authorities said we could return to our villages, my family did not want to return immediately. We were not sure what we would find in the village. The house was destroyed, there were mines everywhere. And my children felt I needed rest.

"I don't know anyone in my lifetime who has lived to 100 years, no one in my village has lived that long. I want to be the first, I want go there and celebrate.

"I just want to go back to my village, live like I used to, in peace, with no worries. That is my only dream."

Louisa Arulamma Thambyraja is the wife of late Rev.A.C. Thambyraja, who founded 'Navajeevanam' (new Life) community living project in 1959.



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Thousands of IDPs miss resettlement deadline in Sri Lanka

By IRIN News

Sri Lankan government officials aim to resettle more than 100,000 internally displaced people (IDPs) by April after missing a self-imposed deadline to move everyone out of camps in the country's north by end-January.

Rishad Bathiudeen, Minister of Resettlement and Disaster Relief Services, said the delay was due in part to incomplete demining activities in northern areas. "It has impeded the resettlement process. The area needs to be completely safe for the people to resettle," Bathiudeen told IRIN.

"Administrative structures [in the areas] are now completely restored. They are also functional. Most schools, co-operatives and hospitals are now functioning," he added.

A fortnight after re-electing incumbent President Mahinda Rajapaksa for another six years, Sri Lanka's political focus is now on electing a new parliament, with the poll set for 8 April.

The secretary of the Ministry of Resettlement and Disaster Relief Services, ULM Halaldeen, admitted there had been a delay in the resettlement process in the run-up to the presidential election on 26 January.

However, he said all the IDPs should be resettled by the time the parliamentary election is held, and insisted they would be able to vote.

"Come April, they all will be resettled in their own homes and leading more normal lives," Halaldeen told IRIN. "This is a process and we are continuing to

resettle people at our earliest," he said.

As of 5 February, there were more than 106,000 IDPs remaining in camps in the districts of Vavuniya, Mannar and Jaffna, according to the UN, citing government agents. About 160,000 IDPs have been returned to their districts of origin, while 29,060 people have been released from temporary camps into host families and elders' homes.

More than 280,000 were displaced in the fighting and living in government camps soon after the war ended in May 2009.

At the same time, the latest report issued by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) warns of funding shortfalls from February for agencies operating in Menik Farm, the

largest IDP camp.

The lack of funding is expected to affect services, including the maintenance of sanitation facilities, provision of food and education, it says in the report to 29 January.

It also says that most returnees have expressed satisfaction at restarting their lives in their areas of origin but notes several challenges, including insufficient basic services, transport limitations and damaged or destroyed property and shelters.

"Indications of tensions among communities arriving at different stages of the return process had surfaced, with the civil administration indicating that it would [be] strengthening its role to support resolution of disputes," it says.



**MONSOON
NEWSLINES**

Legislators representing Sri Lanka's northeastern provinces also expressed concern over the practicality of resettlement initiatives.

As a result of these, IDPs would be grappling with "uninhabitable homes without the necessary facilities to help them lead a normal life", said Tamil National Alliance (TNA) ex-parliamentarian, Suresh Premachandran. "It will take at least two years to resettle people properly with their infrastructure needs being met."



Picture shows the annual prize-giving event of the Primary school of St.Bridget Convent in Kotahena in Sri Lanka. Left to Right - Fr. A.R. Lloyd Shantikumar from the National Education Center, Ministry of Education Official Mrs. Sri Ranganathan, School Principal Marie Razia and Primary School Head Rubini Thambiraja (Picture Courtesy: Virakesari)

Rocco Rossi speaks at sold out Toronto Board of Trade Event



Rocco Rossi delivered the second major speech of his campaign on Wednesday, March 3rd in which he focused on the city's finances and gave new details about his plans for the TTC.

The speech was held in front of a sold out crowd as part of the

VoteToronto2010 Speaker Series, organized by the Toronto Board of Trade.

The city's business elite filled the room, and warmly received Rossi after taking lunch. The noon hour event attracted almost 800 people.

Rossi pledged that the Toronto Board of Trade's report on city finances - which predicts a \$1.19 billion structural deficit by 2019 if no preventative steps are taken - would "serve to drive next spring's budget" if he is elected.

To improve the budget, he

proposed limiting annual wage increases for city workers to three per cent. He also called for an immediate hiring freeze for all but essential service personnel, and repeated his pledge to sell off Toronto Hydro and privatize some city services.

He also spoke about the TTC and Transit City. In previous statements, Rossi has called for a pause on transit expansion until it is clear the city can afford to pay the operating costs.

"We all want to ride the wave of the province's renewed interest in transit. But we don't want to get swamped," he said on Wednesday.

"As mayor I would pursue negotiations on the future of the TTC with the province. I would be willing to put everything on the

table for discussion" he said. "Perhaps they will involve a different governance model for the TTC, one that brings it into some sort of new partnership with Metrolinx" he continued.

While Rossi did not say which responsibilities should be transferred to the province, he noted that a complete upload is not an option.

"We can't just upload the whole thing" Rossi explained while speaking with reporters after his speech. "It takes two people to upload, because the uploadee has to be willing to accept it. And quite frankly, with the union contracts, I'm not sure that in the current circumstances that they would be prepared to do that."

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Ontario Harmonized Sales Tax and Income Tax update

Photograph's taken at the " Ontario Harmonized Sales Tax and Income Tax update " seminar held on Saturday February 20, 2010 at Scarborough Civic Centre.



Rajan Tharoor, CGA, President SAAC, addressing participants of HST & Tax update seminar held at Scarborough Civic Centre, Council Chambers



Rajan Tharoor, President SAAC, with Carmen Jacques - Business Development Manager CGA-Ontario and Shilpa Kumar - Small Business Advisor - TD Canada Trust at the seminar



Section of the participants at the HST & Tax update seminar held at Scarborough Civic Centre, Council Chambers



Section of the participants of the HST & Tax update seminar held at Scarborough Civic Centre, Council Chambers



Section of participants of the HST & Tax update seminar held at Scarborough Civic Centre



Participants listening to the HST presentation by Glen Faulkner BA, from Canada Revenue Agency at the SAAC seminar held at Scarborough Civic Centre



Carmen Jacques CGA, Business Development Manager CGA-Ontario addressing the HST & Tax update seminar participants held at Scarborough Civic Centre



Rob Wrenne, CMAA, FCP, Senior Manager, TD Interpersonal addressing participants of the HST & Tax update seminar held at Scarborough Civic Centre, council chambers



Thomas McCullum FCGA, CMAA, addressing participants of the HST & Tax update seminar



Theva Somesunderam CGA, Arthy Ariaran CGA Secretary SAAC and Kuna Rajaratnam CGA at the SAAC seminar

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China's bullying tactics



A bully has no qualms of conscience over showing his real self at the slightest provocation. China next door to India is a case in point. First, let us know the dictionary meaning of the expression bully: "A person who is habitually cruel or overbearing especially to smaller or weaker sections." He is also described in various other terms like "a hired ruffian" and "a thug". Bullying is the device he chooses to carry out his designs. Bullying is rightly defined as "repeated acts over time that involves a real or perceived imbalance of power with the more powerful individual or group abusing those who are less powerful." It can be indulged in by a person, a gang and even a government and a country.

What emboldens a bully to do what he does and be confident that he can get away with it? Arguably he draws encouragement from the submissiveness of the victim who thinks that he is too weak. The bully also benefits from the support he gets from bystanders who either keep silent or cheer him in awe of him.

It is small wonder then that China thinks of highly revered Dalai Lama what a bull feels about a red rag. The temporal and the spiritual leader of the Tibetan people is a believer in non-violence. China, on the other hand, has no time and patience for ahimsa and is irritated by his mere mention.

In its latest outburst China has taken on both Dalai Lama and United States President Barack Obama. A mere meeting between the two in the White House has angered the Chinese Government. It has voiced its strong opposition by summoning the American ambassador to China in Beijing and lodging "a solemn representation" to express its displeasure at the US "obstinately" arranging the get-together. Its reaction is strongly worded: "The US has grossly interfered in China's internal affairs, gravely hurt the Chinese people's national sentiments and seriously damaged Sino-US ties."

The Dragon adopts menacing postures whenever it feels that its claim howsoever unjustified it may be is being challenged. Only recently it has caused sleepless nights in India's trans-Himalayan district of Leh. About our north-eastern state of Arunachal

Pradesh Chinese envoy in New Delhi has once felt emboldened to own it as his country's part. China has shown to the world that when it comes to handling its priorities it does not care about diplomatic niceties, good-neighbourly relations or international accords. As and when it wants it is also able to retain the iron curtain around it in the face of the latest Internet and satellite technologies and global trade practices.

It has been ruthless in crushing the insurgency in its Xinjiang region changing in the process its demographic profile. Slowly but surely it is usurping Tibet. There is nothing in the discussions between Mr Obama and Dalai Lama that could have offended anyone. The two leaders have actually agreed "on the importance and cooperative relationship between the US and China."

According to a White House statement, Mr Obama has "stated his strong support for the preservation of Tibet's unique religious, cultural and linguistic identity and the protection of human rights for Tibetans in the People's Republic of China." He has also commended Dalai Lama's "Middle Way Approach", his commitment to non-violence and his pursuit of dialogue with the Chinese government. He stressed that he has consistently encouraged both sides to engage in direct dialogue to resolve differences and was pleased to hear about the recent resumption of talks.

What is wrong in this? Obviously annoyed by China's constant needling the US has insisted that Dalai Lama is "an internationally respected religious leader" thereby calling the Chinese bluff that the Tibetan leader is "not a pure religious figure, but a political exile who has all along been engaged in separatist activities under the pretext of religion." In a verbal retort the US has stated: "We think we have a mature enough relationship with the Chinese that we can agree on mutual interests, but also have a mature enough relationship that we know the two countries are not always going to agree on everything." Who can teach China the virtues of individual liberty and religious freedom?

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CTCC takes off for 2010 with A Quarterly Meeting

By Siva Sivapragasam

The Canadian Tamils' Chamber of Commerce held its first quarterly meeting for 2010 on the last Saturday of last month at the Embassy Restaurant.

The meeting began with Secretary Kalyani Nathan welcoming the guests and thanking them for their presence specially on a Saturday morning when members would be pre-occupied with their personal tasks for the week-end.

Following Kalyani's introductory remarks, President Ken Kirupa read out the President's report in which he traced Chamber activity for 2009 which included the Golf Tournament and the Business Mixer. Commenting on the events for 2010, he stated that Chamber events were taking shape with the upcoming-event of the Awards Gala which has been scheduled for April 10th and that

the event will take place at the prestigious Fairmont Royal York Hotel and the venue will certainly help promote sponsorship for the CTCC by elevating the status of our community events. The President also commented that the paid membership had doubled during the past five months. The Chamber had declared February as the Membership month which included a two day membership open house at the Chamber

office. Mr. Sam Thiru, Membership Director outlined the steps taken to increase the membership.

A presentation was made at the meeting by Mr.Nani Pradeepan & Mr.K.Arshad on behalf of New Dawn Solutions on the benefits of Solar PV System for homes and offices. They both emphasized the Financial and environmental benefits of the solar panel system. Mr.Arshad specifically mentioned the finan-

cial benefits the Government of Ontario is offering for the installation of the Solar Power system. It was pointed out that the installation will be a low-cost, high income yielding investment. The presentation was lively and members did not fail to obtain certain clarifications from both Mr.Arshad and Mr.Nani Pradeepan.

Seen here are some photos taken at the event.

Photos by Ken Photo



Asst. Sec. Robert Blake urges Sri Lanka for 'national reconciliation and power sharing-particularly with the north'



The following is full text of interview given by Amb. Robert O. Blake, Jr., Assistant Secretary, Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs, on Feb 22, 2010 to the BBC World News. This text was released to the media by the US State Dept.:

BBC: What is the American view of what is taking place in Sri Lanka? Live now to the U.S. State Department in Washington, and Robert Blake, Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs.

Assistant Secretary, thanks very much for joining us here on BBC World News. What is your reading of what is underway now in Sri Lanka? Do you accept that General Fonseka is experiencing a due and proper legal process?

Assistant Secretary Blake: So far I think it has been less than we might have hoped for, but we've certainly encouraged the government of Sri Lanka to ensure that he is charged promptly, as you said, and that everything is handled in accordance with Sri Lankan law as they move forward.

BBC: Do you think you have democracy or they have democra-

cy in Sri Lanka which is acceptable under international norms?

Assistant Secretary Blake: I think they do have a democracy, and certainly they have a very proud democratic tradition. One aspect of democracy, of course, is respect for human rights. Again, I think there can be, there needs to be improvements in that area. We've spoken particularly about the importance of greater respect for freedom of the media and freedom of the press.

BBC: What though is the position particularly after what's happened to General Fonseka, Retired General Fonseka now? The fact that he was dragged from his office, watched by supporters, and is now being held in a naval detention facility. Do you accept that as a legitimate part of a democratic and legal process?

Assistant Secretary Blake: We haven't yet seen what the charges are, so I really can't comment on that. Again, we've encouraged the government to make public as quickly as possible what those charges are. But I think that Sri Lankans themselves have spoken about the manner in which General Fonseka was



arrested. Several monks, for example, several Buddhist monks have noted that this was handled in a very unprofessional and undignified way.

BBC: It is now eight months since the end of the war with the Tamil Tigers. They were defeated. What's your view on the respect now being shown for the Tamil minority?

Assistant Secretary Blake: In our view I think one of the highest priorities now is first, to complete the resettlement of the internally displaced people. About 180,000 have been sent back from the camps, but approximately 100,000 still remain. So I

think it's important for them to be allowed to return to their homes and villages in the north as quickly as possible.

Secondly, I think it's important for the government to pursue as quickly as possible this process of national reconciliation and power sharing, particularly with the north. Then as part of that national reconciliation process, to begin a process of accountability for many of the human rights abuses that may have occurred during that war. And third, to again talk about the larger issue of possible war crimes that may have occurred. Again, that will be an important part of the larger reconciliation piece.

BBC: Assistant Secretary while you're joining me, and thanks for joining us live from the State Department in Washington, can I just turn your focus to the north of Sri Lanka, to India and Pakistan. The Pakistani Foreign Secretary will arrive in Delhi and have a meeting with the Indian Foreign Secretary at the Indian invitation on Thursday, the first such meeting for more than 15 months. What expectations do you have of at least the opening

of this dialogue?

Assistant Secretary Blake: We welcome very much the fact that these talks are taking place. I think this is a significant breakthrough, and I really want to commend both the Indians and the Pakistanis for arranging these talks. As you say, the talks have been suspended for some time as a result of the November 2008 bombings in Mumbai, so we think this is a very valuable opportunity for both of these countries to explore the important issues on their agenda, but also to think about ways that they can begin the process of reestablishing the composite dialogue that they suspended and again, normalize relations.

As you know, a great deal of progress was made between 2004 and 2007. I think we and the Indians and the Pakistanis themselves hope that that progress can be reestablished.

BBC: Assistant Secretary, thanks very much indeed for joining us live from the Department of State in Washington D.C.

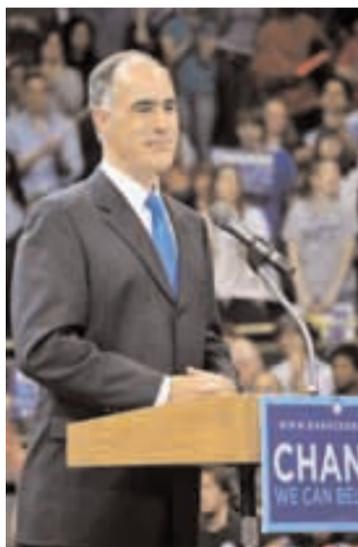
Assistant Secretary Blake: Thank you. It was a pleasure.

US Senator Bob Casey's Remarks Read at Global Tamil Forum Event in UK

U.S. Senator Bob Casey (D-PA), chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on Near Eastern and South and Central Asian Affairs, provided the following statement which was read at the Global Tamil Forum inaugural event in London on Wednesday, Feb 24th,;

"As Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on South Asia, I have examined

the unfortunate effects of the conflict in Sri Lanka. I have sought to shed light on the plight of internally displaced people and the importance of development in post-conflict Sri Lanka. As Americans, we will continue to seek opportunities to play a constructive role in post-conflict Sri Lanka. As Sri Lanka heals from the horrors of war, it will also require that the Tamil population



Senator Bob Casey

in and outside the country play a key role in the development of Sri Lanka's infrastructure as well as its social fabric."

"I want to thank the Global Tamil Forum for its efforts to support the democratic process in Sri Lanka, especially during this difficult time in the country's history. I hope that the Sri Lankan people will be able to come together and focus on a common future that moves beyond war, terrorism and violence as means of political expression.

"I also want to applaud the work of the U.S. Tamil Political

Action Council. USTPAC has raised awareness of the humanitarian crisis facing the Tamil people in Sri Lanka and has played a constructive role in educating U.S. policymakers. I look forward to our continued cooperation and wish you a successful forum in London.

British Prime Minister Gordon Brown met delegates of the Global Tamil Forum (GTF) conference in London where the British Foreign Secretary David Miliband addressed the gathering.



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HNB group post tax profits for 2009 records impressive growth of 58%

Hatton National Bank Group posted a pre tax profit of Rs. 6.17 Bn. and post tax profit Rs. 4.55 Bn an impressive improvement of 37.5% and 57.8% respectively, over 2008.

Commenting on the exceptional performance Managing Director / CEO of Hatton National Bank PLC (HNB) Mr. Rajendra Theagarajah said that the solid contribution from the core banking activities, significant reduction of the Non Performing Advances (NPA) and commendable returns from the subsidiaries are the key success factors.

Main contribution came from HNB (The Bank) which recorded Rs. 5.92 Bn. and Rs. 4.35 Bn. pre tax and post tax profit, reflecting increases of 23.7% and 35.2% respectively, over the results of 2008.

Despite the challenging macro economic climate and the contraction in loans and advances during the year, the skillful management of margins enabled Net Interest Income (NII) of the Bank to grow by 15% to Rs. 14.6 Bn in 2009. However, Foreign Exchange income witnessed a decline of 21.2% while fee and commission income recorded a decrease of 2.3% over 2008. The cumulative effects of a drop in trade finance business; near static exchange rates and a decline in the forward exchange bookings contributed to the overall drop in fee and commission income and exchange

profit.

Investment income re-adjusted during the year, from an exceptional growth and capital gains witnessed as a result of restructuring of subsidiaries in 2008. Thus in 2009, the investment income declined by as much as 59.6% to Rs. 217.4 Mn. Nevertheless, due to the increase in other income by 101.1% to Rs.1.3 Bn. primarily as a result of provision reversals on account of Kabool Lanka (Pvt) Ltd. and Cross Staff Aquila USD Plus (Aquila) Funds, the total non interest income improved marginally by 0.7% in 2009.

The overall operating expenses for the year increased by a mere 6.4 % to stand at Rs. 13.4 Bn, with staff expenses and salaries in particular contributing to the rise. The recently negotiated collective agreement with the Bank Unions came into force during the year, increasing staff expenses by as much as 14.9% due to an upward revision of salaries. However, the Bank continued its efforts towards cost management and productivity improvements. The headcount reduced by 2.1% despite the expansion of the Bank's operations which saw the establishment of 9 new customer centers during the year.

The Bank's cost to income ratio (excluding financial VAT) stood at 54.4% in 2009 compared to 54.3% in 2008. Despite the



marginal deterioration, the Bank is well positioned to meet its medium term goal of containing the cost to income ratio below 50%.

Despite challenges the Bank managed to reduce its NPL ratio from 6.73% in 2008 to 6.15% by end 2009 as a result of prudent lending policies, aggressive recovery action and recovery made on account of Kabool Lanka (Pvt) Ltd.. This is well below the sector average which exceeded 8% in 2009.

The specific provision for loan losses increased in 2009 by 11.7% to Rs. 665.8 Mn., however, the Bank's general provision declined as a result of the contraction in loans and advances. The Bank continued to maintain and meet the 1 % general provisioning requirement in line with the provisioning direction of the Central Bank of Sri Lanka. The Bank's provision cover (total provisions to non performing loans) was maintained at 52.8% boasting of one of the lowest net NPL figures of 2.9% among local commercial banks.

The inclusion of Nation's Building Tax (NBT) during the year 2009 added to the tax burden comprising of Income Tax

and Value Added Tax (VAT) on Financial Services. The total charge to the Profit & Loss account in 2009 on account of taxation stood at Rs. 3.8 Bn, accounting for a hefty 46.3% of the Profit before Financial VAT and Corporate Tax.

Taxation continued to be a heavy burden to the Financial Services and Banking Industry. As experienced in previous years, the Taxation regime remains grossly non-conducive for industry vigor and growth. In 2009, taxation continues to impose immense strain on the sector, constraining capital accumulation.

The Bank's balance sheet in the year under review, continued to demonstrate the strength and stability of Hatton National Bank, proving that sound fundamentals and astute financial policies and strategies are the core to sustainable business.

The Bank's total asset base increased by 9.3% to Rs. 280.6 Bn in comparison to Rs. 256.7 Bn in 2008 enabling the Bank to reinforce its status as having one of the highest asset bases amongst private sector commercial banks in Sri Lanka.

The total net advances and leases portfolio during the period

under review declined by 2.6% from Rs.172.6 Bn in 2008 to Rs. 168.1 Bn in 2009 with overall lending across the product spectrum declining due to the high interest rates experienced over much of the year.

Deposit mobilization in the first half of the year proved to be less of a challenge due predominantly to the high interest rates and in part to conditions within the industry wherein customers migrated their funds to more stable and reputed entities. Thus, the LKR deposit portfolio witnessed a growth of 13.4% from the previous year to settle at Rs. 167.2 Bn from Rs. 147.4 Bn in 2008. However, in the final quarter, a revision of interest rates by the Central Bank of Sri Lanka created a climate wherein customers sought more lucrative returns for deposits. Nevertheless, the character and composition of the Bank's depositor mix enabled HNB to defend its savings deposit base.

Demand deposits grew by 18.4% year on year to Rs. 15.1 Bn. in 2009. Fixed deposits continued to be the highest contributor accounting for over 51% of the LKR deposits.

However solid growth also stemmed from savings accounts in the LKR deposit base which expanded by 21.1% to Rs. 66.1 Bn., up from Rs. 54.5 Bn. in the previous year.

Philanthropist Wins Luxury Hybrid to start the Year of the Tiger

What better way to welcome the Chinese New Year than winning a luxury 2010 Lexus HS 250h!

Daniel Collison of Toronto could hardly believe his luck when he was contacted by the Yee Hong Foundation for being the lucky owner of winning Dragon Ball raffle ticket (#01509) As the Grand Prize recipient, Daniel won a brand new 2010 Lexus HS 250h luxury hybrid (value: \$ \$47,460), generously donated by Lexus of Richmond Hill and Don Valley North Lexus. To share his good fortune, Daniel decided to donate \$5000 to Yee Hong.

"I didn't know much about Yee Hong when I bought the ticket from my colleague," said Collison. "After I got the great news, I did some research and found that Yee Hong has been doing wonderful work for seniors for more than 15 years."

The Grand Raffle is part of the Dragon Ball, the largest Chinese New Year celebration of its kind in

North America attracting close to 1,300 patrons this year.

"Over the past 21 years the Dragon Ball has raised over \$18 Million for Yee Hong," said Pauline Tong, President of Yee Hong Community Wellness Foundation. "The fantastic result is a tribute to the generous support from the community, corporate sponsors, donors, and, of course, tens of thousands of raffle purchasers."

This is the fourth consecutive year the two Lexus dealerships and Lexus Canada have participated in the Dragon Ball. "It reaffirms our commitment in supporting worthy organizations like Yee Hong. We are proud to be the Grand Raffle Sponsor of Dragon Ball," says Serge Sotoadeh, General Manager of Lexus of Richmond Hill.

Other Grand Raffle prizes of Dragon Ball 2010 include: 8-Day Taste of Argentina & Iguazu Falls Package for Two donated by Tour East Holidays (Canada) Inc. & Air Canada ((winner's raffle



Dragon Ball 2010 Grand Raffle Prize Presentation: (From left to right) Daniel Collison, Grand Prize winner, Pauline Tong, President of Yee Hong Foundation, Helen Lu, member of the Board of Directors, Yee Hong Foundation and Serge Sotoadeh, General Manager of Lexus of Richmond Hill

ticket # 15179); Jade Quan Yin Pendant (winner's raffle ticket # 08789); heart-shaped Diamond Pendant ((winner's raffle ticket #00146) and 10 BlackBerry® Bold™ Smartphones, courtesy of

Rogers Communications (winner's raffle tickets # 08106, 01349, 02875, 00644, 04216, 00946, 05985, 08105, 00887 and 05103).

Hilda Chow, Communications and Public Relations Officer, Yee

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LETTERS & OPINIONS

Kanayal Raina

The London Conference of January 28 went along with the British Prime Minister Gordon Brown's proposal to set up a \$ 500 million trust fund to buy "peace and integration" with the fighters who are engaged in violence for economic rather than ideological reasons. The intention is to reintegrate "low and medium level" Taliban fighters through offer of jobs for defectors and the promise of protection of American-led special forces. However, British Prime Minister warned that for those insurgents who refuse to accept the conditions for reintegration "we have no choice but to pursue them militarily". This springs from a realisation that the hard core elements, who matter in so far as insurgency is concerned, will not accept the amnesty offer.

The latest Western move in Afghanistan, born out of the desire to start pulling out troops from mid-2011, is based on an erroneous assumption that a resurgent Taliban will fall for allurements and abandon their goal of re-taking the country, which they think is achievable. The disarray in the camp of the United States and its allies and US President Barack Obama's reluctant decision on a short-term surge of some 40,000 more sol-

Pull out from Afghanistan

diers, is far too evident to be missed by Taliban in the battlefield and their patron, Pakistan, which has flatly refused to evict Al Qaeda and Taliban insurgents from its tribal areas after a show of military action in Swat and south Waziristan that led to the insurgents moving to safer areas without losing many fighters.

President Hamid karzai, sullen and soured with the US that wants to get rid of him, is in no position to resist the new strategy but insists that only those Taliban will be pardoned who do not belong to Al Qaeda, join the mainstream and work within the democratic Afghan constitution. He is being repeatedly insulted by parliament, which has so far refused to approve the full complement of his Cabinet ministers, forcing him to administer oaths in instalments -- there still being a dozen vacancies to be filled.

A hasty US withdrawal will spell disaster for war-ravaged Afghanistan and pose a grave threat to regional security and stability. India, which is fully involved in Afghanistan's reconstruction -- which is disliked by Taliban and openly objected to by Pakistan -- will face increased terrorist threat once Taliban and Al Qaeda somehow manage to take control of the country.

US special representative Richard Holbrooke argued the new reconciliation policy is solely guided by the consideration to prevent further American and

other casualties. An opportunity was being offered to get the shooters off the field so that they do not kill soldiers and civilians. Last year was the worst so far for the foreign soldiers and Afghan civilians -- with the highest casualties so far. US officials believe that the majority of Taliban forces do not back Al Qaeda or embrace extremist goals, nor are they ideological supporters of Mulla Omar or Osama Bin Laden. At least 70 per cent of them are not fighting for any of the causes and majority of the people blame Taliban, and not the US forces, for their misery.

Yet, there are "red lines" that could not be crossed during negotiations with Taliban fighters and those who back Al Qaeda or support the group's harsh treatment of women, would not be recommended. By making them stop fighting future casualties would be prevented. There still is no clearly defined plan on reconciliation and reintegration of the Taliban within the establishment. Pakistan, which claims to be best qualified to bring about reconciliation and reintegration is ready with the list of Taliban "contacts" to become the "honest" mediators between the West and Taliban, increasing their cache and nuisance value. In a sign of how serious the West has become, the United Nations removed five top Taliban commanders from its sanctions list to facilitate reconciliation.

These include former foreign minister Abdul Wakil Muttawakil, former deputy Foreign Minister Faiz Mohammed Faizan, an official under the Taliban Shams-us-Safa and Mohammad Musa. They were under travel ban and assets freeze. In the initial stages of the war, the US and Pakistan had tried to utilise the services of Muttawakil to argue with the Taliban leadership to halt all military action and agree to reconciliation. But his efforts did not bear fruit and the Taliban leadership refused to negotiate with the US and its allies. Mulla Omar has repeatedly said that attempts to divide the Taliban would not succeed and that peace was possible on the condition that all foreign forces are withdrawn from Afghanistan and the people allowed to choose for themselves the form of government they wanted, without any outside interference. There are no indications so far that Omar and his associates have changed their stand.

In the changed policy of the US, Pakistan sees an opportunity -- to reassert its influence in shaping the future set up in Afghanistan after foreign forces have withdrawn in a couple of years. Islamabad supports a differentiation between Taliban segments, including being soft towards the Afghan Taliban, which was sponsored by Pakistan Army's Inter-Services Intelligence.



Kanayal Raina

On the face of it, the new US strategy may not work because Taliban now sense victory within grasp as NATO forces get more are more exasperated and demoralised at the course of a war without end. A vast majority of the Afghan do not want the Taliban back and their country being pushed again into the dark ages. But little security is available to them. The risk of Taliban retribution is so great that few are prepared actively to resist the insurgents. Hence the need to deal with hardcore Taliban militarily and defeat them, while simultaneously building effective governance, providing security to the people, intensifying reconstruction and strengthening secular and democratic institutions. There is also need for a regional agreement to ensure peace and neutrality in Afghanistan after foreign forces have left. India has a role to play in ensuring regional security and must share responsibility with other players.

Jaffna Chamber of Commerce holds trade fair to lure investors from India

The business community in the north Sri Lankan Tamil-speaking district of Jaffna is ready to welcome Indian investments and development projects amidst them, in spite of the fact that they, like the people of the district, harbour strong anti-Indian feelings, P.K. Balachandran of the Indian Express wrote from Jaffna recently.

In a report published in The Express Buzz he added:

A Jaffna man blames India for the defeat of the LTTE. "India had failed to stop the last leg of the war between the Lankan forces and the LTTE and prevent the killing of thousands of Tamil civilians," they complained.

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M Karunanidhi only enacted a "drama" in support of the Tamils here, they sneered.

However, Jaffna is safe for Indian investors and businessmen, assured R Janakumar, president of the Jaffna Chamber of Commerce.

"We would like Indian companies to participate in the trade fair

the chamber is holding from March 27 to 29. It costs only SL Rs 30,000 to book a stall," he said.

The businessmen and others Express spoke to made it clear that they had fraternal feelings towards Indians. The issue was with the government in Delhi and the ruling party in Tamil Nadu, they stressed. The general feeling here is that Congress leader Sonia Gandhi had punished people for a crime they did not commit.

Whatever the feelings of the locals, India seems determined to invest in Jaffna heavily. It has announced a credit line of Indian Rs 500 crore for the Tamil-speaking north and East. India is setting up a cultural centre and a technical training institute for \$5 million in Jaffna. India would also supply 800,000 cement bags for distribution among 100,000 Tamil war refugee families. US \$8.5 million has been allocated to the seven Indian de-mining teams working in the war zone.

Members of the chamber acknowledged that after three

decades of extreme sluggishness, trade in Jaffna was booming, with the full opening of the land route to Sri Lankan citizens. Shops are overflowing with goods, which are also selling goods at lower prices when compared to Colombo.

"Now, only 10 to 15 per cent of the lorries go out of Jaffna carry local goods for the south Sri Lankan market. Others return empty. But before the war, more goods went out of Jaffna as compared to the amount that came in," Janakumar said.

"A third of the land area has been a High Security Zone (HSZ) since the 1980s. Our economy cannot improve if the HSZs are not reduced drastically," Janakumar said.

"As for industries, we need soft loans. Under the Vadakkin Vasantham scheme we get soft loans but the maximum is only SL Rs 200,000," he pointed out. Employment generation is possible only through industrialisation and the backlog is high.



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"Economics" the cause of war in Sri Lanka - can be key to lasting peace too

By Yatharthan

Economics is the cause and effect of War and Peace in Human History.

This article looks at the Tamil struggle based on economics rather than politics. Although economics and politics are two different disciplines they are intertwined in many ways. In today's world the most paramount human desire is one to strive for better economic status. This is the single most powerful driving force behind Capitalism and Democracy in the world today. This is where Socialism failed spectacularly, when it wrongly perceived that political power to be the overriding human desire, and possibly where Tamil militancy failed too.

In the North East of Sri Lanka, deprived economic conditions after independence led to Tamil Nationalism, and then to Tamil Separatism in the sole aim of self-rule for better economic prosperity of Tamils. After 1977, with the open economy, Sri Lanka was a striving economy in Asia, and most of the spoils of the wealth were with the Tamils in Colombo and other capital cities. This economic disparity was a key factor, which led the Sinhalese to target, destroy and plunder 'Tamil wealth' in the 1983 riots, which is officially the start of the 'Civil war'. This catastrophic economic loss to the Tamils caused the huge surge in Tamil militancy after 1983.

History tells us that successful military revolutions/campaigns have been accomplished within 5 years of active struggle. Longer military campaigns in any society can not be tolerated/supported by the people under continuing economic hardships. The Sri Lankan civil war was characterised by both warring parties targeting the others' economy. The Tamil militancy carried out several daring attacks on 'economic targets' such as the Sri Lankan International Airport, Central Bank etc. In turn, the Sri Lankan Govt. imposed economic embargos on the Tamils.

At times of economic strife both the Sri Lankan Govt and the Tamil militancy engaged in 'peace talks' while rebuilding their economies. Sri Lankan economy seems to have survived the odds while the Tamil economy had gradually weakened over time. This then led to the weakening of the Tamil militancy. Tamils started to leave from the North-East seeking better economic conditions, and they moved to the South of the island, and some moved overseas for even better economic prosperity. It was indeed a sad state of affairs for



the Tamil militancy when it had to impose 'travel bans' on its own people, which

caused further loss of support from the people towards the militancy. Although the Tamil militancy initially viewed the Tamil exodus as detrimental to their economy, later on the migrated Tamils supported the war financially.

Many migrated Tamils supported the militancy out of guilt of abandoning the rebellion rather than of any direct economic benefit to them. The Tamil Diaspora proved to be the back bone of the Tamil militancy with the wealth they supplied from foreign economies. Although the Tamil Diaspora wealth propped up the Tamil militancy for more than 15 yrs, the Tamils in North East continued to live in relatively poor economic conditions compared to the rest of the island and their kin now living around the world. This installed a 'migration' mindset among Tamils, which they saw as the ONLY way out for a better economic life.

The 'final war' was in itself an economics of scale 'numbers game'. First the Tamil militancy was economically weakened by depriving them the 'Diaspora Wealth' by the banning the Tamil Militancy in several countries. This was followed by the targeting of the Tamil militancy's overseas economic assets, such as destroying the military hardware supply ships. Then the Sri Lankan Govt. under wrote its own economy to borrow heavily to fund the final war. The borrowed wealth was used to modernise the military and boosting the troop numbers.

On the other hand, the Tamil militancy had dwindling cadre numbers with a relatively small recruitment pool and a very poor supply of military hardware. The economic mismatch of the two sides in the final war was so wide that defeat of Tamil militancy was

inevitable. The other mismatch was the economic wealth of the Tamils living in Sri Lanka and the Tamil Diaspora, which led the two groups to have different expectations from the Tamil militancy. The Diaspora Tamils, being far removed from the conflict and economically affluent, actively supported the militancy for a separate country. The Tamils living in the Tamil Homeland being passive supporters strived for a reasonable 'settlement' of some form of self governance to allow their economic aspirations prosper.

The 'sudden' demise of the Tamil militancy has left both groups in despair. But the Tamils living in Sri Lanka, being close to the war, who had little expectations, seem to be coping well compared to the Diaspora Tamils, who were far removed from the war and had more expectations from the Tamil militancy. Further, the group living in poor economic conditions seem to be more resilient over the demise of the Tamil rebellion compared to the group living in affluent economic conditions.

The Sri Lankan Government now hopes a nullified Tamil Militancy will bring the country more economic stability and access to previously untapped resources, which in turn will bring in more foreign investment and wealth to the country. These economic driving forces also influenced the decision of the countries that supported the Sri Lankan Govt. in the final war. The Sri Lankan Govt. seem to have also aligned itself correctly, and at the right time, with the shifting of the world economic power houses, i.e., moving from the West (US, UK, Europe) to East (China and India) for its economic support.

As for the future, economic interest of the people (and politicians!) will be the main driving

force behind the politics of Sri Lanka. If the Sri Lankan Govt. actively fosters economic development in the Tamil homeland it can quell any extreme Tamil nationalistic aspirations rising again. If it chooses to continue to deprive the Tamils living in North and East of their rightful economic development another Tamil uprising is not far away. Do not mistake the fact that a prospering economy also brings in enormous wealth to the politicians as well, and these politicians have all the intention to strive for peace.

One could argue that the Sri Lankan politicians had hastily ended the war after seeing the enormous 'kick-backs' the military top-brass was earning from the war, and now the benefits of peace and economic prosperity would flow into their own coffers rather than of the Military Generals.

As for the Tamil Homeland, there is already some signs of increased economic activity in the North and East with trade booming between North East and the rest of the country and while tourism is another thriving industry. Opening of the major banks, supermarket chains in the North are signs of increased economic activity. Further more, the rise in property value over past 6

LETTERS & OPINIONS

months in and around Jaffna has been phenomenal combined with the fall in property values in Tamil dominated areas in Colombo, indicating a tendency of return of the local Tamil economic 'migrants' to the North. This seems a clear sign of economic prosperity in the North and East in the short period. With the return of the Tamils from the other parts of Sri Lanka the economy of the North will continue to boom. The money they were spending in the South will now be spent in the North.

This would ensure better goods and services are available in the North. This would then lead to better hospitals, schools, public transport and other infrastructure development in the near future. This self-supporting economic cycle will be boosted with the Diaspora Tamil wealth spent in the North East. This is bound to happen with improving economic conditions more Diaspora Tamils holidaying with their families and buying properties for their families in the North and East of Sri Lanka. The improving economic climate would entice organised Diaspora Tamil investment into the North East in the form of IT support officers, Engineering and Accounting Services etc tapping the vast intellectual sources. Such level of economic activity would then entice the international economic migrants to return to work and live in the North East. This then would be the true sign of the advanced economy of the Tamil Homeland.

In conclusion, economics has been the success and failure of all ideas (politics, business, engineering) and only economically sustainable ideas will stand the test of time. Economics has both been the weapon of war and reward of peace.

Economics has been the cause of war Sri Lanka and will be the effect of Peace in Sri Lanka.

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John Boddy Homes has been voted 'Best Builder' in Ajax/Pickering for the thirteenth year in a row for this year's Readers' Choice Awards and has now released its next phase 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, semi-detached and townhomes. Homes start at 1,700 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 great selection of extra deep lots, pie shaped lots, walk out basements and a select few backing onto 3.5 acres of mature trees. With such a broad range of house sizes and 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 or second 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 homebuyers to make upgrade selections on site, enabling them to conveniently personalize their home.

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

For a limited time only John Boddy Homes is offering an incentive package including \$5,000 in free upgrades and 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 6:00p.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.johnboddy-homes.com.

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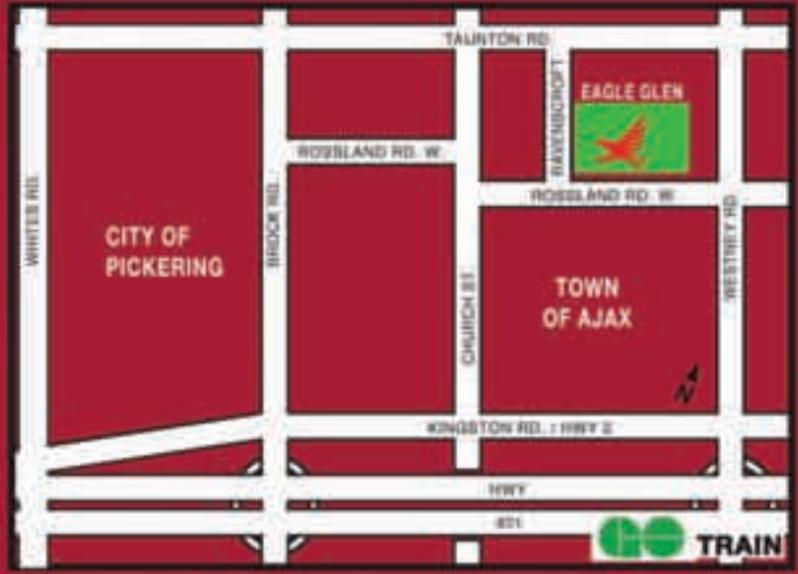
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www.johnboddyhomes.com



The teams of athletes gathered in Vancouver for the Winter Olympics have trained and honed their skills to win medals. But another team - from the Royal Canadian Mint - has used all of its skills and training to make the medals the athletes are trying to capture.

Outside a former Bank of Montreal building in downtown Vancouver, two long lines snake their way up Granville Street. Some of the people in line have been waiting several hours to see, feel and hold Olympic medals.

The Royal Canadian Mint has taken over the building - now Simon Fraser University's School of Business - for a special exhibit of the Olympic medals to be awarded in Vancouver.

The medals for the Olympics and Paralympics are on display on the second floor of the building, where Project Manager Dan Mallett tells tour groups about how the medals were designed and made.

Dressed in a charcoal gray athletic outfit, Mallett wears special white cotton gloves - gloves

Canadian Pride, Craftsmanship Go into Making Olympics Medals

that every visitor receives before entering the exhibit. He explains that each medal is unique - none of the 615 Olympic and 339 Paralympic medals is identical.

This is the first time the Olympic medals are not flat. Their surfaces undulate to simulate Canada's terrain. The medals are adorned with Native Canadian icons and designs of killer whales. The Paralympic medals have a native symbol of a raven that represents overcoming obstacles.

Like a jigsaw puzzle, each medal is a piece of the master design. If all of the medals were placed together, they would form a complete picture. Medal winners receive a scarf with the overall design, so they can see where their medal fits.

Deanna Scott of White Rock, Surrey in British Columbia is one of the people listening to Mallett's presentation. Wearing a Canada team sweatshirt, a woolen cap and sunglasses, she picked up the gold medal, snapped a photograph and turned over the prize to see the back. Scott says that waiting in line for three hours was worth it to hold one of the medals.

"That's pretty cool, especially after we just won one yesterday," she said. "I am extremely proud of all our Canadian athletes. I

was in line at 9:00 this morning. But it was worth it, definitely worth it."

The Royal Canadian Mint was tasked with bringing the vision of local artists Corrine Hunt and Omer Arbel to life in a way that uniquely represents Canada.

Mint Communications Director Christine Aquino says that when the final products emerged, it was a very special day. "I can tell you it was quite an emotional day at the Mint. There were approximately 34 people who worked directly on those medals. They got quite attached over two-and-a-half years. And now that we see them being awarded to athletes from all over the world, we are very proud about that," she said. Creating the medals is an arduous process. Each one weighs more than 500 grams and took more than 30 steps to manufacture. Because of their unique surface, each medal is struck with 12 dies - nine times with 1,900 tons of pressure, the weight of more than 700 automobiles. The native designs were laser-engraved on each medal.

The gold medals are mostly silver. But each is plated with six grams of gold. The silver medals are almost entirely made of silver. The bronze medals are largely copper because burnished bronze



Paralympic medals are displayed at the unveiling of Olympic and Paralympic medals at Olympic Village in Vancouver, 15 Feb 2010-AFP pic.

and gold are similar in color, and the mint did not want any confusion as to which medal an athlete receives.

The Mint's Christine Aquino says people don't mind the lengthy wait to see, hold and photograph the medals. She says most visitors are shocked by their weight and are thrilled to touch something that only a few people will ever possess.

"They are meant to represent the feat that an athlete has to accomplish to win that sport. And we're just thrilled. We knew we had something great to come to Vancouver with, and we're quite proud of it," said Aquino.

Outside at the head of the line, Luca and Andre Bucci of

Hamilton, Ontario are almost to the door. The two men attended the women's moguls event on February 13, where Canadian Jennifer Heil won a silver medal. They say that even though Heil's medal wasn't gold, they are proud a Canadian made the podium.

The hundreds of fans who visit the Mint pavilion get to hold the medals and take photographs. The thousands of athletes competing in Vancouver are striving for the same privilege. But only a few will possess the coveted prizes. The artists and craftspeople who made the medals say that the winners will take a special piece of Canada with them when the Games are over.

[VOA News]

Olympic Athletes Promote Sports in Developing World with 'Right To Play'

By Kane Farabaugh

As the world focused on the Winter Olympics in Vancouver, Canada, an athlete-based, international humanitarian organization used the spotlight to help promote sports in the poorest parts of the planet. The organization, called Right To Play, helps more than one million children around the world.

When U.S. Olympic skier Nikki Stone won a gold medal at the 1998 Winter Olympics in Nagano, Japan, it led her on a path that would take her half way around the world to Sierra Leone.

"Once you go to the field and you see these children playing and you see what an impact it has on their lives and the smiles on their faces and how excited they are just to be able to play," she noted. "In the United States, it's a luxury; for them, it's changing their lives. They are playing games to teach about HIV. They are playing games to wash their hands. They have red light, green light to learn to wash their hands."

Johann Olav Koss of Norway is the president and CEO of Right To Play and a four-time Olympic speed skating gold medal winner. His organization uses sport to promote a positive life for children.



"Every child in the world has a right to play, and we want to go out into the most disadvantaged areas in the world and provide sport and play programs for their basic life skills training," he said.

To complete that mission, Right To Play draws on the experience and popularity of Stone and other athletes.

And as ambassadors they visit disadvantaged youth in some of the poorest areas on the planet. Right To Play is active in 23 countries, including 15 in Africa.

"It could be in refugee camps, it could be in communities or slums of the cities. We know that many of the challenges that they are overcoming could be of preventable diseases like infectious diseases and we are teaching the children about how they can protect themselves," added Koss.

The Olympics provide an opportunity for Right To Play to recruit new athletes into the movement, but the organization

is made up of more than just medal winners. Stars from the National Football League in the United States, worldwide rugby and soccer teams and various other prominent sports all contribute to Right To Play's global outreach.

Stone has traveled to Africa twice on field assignments, and says she gets as much as she gives through the experience.

"I think it's valuable for them," she said. "Once you start giving back, you start to learn the values of teamwork, you start realizing how commitment will make a difference. And it is something that if they put the time in it's just going to pay back to them."

Right To Play says each week more than one million children take part in its activities, administered through a network of more than 15,000 coaches, teachers and leaders.

[VOA News]

Canada's National Flag

Statement from Prime Minister Harper on the occasion of the 45th Anniversary of Canada's National Flag on February 15th.

STATEMENT BY THE PRIME MINISTER OF CANADA

Prime Minister Stephen Harper issued the following statement on



the occasion of the 45th Anniversary of Canada's National Flag on February 15:

"Since it first appeared in 1965, our distinctive maple leaf flag has become a national icon. It is recognized both at home and abroad as a symbol of peace, democracy, freedom and courage.

"On this date 45 years ago, the flag was raised for the first time on Parliament Hill, in communities across Canada and at our embassies and missions around

the world.

"Just a few days ago, accompanied by our country's top athletes, Canada's Olympic flag-bearer Clara Hughes carried our national flag during the opening of the Olympic Winter Games. It was an electrifying moment of intense pride for the entire country. "I invite Canadians across the country to take a moment and proudly reflect on our flag and what it means to live in such a rich, diverse and blessed country."



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CHINMAYA ORGANISATION FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT (CORD) SRI LANKA



To facilitate integrated, sustainable social help programs in local communities through processes of self-empowerment and enrichment.



CORD

Chinmaya Organisation For Rural Development

CORD Sri Lanka is the service wing of Chinmaya Mission Sri Lanka and was established in 2005 in the aftermath of the Tsunami disaster on December 2004 and adheres to the mission and policies of the Chinmaya Organization for Rural Development (CORD), the charitable wing of the Chinmaya Mission, also based in India. CORD's mission is to harness human resources and enable the poor to transform their lives through programmes driven by themselves.

CORD Sri Lanka is a non-government, non-profit organization and registered as a charity in the Sri Lanka and has expanded its activities to include short and long term relief efforts in the North and East as well, working at grass root levels towards the development and empowerment of women and children. Charitable projects have reached across Colombo, Jaffna, Batticaloa, Trincomalee, Vavuniya, and the up-country, benefiting various groups in which men, women, youth, and children actively participate. Our programs and activities are designed according to the particular age groups, abilities, needs, resources, etc.

Chinmaya Mission

To provide to individuals, from any background, the wisdom of Vedanta and the practical means for spiritual growth and happiness, enabling them to become positive contributors to society.

The Chinmaya Mission is a global organization with over 300 chapters worldwide

whose mission it is to provide to individuals, from any background, the wisdom of Vedanta and the practical means for spiritual growth and happiness, enabling them to become positive contributors to society. Founded in India in 1953, the Chinmaya Mission is an international charitable organization that has become the nucleus of a spiritual renaissance movement that now encompasses a wide range of spiritual, educational and charitable activities helping the lives of thousands in the South Asian continent and beyond.

The only Sri Lanka chapter of the organization—the Chinmaya Mission of Sri Lanka (CMSL)—was set up as a local nonprofit organization in 1981. Prior to December 26, 2004, CMSL had been active in religious, educational, health promotion, and poverty alleviation programs in some of the remotest regions of Sri Lanka.

Current Needs

The Chinmaya Mission of Sri Lanka needs your help to continue with our ongoing efforts and to expand into new areas, so that we may help uplift many more communities. Our ongoing expenses are as follows:

Child Sponsorship:

\$30/Month for each child. Your sponsorship will cover the cost of education for the child including stationary supplies and uniforms and shoes, periodic health screening and nutritional supplements and awareness.

TOTAL: \$ 180 / 6 months

TOTAL: \$ 360 / 1 year

Tuition for Youth:

\$800/month for all teachers' salaries, supplies, photocopies, etc.

TOTAL: \$ 9,600 / year

English Teacher Trainings:

\$1,000 / month for teacher's salary, transport for all teachers, lunches for all, photocopies, supplies, etc. in Jaffna

\$500 / month for teacher's salary, transport for all teachers, lunches for all, photocopies, supplies, etc. in Batticaloa

\$300 / month for teacher's salary, transport for all teachers, photocopies, supplies, etc. in Colombo

TOTAL: \$21,600 / year

Computer Trainings for Youth:

\$20 / student (for a 6-month course) x 150 students

TOTAL: \$18,000 / year

Administrative & Operational Expenses:

\$1,000 / month for all rent supplies, equipment, transport, bills, etc.

\$200 / month for project manager in Jaffna

TOTAL: \$14,400 / year

\$350 / month for all rent supplies, equipment, transport, bills, etc.

\$500 / month for project manager in Batticaloa

TOTAL: \$10,200 / year

Women's Empowerment/Livelihoods Support:

\$600 / month for Field Assistants' salary in Jaffna

TOTAL: \$7,200 / Month for Jaffna

\$500 / month for Field Assistants' salary
\$200-350 / machine for Sewing, Rice Flour Grinding, etc.

\$100 / month for Palmyra Board Teacher, supplies, etc.

TOTAL: \$9,600 / year for Batticaloa

Nurses Training Program:

TOTAL: \$25,000 for all salaries, equipment, books, copies, rental fees, transport, etc.

Volunteers - CORD Sri Lanka

cordsrilanka@gmail.com
cordsrilanka.usa@gmail.com

+94 777 53 00 86 (Sri Lanka—mobile),
+1 312 622 3402 (USA)

Colombo Centre :

32 10th Lane,
Colombo 3, Sri Lanka
Tel: 0114519530
Email : cmsl@sol.lk

Contact: Mrs. Gowrie Mahenthiran,
Director (+94 777 53 00 86)

Ramboda Centre :

Sri Baktha Hanuman Temple & Ashram,
Wevandon Hills,
Ramboda, Sri Lanka
Tel: +94 522 25 96 45

Batticaloa Centre :

Sixth Cross Street,
Dutch Bar Road,
Kallaidy,
Batticaloa, Sri Lanka

Tel: +94 652 22 58 90, +94 652 222 935

Contact: Mrs. Manohari Seevaratnam
(+94 777 07 97 33)

Please make cheques payable out to "Chinmaya Mission Sri Lanka" and send your donations to the following address:

Chinmaya Mission of Sri Lanka
CORD
32, 10th Lane,
Colombo 3, Sri Lanka.

" Olympics Meet & Mingle" Event at RBC Morningside & Milner Branch

"RBC employed the resources of more than a thousand Branches and more than 50,000 employees, and also personal client relationships to help rally around the Olympic Torch Relay across the country", says Royal Bank's Toronto East Region Vice-President Lisa Gallacher.

By Siva Sivapragasam

The month of February and early March witnessed enthusiasm and encouragement among Canadians for the Winter Olympics 2010 held in Vancouver. RBC-Royal Bank, well-known for its commitment towards community events and sports festivals was a primary sponsor of the Winter Games. The support and encouragement for the Games were felt through-

out the RBC network and one of such events was the "Olympics Meet and Mingle Event" at RBC's Morningside & Milner Branch.

Addressing the guests present at this function, RBC Royal Bank's Toronto East Region Vice-President Lisa Gallacher outlined the role played by the Bank in igniting the national pride prior to the Games, as the Olympic torch traveled community by community across the country. She further remarked that RBC

looked at this as a part of the Bank's efforts to help inspire Canadians to work together to create a Better Canada.

She paid a glowing tribute to the Morningside & Milner Branch Manager Mr. Sundaramohan & his staff team by stating that the Olympic Games represent values like excellence, teamwork, diversity and commitment and that Mohan and his team are committed to these same values and give their clients

best-in-class financial advice. She thanked the guests for their presence.

Mr. Mohan Sundaramohan, Branch Manager welcomed the guests for the evening function and introduced the Toronto Region Vice-President Lisa Gallacher to the guests and invited her to address those present. Joylan Gonsalves, one of the torch bearers in Toronto also participated at the event.

Seen here are pictures of the event. Photos by Ken Photo



Burma Ethnic Minorities in Bangladesh Face Abuse, Humanitarian Crisis

By Daniel Schearf

The medical aid group Doctors Without Borders says a violent crackdown in Bangladesh against migrants from Burma is fueling a humanitarian crisis. The group says thousands of ethnic minority Rohingya have fled to a makeshift refugee camp on the border with Burma where they live in squalid conditions.

Doctors Without Borders says stateless Rohingya in Bangladesh face unprecedented levels of violence and attempts to force them back to Burma, also known as Myanmar.

The aid group recently said that since October 2009, 6,000 Rohingya have fled to a makeshift refugee camp in Kutupalong, near the border with Burma, to avoid harassment and beatings.

Doctors Without Borders has a clinic at the camp and say its staff has treated Rohingya who were beaten by Bangladeshi people, in-

cluding polices.

"Our patients tell us that in some cases they've been handed over to the Bangladeshi Rifles - the border force of Bangladesh - beaten, and forced to swim the river back toward Myanmar," said Paul Critchley who heads the group's Bangladesh mission.

The Arakan Project, a Rohingya rights group, says in the last month hundreds of unregistered Rohingyas in Bangladesh have been arrested or forced back to Burma.

Critchley told journalists in Bangkok that Rohingya fleeing the violence are forced to live in the Kutupalong camp's unsanitary and crowded conditions.

He says they live under plastic sheeting held up by sticks. They are not allowed to work and are in desperate need of aid.

"This crackdown must stop,"

Critchley said. "This population desperately needs the protection that the Bangladeshi government needs to give it. As it is responsible for the protection and security of everybody within its borders. The United Nations High Commission for Refugees has to do more to protect this population."

Critchley says there are about 29,000 Rohingya now at the camp, but the numbers are fast increasing and the situation could get worse.

Doctors Without Borders says in January alone 2,000 Rohingya arrived at the camp seeking help.

The Rohingya are a Muslim minority group from Burma who are not recognized by Burma's military government. For decades they have fled abuse and poverty in Burma.

There are an estimated 200,000



Thousands of Bangladeshis and Rohingyas, members of a stateless, Muslim ethnic group that fled to Bangladesh to escape persecution in Burma, leave Bangladesh aboard rickety boats each year in hopes of finding work elsewhere (AP file photo)

Rohingya living in Bangladesh. Doctors Without Borders says 28,000 are recognized as refugees and live in camps supported by the

UNHCR. The rest, the group says, struggle to survive unrecognized and with little assistance.

[VOA News]

India Estimates 2010 Economic Growth



A shopkeeper arranges price tags on pulses at a wholesale market in the old quarter of New Delhi (File)-by AFP

By Anjana Pasricha

India estimates that its economy will grow by more than eight percent, in the coming fiscal year. But there are concerns about high

inflation, as food prices in the country climb at the fastest pace in more than a decade.

In an annual assessment of the economy released in parliament recently, the finance ministry says India has posted a "remarkable

recovery" from the global recession.

Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee says the sense of "despondency and gloom" associated with the economic downturn in the past year is finished.

"The economic survey has projected for the year 2010-11 our growth rate would be 8.5 percent plus, minus 0.25 percent," he said. "That means we began with a sense of uncertainty, the fiscal year, and we are ending it with a sense of confidence."

The economic report has an even more optimistic outlook for the future. It estimates that, in four years, economic growth could hit ten percent, making India the fastest growing economy

in the world. However the economic assessment also put the spotlight on the greatest worry confronting the government - high inflation. In-

flation is particularly worrisome because it is largely triggered by high food prices. Prices of staples, such as lentils and rice, have soared in recent months after poor monsoon rains last year lowered farm output. The report warns that food inflation, which is presently hovering around 18 percent, could persist for a year.

The government has been under attack from angry opposition lawmakers because of the unprecedented rise in food prices. On Thursday, the leader of the opposition in the lower house of parliament, Sushma Swaraj, said that high economic growth has no meaning for millions of poor people in the country for whom basic food items are becoming unaffordable.

Swaraj quotes the high prices of items such as rice, wheat, lentils, tea, sugar, and vegetables. She says all these items are crucial for the sustenance of poor people and not the rich.

Economists say the government is likely to take measures to tackle inflation when it presents its fiscal plan, Friday. But they say the dilemma for the government is to do so without hurting growth at a time when the economy is rebounding.

[voa news]

Dubai's Doldrums Spark Exodus of Migrant Workers

By Raymond Thibodeaux in Kochi, India

Abdul Wahab is in the kitchen of his new house. His wife, Neeza, pours glasses of orange drink for him, their two children and some friends. He is back from Dubai and, for the first time in 24 years, his visit is not just a few weeks of home leave. He and about 1,700 other dockworkers at the Dubai Ports Authority were recently laid off. There was no warning, no chance to look for alternative employment. It all happened in one day.

After his shift they came and gave them the paper saying their job was over. There was no time to think. The workers' camp is surrounded by the military. So they simply went back home.

But coming back to India has been bittersweet for Abdul. He says tough choices lie ahead for them, as with many of those returning from Dubai. Abdul is considering selling his new house for a smaller one, using the profit to keep their two children in private schools. Still, Neeza could not be happier that he is home.

She says she hopes that he is back for good. She says working a government job and raising two children, alone, take a toll.

Abdul is part of a reverse migration of tens of thousands of migrant workers from South Asia who have looked to the Gulf countries as a source of employment since the oil boom of the 1970s. The boom helped Dubai finance huge construction projects.



Two employees supervise unloading containers at Jebel Ali port terminal 1 in Dubai, United Arab Emirates (file) by AFP

"[The oil boom] triggered massive demand for overseas workers. And, that was a golden opportunity for low-skilled and mid-level-skilled people to find highly paid jobs," said Binod Khadria, an economics professor who directs the international migration and diaspora studies project at Jawaharlal Nehru University in Delhi.

Of the six million people who live in

the United Arab Emirates, which includes Dubai, more than five million are foreign nationals, and more than three million of them are registered as unskilled foreign workers.

Khadria says most of those laborers come from India and most of the Indians come from Kerala, where one in six workers is employed overseas. But, with Dubai's

once-soaring economy hit by a global downturn and many construction projects put on hold or abandoned, migrant workers are being shipped home by the ton.

"The psychology is on, now that it's coming to an end. They have that sense, but they also are hopeful that the gravy train can find other routes. Europe is opening up. East Asia is opening up. Those are other avenues [for employment]," said Khadria.

Kerala's economy is counting on it. People from Kerala working abroad sent home about \$5 billion a year. Their remittances boosted Kerala's economy by nearly 25 percent.

Rafeek Ravuther is host of Migrants World. It is a TV show about Keralans working overseas. He says returning Indians complain that even in a rising India, salaries are way too low. Some have had to take their children out of private schools. But Rafeek has noticed something else.

"If they are coming back to Kerala, the kinds of jobs they did in Dubai, they will not do in Kerala," he said.

Why not?

"Because they will not go for low, meager jobs," he said.

Ravuther says it is a pride thing. ANY job in Dubai was seen as so prestigious that bride-seeking bachelors often added "works in Dubai" in their matrimonial ads. Now, with those jobs looking more tenuous, potential brides are not as impressed.

[VOA News]

Multicultural Assembly at Trillium

Trillium is a private school in Unionville, dedicated to celebrating and recognizing multiculturalism, both within its student community, and outside of it. The students of Grade 7 and 8, under the guidance of their teachers, presented a musical extravaganza on India and the south-east asian culture on Feb 8th in an Assembly held in the school gym. The assembly started with a fashion show parading predominantly non-indian students wearing traditional attire in myriad colours

and fabrics- a kaleidoscopic feast for the eyes! This was followed by a slide show, accompanied by beautiful instrumental music, that enlightened all who had gathered, on the various facets of the country as well as the people- focal topics, among others, were places of tourism, important celebrations, classical dances and festivals, food- which, as we all know, is very important to the culture! Students performed pyrotechnic feats with sparklers in their hands, surrounded by beautifully

lit 'diyas' and candles, to demonstrate the verve with which Diwali is celebrated. If the spectators were not awed enough by this diorama of colours and melody, the students had saved the best for the last- as a final, breathtaking performance, the ringing, foot-tapping strains of the Oscar winning song JAI HO came on, and all the students danced, Bollywood style, to the artistically choreographed number-a performance so lively and enjoyable that the audience's applause

almost drowned out the final crescendo! A learning experience non-pareil, it was victory indeed, for the talented performers!

Haiti Relief efforts

At Trillium school, we strive to promote academics, but more importantly, we try to foster global citizenship in our students. With the Haiti earthquake whose reverberations shook the entire world, Trillium's caring staff and students were prompt to open their hearts and their purses to help the stricken country and its



people. Our hearts are full of pride at the empathy and generosity shown by the Trillium community, which was able to raise a whopping \$4855.70, a sum that will be matched by the Canadian government. All donations have been delivered to the Canadian Red Cross. We care.



Participants performing for Jai Ho song



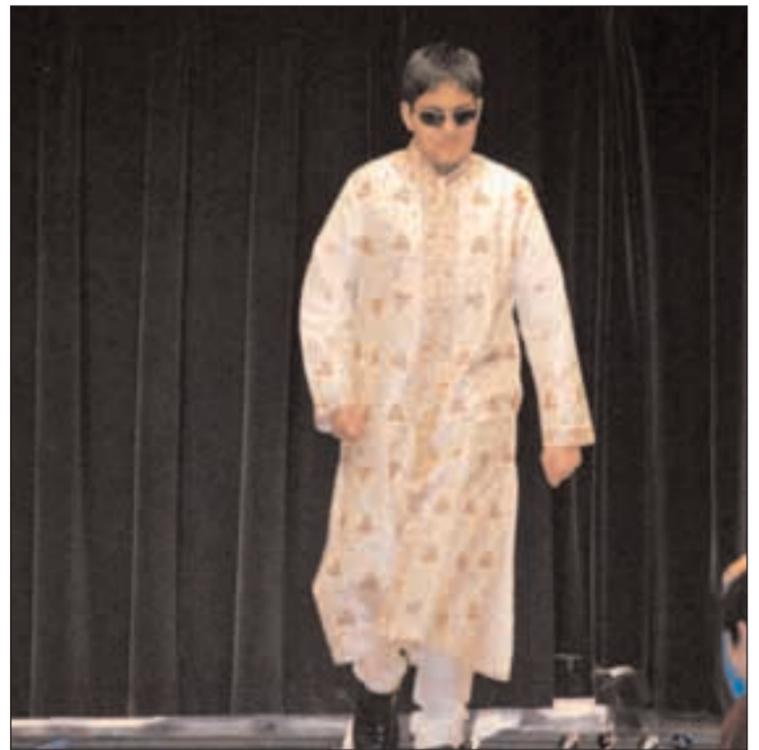
Students and Parent



Thivya Varatheswaran



Participants after Jai Ho dance



Aathman Kiruba

Book Review

The Value of Nothing:

How to reshape market society and redefine democracy

by Raj Patel

"This is a deeply thought-provoking book about the dramatic changes we must make to save the planet from financial madness" - Naomi Klein.

Opening with Oscar Wilde's observation that "nowadays people know the price of everything and the value of nothing," Patel shows how our faith in prices as a way of valuing the world is misplaced. He reveals the hidden ecological and social costs of a hamburger (as much as \$200), and asks how we came to have

markets in the first place. Both the corporate capture of government and our current financial crisis, Patel argues, are a result of our democratically bankrupt political system.

If part one asks how we can rebalance society and limit markets, part two answers by showing how social organizations, in America and around the globe, are finding new ways to describe the world's worth. If we don't want the market to price every aspect of our lives, we need to learn how such organizations

have discovered democratic ways in which people, and not simply governments, can play a crucial role in deciding how we might share our world and its resources in common.

This short, timely and inspiring book reveals that our current crisis is not simply the result of too much of the wrong kind of economics. While we need to rethink our economic model, Patel argues that the larger failure beneath the food, climate and economic crises is a political one. If economics is about choices,



Patel writes, it isn't often said who gets to make them. The Value of Nothing offers a fresh and accessible way to think about economics and the choices we will all need to make in order to create a sustainable economy and society. More Info: www.rajpatel.org

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In Malaysia, Increasing Religious Tension May Be Linked to Economic Concerns

By Brian Padden

Recently, a series of attacks on Christian churches and a Sikh temple in Malaysia focused attention on growing ethnic tension in the country. The Malaysian government, which has been promoting a "1Malaysia" campaign stressing racial and religious harmony, condemned the attacks. But, some critics say it may also be contributing to religious and racial divisions to solidify its political base.

A legal dispute over the word "Allah" divides Muslims and Catholics in Malaysia. The controversy started on December 31, when the Malaysian High Court allowed Roman Catholics to use "Allah" to refer to God. The government has appealed the verdict.

Although many Muslims attending prayer service at the National Mosque in Kuala Lumpur believe the word "Allah" is exclusive to Islam, few endorsed the violent attacks on nine churches and a Sikh temple that followed the court ruling.

"We think it could be created, you know, to make people believe there are violence in religions here but, in fact it is not," said a Muslim man.

At Saint Ann's Church, Father Lawrence Andrew says the government's swift response to protect churches has been reassuring but the experience has left Malaysia's Catholic community concerned. "We are not really upset about it, but what is psychologically disturbing is that people can be annoyed or feel insecure at the slightest differences that appear," he said.

Although the attacks appear religious in nature, political analysts here say they are more symptomatic of conflicting economic and political pressures on the leading government party, the United Malays United National Organization.

Charles Santiago is an opposition member of parliament with the Democratic Action Party. He says UMNO maintained power for



A Kuala Lumpur police officer inspects the damage to the Metro Tabernacle Church which was destroyed by a fire bomb a little after midnight in the Kuala Lumpur suburb of Desa Melawati, Malaysia.

08 Jan 2010-by AP

years by giving special treatment to its core constituency - ethnic Muslim Malays, who make up 60 percent of the population.

"I am UMNO, the protector, and I will give you the money. I will give you all development and all you have to do is every once in five years make sure you come and vote for me, and this thing will go on," said Santiago.

However, to become more competitive in the global economy, the government is trying to rollback its system of ethnic preferences, which requires companies to reserve 30 percent of their shares for Malays.

The government public relations campaign, called "1Malaysia," which advocates the values of tolerance and equality, was designed, in part, to push public acceptance of these economic changes.

But after the 2008 elections, in which many Malays voted for the opposition, UMNO had to change its tactics.

Zakaria Ahmad is a professor of politics with Help University in Kuala Lumpur. He says, to shore up its support within the Muslim Malay community, the government now has to support or at least tolerate more hard-

line actions on issues of race and religion. "I think there is a breakdown of law and order, but it is not lawlessness. It is just the government seems to be unable to cope - doesn't seem to have the political will to enforce laws as before," said Ahmad.

In addition to the controversy about the use of the word Allah, the judicial system has put new emphasis on enforcing Sharia law among Muslims. In recent months, three Muslim women have been caned for sexual misconduct.

In Malaysia, Muslims are subject to Sharia courts for violating religious law and for family issues such as divorce. A separate secular court system exists for other issues and for non-Muslims.

Marina Mahathir, a women's rights advocate and daughter of former Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad, says there are more instances of police monitoring personal behavior. "There was a recent story about wanting to, on Valentine's Day, raid people having romantic candlelit dinners, Muslim couples having romantic candlelit, I mean, what business of it is theirs and really don't they have better things to do? And, that is what our leadership should be saying, 'Don't you have better things to do,'" she said.

Law Professor Yusri Mohammad, with the International University in Malaysia, says the Muslim community is not becoming more conservative, but it is trying to hold on to its values and way of life. "You can't have non-Malay things that you may feel some people in countries are having that you would also like to have, but if you inject that within a Malaysian setting it becomes disruptive. It becomes - it disturbs the balance we have," he said.

He says, although some politicians may think that conflict can help them win votes, most Malaysians still embrace moderation and respect for all races and religions.

[VOA News]

A DANGEROUS MIXTURE IN BALOCHISTAN

By IRIN News

Significant development and poverty challenges in Balochistan Province, southwestern Pakistan, are being exacerbated by growing security concerns, according to aid workers.

Decades of nationalist unrest, underdevelopment and the scaling down of UN and NGO activity have left residents feeling neglected and fearful for their safety, they say.

President Asif Zardari on a recent visit to the province, which is nearly as big as Germany but has a population of only 10 million, said he was aware of the problems but urged people not to resort to violence.

In April 2009 ethnic violence led to a wave

of killings and riots.

"We know there is a feeling of sadness in Balochistan. The people here do not sob, and prefer to pick up guns," he said in a statement on 25 February. He called for patience: "I have good knowledge of the problems of Balochistan. I need some time to solve these problems... There might not be any immediate relief, but over a period of time, you will witness significant change in your lives."

In recent years, there have been a number of abductions of aid workers, causing the UN and many NGOs to scale down operations, making life even harder for the most vulnerable. There have also been recent media



Poverty and deprivation exist across Balochistan

Photo courtesy: IRIN

Singapore Opens 1st Casino in Bid to Become Tourist Hub

Singapore has opened its first casino, part of a campaign by the city-state to transform itself into a tourist hub and reduce its reliance on manufacturing.

The Resorts World Sentosa casino welcomed its first visitors on Feb 14th, an auspicious date that coincides with the first day of the Lunar New Year.

The casino is part of a \$4.7 billion complex built by Malaysia's Genting Group on Sentosa island, an islet linked to Singapore's main island by a bridge. The complex also houses a new Universal Studios movie theme park and high-end hotels.

Singapore is trying to broaden its appeal to tourists and become more of a services-based economy, while shifting away from manufacturing work that its Asian neighbors can do more cheaply.

Some Singaporeans have expressed concern that promoting gambling could undermine the city-state's values and encourage money-laundering.

The government has tried to address those concerns by imposing a \$70 fee on Singaporeans entering the casino to try to dissuade them from becoming addicted. The fee does not apply to foreign visitors. Singapore also



Casino Chips

has banned anyone declared bankrupt from using the casino.

The city-state plans to open a second casino, built by U.S. company Las Vegas Sands, in the coming months. The government estimates the casinos will boost Singapore's gross domestic product growth by up to one percentage point in the coming years. [VOA News]

reports of Taliban militants operating in the province.

"A few years ago, many NGOs were active here, running schools or offering aid. Now many have pulled out," said Naimat Khan, 60, a resident of a village a few miles outside Quetta, the provincial capital. "This has also led to unemployment, because some NGOs have let local staff go."

The head of the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) office in Quetta, John Solecki, was kidnapped in February 2009 and released a



Balochistan residents Sadiqa Bibi and her husband say they cannot survive without help-Pic: Tariq Saeed IRIN

few months later. Because of concerns over the safety of its staff, the UN scaled back operations in Balochistan in July 2009, and in October the World Food Programme (WFP) closed 20 food hubs, though Amjad Jamal, a spokesman for WFP in Pakistan, told IRIN

WFP projects in the province were continuing "as usual".

The reported abduction on 18 February 2010 of four Pakistani employees of US-based NGO Mercy Corps while visiting projects in Balochistan has added to concerns.

"Our programmes in Balochistan have been temporarily interrupted as we determine the nature of this incident," Joy Portella, director of communications for Mercy Corps in Seattle, told IRIN.

Access to health care is limited in Balochistan and officials in Islamabad and Quetta accept there is a need to improve the situation.

"There was good work going on for us here. Doctors came in to take care of women, but now after this latest incident where people have been abducted, we are worried no one will come," local resident Azmatullah Jalal told IRIN from the town of Zhob, some 300km north of Quetta.

"Security concerns further handicap people, since few volunteers or NGO activists are now willing to travel in Balochistan," said Robina Mughul, who runs a voluntary clinic in Quetta.

Meanwhile, I.A. Rehman, secretary-general of the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, told IRIN: "The problem in Balochistan is the perception of injustice as well as the reality of deprivation that people suffer."

IRIN (Integrated Regional Information Networks) is part of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

Reaction or Response

By: Devadas Chelvam

The urge to fight or flee is the normal reaction to any external violence. It is a survival instinct that man shares with all the animals. Instead of such normal reaction, man also has the wonderful capacity to respond in a different manner.

The common and easy reaction to a strong party oppressing the weak is righteous indignation and rage or fear and sadness. We have been conditioned to react in this way for many years or

mation of a life? To make a long story short, he was never violent again... Never underestimate the power of God's love-it transforms. It reaches the spark of good in the other person, and the person is disarmed"

The impulse to fight or flee violence arises from fear. Peace Pilgrim was a fearless person. She was not afraid to die because she knew that she was a soul, wearing a bodily garment temporarily. Full of peace, love and joy, Peace Pilgrim did not arrive at her deep

while he walked towards the tiger and lovingly caressed it. The tiger seemed to be quite pleased as it moved away.

The people in Ammachi's village were very scared due to a particularly large venomous cobra that was seen around by a few. Once it crept into the shed where Ammachi was giving Darshan, when people moved aside quickly in fear. Amma picked up the cobra, looked affectionately at the snake, and touched its tongue with her own tongue before gen-

and international conflicts.

There is personal consolation in condemning the corruption and violence of the opponents. Hence it becomes a favorite pastime when people get together. Unfortunately it is a common but harmful habit, because thereby we strengthen and increase the evil, without being aware of it. Hatred is not overcome by hatred; feeding on each other's feelings, hatred and its evil consequences can grow and proliferate.

The present Dalai Lama is a shining example for healing hatred with love. Though his opponents often criticize and condemn him, he is consistently kind towards them. Recently Larry King from CNN asked the Dalai Lama why he continued to be optimistic after repeated failures in his efforts towards reconciliation for more than fifty years. Happily bursting out in laughter, he replied that first, it is better to be optimistic, and secondly, we do not know the future, and the circumstances can change around for good.

Through his daily meditations and affirmations, the Dalai Lama sends out vibrations of peace and harmony to Tibet, China and the whole world. We too can contribute much towards justice, peace and prosperity in any part of the world by repeating the peace mantra often:

Lokah Samastah Sukhino Bhavantu

(May all the beings in the whole world be well and happy.)

Om Shanthi, Shanti, Shanthi. (Peace, Peace, Peace).

We cannot contribute to external peace unless and until we experience internal peace. Such experience is not possible without the repeated practice of forgiveness. Two former prisoners of war met after a few years, and one asked the other whether he had forgiven his captors. "Never! How can I forgive those monsters? I am even now very bitter and angry," came the reply. "Then, you are still in their prison" commented his companion.

We forgive our opponents primarily for our sake, so that we may be peaceful, and learn to forgive ourselves, which is not at all easy. Daily meditation can be a great help in this process.

Taking a steady, relaxed pose



(either seated on a chair or sitting on the floor) one can alternate between observing the breath and being mindful of the various feelings in the body, and the thoughts that go on in the mind. Pain and bad feelings may appear, become intense, and then dissolve without your intervention. The habit of being a detached witness or observer of whatever happens within you, results in a sense of peace.

Scientific experiments have been done to prove the power of prayer for effective bodily healing, and to bring about peace in a violent area. The efficacy of prayer depends not on the words used, but in the underlying feeling, or the faith factor. One must feel that what is prayed for is already accomplished. Such a feeling may be slight, but it can achieve wonders. Faith, even as small as a mustard seed can move mountains, according to Lord Jesus.

We are deeply interconnected. In the words of Gregg Braden, "through the hologram of consciousness a little change in our lives is mirrored everywhere in our world". And it happens instantly. Our misery, jealousy, and hatred definitely make the world more evil. Hence the world is in dire need of our inner peace, acts of forgiveness, and unconditional love to become a better place.

The world is heading fast towards destruction through man's greed, hatred, selfish exploitation of nature, and superficial reactions to adverse circumstances. But we do have the capacity to turn it around, if we learn to cultivate peace, pray with faith, and respond from the soul, rather than react from the ego.

What gives us great hope is the fact that the critical mass needed to change the world around is a relatively small number of people. Some have calculated it to be the square root of one percent of the population. Without arguing the point, even now we have the choice to be agents for a positive change, and respond to adversity in a meaningful manner.



through several incarnations. On the other hand, Ammachi talks about the importance of not reacting to adverse circumstances, but responding from a center of peace, love and wisdom.

As an illustration of our amazing ability to not react, but respond lovingly and positively to violence, here is an incident narrated in the inspiring book: Peace Pilgrim. This book was compiled by five friends of Peace Pilgrim using her own words.

"Once I was hit by a disturbed teen age boy whom I had taken for a walk. He wanted to go hiking but was afraid he might break a leg and be left lying there. He was a great big fellow, and was known to be violent at times. Everybody was afraid of him, so I offered to go with him.

As we got to the first hilltop, everything was going fine. Then a thunderstorm came. He was terrified, suddenly he went off the beam, and came for me, hitting at me. Even while he was hitting me I could feel only the deepest compassion for him. I bathed his hatred with love even while he hit me. As a result, the hitting stopped.

What are few bruises on my body compared with the transfor-

faith in God through any prior conditioning.

She came from a family that was atheistic for many generations. Yet she discovered God by herself after much personal search. Peace Pilgrim cultivated the habit of constant prayer and started to live for others, since she found her life of wearing fashionable clothes, going for parties, and driving new cars rather meaningless. Then she experienced the joy of God's Presence and union with all creation at different times. Later the sense of union with God and others became a continuous and stable experience for her. That means, she lived in the love of God always. Love casts out fear, says the Bible. When we let ourselves feel God's love within us, fear flees away naturally.

Masters in general do not react but respond from a center of divine love. Paramahansa Yogananda went into a forest in West Bengal with some students and teachers from his school. There they encountered a ferocious wild tiger looking at them from a distance. Since the youngsters panicked along with their teachers, the Master asked them to be calm and stay in their place,

tly laying it down. It slithered away slowly and never bothered the villagers again.

The divine love expressed by Peace Pilgrim, Yogananda and Ammachi is present within our soul as well. Though it may be rather hard not to react but to respond from our inner depth, we too can act out of love, even when we do not feel it. As we continue to do so daily, we will have started on a path leading to perennial peace and joy.

In this world, evil is often mixed with the good. In gang violence for example, the gang members are saved from feeling lost, lonely and bored. They come alive by cultivating camaraderie and a sense of belonging to a community. The same phenomenon may be observed in national

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CINE BLITZ

Jayachitra's son to enter films



Veteran actress Jayachitra, who has more than 200 films in various South languages to her name, is launching her 21-year-old son Amaresh Ganesh as hero in a film titled Naane Ennulai.

Besides directing the movie, the actress also pens the story, screenplay and dialogues.

Amaresh had brought out music videos during his college days. Interestingly Amaresh is also debuting as a music composer with this movie.

Two heroines are yet to be finalised. Actor Raghav is the lead villain and Nasser, Gangai Amaran, Saranya will appear in supporting roles. Prasad Babu, a well known name in Tollywood, has been signed up as the cinematographer.

Back in action

Ramana is back after a break. The Nayakan actor is playing an angry youth who falls head over heels in love with a girl in Thambi Arjuna. Directed by Vijay R Anand, a former associate of Arun Pandian, the movie features Suman, French artiste Feroz Khan and Aashima.

Speaking about the movie, the director, says, 'women have always occupied a prominent place in history. They have made and destroyed many empires. Thambi Arjuna is a tale of a young woman and her lover.' Suman plays a tough policeman, while Feroz Khan, who is a kickboxer, is the baddie. Music composer Dheena is acting in this movie.

A great fan of Ram Gopal Varma films, Vijay R Anand says, 'I want my movie to do all the talking. It will be shot using state-of-the-art technology. Action sequences will be the highlights.'

Ramana has worked out rigorously and toned his physique for the role. Filmmaker Aabavannan has crooned for a song. Produced by G M Balaji, shooting for Thambi Arjuna is on at a fast pace.

Dheena has scored the music while Madhavraj is taking care of cinematography.

Fanfare at film awards



Tamil film celebrities gathered under one roof for the annual Edison Film Awards distribution held at Lady Andal School in Chennai recently. Jayam Ravi received an award for Peranmai while Prasanna and Sneha received the awards for Achamundu Achamundu.

The other award-ees included cinematographer - director K V Anand, script writer and actor Ramesh Kanna, actress Aarthi, film personalities including Kishore, Ambika, Shammu, Manoj Paramahansa, Krish among others. A variety cultural programme was organised as part of the celebrations.

Karthi to speak Telugu



Director Selvaraghavan's Aayirathil Oruvan has become a rage in Tollywood. Dubbed in Telugu as Yuganiki Okkadu, the movie has made quite a splash in Andhra Pradesh and Karthi, who played the lead role has won fans across the State.

It is very likely now that Karthi's his Tamil movie Paruthiveeran will also be dubbed and released in Telugu. The latest buzz is that the actor has decided to dub for his character in the Telugu version of Paruthiveeran titled Palnati Veerudu. The actor is reportedly learning the nuances of Telugu pronunciation now. [newstodaynet]

I AM PROUD OF WHAT I AM DOING: MADHAVAN



He may be a popular face down south but when it comes to Bollywood, R Madhavan has no illusions. The actor admits that he is no star in Bollywood

but he is enjoying the kind of work he is doing in Hindi cinema.

Madhavan began the year with the record breaking success of 3 Idiots and now he is all set to surprise fans in much-awaited Teen Patti, which also stars Amitabh Bachchan and Ben Kingsley.

'I am very very happy after the success of 3Idiots. The success is huge and I am living a dream right now. Everything seems to be going right and now I can say that I am finally proud of the work I am doing,' Madhavan said. The 39-year-old actor was first seen in 2001, Rehna Hai Tere Dil Mein, though the film was not a major hit, Madhavan did create a fan base in North India.

Almost 10 years from then, Madhavan has been extremely choosy doing just nine films and has given memorable performances in Rang De Basanti, Guru and 3 Idiots. 'I have done really few Hindi films that shows how choosy I am. It sometimes depends on the right timing. I may be a star down south but I am happy that North India is finally accepting me as an actor. It is really over-

whelming,' Madhavan said.

Madhavan is all set to surprise his fans by playing a charming teacher. He has donned six different looks in Teen Patti. 'I play this professor who wants everything in life too quickly without wasting too much time. It is a completely different role for me where you will see me in six different looks,' Madhavan said.

Aamir Khan stole the lime light in 3 Idiots and now it is Big and Kingsley who are the talk of the town for Teen Patti but Madhavan has no qualms working with a huge starcast till the time he has an author backed role.

'Directors have been kind to cast me in solo leads as well. 13B did really well in future I am doing Tanu Weds Manu as well. So I think for me it is a perfect mix of multistarrer and solo leads now. Moreover, its not an issue for me to do a movie with a huge starcast till the time I have an author backed role,' the actor said.

Set in India and England, Teen Patti, directed by Leena Yadav, boasts of being an emotionally riveting thriller about greed, deception and imagination. [PTI]



My Name Is Khan

My Name Is Khan is a 'must watch movie' writes Sarita Tanwar, in Mumbai's Midday:

WHAT IT'S ABOUT: When the maestro of romance teams up with celluloid's most adored pair, you know there's magic waiting to happen. Get set for the year's best offering so far. My Name Is Khan has all the gloss you expect from a KJo film -- only this time, it comes along with a new sensibility and a bolder theme. The film is about Rizwan Khan (Shah Rukh Khan) who suffers from Asperger's Syndrome, a birth disorder. Rizwan has problems in his social interactions. After his mother's (Zarina Wahab) death, his US-based younger brother (Jimmy Shergill) takes him to San Francisco where Rizwan starts working as a salesman.

On one of his calls, he encounters Mandira (Kajol) and his life changes. Mandira is a single mother, falls in love with Rizwan in an improbable yet utterly romantic manner. They get married and, life seems till (9/11) changes it all. Rizwan and Mandira are torn apart after they face a monumental tragedy as victims of racism. To win Mandira back, Rizwan is faced with the most daunting task of all. And thus begins his journey -- across states, cultures, people, racial profiling and hatred. In his quest to rediscover his lost love, how Rizwan emerges as the most unlikely hero forms the crux of the film.

WHAT'S HOT: There's no one quite like Karan Johar when it comes to love stories and MNIK simply reinforces that. This is a difficult subject to handle -- it's multi-layered unlike his previous attempts. There's a hero with a handicap; the leading lady who is the mother of a school kid; there's a clash of cultures inspired by true events and there's some hard-hitting drama. It's commendable the way Karan interweaves all of this in his narrative, in a film which at the core is a love story with epical proportions. Even though MNIK is the director's shortest film in terms of length, it's the most comprehensive story he's ever told. The quintessential dazzle of a KJo film is all there -- from the zig-zag streets of Frisco to the stark beauty of Arizona.

The director scores full marks in the poignant portrayal of each of the relationships. The Rizwan-Mandira romance is captured beautifully. Rizwan's moments with her son are brilliant and the child's acceptance of the new man in his mother's

life is subtle yet so effective. The second half of the film is the crowning glory -- the lead pair's parting forms the base leading to Rizwan's spectacular ride through the country and his ability to strike a chord with everyone he encounters. MNIK works because it's an uplifting tale of an underdog told in an entertaining manner.

There's also that element of freshness in the film also his choice of actors -- Zarina Wahab, Jimmy Shergill, Soniya Jehan (simply superb) and Arif Zakaria. It's a delight to see Kajol back in action -- she brings Mandira alive first with her characteristic candour and then with her heart-rending complexity of emotions. The distressing scene with her son is proof of why she's simply the best. But MNIK is, after all, the story of Rizwan and it is to Shah Rukh Khan's credit that Rizwan grows on you with every scene. What seems awkward initially eventually culminates into a character you warm upto want to take home -- you want to laugh at his innocent antics and cry when he's in pain. The SRK magic is at play in almost all the crucial moments -- when Mandira proposes to him, his touching camaraderie with the African-American family; the sequence in the Church where he speaks about his son; the one where he stands up to a fanatic; the scene -- MNIK is Shah Rukh.

WHAT'S NOT: In a near-perfect film, the only over-the-top part is Rizwan's return to a flood-hit small town to save the African-American family. It's stands out because everything else is so understated. And then the part about the media brigade landing there followed by Rizwan's supporters is a bit unconvincing. Also, one of the highlights of all Karan Johar films has been the musical score. In MNIK, nothing impresses us much except for the Noor-E-Khuda track, which is haunting.

WHAT'S THAT: Rizwan never shakes hands with anyone -- he has a problem with that. Yet, when he meets the American President, he shakes hands not once but twice. Special treatment for special people?

WHAT TO DO: Brave the protests and head for the nearest cinema hall. MNIK is a must-watch. The Karan-Shah Rukh-Kajol combo strikes once more.

(www.mid-day.com)

For the love of films



Noted politician and ruling DMK South Chennai District Secretary J Anbazhagan has announced his foray into film production with the launch of his Anbu Pictures.

Having been into film distribution for the last five years, his venturing into production, by his own admission, was a fulfillment of his cherished dream. 'I had always wanted to produce a film and it is only now that my wish is being fulfilled,' Anbazhagan, who is also the former MLA from T Nagar said.

Anbu Pictures would be producing Aadhi Bagavan, to be directed by acclaimed film director Ameer, whose Paruthi Veeran, won several awards, including the National Award.

Anbazhagan, who had unsuccessfully contested from T Nagar in the May 2006 Assembly elections, said his decision to produce films had nothing to do with politics.

'I am already into film distribution. I am passionate about movies. I met Ameer. got a good story and decided to produce it,' Anbazhagan said, without specifying what the budget would be.

'My political journey will continue. This is (film production) is entirely different,' he said. Jayam Ravi will be playing the lead role in the film, the shooting for which is expected to commence in March. Yuvan Shankar Raja, son of maestro Ilayaraja, will be composing the music and it is expected to be among the Pongal releases next year.

Without going into the details, Jayam Ravi and Ameer said Aadhi Bagavan would be an entertainer with an urban story line reflecting the theme 'Obsessive love'.

'The leading lady to be paired with Jayam Ravi would be decided soon,' Ameer said. On his part, Ravi said, 'it will be a different story with new dimensions and I hope the audience will receive it well.'

'Ameer knows how to bring the best out of his heroes. Hopefully Aadhi Bagavan, will show me in a different light,' he adds.

'My role in Peranmai was different and with Ameer's film I am confident that new vistas will open up for me in the film industry,' he adds.

WORDS OF PEACE

Go for the Gold

Some people yearn for wealth; others for prestige. Some people say they're searching for truth; others say they're looking for love. These quests are only superficially different, says Maharaji. The bottom line is everyone wants the same thing: to be fulfilled in life. We just have different ideas about what will fulfill us.

For most of his life, Maharaji has been traveling all over the world to talk about a simple proposition that fulfillment already exists within the human heart. He urges people to consider this possibility. There's a way, he says, to turn within and feel a profound contentment that doesn't need any external stimulus.

"Once there were three brothers who were very, very poor," Maharaji says. "They sold everything they had to buy some gold, because they knew that gold could get them everything they wanted-make them rich, buy them clothes, food, shelter.

"Each built a little hut for himself far away from the others. One brother was very religious. He took his share of the gold and made an altar where every day he would pray to it: 'Oh, please, gold, make me rich; give me food. You are everything.'

"The second one also took his gold and put it on display, but not on an altar. He wasn't religious. He was a scientific guy. He would write essays: "Gold has the potential to remove my hunger, give me a house, give me new clothes, give me food.'

"The third brother took his share of the gold and sold it. With the money he got, he bought a farm. He grew vegetables and fruit. Whatever he needed he ate, and whatever he didn't eat he would sell in the market. With the money he made, he built a house and bought clothing. He just kept getting richer and richer.

"After a few years had gone by, the three brothers decided to

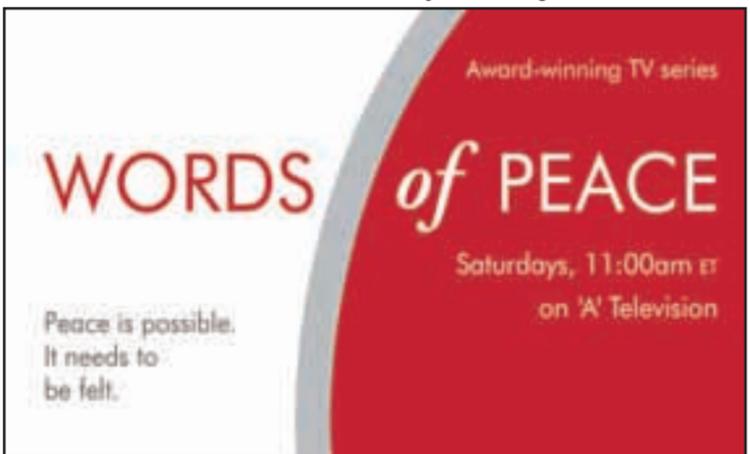


orchard. I'll cook for you and give you some clothes.'

"His brothers said, 'You sold the gold?'"

The two brothers were still poor, Maharaji says, because they couldn't see the obvious. They had the means to get everything they were hoping and praying for. They just had to unlock its potential. That's what happens, Maharaji says, when people chase an idea of what will fulfill their lives instead of fulfillment itself.

"You, too, have all that you need," he says. "It lies within you every day. In sadness, in sorrow, there is a joy unparalleled inside of you waiting to be discovered.



get together. The first one explained that every day he prays to the gold, and one day the gold will answer his prayers. The one who was very scientific said, 'One day, my gold will fulfill everything that I have in my mind to do. Its potential will come through.'

"They both turned to the third one and said, 'You're obviously doing pretty well. You have new clothes, nice shoes, a nice watch. You look big and plump. What do you do?'"

The third brother was very shy. He knew that in the opinion of the first one, to sell the gold was sacrilegious. To the second one, it was very bad, very impractical.

"He said, 'Well, I sold the gold, and with that money I bought a farm. Hey, come visit me! I've got a home. I've got a beautiful

It's not very complicated. It's very simple. You have it whether you decide you want to experience it or not.

"If somebody asked me which of those three brothers I would advise them to be, I would say I have no advice. You choose who you want to be. I'm not here to pass judgment on anyone. I'm not a judge. I'm just a mirror-a mirror to show you how beautiful you really are. Because I can do that quite well.

"This is the possibility: that you can be fulfilled. Chase fulfillment, not an idea. This is what the journey is all about."

To learn more about Maharaji, visit:
www.wopg.org
www.tprf.org
 For a free DVD please call 1 877 707 3221.



denied to you by anybody except yourself, isn't it? What is within you cannot be denied to you by anybody except yourself. So you just have to get yourself out of the way, either you go in installment or you just go once.

Enlightenment need not always happen with a bang it can happen quietly, it can be like a flower blossoming. The greatest things happening on the planet do not make any noise, isn't it? Now a seed is becoming a plant -a

Enlightenment - When?



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

Everybody would like to know what is after death if they could get it on the Internet. If you can login and just find out, everybody would like to know, but how badly do you really want to know? If you can sit here and casually ask 'What happens after death? What is the source of my creation,' that means you don't know the immensity of the question. If you burn with this question, to such an extent that you can't utter a word but you burn, then knowing is not far away.

It's very simple. The reason why it is so far away is because the longing is still lukewarm. It is still not killing you. Still, it's on the side. You want to know the truth like some entertainment, it won't happen. Don't have such hopes. If you want it in such a way that that's all you want, then it's just a moment away, because what you want to know is within you.

What is within you cannot be

plant is becoming a tree, not a small phenomenon- a tremendous phenomenon, does it make any noise? But the little achievements make a lot of noise. You know the cock gets up in the morning and makes a lot of noise, but the big things happening in existence don't make any noise. Quietly it is happening isn't it? So enlightenment also happens quietly without any noise, no big firecrackers happening, very quietly from one dimension to another. In the garden the flower blooms, no noise no fireworks nothing, but once it has bloomed you can't ignore it, it's significant, the fragrance and the beauty of it is undeniably there.

So similarly enlightenment, blossoming from one dimension to another happens very quietly, but when it happens, when the moment you notice it, it is a very big thing, you cannot ignore it.

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Elizabeth Nesamma Tharumalingam



DATE OF BIRTH: NOVEMBER 19TH 1921
DATE OF DEMISE: FEBRUARY 25TH 2010

Elizabeth Nesamma Tharumalingam was the eldest child of Senator Mudaliyar and Mrs. AB Rajendra in Colombo, Sri Lanka. She was educated at Good Shepherd Convent, Kotahena. During the times when women were not educated beyond grade eight, Elizabeth was successful in pursuing a University BA degree in English at the University of Ceylon in 1945. She excelled in her university career and graduated in 1948 becoming the first woman graduate from Kotahena. She was offered a teaching position at Good Shepherd Convent in the same year.

In 1949, Elizabeth married Mr

V Tharumalingam, an accountant who eventually became an Advocate and Attorney at Law. It was a grand wedding held at the historic St. Lucia's Cathedral, Kotahena. It was a renowned wedding attended by the then Governor General Sir Oliver Gunatillake and the Prime Minister DS Senanayake, who were the attesting witnesses. Mr. and Mrs. Tharumalingam were blessed with seven wonderful children who excelled in education and became doctors, an engineer, a lawyer, accountants and a teacher.

At Good Shepherd Convent, Elizabeth was a proud teacher who helped to mould the character of many children in a career that spanned over 30 years. In 1989, she migrated to Canada to

join her children and was elected the first president of the Past Pupils Association of Good Sheppard Convent.

She was a talented poet and her retired life in Canada was spent on exclusive contemplations of poetry. Her poem 'To my dear brother Jeyam,' which was composed at the untimely death of her brother, was chosen to be included in the international library of poetry. She was also the author of 'Random Gleanings' (two compilations).

Elizabeth had seventeen grandchildren, who have and who are also excelling in their careers and educations, and of whom she was greatly proud. In her later years, due to her gradually failing health, she died peacefully on 25th February 2010.

Amuthu Pulavar, veteran of Christian Tamil literature passes away

Chevalier Dr. S. Adaikalamuthu, Tamil pundit and poet from I'lavaalai, Jaffna, known by his pseudonym Amuthupulavar, passed away at the age of 92 in London, on Feb 23. Studied classical Tamil at the prestigious Kaaviya Paadasaalai (School of Classics), which was functioning in the Arumuga Navalar School in Jaffna, Amuthupulavar was one of the few surviving authors of Christian Tamil literature of the traditional genre. Born in 1918 and beginning his poetic pursuits in 1938, his most known literary work was Madu Maathaa Kaaviyam, a poetic composition on the famous Catholic pilgrim centre at Madu in Mannaar. He was knighted (Chevalier) by the Late Pope John Paul II in Rome in 2004 and in the same year was awarded honorary doctorate by the University of Jaffna.

Early this month he addressed a grand function arranged in London to facilitate him and to release the publication of 1600-paged complete works of him.

Amuthupulavar had his early education at St Henry's of I'lavaalai and at St. Patrick's of Jaffna. He was trained as a teacher at Kozhumpuththu'rai Teacher Training College. He became a Tamil Pundit, a title conferred by the Education Ministry of Ceylon, after studies at Kaaviya Paadasaalai.

He was a student of late professors Kanapathipillai, Chelva-

nayagam and Vidynathan during his diploma days at the University of Peradeniya.

Dr. Adaikalamuthu was the biographer of Nalloor Swamy Gnanapragasar (1975) and was the author of a book on the Origin and Development of Tamil Siddha Ayurveda Medical Practice in Eezham (1983). Both the publications received the Sahitya Academy awards.

In 1984, the retired teacher and school principal residing in I'lavaalai was forced to move to London.

During early 20th century the Kaaviya Paadasaalai in Jaffna, having Chunnaakam Kumaraswamy Pulavar as its presiding teacher, was a prestigious seat for Tamil learning, looked upon with awe even by scholars in Tamil Nadu. It was the first school started by natives of Jaffna to locally confer Tamil Pundit title.

Ananda K Coomaraswamy, U V Saaminaatha Aiyar and the editors of the Madras Tamil Lexicon were some of the admirers of the school and the scholarship it generated in those days.

The school attracted students from all parts of the island. Pulavarma'ni Periyathampip Pillai from Batticaloa was one of its first students passed out in 1902. Pa'ndithama'ni Kanapathipillai was the last student studied under Kumaraswamy Pulavar in 1921.

Dr. Adaikalamuthu was a student of Pa'ndithama'ni Kanapathi-



pillai and Pulavar Ilamuraganar of Navaali (son of Somasundarapulavar) in traditional norms of Tamil poetry.

After the times of Kumaraswamy pulavar, the education department of the British government and later the governments of Ceylon and Sri Lanka took over examination procedure and conferment of the Pundit title.

The Arumuga Navalar School, the trust of which was running the Kaaviya Paadasaalai, was taken over by the independent government of the island and it is reduced to an intermediary school today. Yet as long as Vidvan Subbaiah Pillai and Seetharama Sastri were alive, the Kaaviya Paadasaalai lingered as a separate entity functioning only in the weekends, coaching students for Pundit examinations even in the late decades of 20th century. We have no idea of its present status.

Obituary

Chevalier Dr. S.A. Adaikalamuthu, PhD (University of Jaffna (Amuthu Pulavar),) a highly accomplished Tamil poet, writer and educationist, a former teacher and Principal passed away peacefully at Northwick Park Hospital in London , England on Tuesday morning February 23, 2010. He is the son of the Late Sethupillai Saverimuthu and Getrudamma, and beloved husband of the Late Theresa Adaikalamuthu and the affectionate brother of the Late Sinnapunayagam, Gnanapoo Ramanathan and Alexis Sebaratnam and the ever loving father of Bhanumathy, Inthumathy, Kanthimathy, Sebastian Nehru, Rev. Dr. Joseph Chandrakanthan , Jeyamathy, Dr. Vasanthakumar, Ilanchelian, Rubia and Amutharasan and most loving grand father of Beulin, Marylin, Tyrone, Jonathan, Bindu, Rajkanthan, Caroline, Prasha, Rajiv, Ryan, Mark, Rick, Georgina, Winston, Jessica, Zeta, Shelica, Clinton, Shaun, Edith, Cynthia, Emlyn, Shibon and Tresha and the great grand father of Sophie, Isabella and Joani and loving father in law of Keerthisingam, Samsonroy, Selvarajah, Murali Joachimpillai, Bibiana, Sumithra, Jolita and the Late Judith.

A Life Well Lived

Nagaratnam (Siva) Sivalingam - 1940 to 2010



For Close to 45 years, Canada was home to Nagaratnam (Siva) Sivalingam. The Canada he left behind this week is drastically different than the Canada to which he immigrated in 1966. At that time, he was a minority - there were very few people who looked like him, spoke like him, dressed like him, and prayed like him. He would be a transformative force in the Tamil community. He would go onto build a community, the Tamil community, so that all of us can embrace the great things about Canada, while, proudly, holding onto our roots and values. He was not just a pioneer; he was a community builder.

Over the course of these four and a half decades, he built one institution after another, most of them standing tall today as the servants of this community and as monuments to the enduring work of Mr. Sivalingam and his peers. Amongst his many achievements - he was the founding president of the Tamil Eelam Society of Canada (TESOC), an advocacy, turned, social service agency serving the community for over 30 years, a founding director of the Canadian Foundation for Tamil Refugee Rehabilitation (CAFTARR), a Registered Canadian Charity assisting refugees in Sri Lanka, and a founding trustee of the Hindu Temple Society of Canada, the largest Saiva Temple in North America. In between building these institutions, he represented the interests of Tamil Canadians at numerous municipal, provincial and federal community service meetings, including, the South Asian Consultative Committee (Toronto Police Services), Canadian Immigration and



Citizenship forums, and City of Toronto and York Region Race Relations and anti-racism conferences.

Mr. Sivalingam was a strong believer in the religious and spiritual development of the Saiva community in Canada. He was one of the founding trustees of the Hindu Temple Society of Canada, and has served in the past as the president, vice-president, treasurer and secretary. Mr. Sivalingam was the Vice President of the World Saiva Council (Canada Branch) and the Chair of the Federation of Ontario Saiva Organizations. Mr. Sivalingam was also actively involved in the establishment of the Canada Saivite Council for Spiritual Care in Healthcare. The honorary title of "Arudpani Arulaalar" (Provider of Divine Duties) was conferred upon him by the trustees, priests, volunteers and devotees of the Hindu Temple Society of Canada in January 2000.

These achievements and accolades fail to capture the true spirit of the man.

He was a simple and humble human being. He never made his point by shouting, but convinced them with his sheer honesty, sense of fairness, and determination. He was simply motivated by doing the right thing, day in and day out. He is often seen wearing his trademark Vesti and National at many functions in Toronto, be it on the coldest day in February or a warm summer's night.

He unequivocally believed in the Tamil people, not just in Canada, but around the world. He supported the rights of Tamils in Sri Lanka to live in peace, dignity and with agency. To this end, he passionately defended and worked towards their freedom.

In Canada, he ensured that Tamils could live in dignity and equality. He consistently defended the rights of Tamils

with every level of government and at every juncture. He has always been a strong and salient force, and a focal point in the community. He made great efforts to ensure that people worked together - not for their own good, but for that of the community.

He was always a true Canadian. He believed in Canadian values of democracy, transparency, peace and justice. He believed in a just society - the type of society he would help build. He lived, and helped define this just society - a society and community in which we can all take pride. He was engaged at every level of civil society and took his responsibility as a regular citizen to heart. He would vote at every election. He would go to endless meetings to understand the issues from different viewpoints. He encouraged his children, grandchildren, nephews and nieces to give back to this community and country in

every possible way.

Mr. Sivalingam was born to a family of six, heralding from the academically and culturally rich Town of Elavalai, Jaffna. He pursued his studies at St. Henry's College Elavalai, and Mahajana College in Tellipallai. He studied architecture in England and at the St. George Campus of the University of Toronto. Mr. Sivalingam was married to Jegajenany Sivalingam for 39 years. They have two daughters, Sivajini and Harini, and three grandchildren, Ganatheeban, Priyatharshini, and Bairavi. Professionally, he practiced as an architect at several major Canadian firms, prior to starting his own firm. He retired in 2008.

Mr. Sivalingam is the recipient of numerous awards to recognize his contributions and achievements, including Thamilar Thagaval Award for community service in February 1992, Thamilar Thagaval Man of the Decades Award, February 2000, Jaffna St. Patricks College Alumni Association Award for promotion of Religion, July 2000, and the Canadian Tamil Youth Development Centre (CanTYD) Lifetime Achievement Award, November 2003. He is a patron to a number of organizations, a volunteer at many other organizations, and is a member of several organizations, including the Canadian Tamil Congress.

He died peacefully on March 2, 2010, at Centenary Hospital in Scarborough, surrounded by his siblings, children and his beloved wife with the sounds of Aum Nama Shivaya echoing in the background. May his soul attain freedom and may we all take inspiration from a life well lived.

---Aum---



by J.B. Muller

Democracy' is neither organic nor home-grown. It was a foreign imposition upon a polity that was segmentalized and divided against itself.

It is the tragedy of our times that we Sri Lankans are gullible enough to swallow all this tripe about elections as the universal remedy for all our problems or the fulfillment of our hopes and dreams.

Democracy in Sri Lanka was a foreign imposition upon a polity segmentalized and divided against itself

Our sundry and various politicians shout themselves hoarse about 'saving democracy' or, contra wise, 'strengthening democracy' when they don't even know the meaning of the word!

They all firmly believe that majoritarian domination is the quintessence of democracy!

Then, they would have us believe that having 54 or 65 political parties means a vibrant, thriving democracy! Indeed, it gets curiously and curiously as they

ethnicity, language, religion, and caste in the first instance.

Then, the additional dimensions of 'class,' racial superiority and majoritarian supremacy were added to the simmering cauldron—a veritable witch's brew. Then, our foreign overlords contemplated all this with not undisguised satisfaction for 'divide et impera' was a time-tested way of controlling the colonized and subjugated.

The process also created a new ruling class fashioned in the mould of the overlords and to that class the reins were handed over, reluctantly, due to the attrition of time and circumstance.

When those who inherited the mantle of rulership danced to the

tune that the foreign pipers played, all was well. They could continue to exploit the natural resources of the Island and labour of its people, they could continue to 'police' the Indian Ocean because of their military bases and they could continue to sell their manufactured goods sponging up whatever extra money we had earned from the World Market.

They also made good use of

UK Youth Jeremy Climb Mount Killimanjaro Raise funds for St. Johns College, Jaffna, Sri Lanka

By: Chrisanthan

I was amazed when eighteen year old Jeremy Strong (also known as Jez) rung me up to say "uncle having heard/read about the great work St Johns' College, Jaffna is doing I have decided to embark on a mission to raise money for the Eagles Nest. He then explained that he was going to climb Mount Killimanjaro (highest peak in Africa) in Tanzania and donate all the money he raises to the Eagles Nest.

I am sure that you will agree with me that we should support this young British born Sri Lankan lad (the son of an old Johnian Chuttie Strong) who even though he has never been exposed to the ethnic issues in Sri Lanka has been so moved by the plight of the internally displaced that he has taken it upon himself to actively raise funds.

Having been educated at St Paul's School, Jeremy is on a gap year prior to going to university; during which he is going travelling. Jeremy, hearing about our efforts to provide accommodation and education for 560 displaced children/youth at St John's and

year's on, we, the People, have come to this day. We are all at a critically pivotal period in our painfully long (some would claim it was glorious) history.

In the past six plus decades the People have paid a terrible

CGC College; decided that before he goes travelling at the end of March he would attempt to summit Killimanjaro and challenge as many people as he could to dig deep into their hearts and donate to support these children.

The climb will involve a gruelling four day ascend up the mountain, followed by a two day descend. The main worry is not the physical climbing itself, but altitude sickness. At an astonishing 5,893 metres (19,334 ft) at the summit, the air can get very thin with low oxygen percentage.

I will give you an update on the training program and preparation for the climb together with the milestone reached in terms of funds raised. In the meantime please keep his safety and fund raising efforts in your prayers so that through his efforts we can add to the funds raised to meet the needs of these children.

So please dig deep and donate now.

To make a donation please log on <http://www.justgiving.com/jeremystrong>

Donating through JustGiving is simple, fast and totally secure.



Your details are safe with JustGiving - they'll never sell them on or send unwanted emails. Once you donate, they'll send your money directly to the charity and make sure Gift Aid is reclaimed on every eligible donation by a UK taxpayer. So it's the most efficient way to donate Or

Donations can also be made on the High Street, by calling into any HSBC bank. Our Bank details: Name: CTF, Account No 42034611 Sort Code 40-23-13. Or Donations can also be sent to the CTF by post, with a cheque made payable to CTF and addressed to CTF, 21 Gainsborough Gardens, Greenford, Middx. UB6 0JG.

For More information <http://www.csjppa-uk.org/>



would also have us believe that Pradeshiya sabha, municipal council, provincial council and parliamentary elections held at frequent intervals is also convincing proof that Sri Lanka is a living, breathing democracy.

All of this taken in parts or together is a gigantic 'pie in the sky' and utter nonsense fit only for the mentally weak, for morons and for lunatics.

Our 'democracy' is neither organic nor home-grown. It was a foreign imposition upon a polity that was segmentalized and divided against itself by the factors of

the intellectual capital of the country by enticing our best minds to migrate by dangling the carrots of prosperity and la dolce vita before them. Their media continued to brainwash the educated into believing that they were superior in all respects and implying, often not so subtly, that we were an inferior breed.

However, nothing remains the same forever. Things change and our ill-prepared leaders took charge of the process of change. They botched many things in their new-found enthusiasms for other alien ideologies and, by dint of hard and bitter experience, 62

price in blood, terror, destruction, sorrow, and pain. This is so because of the overweening greed for power of some and the sheer, almost criminal incompetence of others.

This beautiful country is saddled with an Opposition that has become nothing more than a circus made-up of born losers, has-beens and wannabes who have, in the ultimate analysis, NOTHING to offer the People of this country but some more blood, terror, destruction, sorrow, and pain. We had a government with a visionary re-elected leader who wants to change the entire inherited

frame.

He wants to get down to grass-roots democracy where the real voice of the People would be heard. He seeks (within the prevailing frame) a majority that would enable him to usher in genuine change instead of cosmetic touch-ups.

He has had the courage to seek a fresh mandate for himself. The People gave him one. He now seeks another mandate from the People to give him a viable way to effect radical and drastic change. It is hoped that his faith in the People will be vindicated at the upcoming polls.

All this is well and good but the core problem is good, sound, competent economic management of a high order and it is incumbent upon the President to get together such a team drawn from the Public, Private, and Non Governmental Sectors [Civil Society] who would be both willing and able to advise him, no holds barred, on how to restructure the economy, revamp the tax regime, change laws where necessary in the light of the country's needs and tighten up the many loose screws.

For one thing, political expediency apart, he needs to have a tighter, smaller Cabinet made up of younger people he can trust in implicitly. What he needs is hard-nosed doers and go-getters and not smooth talkers who adroitly spin words to mesmerize the naive. He also needs real profes-

sionals to handle his government's national and international media outreach. What manages to survive is mediocre and ultimately does more damage than good.

Finally, he needs to clear away the sycophants and opportunists who surround him—he must go direct to the People, unheralded and talk to them face-to-face to learn the truth about anything and everything that concerns his government.

If there are many of those around him who say that this or that cannot be done because of the mass of cobweb-like ARs and FRs, he should, with his characteristic courage, use a broom to sweep them all away. When he begins to do these things, he would be restoring the true symmetry and balance of this country.

Indeed, there is no government like strong government in the hands of an enlightened, experienced leader. He has the potential to change that 'pie in the sky' into tangible reality, to usher in genuine grass-roots democracy, to clean-up this overabundance of political parties and govern consensually, leaving the sordid past behind us all.

Then, the era of 'utter nonsense' parading as 'genuine democracy' would be over and we could put our shoulders to the wheel to create prosperity for all, ensure real progress, and that greatest gift of all: PEACE in our time!

Tamil options and the April 08th Sri Lanka General Elections

By Luxman-Arvind

The January 26 Presidential Elections are over and, like its predecessor in 2005 that also returned the same candidate Mahinda Rajapakse, is bathed in doubt and controversy. The "results" in both were challenged. The appeal against the January 26 Presidential Election is now before the country's highest judicial body. Convincing arguments for the victory and the challenge remain in a part of the world where election victories are questioned - more as a rule than exception.

The graceful yielding of Al Gore to George Bush (Jr) in probably the most bitterly contested Presidential Election in US history - "in the interest of the nation's unity" is not a culture we are likely to see in Lankan region for quite a while.

The choice before Lankan Tamils within the Island and the influential diaspora is how will Tamils vote this time. The world was surprised the larger number of voters in the Tamil and Muslim communities - the two large communities after the Sinhalese population-wise - overwhelmingly voted in favour of Gen. Sarath Fonseka - although a few months back he was feared by the Tamils as one whose avowed aim was to politically and numerically render the Tamil community into gradual oblivion.

In his own pronouncements before he changed into military uniform, Fonseka pleased many Sinhala hearts insisting the island belongs only to the Sinhalese. He added Tamils and others might just as well "behave - or else" Unsurprisingly, his tone and attitude changed once he became a Presidential candidate. Millions of Sinhalese were surprised when the fire-breathing General was found bowed-head in prayer at the venerated Nallur Kandasamy Temple in the historical land of the Tamils in his election campaign - in traditional dhoti, pottu and kumkum as devout Hindus do.

Tamil votes were found to be crucial for victory. Whatever his inner intentions may have been, millions in the island - more so the overwhelmingly Tamils inhabiting the North East Province welcomed the gesture in the belief the mindset of the hardline Sinhalese is going through a sea-change. This includes many of those seen as anti-Tamil and obstinately unyielding on the National Question-the radical JVP, the racially-charged JHU party dominated by politically active monks. Many identified with narrow Sinhala supremacist ideology are joining in too - the influential Buddhist clerical hierarchy in the different Sects.

The choice before the main grouping of the Tamil political formation - Tamil National Alliance - lead by senior politician R. Sampanthan - is unenviable.

Although the Rajapakse Brothers are reported to have made the TNA many assurances to join their Alliance, the TNA eventually decided to lend their support to Gen. Fonseka pointing Mr. Rajapakse had many years while he was in power to bring relief and justice to Tamils. Sampanthan speaking for the TNA said Rajapakses failed to honour these after he assumed the powerful position of Executive President. The choice before the Tamils in the Jan 26 elections was bizarre.

They had to choose between the man giving the orders to the almost entirely Sinhala army in his role as C-in-C to bring the Tamils to their knees or to the man physically carrying it out enthusiastically on the ground in his role of the all-powerful Army Commander. In that personification Fonseka cared little to established International Protocols on modern warfare or Human Rights either to Tamil combatants or nearly a million civilian Tamils in the NEP.

The NEP political leadership is under pressure both from the voters and the diaspora for a change in the existing political representation in Parliament. The fresh faces one sees and the removal of some old in the current lists of candidates of the main Tamil parties points out this view has received attention. In spite of the recent meeting in Geneva aimed at unity, Tamil political parties have failed to work out a programme of coming together to speak in a single voice. This lacking will weaken them in that necessary bargaining power in a Sinhala-dominated Parliament of 225 where the combined NEP Tamil seats will be around 25 only. That section of the Tamil diaspora with its own sympathies to the LTTE seems to be gaining ground now with their Project of the Trans National Government of Tamil Eelam getting a boost.

The well-attended Global Tamil Forum meeting last week in the premises of the British Parliament has incensed GoSL. The presence and the encouraging addresses of key players in the Labour government and the Conservative Govt-in-Waiting should awaken the Rajapakse regime to the reality the world at large - and particularly Western countries whose aid and commercial imperatives are vital to Sri Lanka's economic survival bear support and sympathy to Tamils. They share the widely held view the Rajapakse regime has done little to address the problem with time and resources in hand.

It is true the influential Tamil diaspora can do little to alter the voting pattern in Sri Lanka because almost all of them are nationals of other countries. But to ignore them will be at the peril of the Rajapakses because their voice is articulated through legislatures in the USA, Canada,



Britain, Germany, France, Switzerland, Norway, Australia, Malaysia - to list the countries where the Tamil diaspora is concentrated. It is now a global reality in those instances nationals of their own countries are subject to prolonged discrimination, the international community has a recognised role to play.

The Diaspora is proceeding with its Agenda that also includes provisions for Diaspora Tamils to vote in Sri Lanka. They model this on the Israeli example where Israelis anywhere in the world can vote in the Knesset Elections. Many of these Israelis flown into the Elections to vote in the elections are dual Citizens - a provision the Tamil diaspora is examining. Many in Sri Lanka will be surprised to learn the Rajapakse government is also in consultation with several representative entities of the Tamil diaspora. The talks, inter alia, is said also to include dual-citizenship.

Meanwhile, the opposition to the TNA in the North will come from Douglas Devananda's EPDP, PLOTE and, to a lesser, extent from the TNA breakaways like young Gajendran Ponnambalam, Shivajilingam (the latter performed poorly in the last Presidential Elections) and a few others. The Karuna-Pillaiyan schism in the Batticaloa District will cause concern both to the TNA and the government. Karuna's decline from once-admired fearless Tamil field commander to his much advertised debauchery and deplorable wayward conduct will not find favour with voters in the EP who respect conventional family integrity from the man of the house. Kindnappings in ubiquitous white vans where many have been found dead; coercion, intimidation in daily life in the NEP and the Colombo District by favoured Tamil politicians within the government are very much in the minds of Tamil voters.

The more of the analytical voters among the Tamils are conscious - with dwindling resources and a skeptical IMF- WB and the Donor community, the Rajapakse government is unlikely to carry out the grandiose promises to "develop Tamil lands" in the NEP. They would rather use the inadequate resource availability to

develop the Sinhala South - their main vote base for their own political survival. Predictably, there can be a few hand-outs here and there in the Tamil areas more for cosmetic purposes.

They are unlikely to gain those features to make the besieged Tamils to rejoin the Sri Lankan family - meaningful devolution to run their own affairs, rapid infra-structural development of the NEP. This ideally to include water resources, the repair and building up of main roads, bridges, restoration of HSZ lands/farms, industrialization employment generation, building new/old hospitals, schools, places of worship destroyed by the war, modernisation and development of the agricultural and fishing industries - being the chief among the more urgent. Admittedly, there has been visible improvement in road transport, provision of electricity - that makes Tamil think favourably.

Signs of the return to normal life, denied to Tamils under LTTE rule, has engaged Tamil favour as the people yearn a life of peace and quiet. The much-hyped train services to KKS, more affordable air services - will go a long way to restore Tamil confidence. NEP Tamils are conscious of Sinhala sensitivities of the day and do not expect everything to happen at once. But the fact the Rajapakse government under-performed since 2005 when the LTTE was considerably weakened and since May 2009 when they were entirely removed from the scene - are vital areas in which the government had space to re-establish its confidence with the Tamils in the NEP.

The Tamils in the Plantation areas are a different cup of tea. Thondaman's fortunes, in a way, are in the ascendancy with his main rival Chandrasekaran gone. He has re-established his confidence with the Rajapakse regime in the Presidential Election - where he chose well to hitch his CWC with the Rajapakse wagon. If he can produce over 8 CWC MPs on April 08 Thondaman is assured of a plum Ministry - that he enjoyed in 2001/2002. It is unlikely the break-away of veteran CWC TU man M.S. Sellasamy, Yogarajan or Satchithanathan will in any way substantially



LETTERS & OPINIONS

weaken him.

In the same vein, the going in the Central Province and Nuwara Eliya District in particular is not going to be easy. Men like Sathasivam, Vadivel Suresh, Digambaram, Puthrasigamoney, Mano Ganesan will trouble him in the April elections. But the CWC resources and network, his own considerable electoral skills may retain for him the dominant position as leader of the people of recent Indian origin - the undisputed mantle of the legendary leader and King of Malainadu - the late Saunyamoorthy Thondaman.

Tamils in the Colombo and Gampaha Districts may, this time, decide to go with the Rajapakse government since the UNP is woefully divided, unsure of itself in its own leadership. By the manner the UNP is going about it appears to have conceded the elections to the Rajapakses already with serial-loser Ranil Wickremasinghe fated to remain in the opposition.

The incarcerated Sarath Fonseka is unlikely to repeat his own performance in the January 26 Presidential Elections. His own Coalition is in shatters where the State used its mighty media and propaganda juggernaut to its advantage. The divided JVP under Somawansa Amarasinghe-Tilvin Silva probably will not come close to their Parliamentary harvest of 2004. The break-away JVP faction under the inspiration of the charismatic Wimal Weerawansa too is under attack.

Weerawansa's shift from his home-base Kalutara to the Colombo District will be questioned. The concern of the Buddhist voters country-wide about the un-buddhistic conduct of the JHU in the political snake-pit is shown in most of the militant monks removed from JHUs own list of candidates. With their opposition divided, weakened or rendered to confusion the Rajapakse brothers are aiming on a 2/3rd majority.

As one saw in the Post-May 2009 period and the Presidential Elections Sri Lanka can come out with the unpredictable and the most incredible. April 08 can still spring surprises although as at date it looks like the Rajapakses - who have no compunction in mis-using the States considerable resources - may see the continuation of their good fortune in a country where the political high and mighty believe deeply in Astrology. Who will see fortune smiling on them and who will see "stars" will be determined in about 5 weeks from now in the beautiful and calm island once known as the Pearl of the Indian Ocean - but now no more than an Island of Tears.

Monsoon Arts

The power of blue colour

Blue is the most tranquilizing color. It calms tense subjects and increases feelings of well-being and Blue may be a bit too calming for most learning environments. The Colour Psychology of Blue is described as a favourite colour by many people and is the colour most preferred by men. Blue is one of the most popular colours, but it is one of the least appetizing. Some weight loss plans even recommend eating your food off of a blue plate. Blue is often used to decorate offices because research has shown that people are more productive in blue rooms. Blue rarely occurs naturally in food aside from blueberries and some plums and create feelings of sadness or aloofness and also lower the pulse rate and body temperature and how blue is used in language: blue moon, blue Monday, blue blood, the blues, and blue ribbon. For blue colour your brain releases eleven neurotransmitters that relax the body, and may result in a reduction of temperature, perspiration, and appetite.

The colour of the sky, ocean, sleep, twilight is blue. Blue is the coolest colour and Blue is the calming colour. The ancient Egyptians used lapis lazuli to represent heaven. Blue is symbolizes the Virgin Mary. A pure blue is the colour of inspiration, sincerity and spirituality. Blue is often the chosen colour by conservative people. That makes it a wonderful colour to use in the home, especially for babies. Blue is so soothing that is a good choice for pyjamas. Dark blue is the colour of truth and moderation and Wednesday's colour is blue. Blue iris means your friendship is very important to me. Blue gemstones to wear to feel calm are blue sapphire and blue topaz.

Blue is the least "gender specific" colour, having equal appeal to both men and women and as the collective colour of the spirit, it invokes rest and can cause the body to produce chemicals that are calming; however not all blues are serene and sedate. Electric or brilliant blues become dynamic and dramatic, an engaging colour that expresses exhilaration.

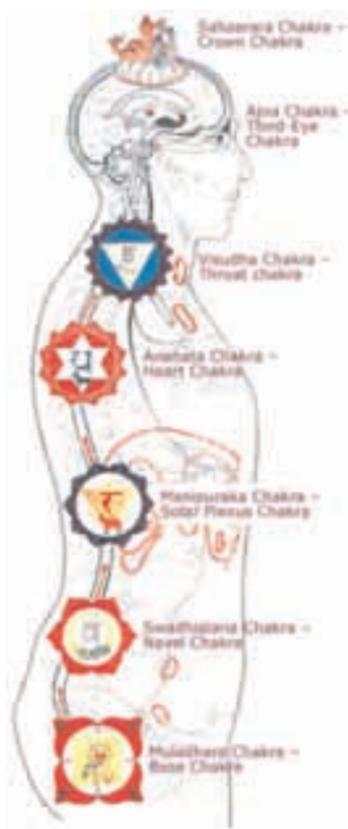
The good way to understand the energy of the colour blue is blue allows us to look beyond and increase our perspective outward. Blue contains a cool vibration that is helpful to communication and gives a feeling of distance. Artists use it to show perspective.

Using blue to relax will encourage feelings of communication and peace. You can put some blue in life when you want. Blue open the flow of communication, broaden your perspective in learning new information and solitude and peace.

The vibration if blue can be used to open energy flow where it is blocked and calm and relaxation to counteract chaos or agitation.

Blue is a Mediterranean colour, one that reminds of the summer and the sea, a define mood booster. Interior designers started to use this colour in offices, day rooms and even to decorate summer gardens and kitchens.

People are more productive in blue rooms, focused and creative. Even sportsmen perform better in blue rooms. Blue in offices has a good impact on the attentiveness of the workers. Lovers of blue tend to be introverted. Blue generally symbolizes harmony, peace, healing and happiness, but it could have "dark" meanings too. Blue describes a happy personality, as the blue gets darker it becomes moody and



depressing, especially when it's not associated with "positive" colours.

According to ayurveda, the 5,000 year old traditional medicine of India, every colour has certain healing energies. By using colour therapy techniques when you are decorating your home or office, you bring those healing energies into your space and enhance or diminish certain qualities. Colour therapy is a form of holistic healing that has been used for thousands of years to treat physical and emotional issues.

Blue is related to the throat chakra in the ayurvedic system and is believed to be able to heal problems directly connected to the lungs and throat. Blue is used to improve communication through verbal expression and enhance artistic creativity. Blue is said to promote calming effects and relieve symptoms of high blood pressure, anxiety, insomnia and irritability.

Colour has vibrational level of high or low and will quickly create an experience of warmth or coolness and it is affect emotions and the senses, it may calm, energise or balance depending on what colours are used. Colour Healing is one of the most popular methods used for treating the Throat or Vishudda Chakra because Colour can be an effective and powerful therapy in colour healing and balancing the mind body and emotions. Vishudda Chakra is located at the throat and is associated with thyroid gland, lungs and respiratory system.

The colour of the chakra normally a gel of the opposite or complimentary colour is used by colour therapists for a shorter period of time to balance the colour energies. The complementary colour ray for blue is red. Throat Chakra is normally exposed to blue coloured lights for 12 to 15 minutes. Coloured lights can be done using healing lamps meant for this purpose which can be in the form of desk lamps, spot light etc.

Throat Chakra is said to enhance communication skills, increase will power and aid artistic expression. Blue is a calming colour that lowers blood pressure, lessens insomnia and eases anxiety and how blue colour therapy can effect the mind and body, and how to integrate blue into your home decorating.

Dr. Fonseka clinician
fricanada@gmail.com





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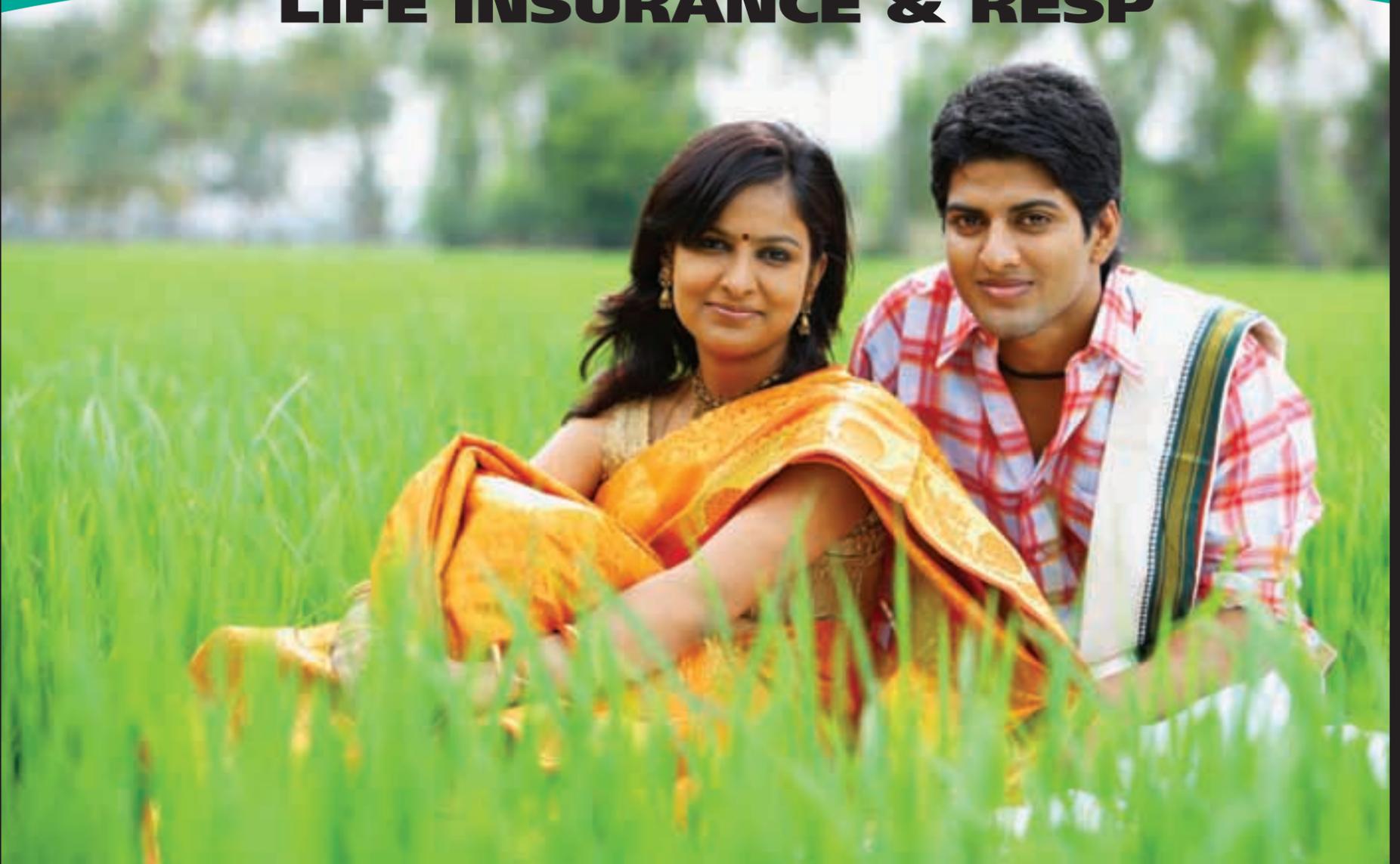
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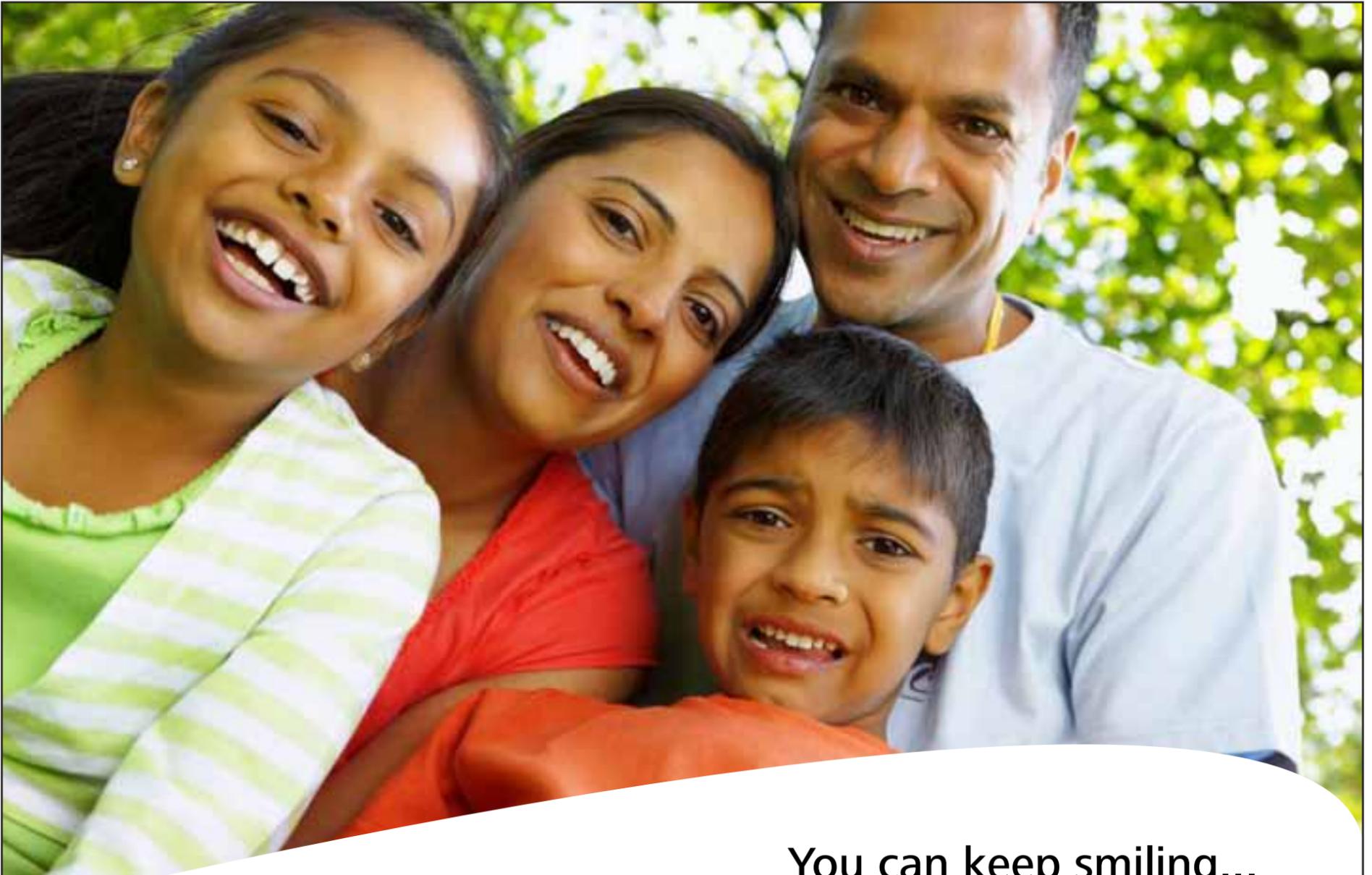
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HOLI Celebration By RANA at Hindu Sabha Temple

It is estimated that at least 2000 persons of Indian origin from all around GTA took part in the most colorful and Grand celebration of HOLI at Hindu Sabha Temple. The function was a Joint effort of Rajasthan Association of North America (Canada), popularly known as RANA and Hindu

Sabha Temple. Since last few years it has become the biggest HOLI celebration of all GTA. This was the third year when RANA, Canada organized this festival of Colour and brotherhood with Hindu Sabha Temple and its size is growing with the number of persons taking part and also enjoying this major festival of India.

The day long celebrations started at around 11.00 A.M on

Sunday, Feb 28th with Bhajans in the main Pooja Hall, followed by Lunch for all. The special HOLI festival drink Dhandai prepared with milk and Dry fruits was a great hit and enjoyed by most people.

Cultural program arranged by the youth of RANA and Hindu Sabha added lots of festive joy and fun to the occasion.

For the Indo Canadians living in Canada It is almost impossible

to have fun of celebrating HOLI with Colors in such a Cold temperature but in the warmth of big hall of Hindu Sabha people played with dry colors Gulal and had great fun like the famous BRIJ ki Holi.

RANA President Yogesh Sharma expressed his sincere thanks to Hindu Sabha Temple President Mr. Mahendra Gupta and Board of Directors for their generosity and open hearted sup-

port to enjoy and celebrate HOLI like it is done in India.

Event organizer Mahesh Gupta and D.P Jain of RANA wish to convey special thanks to all the volunteers and financial support contributors without which such a successful program was not possible.

Photos captured by: Bashir Nasir: 416-414-4213



Greater Toronto Job Fair - March 10th at the Metropolitan Centre

A Greater Toronto Job Fair with emphasis on Recruitment, Settlement and Career is to be held on March 10th at the Metropolitan Centre situated at 3840, Finch Avenue East, Toronto.

The following are the Fair features which are free of charge to the Public:

" Job Link Board-job postings from local employees and Resumes will be collected and will

be sent to prospective employers.

" One on one 10 minute Resume Review

" Career Presentations- Experts on different careers will be present to discuss the job market in Toronto.

" Meeting the Exhibitors - Meeting Employers, employment related service providers and career trainers in Toronto.

Admission to the Fair and Parking are free.

At a Press Conference held in connection with the Job Fair, Hon. Jim Karygiannis, M.P., Scarborough-Agincourt, Mr. Bill Redwood, Consultant and Mr. Thesa Theiventhiran, President of GTA Jobs & Careers addressed the Media. They explained in detail the purpose of the Fair and how it would be of assistance to job seekers.

Seen here are some pictures taken at the Press Conference.



Picture shows Hon. Jim Karygiannis (M.P. for Scarborough- Agincourt (Left), Mr. Thesa Theiventhiran (President, GTA Jobs & Careers (Centre) and Mr. Bill Redwood - Consultant (Right) holding the poster displaying the details of the Job Fair



Representatives from the Media covering the event

Photo Courtesy: Sivakumar

Is Canadian Banking System Really Sound?

Arun Senathirajah
ACIB, MBA (Banking Mgmt)

At the peak of financial market crisis in 2008, a survey by the World Economic Forum based in Switzerland has proclaimed Canada has the world's soundest banking system. Canada's banking industry, led by Royal Bank, CIBC, Scotiabank, TD Bank, Bank of Montreal and National Bank, was given a rating of 6.8, the best ranking of any banking system in the world. Banking systems of Sweden, Luxembourg, Australia and Denmark were ranked after Canada in the World Economic Forum's Global Competitiveness Report, released on October 08, 2008. The banking systems of United States scored 4.0. The World Economic Forum is a global non-profit foundation renowned for its annual meeting in Switzerland that brings together business leaders, politicians, intellectuals and journalists to discuss world issues. The report was cited by the Prime Minister Stephen Harper as proof that Canada's banks are the strongest in the world and need no government help. The US President Barack Obama mentioned 'Canada has shown itself to be a pretty good manager of the financial system in ways that we haven't always been here in the United States.'

Survey by the World Economic Forum

Twelve-thousand corporate executives around the world were interviewed on a number of questions and ranked banks around the world on a scale of one to seven -- one being insolvent and possibly in need of government assistance and seven being entirely healthy. In Canada 75 executives were questioned on the survey. It is interesting to note that the decision was taken on the basis of opinion polls, not based on facts and figures of the banking industry and not even customers were considered as the sample of the survey. Methodology used to come to this decision is neither used by banking regulators nor based on satis-

faction of the customers of these banks. There is no valid statistical evidence other than the opinions of the sample executives. The World Economic Forum released its annual Global Competitiveness Report, a dense compendium of statistics purporting to rank the competitiveness of various national economies across a number of categories, or pillars: infrastructure, innovation, labour market efficiency, and so on. Canada ranked 10th overall in 2008, up from 13th the previous year. The US is the number one in Global Competitiveness. The World Economic Forum did not collect valid data on each country's banking system - standards governing the capital adequacy of internationally active banks based on Basel II Accord, leverage ratios, loan-loss provisions, etc were not considered in this report. Are the statistics gathered for Global Competitiveness Report has no impact at all on banking system? Is it possible Canada ranking 10th in the Global Competitiveness Report could be put forward its banking system (backbone of an economy) as number one? Were the data collected suppressed for some reasons?

\$125 billion pumped into Canadian Banking System under Extraordinary Financing Framework (EFF)

Our Prime Minister Stephen Harper has trumpeted Canada's banks are the strongest in the world and need no need for Canadian government help. But where did the \$125 billion pumped out? Housing mortgage assets are heavily insured by the CMHC (Canada Mortgage Housing Corporation). Canadian government help has reduced the insured bank mortgage assets pools from the banks. Although CMHC was not under any liquidity pressure has also benefited by the actions of the government. Canadian Finance Minister Jim Flaherty has extended Ottawa's \$125 billion mortgage program designed to help banks emerge from the global financial crisis. The program is the federal gov-



ernment's largest emergency measure. When Harper government unveiled its 2009 budget, it agreed to purchase an additional \$50 billion in government-insured mortgages from Canada's major banks, bringing the total since the program was announced late last year to C\$125 billion. Under the US Treasury's TARP (Troubled Asset Relief Program) the US government has used about \$700 billion tax payers' money to bail out the failing banks. So, Canadian banks have weathered the storm better, although no any signal of failure similar to the subprime mortgage crisis that devastated the US financial system. So and so, is this 'Canadian banking system'? Extraordinary Financing Framework (EFF) was intended to counter the credit crunch by providing up to C\$200 billion in credit for consumers and businesses through the banking system by purchasing the mortgage assets. It was alleged Canadian banks are just sitting on the new cash like the proverbial goose. "There is no evidence of more credit becoming available," says analyst Michael Goldberg with Toronto-based Desjardins Securities Inc. "In fact loan growth in the economy is slowing."

No Canadian Government Impose Banks to Lend Low-Income Households

Under Community Reinvestment Act American banks are obliged to extend mortgages to low-income households. Canadian

banks have neither such legal imposition nor is there any Canadian equivalent to the government-sponsored enterprises known as Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, which by their own strenuous efforts to provide funding for subprime mortgages did so much to bring the system to ruin. Finally, in important ways Canadian banks are actually less heavily regulated than the American and discretionary based system regardless of the needy communities.

Asset-Backed Commercial Paper (ABCP) Market

The banks also played a small but pivotal role in the collapse of the asset-backed commercial paper (ABCP) market in Canada. What turned a debacle into a full-blown crisis was the Canadian banks' refusal to honour their commitments to the issuers of these products to be the buyers of last resort. It was not a prudent exercise for a national banking system earning the hatred of the corporate clients.

Regulations

The Office of the Superintendent of Financial Institutions doesn't set out a fixed formula for what it considers adequate provision against loan losses, for instance, but it knows it when it sees it - and has the power to step in to compel banks to make the necessary adjustments. While US and leading European banking systems are more risk-prone Canadian



Banking system is risk-averse. US leading bankers are mainly in investment banking and more greedy and took more risks than warranted. Canadian banking is mainly more conventional and well capitalized. As per Basel I Capital Accord - 1988 - an agreement among the world's leading monetary and banking authorities - required banks to hold no less than \$4 in 'Tier 1 Capital' (common equity, published reserves and equivalents) for every \$100 they lent out, and where U.S. regulators consider a bank well-capitalized at a 6%, Canadian regulators set the bar at 7%. The actual capital of the Canadian banks has consistently been around 10%, well in excess of the regulatory standard. Perhaps of greatest importance, Canadian banks are federally chartered, and nationally based.

Deregulations

In 1999 reforms lifted the long-standing ban on American banks owning other types of financial institutions. Canadian banks were free to do the same. After the 1987 deregulation bill, most of the country's large investment houses were swallowed up by the Big Five. American banks' heavy reliance on securitization, that is, on selling mortgages to third parties. Since the purpose of securitization was to get these assets off the banks' books, tighter capital requirements might have simply spurred even more securitization. American bankers are greedy of profits, playing around tighter regulatory interventions and securitization craze was driven in part by banks' efforts to diversify their asset base beyond their immediate surroundings, so their traditionally greater reliance on commercial paper markets for funds, as opposed to deposit-taking, owed much to legal restrictions on the interest rates they could pay depositors.

The Canadian system amounts to confining banks to the traditional deposit taking and lending, untainted by any suspicion of investment banking, currency hedging, or engagement in other risky derivative products. For another, there was no deregulation of American banks in the last decade, or certainly none that had anything to do with their willingness to issue subprime mortgages. Nor was there any regulation to prohibit it here; indeed, subprime mortgages make up about 7% per cent of the Canadian market.

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Gents: Kurta, suits
MAY 8TH 2010 @ 6.30 PM
\$50
Venue: Swagat Banquet Hall 415 Hood Road Markham - Tel: 905-475-5870 "

Durham Tamil Association Celebrates Heritage Month

" No Culture can Live if it attempts to be exclusive" - Mahatma Gandhi

By Siva Sivapragasam

Multiculturalism is the hallmark of the success of Canada and the popularity of the national mosaic that is woven into its fabric.

This was evident recently when the Durham Tamil Association participated in the Heritage month celebrations with other communities and organized by the City of Pickering at the Pickering Town Centre. Hundreds of visitors who turned for the

event were able to watch and enjoy the colorful Bharatha Natya dance recitals performed and the show-casing of cultural talents by the Durham region Tamil youth. The dance items were performed by pupils of the Bharathalaya Dance Academy.

The Durham Tamil Association is a non-profit organization formed with the fundamental goal of providing an opportunity for Durham Tamil Youth and adults to unite and participate in activities

that enhance Tamil culture. The vision of the Association is to enable the youth of the region to be pioneers in any profession they choose and be a role model in caring for elders and assist the needy in the community and homeland. One of the fund-raising events organized by the Association was the collection of about \$ 23,000 for a much-needed Anesthetic machine for the Jaffna Hospital. The machine was sent last year and is now func-

tioning at the Jaffna Hospital. The Association is also hoping to give awards to some of the successful youth and elders for their contribution to the community and to their outstanding achievements.

The DTA enters its tenth year of founding this year and is stepping up its activities this year to co-incide its tenth year celebrations. Among the highlights of the activities of the Associations are: Youth Festival during the summer season where the youth are pro-

vided an opportunity to showcase their talents, Annual Dinner-Dance, Children's Christmas party, Sports events and providing free Tamil classes for children. The free Tamil classes are conducted on a weekly basis and those interested in its participation can contact Mr. Kandiah at 416 994 1416. The Association is also planning to provide programmes for the Tamil Seniors of the Durham region which comprises Pickering, Ajax, Whitby and Oshawa.



Young kids of DTA in traditional PATTU PAAVADAI



Harmony Movement Director Mr. Roland Rutland with DTA Youth □□



City Of Pickering Councillor Mr. David Pickles with DTA Youth



Mayor Of Pickering Mr. Dave Ryan with DTA Youth □□



A glimpse of the HERITAGE DAY CELEBRATION at THE PICKERING TOWN CENTRE



Selvi LAXANA MOHANACHANDRAN of BHARATHALAYA DANCE ACADEMY performed a classical dance on behalf of DTA

Quebec Trade Mission solidifies Concordia University's Ties to India

The President and Vice-Chancellor of Concordia University, Judith Woodsworth, recently returned from a most productive trade mission to India. Woodsworth was a member of the Quebec trade delegation, led by Premier Jean Charest, which has spent the past week travelling to three cities in India.

The increasing importance India has for Quebec is illustrated by the fact that Charest's first trade mission to India, in 2006, involved 30 delegates, compared to the 130 public and private sector participants on this year's trip.

Concordia's focus on this trip was to renew or extend educational and R&D collaborations in five distinct areas of expertise: aerospace engineering, information and communication technologies, life sciences, sustainability, and energy and the environment. Woodsworth is particularly proud to have signed partnership agreements with eight educational institutions in India, including TERI (The Resource and Energy Institute) University, the National Institute of Design, Indian Institute of Management, Bangalore, and VIT (formerly the Vellore Institute of Technology) University.

"I am delighted to have expanded Concordia's partnerships with new institutions - in addition to renewing current partnerships - where our expertise will undoubtedly play a key role in significant research findings", says Woodsworth. "Under our agreement with TERI, to take just one example, our researchers will be working on climate change, biofuels and sustainable business, all recognized areas of strength here at Concordia."



Judith Woodsworth
President and Vice-Chancellor;
Concordia University

Other agreements facilitate mutually rewarding activity for partner institutions which are now linked to experts in Concordia's John Molson School of Business, the faculties of Fine Arts, Engineering and Computer Science, and Arts and Science, notably through its Centre for Structural and Functional Genomics.

The partner institutions are located in several states across India. This latest visit to India allowed Woodsworth the opportunity to meet with a number of Concordia alumni. They clearly take pride in their Concordia experience and share with Woodsworth their hopes of building an association of alumni in India, along the lines of alumni chapter in locations such as Hong Kong.

A closer look at Concordia University's faculty, students and alumni further illustrates its deep connections to India. Fully 5% of Concordia's full-time teaching and research faculty were born in India. As well, the number of students with Indian citizenship has fluctuated between 300 and 350 for the last few years.

Quebec's Vehicle Emission Law Is Disputed

"Although introduced with little fanfare in late December, Quebec's tough new light vehicle emissions regulation has become a political hot potato in Canada after the federal environment minister, Jim Prentice, denounced the rule as "counter-productive" last week in Calgary while laying out Canada's down-graded emission targets," writes John Lornic, in The New York Times' environmental blog "Green Inc."

The "Green Inc." further said: Quebec is the first Canadian province to adopt California-style emission rules, joining 14 American states, including Vermont, Maine and New York. They came into effect Jan. 14.

With abundant hydro-electric power, about 40 percent of the province's greenhouse gas emissions come from the transportation sector.

The province's voters have traditionally seen themselves as environmentally conscious and strongly support such precedent-setting policies, notes the veteran pollster Christian Bourque, senior partner at Léger Marketing in Montreal. "It's something that would be very popular in Quebec."

Under the terms of the regulation, leading automobile manufacturers have six years to phase in emission reductions of 24 to 37 percent, depending on vehicle size.

A penalty of up to \$5,000 fee

Butterflies Go Free takes flight on the wings of biodiversity

Montréal's Nature Museums are pleased to announce the 13th edition of Butterflies Go Free presented by the Insectarium in the Main Exhibition Greenhouse at the Botanical Garden from February 18 to April 25. During this International Year of Biodiversity, Charles-Mathieu Brunelle, director of Montréal's nature museums, invites the public to "contemplate the beauty, fragility and tremendous diversity of butterflies throughout the world in order to develop a relationship with nature and learn more about it, understand it and protect it."

Anne Charpentier, director of the Insectarium, said "On the Wings of Biodiversity" was chosen as this year's theme because it "showcases our planet's fascinating history and explains the life cycle of butterflies, their co-evolution with plants and their adaptation strategies." Did you know that moths first appeared on earth 190 million years ago and butterflies first appeared 70 million years ago? Dinosaurs have disappeared, but butterflies are still here!

Biodiversity, an endless source of wonder

Butterflies Go Free invites you to learn more about 50 to 75 butterfly species from around the globe. Of the some 1.8 million plant and animal species inventoried to date, two-thirds of them are insects, and close to 175,000 of that number are butterflies. And since some estimates suggest that there may be as many as half a million of them, it means that there are still thousands more species to be discovered. Given that the species extinction rate has increased a thousandfold in recent years as a result of human activities (climate

change, pollution, species overexploitation, etc.), it is vital that we act to protect biodiversity.

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Monarch



Banded Orange

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Amazingly adaptable

Butterflies (or Lepidoptera) appeared on Earth back in the days of the dinosaurs. They have since developed features allowing them to adapt to a vast range of conditions and environments. For instance, some of them feed on nectar from orchids with very deep nectaries, while others sport wing colours and patterns that protect them from predators. Co-evolution, or the way a particular butterfly has adapted specifically to a given plant - whether it feeds on it or pollinates it - has also led to the emergence of new species. These fascinating butterfly species are of special interest

said Mr. Prentice was spreading "false information" about the policy, The Montreal Gazette reported. A spokeswoman for Quebec's ministry of sustainable development, environment and parks declined to comment.

Quebec's French-language media has strongly supported the premier, according to Virginie Lambert Ferry, a climate and energy campaigner with Greenpeace Canada's Montreal office, who said the controversy has become "absolutely huge here."

Following Canada's much-criticized support for Alberta's oil sands during the Copenhagen climate conference, other observers questioned the attack.

"It is unprecedented that a federal environment minister would go after a provincial partner for being



to scientists, to many cultures and to some communities which operate butterfly breeding farms as a way of protecting their often threatened habitat.

Butterflies Go Free

The event presented in the Botanical Garden's Main Exhibition Greenhouse, with temperatures of up to 29°C, holds plenty of splendid surprises for visitors, whether you're already a butterfly fan or simply curious. Come get a close-up look at some 1,500 butterflies and moths from England, Canada, Costa Rica, Ecuador, the United States, Indonesia and elsewhere. Montréal's Nature Museums invite you to enjoy a unique experience combining science and emotion!

too zealous in its efforts to green its economy," wrote The Toronto Star's national affairs columnist Chantal Hébert.

Much smaller markets than Quebec's have adopted tough vehicle emission rules. Vermont's population, for example, is only one-twelfth of Quebec's.

Five years ago, when Vermont lawmakers were looking to adopt the California regulations, auto industry lobbyists warned state regulators that the rules would "impose substantial costs on consumers" and restrict the market for new vehicles without creating meaningful improvements to air quality.

Since the rules have changed, however, there have been no obvious signs of consumer revolt.



**MONSOON
FEATURE**

I was 46 when I left India and came to Canada. Till the 46th year of my life I had rarely heard the word 'Recession'. But when I came here in 1996, in the very first week I got acquainted with the word 'recession' as that period was the recession time too.

Recession and your Family Budget

Wherever I used to go for job hunting, the only word which used to screw my ears was - recession, recession and recession. I used to say that till I was in India I had seldom heard anything about this ghost. A ghost, who reincarnates almost every ten years, and shatters the econ-

omy of the most part of the business world.

During my 14 years of stay in this country, the present course of recession is the second one. Last year when I visited India, would you believe that it was my first time when while chatting about trade and business in India, the

BUSINESS -1

word recession came into our discussions. But practically, recession was no where visible in the Indian markets.

There is another significant factor which we cannot leave aside. A decade before the dawn of the 21st century, multinational companies were not in that big number that they could affect the economy of India. But, in the present times, India is a big name in the international trade market. Outsourcing and international trade brought a big change there and words like recession are now heard there too.

Not only India, China is also an example to support my argument. Until China was almost invisible in the international trade market because of her Iron Curtain policy, was sitting aloof. But since China started marking its presence in the international trade market, many other countries lost their existence though at one time they were the big bosses. I am not singing songs for India or China. My point of view is that if you go and talk to the people of India or China, they are not crying or scared of recession. They are living as they used to live before and always. This is mostly seen in the North America and Europe, at the interval of every ten years, the whole economic environment gets covered by the dark clouds of recession.

I would again like to stress here that my point of view for writing this article is not to make a comparative study of economic conditions between different countries nor that I want to praise one country and condemn the other. This is an effort to find a way how the family budget can be organized so that at the time of economic crises the families may find themselves secured. No one should sleep hungry and no needs to abandon property and run away. Must remember - each time when we go to visit our home country, we are to go there as victorious, not as the failed ones.

Thank God, the recession period is at its end position now. Economy is developing, job market is getting stronger, businesses are improving and very specially the real estate market is booming, which is a very good sign. But there is no reason to be much happy. This is not the climax of the story, this is just the second part after the interval.

Dear readers, if you find that the subject matter under discussion in this article is for the benefit of each one of us, let us find



By Prof. Saran Ghai

out a solution together to help organize our family budgets during such economic troubles. Everyone should understand that recession is not a natural disaster but it is caused by man. And if it is caused by man, its solution has to come from man's mind. Also, do not leave everything for the economists. Although they actually have to be blamed for the entire situation still it is not a few but each one of us who becomes the victim of this major economic disaster.

We have to find out the solution by our own efforts. Do not hide but discuss with others and try to find out how the other person managed his budget.

If you think the subject is worth discussion, would you like to be a part of the discussion. If yes, then tell us-

1. How did you manage your family budget during this course of recession?
2. If you could not manage the budget, what efforts did you make?
3. What was the percentage of your success?
4. What would you suggest the readers to do?

(The information you will provide will be used only for the cause of fighting the recession. Your name and personal information will not be disclosed.) If you think you should join the campaign, do open your computers and e-mail us at businesschambers@gmail.com or call us at (905) 794-4488.

- Prof. Saran Ghai

Prof. Saran Ghai is the President of Universal Business Chambers. This Business Chamber is engaged in extending its services in order to help the new comers to Canada and others. For further information or membership of UBC, visit www.universalbusinesschambers.com. UBC is making efforts to establish a Library which will contain reading material exclusively connected to Business, Trades, Professions and Services. Those who would like to contribute books, CDs, DVDs, magazines or support by cash, please contact: businesschambers@gmail.com

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New Bursaries Will Help Newcomers Get Training and Experience

A new education bursary is being introduced to help newcomers get the local training they need to find a job in their field.

The Ontario Bridging Participant Assistance Program will help cover the cost of short-term college and university bridge training programs that are not covered under the Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP). The 19-month pilot project is expected to help more than 1,800 newcomers enter bridge

training programs in high-demand fields.

The targeted, fast-track and flexible training provided by these programs helps skilled newcomers get jobs that match their education, skills, and experience. These programs also offer work experience such as internships, clinical placements, job shadowing and mentorships, as well as employment services such as interview preparation, labour market information and job

search skills.

Bridging Programs was approved for New Bursary recently.

Ontario is introducing a new education bursary of up to \$5,000 per person to help cover the cost of short-term college and university bridge training programs that are not covered under the Ontario Student Assistance Program.

Currently, 13 programs in eight colleges and universities are approved under the bursary program.

Christie Digital honoured for work with immigrants

By Chuck Howitt, Record staff

WATERLOO REGION - The company has gone out of its way to hire immigrants as interns and kept some of them on as permanent staff. Staff members have acted as mentors to other immigrants during the difficult early months in a new country.

Other employees sit on a steering committee planning programs to help immigrants find jobs and encourage other employers to hire internationally trained individuals.

"Walking through their facility, it very quickly reminds you that we're really a United Nations," said Peter McFadden, executive director of the Waterloo Region Immigrant Employment Network.

For these and other efforts to assist immigrants, Christie Digital has won the inaugural Waterloo Region Immigrant Employment Network Award. It was handed out Wednesday night during the annual Greater Kitchener Waterloo Chamber of Commerce Business Excellence Awards at Bingemans.

"They are a very solid and strategic partner," McFadden said of Christie Digital, which makes digital projectors for movie theatres and projection systems for



Gerry Remers, chief executive officer of Christie Digital, won the Michael R. Follett Community Leader Award at the Greater Kitchener Waterloo Chamber of Commerce Business Excellence Awards Wednesday night. Christie Digital also won the Waterloo Region Immigrant Employment Network Award.

large-audience venues, business presentations and the like at its plant on Wellington Street North in Kitchener.

Christie Digital also took home a second award. Chief executive officer Gerry Remers was the winner of the Michael R. Follett Community Leader Award for his work with organizations such as Communitech, the United Way of Kitchener-Waterloo and Area, the Leadership Waterloo Region Advisory Council and the Arts Dean's Advisory Council at the University of Waterloo.

Other award winners were:

Business of the Year (more than 20 employees): The

Kitchener office of the national law firm, Gowling Lafleur Henderson LLP. Cited for its legal expertise in a diverse range of services including intellectual property, infrastructure, life sciences, financial services, technology and manufacturing.

Business of the Year (less than 20 employees): The Kitchener franchise of Anytime Fitness, located on Victoria Street North. Co-ed facility honoured for its club design, marketing, community involvement and business strategies.

Environment Award: Stemmler Meats and Cheese, a Heidelberg business founded in 1985. Honoured for new technology and up-to-date practices in refrigeration, recovery systems, water treatment, food safety and recycling.

Innovation Award: University of Waterloo School of Pharmacy. Located in downtown Kitchener, the school is the only new one built in Canada in the past 20 years. It brings together education, diagnostics, treatment, research and commercial applications of pharmaceuticals.

Volunteer of the Year Award: Mandy Dennison of Research In Motion. Cited for her work as vice-chair of the chamber's young

Bringing home the gold



Olympic gold medalists in ice dance Scott Moir and Tessa Virtue, are greeted with a roar from fans and family as they arrive home at the airport in London, Ontario on Tuesday. The medal-winning skaters are former members of the Kitchener.



professionals committee and her implementation of a social media strategy at the chamber.

Workplace Training Award: Grand River Hospital. Honoured for its weekday and weekend workshops, leadership training program and learning management system featuring in-house courses offered online.

Young Entrepreneur of the Year Award: Kurt Wissent, managing director and owner of a Premier Homecare Services franchise on Bridgeport Road East in

Waterloo. Serving Waterloo Region and Guelph, the franchise provides non-medical homecare to people wishing to live independently in their own homes.

Non-Profit/Charitable Award: Kitchener and Waterloo Community Foundation. Launched in 1984, the longtime foundation was cited for building local endowment, addressing needs through grants and providing leadership on key community issues.

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Century 21 Innovative Realty Inc. Brokerage & Clinicare Medical Centre Opens under one Roof

A new Real Estate Brokerage with state of the art facility and innovative technology named Century 21 Innovative Realty Inc. to serve the needs of a family, and a new Family Medical Centre named Clinicare Medical Centre were opened recently in a strategic location situated near the Markham Rd. and Finch Avenue intersection.

Friends, well-wishers, clients and Agents with their families were present to grace the occasion of the opening of the two

new offices.

Real Estate Broker of Record Mr. Sameem Mohamed, who is also an experienced professional engineer, and his wife Dr. Roubiya Mohamed, who is a family physician were present to receive the guests who attended the opening of their new offices.

The new Real Estate office will provide weekly/monthly sales training and will have the facility of in-house Mortgage Specialists and Lawyers for clients. The new Real Estate office will be offering

limited time commission split for the first 25 in each of their plans. The office is equipped with state of the art facility and innovative technology. The new office is also hiring new and experienced Agents.

The Medical office under the name of Clinicare Medical Centre is a Family and Walk-in. Clinic and will be run by Dr. Roubiya Mohamed who is an experienced and qualified Family Physician. The Medical Centre is fully equipped with a modern Lab and

other clinical facilities. Among the services provided at the Medical Centre are-; Lab & Ultrasound, Cardiology Services, Plastic Surgeon Consulting, Diabetic Nurse Education, Gynecology Procedures and Vascular Nurse & Ankle Brachial Index Testing. The Centre will be open seven days a week and also serves as a Walk-in-Clinic too.

The Medical Centre also welcomes new patients. There is also a Pharmacy-"Clinicare Discount Pharmacy" adjoining the Doctor's

office to facilitate patients obtaining their prescriptions immediately. The two new offices are situated at 2250, Markham Rd, Scarborough, near the Markham Rd. and Finch Avenue intersection.

Guests present at the function of the opening of the new offices were entertained with delicacies and nourishing refreshments. Seen here are some pictures taken at the Opening.

Photos by:
Gnane's Digital Touch



Sameem with Agents



Sameem Family



Sameem with Staff



Sameem family and staff cutting cake in celebration



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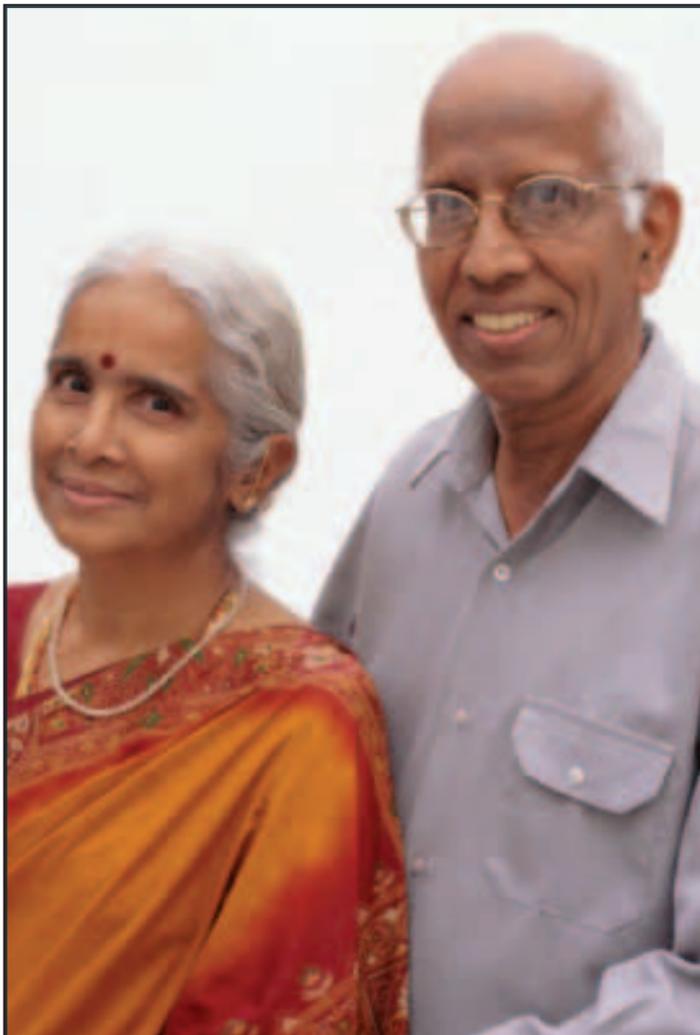
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