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A parfait media publication

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Tamil Civilians: Who will help alleviate the plight of civilians? Will it be Canada, UN or any other international force?

by **Krishni Loganathan, B.A. Hons**

The civil war in Sri Lanka has been the major topic in many parts of the world in the recent weeks due to the humanitarian crisis that has led civilians to be caught in the crossfire. The need to protect civilians immediately is the underlying purpose that the Tamil Diaspora is struggling to achieve. An independent Tamil homeland and political self determination is in the hearts and minds of the Tamil community; however at the present time protecting civilians is the number one priority, community activists say. According to many news and reports of humanitarian organizations, it is stated that in the Vanni

region there are almost 190,000 civilians between the remaining Tamil Tiger fighters and the advancing government forces.

Tamil community members say the war must be halted and these civilians must be allowed to get back to their homes and livelihoods instead of the Sri Lankan government run internment camps. They are also calling for political negotiations.

In a recent interview with Indian TV IBN, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) political chief, B. Nadesan has said that Sri Lanka government is attempting to continue with the uprooting of Tamils from their own land under various guises.

Contd. in page 4



War in Sri Lanka main issue in Tamil Nadu Elections next month

By **Siva Sivapragasam**

The ongoing war in Sri Lanka and the suffering of the civilian population in Vanni will certainly dominate the political scene in Tamil Nadu when elections are held next month.

The current ruling party, namely the DMK under the lead-

ership of Chief Minister Karunanidhi is facing criticism from the opposition parties that he has not done enough to pressurize the Central Government in requesting the Sri Lankan Government for a cessation of hostilities to free the civilians trapped in the war zone. Among his allies who have now crossed

over to Jayalalitha's AIDMK are Vaiko Gopalaswamy and Dr. Ramadoss of the PMK.

Karunanidhi is faced with a strong opposition critical of him in dealing with the Sri Lankan issue. The plus point for Karunanidhi is his alliance with the ruling Congress Party.

Although there is stiff opposition to Karunanidhi regarding his tackling of the Sri Lankan issue, Tamil Nadu has taken vast strides on the economic front during his rule. Development has been fast and large scale investment has been pouring into Tamil Nadu during the recent years. The Congress Government is trying to

rescue Karunanidhi from the criticisms of the Opposition over the Sri Lankan issue by sending letters to him from Congress Party President Sonia Gandhi and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh that Sri Lankan President Rajapakse has promised speedy political solution through power devolution.

Next month's elections in Tamil Nadu is certainly a "Do or Die battle" for Chief Minister Muthuvel Karunanidhi. Perhaps this will be the last elections for him when his political fate will be decided in the evening of his political career.

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Petition presented to Paul Calandra, MP

A Petition was presented to Constituency Office on Markham Main Street at 11:00AM

Wednesday March 18th by Markham Councillor Logan Kanapathi and Regional Councillor Gordon Landon.

Canada has the largest community of Tamils outside of Sri Lanka. It is estimated there are 300,000 Tamils in GTA. This represents a significant voting bloc if this group felt they were getting significant support from a political party.

The situation in Sri Lanka is unacceptable to a Country like Canada. The Tamils in North East of Sri Lanka are systematically being eliminated by the Central Government. The Central Government has refused observers from the UN and frustrating agencies like the Red Cross from getting essential aid to Tamils who have been driven out of their homes.

It is essential that neutral observers are allowed in now, to stop the genocide that is taking place. This is involving young children and women. Regardless of

the arguments about the LTTE, there is no argument that justifies the genocide taking place.

We ask the Canadian Government to demand an immediate ceasefire, with conditions, of the Tamils. Immediately this takes place that Canadian observers are put in place to get needed food, water and medicine to endangered Tamils.

The Canadian Government works with Sri Lanka Government to resettle the displaced people in appropriate accommodations in Sri Lanka.

The United Nations and Red Cross and other international agencies are brought into Sri Lanka to assist the Canadian and Sri Lanka Governments.

That Paul Calandra set up an advisory Tamil committee (Logan Kanapathi and Gordon Landon are willing) in Markham to help to advise him on what further actions need to be taken.

Finally that international press is allowed back into Sri Lanka to report on the progress of protecting Tamils as they are resettled.

Immigration wait times improve in 2008

Canada has reversed a decades-long trend toward longer immigration wait times, with prospective newcomers having their applications processed 12 per cent faster last year.

The 2008 figures from Citizenship and Immigration show 80 per cent of applications were processed within 33 months – a four-month improvement from 2007.

The government cites the snail's pace in dealing with applications as a factor that leads educated, highly mobile immigrants to choose other countries over Canada.

But critics say the modest dip in processing times does nothing to make Canada a more attractive destination.

Wait times remain longer than they were in 2004, and business-class immigrants from some countries need to wait more than seven years to have their applications accepted or denied.

Still, Immigration Minister Jason Kenney says the tide has turned.

"This is a huge development," Kenney said in an interview.

"It's been at least two

decades – a generation – since waiting times went down rather than up. ... We're talking about highly skilled, economic immigrants and we're competing with places like Australia, New Zealand and the United States for the best and the brightest.

"We were telling people to wait in the queue for five years. Where do you think the most competitive people are going to go – if they have to wait five years to come to Canada, versus six months for Australia?"

Only recently, he says, his New Zealand counterpart took a look at Canada's backlog numbers and offered to take some of those skilled workers off his hands.

But Kenney says Canada is only a few months slower and is closing the gap.

He credited the shift in part to \$109 million that helped hire visa workers, but also to legislative reforms and administrative changes.

Some of the files in Canada's bustling New Delhi office, for example, are now dealt with in relatively tranquil spots like Warsaw, Poland.

All this means Canada now processes old applications at least



as fast as it receives new ones to add to the pile.

The backlog in applications skyrocketed to 900,000 from only 40,000 in the early 1990s. As Canadian immigration workers struggled to keep pace, wait times rose.

But opponents aren't impressed. They point to a series of rough patches in the Conservatives' track record.

The processing times for family members actually went up in 2008 – 20 per cent for dependent children, and more than 25 per cent for spouses and partners.

Eighty per cent of spouses now have their cases processed within 11 months, up from eight months in 2007, while 80 per cent of children are now processed within a year, up from 10 months in 2007.



Landon and Logan speak up for Tamil community to Paul



Logan and Landon raise concerns



Paul Calandra accepting the Petition

Government of Canada Recognizes Efforts of Young Canadians to Combat Racism

The Government of Canada is honouring 53 young Canadians today for their efforts to combat racism. Eleven teams of students representing all regions of Canada are being recognized for their winning videos as part of the 2009 Racism. Stop It! National Video Competition.

Ten winning entries have been produced into 30-second public service announcements.

CBC/Radio Canada started airing these announcements on March 21, the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. The eleventh winning entry was recognized with the Public Choice Award, selected through voting on YouTube.

Royal Galipeau, Member of Parliament (Ottawa-Orleans), on behalf of the Honourable Jason Kenney, Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism, joined the award winners at the Canadian Museum of Civilization to celebrate their success.

More than 500 people attended the special ceremony.

"We are a country built on diversity and tolerance. These videos display to all that young Canadians understand the need to end racial discrimination," said Mr. Galipeau. "I would like to

extend my congratulations to each of the winners and to all those who submitted videos. It is heartening and inspiring to see young people taking a stand and demonstrating leadership on this important issue."

The winners include four teams from Winnipeg, two teams from Vancouver, and one each from Shelburne, NS, Chandler, QC, Calgary, AB, and Toronto. In most instances, each team of amateur film makers was made up of five students. There were two age categories (12-15 years and 16-20 years). An adult advisor supervised each of the video projects. In addition to students travelling to Ottawa to receive their certificates, each of their respective schools is being presented with a Panasonic Digital Camcorder.

A team representing the Chevaliers de Colomb of Gascons, QC, won the Public Choice Award. The Racism. Stop It! National Video Competition was initiated by the Government of Canada in 1996 and encourages young people, aged 12 to 20, from across Canada to produce a short video to express their points of view on eliminating racism. More than 1,200 students participated in a



total of 340 video submissions. An independent national panel selected the winning videos based on their originality, audiovisual quality, and the effectiveness of their anti-racism message.

Canada was one of the first countries to support the United Nations resolution making March 21 the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. This day was proclaimed in 1966 to commemorate the Sharpeville massacre of March 21, 1960, when police killed 69 South Africans participating in an anti-apartheid demonstration.

For more information on the National Video Competition, please visit <http://www.march21.gc.ca>

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the bees come uninvited". -
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(1836-1886)**

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From the Publisher's Desk ...

From words to reality, halting the war in Sri Lanka

Humanitarian agencies have reported of dire need for urgent medical supplies and infant feeding essentials.

Drinking water and food needs continue to be scarce. The people in the narrow strip of area in Mullaithivu, in Sri Lanka's North-East have dangerously taken refuge close to the sea shore.

Tamils around the world have been calling The United Nations and the leaders of the countries they live in to halt the war in Sri Lanka that is killing innocent Tamil civilians in the hundreds on a daily basis.

Several prominent social activists too have joined in calling to alleviate the suffering of the Tamil people by calling for an immediate ceasefire.

Indian author, Arundhati Roy, who won the Booker prize in 1997 for her novel The God of Small Things, recently said the horror

that is unfolding in Sri Lanka becomes possible "because of the silence surrounding it".

Regardless of who is at fault there, The Government of Sri Lanka or the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelem, the solution to what is going on in Sri Lanka cannot be solved by "ethnic cleansing and genocide", renowned author Arundhati Roy said in an interview with BBC.

Dr. Ellyn Shander, a humanitarian worker from Connecticut who travelled to Sri Lanka following the 2004 tsunami, has likened the Sri Lankan government's attacks on its Tamil citizens to other genocides such as those committed by the Nazis, former Cambodian leader Pol Pot and former Iraqi president Saddam Hussein.

Several world leaders and United Nations officials too have been calling for 'humanitarian

truce' and 'safe passage' for civilians etc., but no concrete action has been taking place with this regard on a serious manner with the Government of Sri Lanka.

Appeals have been made to Government of India primarily by the people of India and several political parties in Tamil Nadu.

A high ranking official of United Nations too has called on India to speak on "alarming right violation conditions" in the South Asian region.

"I encourage India to speak out on its own, as well as in concert with others, whenever the human rights agenda that it cherishes and seeks to pursue domestically becomes of concern elsewhere," UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay said.

In an address to the National Human Rights Commission in Delhi recently, she urged India "to continue to support freedom and

rights wherever they are at stake, and particularly regarding the alarming situations in its own region, such as those in Sri Lanka and Myanmar."

Yet for the powers of the world, the debate as who is right and wrong on the Tamil humanitarian crisis and even some questioning if the killings in Sri Lanka amount to "genocide" continue while thousands of innocent Tamil civilians continue to perish in Sri Lankan government artillery barrages.

The Monsoon Journal along with the Tamil diaspora around the world urges the leadership of United Nations and the world to put the words of humanitarian calls into action and bring about an unequivocal and determined way to enforce a ceasefire in Sri Lanka, to alleviate the plight of Tamil civilians.

Tamil Civilians: Contd. from page 1

He pointed out that Tamils have lived there for generations and are struggling to get their life back with their land with dignity and not be forcefully sent to other areas.

In order to protect the safety of the civilians a cease fire must be created on both sides to allow the civilians to safely retreat the war zone area. LTTE has expressed willingness for a truce but the Sri Lankan government has rejected the notion of a ceasefire which displays a lack of cooperation from President Mahinda Rajapakse's government.

The Tamil community outside of Sri Lanka are using various means to attain international pressure on the Sri Lankan government. Various social activists, political and non-governmental figures are brought into the picture to attain greater influence to the international community. They point out that there are many atrocities occurring in the north and east of Sri Lanka including a

large number of abductions and enforced disappearances that must be stopped and the perpetrators brought to justice.

Tamil Canadians along with several prominent Canadians are voicing for the Canadian government to take a greater role in the safety of Tamil civilians and Sri Lanka peace initiatives. "We need immediate action by our government," said NDP leader Jack Layton at a conference organized by the Canadian Human Rights Voice held in North York, Ontario on Friday Apr 3rd.

Parliamentarians from the three major Canadian political parties agreed on calling for a ceasefire in Sri Lanka at this conference, however Layton complained that only after other nations took a leadership role, did Canada come in and take a stand. Layton promised to push for another debate to address critical issues such as demanding a safe passage to be established in the war zone to allow civilians to

escape and aid into the area, for foreign journalists and independent international representatives be allowed in to monitor the situation, and for Canada to open its doors so families caught in the crossfire be permitted to reunite with relatives here.

There are many questions that are raised when dealing with this issue. It may be easy enough to remove the civilians from the war zone area but will this stop the war on Tamils? By forcefully relocating all of the civilians from this area, the Sri Lankan government will have an uncomplicated time in continuing to do the same and violate the rights of the rest of the Tamil population in the North and East parts of the country in a similar manner.

This does not in anyway mean to continue to keep the civilians in this war zone area, but it poses questions of a fading homeland that will no longer exist as the civilians are forced to move to other areas of the country. The Sri Lankan government is forcing the Tamil people to leave the homes and livelihoods as the armed

forces continue to move into these civilian areas. Once they are forced to flee from these areas, the Tamil population will no longer have a majority area that they can call their own.

A slow death for the Tamil people in Sri Lanka is evident from this action of forcing the reluctant populace to other areas; innocent Tamil civilians are being murdered in the process.

An international leader must step in and lead the way to a political resolution that can end this Tamil humanitarian crisis.

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Minister Kenney Celebrates Greek Independence Day

The Honourable Jason Kenney, Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism, issued the following statement recognizing Greek Independence Day:

"Greek Independence Day is a national holiday celebrated in Greece on March 25 to commemorate the 1821 Greek Declaration of Independence, making Greeks the first people of the Former Ottoman Empire to secure recognition as an independent nation.

"The annual celebration of Greek Independence Day coincides with the Annunciation of the Virgin Mary, one of the holiest days for the Greek Orthodox Christian Church.

"This event is a celebration of Hellenic identity and commemoration, through which all people of Hellenic descent can express their pride, and promote their culture, identity, and achievements to our civilization.

"For all Canadians, Greek Independence Day provides an excellent opportunity to reflect on the tremendous contributions that



the Greek community has made to this country's rich and diverse heritage.

"As Prime Minister Harper has said, 'Pluralism is the principle that binds our diverse peoples together.'

"As Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism, I join my voice to those of my fellow Canadians of Greek origin in celebrating this national day and I wish them a very happy Greek Independence Day."

Visitors from Croatia no Longer Require Visa to Come to Canada

Visitors from Croatia will no longer be required to obtain a temporary resident visa, Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism Minister Jason Kenney announced today.

"In Canada we have hundreds of thousands of people with Croatian ancestry," said Minister Kenney. "This new change means that people wanting to visit their family or come as tourists to take in the sights of this country are able to do so without a visa."

In 2008, 3,699 temporary res-

ident visas were issued to citizens of Croatia to come to Canada.

The Government of Canada conducted a comprehensive country review of Croatia, including a technical visit in December 2008. Visa policy decisions are based on a country-by-country assessment of a number of criteria such as socio-economic profile, immigration issues, travel documents, safety and security issues, border management, human rights, and bilateral relations.

"Removing the visa require-



ment will facilitate travel for Croatian citizens to Canada and will help improve ties between our two countries" said Minister Kenney.

By law, all visitors to Canada require a temporary resident visa, except citizens of countries where an exemption has been granted. For a complete list of countries and territories whose citizens require a visa, please visit CIC's website at www.cic.gc.ca/english/visit/visas.asp.

Karygiannis again raises concerns about Immigration Processing Times

The Honourable Jim Karygiannis, Member of Parliament for Scarborough-Agincourt, is again expressing his concern with the Harper government's handling of immigration applications.

"The numbers for 2008 are out and we see the same pattern - processing times for certain groups of immigrants is increasing," said Mr. Karygiannis. "It started in 2006 with an overall increase of 20% in processing times, 2007 brought us another 7%, last year it was skilled workers who bore the brunt - up 53%. This year, Harper and his Citizenship and Immigration Minister, Jason Kenney, have targeted families - dependent chil-

dren processing times up 20% and spousal processing times up 37.5%."

The Department of Citizenship and Immigration posts, on its website, the Statistical Information with respect to the number of months it will take to finalize immigrations applications for different application categories.

"Harper and Kenney tout that they firmly believe in 'family values'. However, their actions put this belief into serious question." Mr. Karygiannis commented. "I guess 'family values' are important if you are born in Canada, but if you have immigrated to Canada, you will just have to wait."

The Department of Citizenship



and Immigration statistics show that the largest increases in processing times are from Asia, South Asia, South America and Eastern Europe.

"This Minister just can't get his act together." Mr. Karygiannis further commented. "He keeps going from one crisis to another. Harper has got to either bring this Minister into line or get rid of him."

ONTARIO MOVES TO UPGRADE, EXTEND SCARBOROUGH RAPID TRANSIT LINE

McGuinty Government Building Better Transit for Commuters in Toronto

The Ontario government is moving forward with Scarborough RT upgrades and extension to improve public transportation, generate jobs and reduce greenhouse gas emissions and congestion.

The Scarborough RT project will rebuild and extend the existing RT and replace existing vehicles with modern higher-capacity cars. Commuters will have better connections to north-east Scarborough, Scarborough Centre and the rest of Toronto via the Bloor-Danforth subway line.

The Scarborough project is part of the Metrolinx Regional Transportation Plan's top 15 transit priorities. Subject to environmental approval, construction is expected to start in 2010 and be completed by 2015.

"We are moving quickly to build better public transit for commuters. Our investments in transit will generate jobs, stimulate the economy and improve the air we breathe."

- Jim Bradley, Minister of Transportation

"This is great news for not only the residents of Scarborough, but also to those who live outside Toronto proper, like Pickering and Durham Region, as construction of the rapid transit line will provide all commuters with improved public transit options." - Wayne Arthurs, MPP, Pickering-Scarborough East

"It is great to know that this provincial government is commit-



ted to public capital infrastructure spending and is financially supporting the City of Toronto Public transit expansion plan."

- Bas Balkissoon, MPP, Scarborough-Rouge River

"This reflects the McGuinty government's commitment to transit that is more reliable, accessible, and the rider's choice for those who use the Scarborough link to our transit system. It is an investment in infrastructure that will create more jobs for our community, have a positive impact on the environment and add a much needed upgrade to our entire transit system."

- Lorenzo Berardinetti, MPP, Scarborough Southwest

"This initiative will make commuting easier in the GTA. It will create much needed jobs, make public transportation more accessible, reduce pollution, improve our air quality and promote a healthier environment for all Ontarians."

- Margaret Best, MPP, Scarborough-Guildwood

"The Scarborough RT is an

essential element of Scarborough's social and business life. This is an important investment for Scarborough residents and business."

- Brad Duguid, MPP, Scarborough Centre

"Today's announcement means that commuters and businesses will have access to better transit and shorter commute times. Ontario is setting new standards for protecting the environment by tackling congestion."

- Gerry Phillips, MPP, Scarborough-Agincourt

The Spring 2009 Budget allocated \$9 billion for transportation projects.

Construction of the Scarborough RT would create about 14,000 jobs.

Since 2003, the McGuinty government has invested \$7.4 billion in public transit, including over \$2.5 billion in GO Transit. Since 2003, Toronto has received \$2.9 billion in transit capital and operating funding.

Contact: Scott Cavalier, Office of Brad Duguid, M.P.P., Scarborough Centre, 416-399-0203

Han Dong, Office of Gerry Phillips, hdong@liberal.ola.org.

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Council reaffirmed its commitment to the extension of the Yonge Subway from Finch Avenue in Toronto northbound on Yonge Street, ending at the Richmond Hill Centre located at Highway 7. They also endorsed the

Yonge Subway Extension Endorsed by Council

Environmental Assessment Project Report brought forward by the York Region Rapid Transit Corporation in support of the extension to the Richmond Hill Hub.

Three options were presented to Council last October with pros and cons evaluated for each as

outlined by Town staff. Council preferred Option C, as it will provide the Town with the best opportunity to establish an anchor hub for the greatest number of transportation modes anywhere in the GTA - York Region Transit, GO Transit, Viva, the future 407 transit way and the subway - and

that will facilitate the extension of the subway to 16th Avenue in future. This option will provide the best opportunity to utilize current and future planned transit facilities and corridors, too. Council strongly supports the extension of the subway to Richmond Hill, as it will provide for improved public transit access, more pedestrian-friendly community and environmental and economic benefits.

In June 2007, the Province

announced \$17.5 billion in funding for transit projects for the Greater Toronto Area and Hamilton. Move Ontario 2020, the Provincial Transit Plan, included funding for the extension of the Yonge subway to Richmond Hill. If approved, it is anticipated that the subway extension into the Town could be in full service by 2017. For more information, contact Italo Brutto, Commissioner, Engineering & Public Works, at (905) 771-2527.

Please bear with us for slowing Toronto traffic-Tamil Canadians

As the Sri Lanka military assault goes unabated, on Mar 16th thousands of Tamil Canadians formed their second human chain protest within six weeks to bring the plight of the suffering Tamil civilians to the attention of Canadians and the Government of Canada.

As many GTA news organizations headlined and conducted online polls the protests are having on the daily commuting of all Torontonians, several protesters appealed to bear the inconvenience.

Many Tamils Canadians are expressing frustration that the weeks of awareness campaigns, rallies and vigils are yet to alleviate the sufferings of the Tamil civilians. They say the war and deaths in Sri Lanka are causing

grief for every Tamil Canadian with family and friends in the conflict region in particular.

The Tamil Canadians are appealing Canada to help halt the war in Sri Lanka and also to send the civilians in the conflict zone urgently needed drinking water, food and medicinal relief supplies.

Many demonstrators waved Canadian flags and the red-and-yellow flags of Tamil Eelam, while some shouted slogans and carried signs calling for a separate Tamil state and for the Canadian government to reverse its designation of the rebel group as a terrorist organization. This aspect was markedly different from the last human chain rally of Jan 30th, 2009. During that rally the protesters only held placards highlighting the civilian plight only.

British celebrities, MPs endorse Mercy Mission to Vanni

A global appeal event for the "Mercy Mission," a ship carrying relief and medical supplies to Vanni, was held ON March 31st at the Royal Horseguards, UK, attended by several British Members of Parliament, celebrities to raise awareness of the humanitarian situation in Sri Lanka to the public, organizers of the event said. The event was sponsored by "Act Now" and several Tamil charities. A petition addressed to the President of Sri Lanka was signed by the attending MPs

and other celebrities, and the organizers said that the petition will be circulated to political leaders and other celebrities in US, Europe, Canada and Australia before the petition is sent to Colombo.

The UK-based Hindu Temples Group pledged to donate £200,000 to the mission, and presented a check for the initial payment of £50,000 at the event, attendees said. More details on www.vannimission.org or on www.actnow.info.

Government of Canada recognizes efforts of Toronto youth to combat racism

Five students from Toronto were recently honoured for their efforts to combat racism by the Government of Canada. The students from a Toronto Public school created the winning video in Ontario in the "Racism. Stop It!" National Video Competition.

This contest encourages young people, aged 12 to 20, from across Canada to produce a short video to express their points of view on eliminating racism. More than 1,200 students participated in this year's competition.

An independent national panel

selected ten winning videos based on their originality, audio-visual quality, and the effectiveness of their anti-racism messages. The eleventh winning entry was recognized with a Public Choice Award, selected through voting on YouTube. These winning entries were then edited into 30-second public service announcements. CBC Radio and Radio Canada started airing these announcements on March 21, the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.



Leaders Wives at G20 Summit pose for Photo

Picture shows the wives of world leaders who attended the G20 Summit Conference in London. The lady in saree is the wife of Indian Premier Manmohan Singh. This picture was taken when they went to the Royal Opera House in London

RICHMOND HILL REDUCES CONSUMPTION BY 27 PER CENT

Community heeds the call to conserve power on Earth Hour

The numbers are in and Richmond Hill had a phenomenal drop in its electricity consumption during Earth Hour 2009. Consumption by Richmond Hill residents dropped by a whopping 27 per cent or 43 megawatts on Saturday, March 28 between 8:30 and 9:30 p.m.

"We're thrilled with the amount of electricity Richmond Hill saved during Earth Hour. It's quite a jump from last year," said Mayor Dave Barrow.

Last year, Richmond Hill recorded a savings of 3.58 per cent. In support of Earth Hour 2009, the Town of Richmond Hill focused its energy on a public awareness and participation campaign. In addition to creating and distributing posters around the community, as well as publishing ads in the local

newspaper, staff also used the Town's Website to raise awareness about climate change and the fight against global warming. Community members were invited to let everyone know what they were doing in support of Earth Hour by filling out the online form. "We put out a call to our community, including residents, organizations and businesses and they responded," said the Mayor. "I want to congratulate our very environmentally conscious community and applaud their efforts in protecting and preserving our natural resources."

Richmond Hill is one of nine municipalities served by PowerStream. Other municipalities include Aurora, Barrie, Bradford West Gwillimbury, Essa (Thornton), Markham, New Tecumseth, Penetanguishene and Vaughan. This year, PowerStream

reported a 10 per cent energy reduction territory wide.

Richmond Hill's reduction rate was more than double the next closest municipality.

"We want the community to support us in our continued commitment to the environment by taking action every day, not just for one hour," said Mayor Barrow. "We invite residents to get involved in community clean up and tree planting events, practice water conservation and of course turn off the lights and other electrical appliances when they're not needed."

For more information on the Town's environmental initiatives or its Earth Hour 2009 program, visit the Town's Website at www.richmondhill.ca/environment.



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The Schizophrenia Society of Ontario (SSO) will host its annual Yoga-thon for Schizophrenia on May 16th, 2009 at the Fermenting Cellar in the Distillery District, 55 Mill Street, Toronto. The SSO has been holding this event for the past four years, bringing yoga enthusiasts together in a union of Karma and Hatha yoga to raise much needed funds for their Early Intervention Program.

The Yogathon for Schizophrenia, which began in 2005, was the first event of its kind in Ontario and since its inception has raised close to \$100,000 for the SSO. Joanne Lowe, Director, Big Stretch Yoga Centre, has been participating in the Yogathon for the past three years and will once again be an instructor at the 2009 event.

What keeps Joanne coming back year after year? "For not only myself, but others who may have family members with schizophrenia and feel powerless to help their own loved ones, this event provides us with a joyful and peaceful venue that allows us to help others out by raising

Yogathon for Schizophrenia

funds," says Joanne. "In the spirit of karma yoga, joining together as a group definitely creates awareness of this disease, bringing it out in the open."

Featuring yoga instructors from many of Toronto's top yoga studios, this full day event will begin with an introduction to meditation, followed by group sessions designed for all levels of experience. Mid-way through the day's proceedings, participants will be treated to a performance by world-renowned drummer Muhtadi Thomas, founder and Artistic Director of the Muhtadi International Drumming Festival.

Not only is this an innovative and interesting way to raise money for a great cause, it also raises awareness of the healing power of Yoga, which can be helpful to people with schizophrenia. Medication is the cornerstone of treatment for schizophrenia, but effective treatment often includes other medical and thera-

peutic treatment as well as family and social supports.

"As effective as the newest medications are, they don't control all symptoms [of schizophrenia]. Complimentary and alternative treatments can satisfy the emotional and spiritual needs of patients in a way that standard therapies and psychiatry don't," says Weiland Machleidt, MD, a professor of social psychology at Hanover Medical School in Germany.

Known as youth's greatest disabler, schizophrenia generally strikes young people at the prime of their lives, in their late teens or early 20's. When schizophrenia is left untreated, it can cause delusions, hallucinations, and emotional withdrawal: at its most extreme, this mental illness can, tragically, sometimes result in suicide.

SSO's Early Intervention Program seeks to raise awareness of the early signs and symptoms

of psychotic disorders in order to encourage early diagnosis and treatment. In 2008, the SSO used the funds generated through our Yogathon, to reach out to 2300 youth, through presentations and interactive workshops that focused on recognizing the early symptoms of psychosis. Early diagnosis is vital. Timely intervention and comprehensive treatment will empower and assist people with schizophrenia to cope with the illness and lead productive lives.

Schizophrenia affects one in every 100 Canadians and has a profound impact on their lives and the lives of all those who care for them - family, friends, relatives and others. There are approximately 300,000 people who suffer from schizophrenia in Canada, of which 120,000 live in Ontario.

This year, the Schizophrenia Society of Ontario celebrates 30 years of offering a reason to hope and the means to cope to families



and individuals affected by schizophrenia. SSO provides support, education, and advocacy on behalf of people and families affected by schizophrenia across Ontario. SSO is the largest organization representing people affected by schizophrenia in this province.

We would like to thank our 2009 Yoga-thon corporate sponsors: CIBC World Markets Children's Miracle Foundation, TD Securities, and Sivananda Yoga Vedanta Centre, as well as our media partner Ascent Magazine.

Our other valued supporters of this year's event include Roots Yoga, Dear Lil' Devas, Downward Dog, Moksha Yoga Danforth, The Big Stretch Yoga Centre, Yoga Sanctuary-Danforth, and Octopus Garden Yoga Centre.

CIBC & YMCA expand learning and career opportunities for newcomers

CIBC YMCA Access to Opportunity™ will connect Vancouver newcomers to employment opportunities and support financial literacy in Vancouver & Toronto

After a successful pilot program of job readiness training and financial literacy seminars for newcomers in Toronto in 2008, CIBC and YMCA are pleased to announce their renewed partnership and the rollout of the two-part program in Vancouver this year. In addition, the financial literacy seminars are being delivered in five locations this year throughout the Greater Toronto Area.

CIBC YMCA Access to Opportunity provides information through Facts and Finance™ seminars that newcomers need to make informed decisions about financial services, build credit history, save, start a business and invest in their families' future. The program also includes CIBC Connection to Employment™, a free five-week job readiness training session for qualified newcomers to give them the skills they need to land a job in Canada's financial services sector.

"CIBC Connection to Employment truly placed me on a trajectory for career success," said Felix Quartey, a 2008 graduate and now a Loans Operations Officer with CIBC in Toronto. "The soft and hard skills that I learned, like negotiation, time management, career management, and the knowledge I gained on Canadian banking will be useful throughout my career. My expectations were absolutely exceeded. Anyone who is lucky enough to be selected into this program will definitely enhance his/her human capital."

"CIBC YMCA Access to

Opportunity was a resounding success in 2008," said Christina Kramer, CIBC's Executive Vice-President of Retail Distribution. "Feedback from the nearly 200 newcomers who attended the Facts and Finance seminars in Toronto last year was very positive, particularly on how it expanded their financial literacy. We are also pleased to have hired the majority of the 24 graduates of the first CIBC Connection to Employment program."

Facts & Finance - Toronto and Vancouver

In Toronto beginning next month, the two-hour Facts and Finance seminar series on Banking in Canada, Starting your own business, and Teaching your children about money is being given at five YMCA locations: Downtown, North York, Scarborough, Etobicoke and Brampton.

In July, newcomers in Vancouver also will be able to attend the Facts and Finance seminars throughout the year at the YMCA at 200-1166 Alberni Street in downtown Vancouver.

To register, visit www.cibcymcanewcomers.ca or call 1-866-278-6209.

Connection to Employment - Vancouver

Beginning April 20, up to 25 qualified newcomers in Vancouver will take part in the CIBC Connection to Employment job readiness training program which will be delivered at the YMCA at 200-1166 Alberni Street in downtown Vancouver. The application deadline is March 30th.

To apply, visit www.cibcymcanewcomers.ca or call 1-866-278-6209 or local Vancouver 604-685-8066.

"At the YMCA, we're committed to helping newcomers transi-

tion into their new lives in Canada. We are proud to build on our longstanding relationship with CIBC to deliver this program that will specifically help newcomers with financial capacity, confidence, and awareness of the financial services sector in Canada as well as create a talent pool for potential employers," said Bill Stewart, CEO of the YMCA of Greater Vancouver.

CIBC YMCA Access to Opportunity builds on the YMCA's long history of welcoming newcomers and helping them integrate into Canadian communities, and CIBC's focus on financial advice, banking services and community support. It also builds on CIBC's continued focus on addressing the distinct needs of newcomers through a diverse employee base, relevant product solutions like a newcomer mortgage and credit card as well as our broad multicultural capabilities across our branches, call centres, ABMs and website.

About YMCA

The YMCA of Greater Vancouver's mission is to support the growth of people in spirit,



mind and body and to foster a sense of responsibility to each other and the global community. As a values-based charity dedicated to building strong kids, strong families and strong communities, the YMCA of Greater Vancouver served over 64,000 people of all ages, cultural backgrounds and economic circumstances across the Lower Mainland in 2008. The YMCA offers diverse programs at 138 locations throughout the region including child care, health and wellness, camps, employment, and international and community development. To learn more, visit www.vanymca.org.

About CIBC

CIBC is committed to supporting causes that matter to our clients, our employees and our

communities. We aim to make a difference in communities through corporate donations, sponsorships and the volunteer spirit of employees. With a strategic focus on youth, education and health, and employee commitment to causes including the Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation CIBC Run for the Cure, the CIBC World Markets Children's Foundation and United Way, we are investing in the social and economic development of communities across the country. In 2008, CIBC group of companies contributed more than \$36 million worldwide to charitable and nonprofit initiatives. Of this, more than \$27 million was invested in Canada to support national, regional and local organizations.

Yoga-thon
Join us to raise funds for the
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EVENT SPONSORS: TD Securities, [Other logos]

For information: www.yogathon.ca 1-800-449-6367 specialevents@schizophrenia.on.ca



By Basil Fernando

Sri Lankans have learned with shock and shame the tragic story of the abduction and killing of six-year-old Varsha Jude Regi of Trincomalee.

The little girl went to school as usual on Wednesday, March 11. By noon she had been abducted, allegedly by a person trusted by the family to teach the computer to her and her brother. He was known as "computer-uncle."

The abductors thereafter began negotiations with the relatives and the father who is working in the Middle East. The kidnapers demanded a ransom of Rs 30 million (US\$260,450). While the family members were negotiating giving Rs 1 million, the girl's body was found in a bag on Friday, March 13. Her throat had been slit and the bag containing her body was left in a drain on New Moors Lane in the heart of Trincomalee town.

Adding to the horror of the story, two suspects, the computer teacher Oswin Mervin Rinawushan and Vardharajen Janarathan, both died in police custody. The police reported that after Rinawushan had been arrested he was taken out and he then attacked the police. In retaliation the police shot him dead.

The story relating to Janarathan is that when he, too, was taken out by police in handcuffs, he managed to pick up some cyanide and swallow it. It is said there are a few more suspects. It is very likely that if they are arrested something similar will happen to them.

Further adding yet more horror to the story, the two main

6-year-old Tamil Child's abduction and killing tied to politicians, police in Sri Lanka



6-year-old student Miss Varsha Jude Reggie

political parties of the east, the Tamil Makkal Viduthalai Pulikal and the Sri Lankan Freedom Party, have accused each other of being behind the kidnapping and killing of the little girl. The TMVP has been accused because the schoolbag belonging to little Varsha was found in the TMVP office.

The TMVP stated that a former party cadre, Karuna Amman, had joined the Sri Lanka Freedom Party along with 2,000 other former TMVP members, and had taken some of the office equipment of the TMVP - and that they were somehow responsible for the misplaced schoolbag.

The issue for the public is not which one of these groups is responsible, but that it is the new political guardians of the Eastern Province that are allegedly behind the assassination of little Varsha for purposes of ransom.

It has also come to light recently that there have been several other abductions for ransom, including a leading businessman, the manager of a movie theater and a bus conductor in Trincomalee. The list is in fact much longer.

The essence of the problem is that the Sri Lankan government and its law enforcement apparatus are no longer capable of pre-

venting serious crimes or of properly investigating crimes that have taken place. Varsha's tragic story shocked the nation because of its horror. However, the failure of the police to protect people and investigate crimes is a common phenomenon faced in all parts of the country. Therefore, to lament Varsha's tragedy and not to deal with the larger problem of failed policing in Sri Lanka is simply hypocritical.

The government needs to accept its duty to protect the people of the country against crime. If the police are unable to protect the people - as is demonstrated all the time - the government must decisively approach the problem of making the policing system effective. At the moment the government has shown no will to do this. It has no plans of any sort to make the law enforcement agencies capable of preventing or investigating crimes, which is their primary task.

It is not a function of the police to create sinister forms of entertainment by killing arrested suspects and providing ample publicity for such killings - hoping that people will have a happy hour in witnessing these things. Law enforcement has degenerated to such a state that publicity about the killing of alleged criminals is what passes for justice.

To handle this issue with intelligence and wisdom, the government should appoint an authority for the prevention of abductions. Bogus presidential commissions cannot do this task. The new authority should have a task force that can quickly gather the intelligence necessary to develop policies and strategies to prevent abductions. Without a compre-

hensive, strategic plan to deal with this problem, abductions will surely increase.

Sri Lanka also needs an institute for the study of the prevention of extrajudicial killings. Such killings have infested the law enforcement agencies to the point that the killing of alleged suspects is being promoted as an easy way of dealing with crime. This approach will further destroy the country's rule of law system, which is already in a very bad way.

It is the duty of the government to demonstrate its will to take preventive measures against abductions and extrajudicial killings. This requires serious policy changes, based on a thorough review of the current situation and an analysis of the causes of the existing impasse.

If the government delays this process of reviewing and reforming the law enforcement system, it is itself contributing to abductions, such as that of Varsha, and the extrajudicial killings that are happening in every police station under the pretext that suspects in police custody are attacking policemen and therefore shooting them is justifiable. Such claims are a joke, yet the government allows such jokes to be played on the people. [upiasia.com]

(Basil Fernando is director of the Asian Human Rights Commission based in Hong Kong. He is a Sri Lankan lawyer who has also been a senior U.N. human rights officer in Cambodia. He has published several books and written extensively on human rights issues in Asia. His blog can be read at <http://srilanka-lawlessness.com>.)

Karygiannis thanks GlobalMedic for humanitarian assistance in Sri Lanka

The Honourable Jim Karygiannis, Member of Parliament for Scarborough-Agincourt, expressed his thanks to the Canadian emergency medical first responders of GlobalMedic for the humanitarian assistance they provided to the innocent victims of the Sri Lankan civil war.

"GlobalMedic personnel approached me in February indicating that they were ready to deliver humanitarian aid to Sri Lanka," said Mr. Karygiannis. "These are brave men and women, ready to help those in need here in Canada and around the world."

Mr. Karygiannis met with the

High Commissioner of Sri Lanka in Canada and wrote, on two occasions, to the Government of Sri Lanka through the High Commissioner Ottawa requesting entry visas for the GlobalMedic team. The Government of Sri Lanka has yet to respond to Mr. Karygiannis' letters.

"This lack of response by the Sri Lankan government speaks volumes. We were asking to visas for people who were going to provide help." Mr. Karygiannis commented. "The Sri Lankan government obviously does not want foreigners to see the damage their bombs have caused."

Tamil New Year Wishes from Honourable Jim Karygiannis, Member of Parliament for Scarborough-Agincourt

May I take this opportunity to wish members of the Canadian Tamil community a Happy and Prosperous New Year, on the occasion of Tamil New Year.

The Tamil New Year is a holy day for Hindu Tamils of Tamil Nadu in South India, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Bangladesh, Singapore, Canada and other parts of the world. This year, Tamil New Year falls on April 14th. which, according to the Dravidian or Hindu calendar, is the first day of the month of Chithirai.

In preparation for this Tamil festival, houses are given a thorough cleaning or painting on New Year's Eve and old and damaged household items are either repaired or replaced.

Early on New Year's Day, Hindus take ritual baths with 'maruthu neer' - a medicinal liquid made of flowers and herbs, wear new clothes and worship at

Temple with offerings of coconuts, fruits, flowers, betels and areca-nuts. At Temple, the faithful take part in the religious rite of Puja. The Puja is an acknowledgement of one's humility.

The day begins early with the cooking of special foods including sweet milk-rice called 'Ponkal'. Following Temple, families return home for the 'Ponkal' ceremony and await the most anticipated event - when the head of the family gives cash presents to his family and neighbours. According to tradition, it is believed that receiving cash from a good-hearted person on New Year's Day will improve one's income during the year.

A Happy and Prosperous New Year to you and your families!

This New Year is also a time of profound sadness. As the civil war in Sri Lanka rages on, one



remembers the countless lives that have been lost, the thousands of Tamils who have been displaced and the families that have been torn apart. I stand 'shoulder to shoulder' with you in your grief. It is important that Canada and the world community work with all Sri Lankans, regardless of ethnicity, to achieve peace with justice in Sri Lanka.

Tel: (613) 992-4501; Fax: (613) 995-1612; Email: karygj@parl.gc.ca Website: www.karygiannismp.com

Free Flowing Qi

By Mithura Anandarajah, PT
Registered Physiotherapist

Do you have symptoms of pain or fatigue? You may have lifted furniture and strained your back. Perhaps after sitting at the computer for several hours, you develop stiffness or numbness that radiates down your arms. You are tired of popping pain medication and would like to try something else. Acupuncture is an option that you may have heard of or would like to consider.

Acupuncture is traditionally an ancient form of Chinese medicine, which involves the insertion of solid mostly stainless steel needles into the skin at specific points in the body. The needles do not have any medication and therefore, no drug is inserted into the body. The needles alone, their location and their effect, provide the benefits. Acupuncture is used to encourage natural healing, improve mood and energy, reduce or relieve pain and improve function of affected areas of the body. It is safe and effective and is often successfully used as an alternative to medications.

According to Chinese Medicine, nature and the body consist of a free flowing energy, Qi (pronounced Chi). In order to be healthy, the body should have

sufficient Qi and it should be balanced and free flowing in certain patterns connecting different organs. The human body there-

fore, has several channels or meridians. Along these channels are specific points, where the energy can be accentuated or inhibited depending on what is needed. By inserting acupuncture needles into these points, it then becomes possible to enhance the Qi and therefore, promote wellness. Anatomically, a lot of these points happen to be muscle trigger points or areas of

increased blood flow. A tight or spastic muscle can be released by stimulating the trigger point. In areas of inflammation, increasing the blood flow always promotes healing.

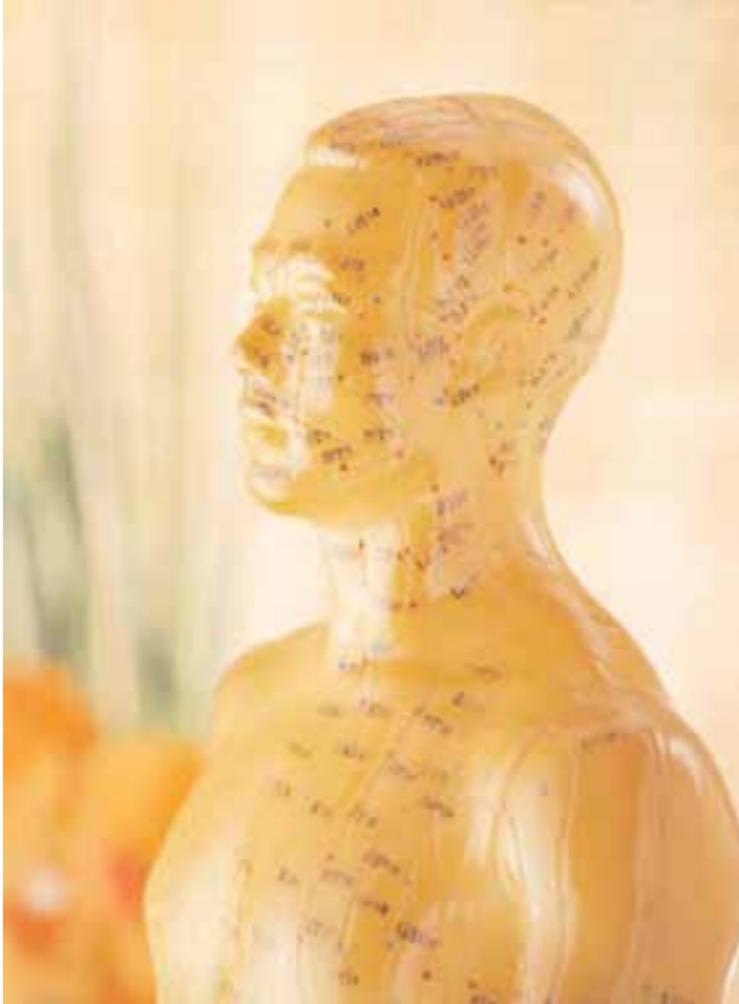
Acupuncture can be used to treat musculoskeletal injuries like neck or low back pain. It has been found to be effective for headaches or migraines. It can be used in the treatment of cancer for pain or nausea. Also it has been used for internal conditions like diarrhea or indigestion.

Usually in a treatment session, multiples needles are inserted and the depth can vary from a few millimeters to a few centimeters. The needles are usually left for 15-20 minutes. Occasionally, the practitioner may stimulate the needles, by twisting or rolling the needles. This increases the intensity of the treatment. Occasionally you may feel a heaviness or dull ache. This is called the "de Qi" response and sug-



gests the flow of the energy. There are very few adverse effects of acupuncture. It is rare to get a drop of blood or a bruise. Occasionally there may be a feeling of fatigue or nausea. The benefits of pain relief however can be significant.

Acupuncture can be done by a traditional Chinese Medicine Practitioner. It can also be done by your Physiotherapist or Chiropractor, provided they have the training and perform it under their scope of practice. Discuss it with your health care provider should you have further questions. It is certainly a viable, effective option in promoting overall wellness.



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Paint the Town Rouge gala nets over \$100K to purchase life-saving cardiac equipment

by Kerry McLeish

Resplendently decorated in luxurious fabrics and flowers, the Liberty Grand offered old-world elegance for revelers attending the Rouge Valley Health System Foundation's Paint the Town Rouge gala on Friday, March 27, 2009.

Everyone dressed the part -- women in magnificent dresses

and men in their finest with red ties. Guests were greeted by gentlemen in tuxes and Gala Chair Judith Barker, then entertained by Master of Ceremonies Farley Flex and his protégé pop-opera singer Daniel Panetta.

Keynote speaker Dr. Joe Ricci, Program Chief of Rouge Valley Health System's Cardiac Care Program, spoke of the importance

of the program in the region and introduced a moving video that captured the heart of the many people and services that make up Rouge Valley's cardiac care program.

Thanks to the efforts of the Gala Chair and Steering Committee, sponsors, volunteers, Board members, staff and attendees, the Foundation raised over

\$100,000 to purchase a life-saving Intra-Aortic Balloon Pump for the cardiac care program. A balloon pump is sophisticated device that is used to support the heart in critically-ill patients who have severe heart failure, shock or a heart attack.

This piece of equipment can make the difference between life and death. As a regional centre,

and with the extraordinary advances in cardiology, Rouge Valley's balloon pump use is growing significantly.

Photos from the celebration with true heart can be viewed online on the Foundation's Photo Gallery at www.rougevalley.ca/rvhsf.

Photos by Todd and Kerry McLeish



Dr. K.C. Moran, RVC Emergency Site Chief; Mary Anne Chambers and her husband Chris; Chad Hanna, RVHS Foundation President & CEO



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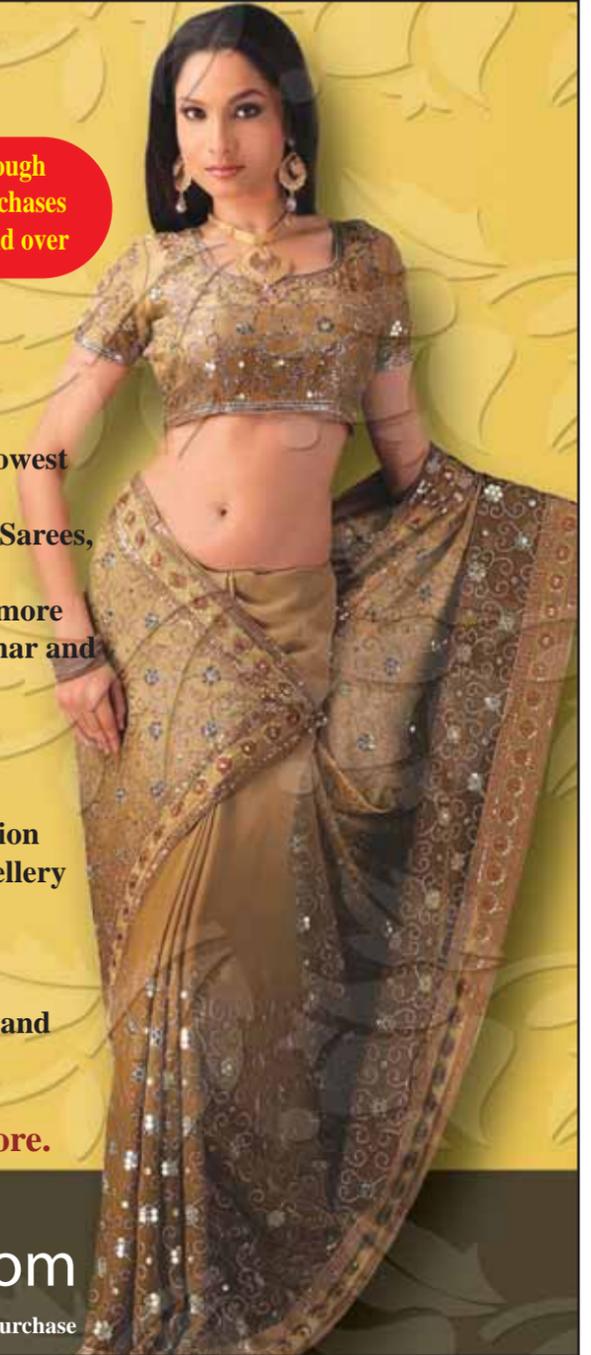
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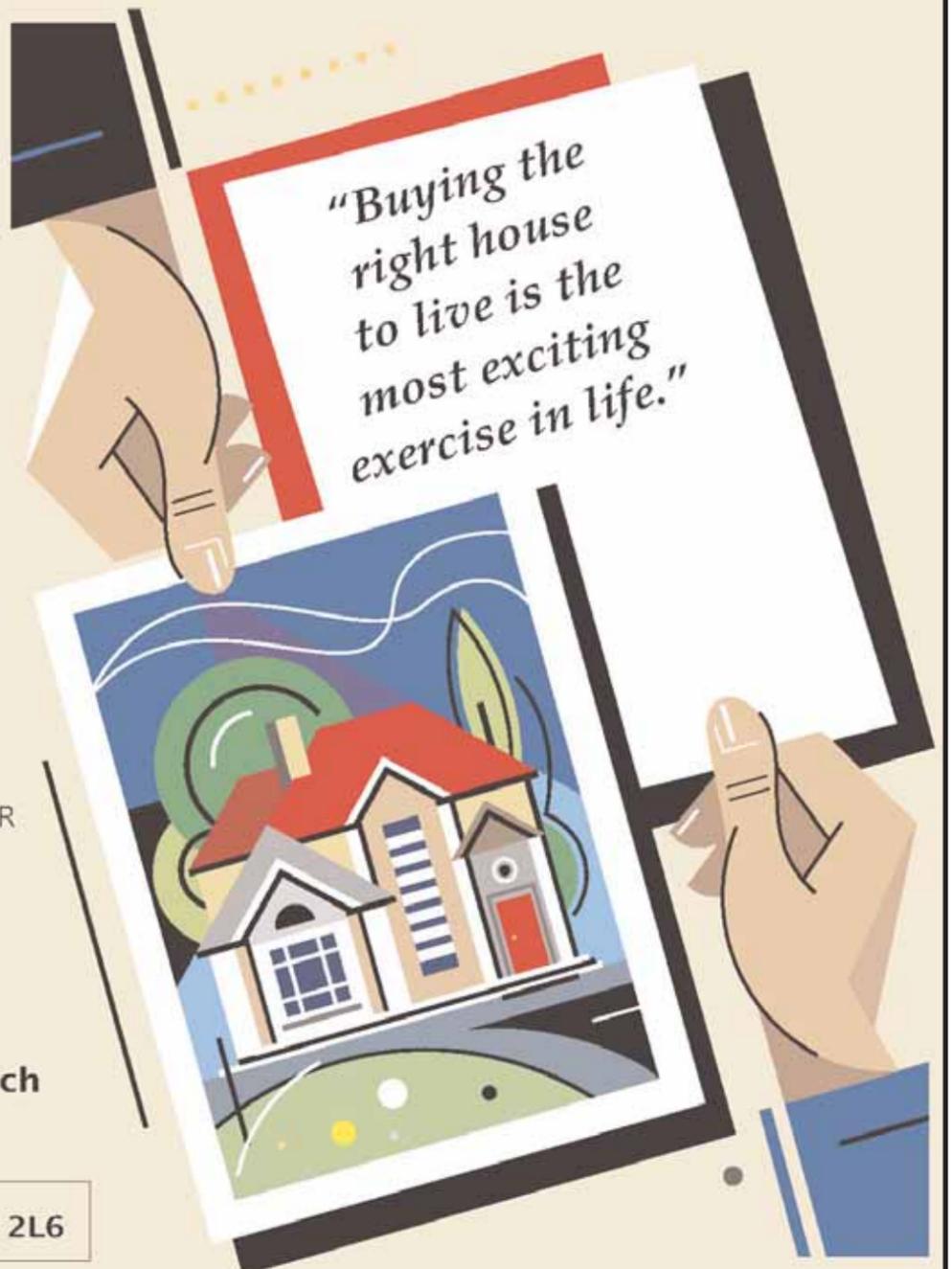
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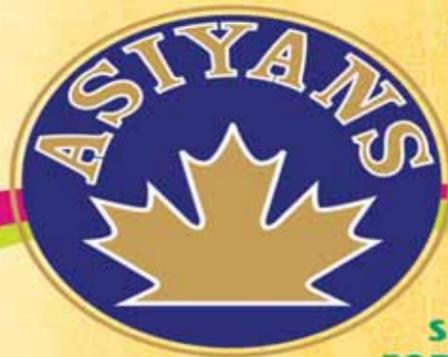
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Little hope of an enduring end to Sinhalese victimisation of Sri Lanka's Tamils

by Howard Debenham

On May day in 1993, Sri Lankan president Ranasinghe Premadasa was in the back streets of Colombo, greeting supporters as they streamed into the capital for the day's festivities, when he was killed by a suicide bomb. Had the conventions of diplomacy permitted it, I would probably have been at his side. He had been insistent that I should join him on this occasion.

In the previous year, Premadasa had allowed me to see some of the handiwork of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam. Before the bodies were cleared away, I spoke with some of the shattered survivors of LTTE massacres of simple farming folk in the pitifully poor eastern villages of Palyagodella and Alinchipotana, in one instance crouching with a wild-eyed labourer over the pools of drying blood where his family had had their throats cut. But neither Premadasa nor his successors were as accommodating when it came to investigating the handiwork of government forces, which has so often been of equal savagery.

By the time of his assassination, however, Premadasa was coming around. Among other things, he allowed a limited review by a small group of ambassadors (myself included) of the widespread extrajudicial killings and disappearances of Tamils at the hands of government forces.

It is often overlooked that Tamil militarism was, in the first place, spawned by the deliberate demonisation of Tamils (both Hindu and Muslim) in the early years of Sri Lanka's independence from Britain.

The situation took a significant turn for the worse following the failure of Junius Jayawardene's government to promptly intervene in the deliberate slaughter of thousands of innocent Tamils over just a few days in 1983.

In his retirement, an unrepentant Jayawardene explained to me at his residence in Colombo in 1992 that, following a tit-for-tat killing of policemen by Tamil militants, 1983 had been about giving the Tamils a "bloody nose" to "put them in their place". He scoffed at the notion that the country's Tamils were as Sri Lankan as the Sinhalese. Jayawardene was not alone in this view then, nor is he now. It is therefore hardly surprising that many Tamils feel it is only the spectre of the Tigers and their ability to strike back that prevents further pogroms against their people.

The answer for many Tamils to the Government's failure to broker a peace has been to flee the country to either the refugee camps of southern India or, for the more fortunate, a new start in other countries. This is happening in such numbers that they are referred to as the Tamil diaspora.

For those trapped in the north during the current Government offensive, the risk of accepting a "haven" on the Government side must be weighed against the risk of putting themselves in the hands of Government forces.

The essential interest of Sri Lanka's Sinhalese political parties and personalities is still how to exploit the struggle with the Tigers to maintain power in Colombo. Successive governments have more or less dressed up their intention to negotiate to

assuage the feelings of the United Nations and donor countries, including Australia, but not nearly enough to fool any informed observer into believing that the underlying issue of rapprochement between Sinhalese and Tamils is any more on the government's agenda than it was 50 years ago.

There is little hope of an enduring end to Sinhalese victimisation of Sri Lanka's Tamils until Sri Lanka produces the kind of courageous and visionary leadership that can admit the errors of the past and reach out in a sustained way to all Sri Lankans, thus providing a sound basis for drawing all Tamils, including the Tigers, into the political process.

The Sri Lankan government did this with the murderous Communist Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) back in the late '80s after its violent uprising had almost brought the country to its knees. But that, it seems, was different: the JVP was Sinhalese. Unhappily, the vision required today, free of the deeply embedded political and financial corruption that has plagued Sri Lanka for so long, is nowhere in sight.

Ordinary Sri Lankans, disempowered and cowed through decades of dominance by the business and political elite and effective exclusion from the rule of law, are still easily duped into believing that they will be better off once the Tamils have been crushed.

It is at least doubtful that the LTTE can be completely wiped out by Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapaksa's salaried soldiers, who are largely in it for the money they cannot earn at home. Government forces should certainly be able to outgun the LTTE in military set pieces, but it is most unlikely that they will ever be able to match them in guerilla warfare.

Having so loudly abandoned the peace process, the Rajapaksa Government is throwing everything into the military fray. Though this approach is being backed with claims of higher body counts and significant incursions into Tiger territory, the consequence of pushing the military arm of the LTTE to the wall could well be a dramatic upsurge in urban terrorism, of which the recent mosque bombing in Akuressa would only be the beginning. It is an option for which, after all the years of its existence, the LTTE is no doubt well prepared.

Should infrastructure, transport and even tourism become systematic targets in such a campaign, Sri Lanka could be brought to its knees. Rajapaksa, or whoever is in power, would then have to think again about a peace process, but this time from a weaker position than the one that applied through much of 2006, when a small group of uniquely qualified Americans and a former Australian high commissioner quietly tried, working with the highest levels of the Sri Lankan Government, to build capacity for statesmanship and progress before peace talks with the LTTE scheduled for Geneva in October of that year. As it turned out, Sri Lanka's leaders only pretended to listen, and so doomed a country and a people once so full of promise to more mindless death and destruction, the worst of which may yet be to come.

Howard Debenham was Australian high commissioner to Sri Lanka from 1992 to 1994.



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CTC pleads for greater Canadian involvement in Sri Lanka to prevent catastrophic situation escalating

Statement by Canadian Tamil Congress to the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs

March 25, 2009

Good Afternoon Honourable Members of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development.

My name is Harini Sivalingam, and I am a lawyer by profession and Policy Director with the Canadian Tamil Congress (CTC), a registered non-profit organization that has advocated for the interests of the Tamil Canadian community since 2000. Along with me is Mr. David Poopalapillai, the National Spokesperson for CTC and Ms. Sharmila Rajasingam, CTC member from Montreal.

First, we would like to thank you for giving us the opportunity to appear before this Committee on a topic that is of grave importance to the 300,000 Tamil Canadians across this nation. We appear before you not only as members of the Tamil community who are deeply concerned about the plight of Tamils in the North East of Sri Lanka, but more importantly as Canadians who share in promoting our national values of peace and justice around the world.

For over 60 years, Tamils in the island of Sri Lanka have faced oppression, discrimination and violence unleashed upon them by successive Sri Lankan governments. Today, the 25 year armed conflict has reached a crossroads. Due to intense fighting that resumed after the Government of Sri Lanka (GoSL) unilaterally broke a six year old ceasefire in January 2008, over a quarter of a million Tamils are entrapped within a small sliver of land in the midst of the conflict zone between the GoSL and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). Thousands have been killed due to arbitrary shelling by the GoSL into so-called "safe zones".

Hundreds of thousands of internally displaced people, mostly women and children are on the brink of starvation. Hospitals have been deliberately attacked by shelling, and convoys transporting the sick and wounded have been targeted. Human rights defenders, aid workers, and journalists are at risk for speaking out against human rights abuses perpetrated by the GoSL.

Despite calls for an immediate ceasefire by the highest officials of the United Nations such as Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon, and the High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay, international NGOs, and foreign governments such as Canada, the GoSL

CTC pleads for greater Canadian involvement in Sri Lanka to prevent catastrophic situation escalating

has refused to consider a ceasefire and is vigorously pursuing an aggressive military campaign against the Tamil population in an effort to "wipe out the Tamil Tigers" - in effect, they are wiping out the remaining Tamil population in the Northeastern Sri Lanka.

Not only has the GoSL rejected the international calls for a ceasefire, the

government is also blocking international humanitarian aid from reaching civilians

trapped in the conflict area in direct violation of international humanitarian law. In

September 2008, in preparation for its military onslaught in the Tamil areas, the

GoSL ordered all international aid workers to leave Tamil areas with only the ICRC and World Food Programme remaining today.

With the escalation in violence the ICRC has stated they are prevented from effectively operating in the area. The GoSL is also accusing international aid groups operating in Sri Lanka, such as CARE International of supporting terrorism and perpetuating the armed conflict as reported on the Sri Lankan Ministry of Defense website.

Meanwhile, the humanitarian catastrophe in Sri Lanka is deteriorating each day leading to gross and systemic human rights violations. The ICRC has stated in its latest operational update dated March 17, 2009, that "tens of thousands of people confined to a rapidly-shrinking area have headed for the coast to escape the fighting, in search of safety, food and medical care. But numbers in the coastal belt held by the LTTE have increased drastically over recent weeks, and clean water is scarce. The area is affected by shelling every day, and the cramped conditions and the lack of water and proper sanitation are putting people at risk of epidemics."

The Government Agent for the Mullaitivu District stated in a letter requesting much needed food rations, dated March 5, 2009 that "Everyday the IDPs come to us and are pressurizing us for the food, but we are not in a position to give them a correct answer. These innocent people including children and women are in a pathetic condition and very soon they will die due to starvation. The Regional Director of Health Services, Mullaitivu has informed us that 13 people have already died due to starvation."

The breakdown of the rule of law in Sri Lanka is also apparent. According to the UN Working Group on Enforced Disappearances, Sri Lanka has the highest number of disappearances in the world next to Iraq.

The former Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Mangala Samaraweera was quoted in the Sunday Leader, admitting that a person is abducted every five hours in Sri Lanka. He went on to state that "Kidnappings, abductions and killings have become common incidents."

Sri Lanka is also ranked the most dangerous place in the world for journalists and media workers. Amnesty International reports that 15 journalists have been killed in Sri Lanka since 2006. The most recent attack on the media occurred last month with the so called "arrest" of Mr. N. Vithyatharan, the editor of the only functioning Tamil daily in Northern Sri Lanka who continues to be detained to this day. Mr. Vithyatharan has a brother living in Canada and was recently in Canada last fall speaking out about the deteriorating situation in Sri Lanka.

This is the bleak reality that faces Tamils in Sri Lanka. Each passing day, as we hear the news of more deaths and destruction on the island, Tamil Canadians are at a loss as to what to do. Debate about the Sri Lankan-Tamil conflict is not simply an academic or political exercise for the Tamil Canadian community. These are not just statistics and numbers for our community, rather these are our loved ones, our family and friends who are suffering immense hardships, day in and day out.

Over the past several months Tamil Canadians from all walks of life, from infants, to senior citizens, from Vancouver to Halifax have taken part in demonstrations, rallies, human chains, and vigils to bring awareness of the plight of Tamils in Sri Lanka and to call for an immediate ceasefire to allow for humanitarian aid to reach those entrapped in the conflict zone.

During the Committee proceedings on Monday, several members referred to the role of the Tamil Diaspora in this conflict. The role of the Tamil Diaspora, in particular Tamil Canadians, is vital. However, there is a deep sense of frustration amongst Tamil Canadians. We were able to leave the brutality and persecution that we faced back home and seek refuge and safe haven in the welcoming arms of Canada.

Those we have left back home are silenced and voiceless. We are here today to carry their voices in the hopes that the international community will take action. Our voices have not gone unheard. The Canadian public is well aware of the humanitarian crisis in Sri Lanka, thanks to local media coverage. Canadian parliamentarians are also listening. During the Emergency Debate held in Parliament on February 4th this



year, Honourable Members from all political parties denounced the violence perpetrated against Tamil civilians in the North East. Today in this Committee room, you are hearing our pleas.

We are here today to plead for greater Canadian involvement in order to prevent an already catastrophic humanitarian situation from escalating further. Canadian influence in international forums such as the United Nations and the Commonwealth of Nations are necessary to pressure the Sri Lankan government to conform to international humanitarian and human rights laws.

Why Canada? Canada is a leader in promoting international human rights and peace building. Canadian doctrines such as "human security" and "responsibility to protect" (R2P) are the driving force for international human rights discourse.

Renowned Canadians such as Louise Arbour, Steven Toope, Alan Rock, and Steven Lewis are at the forefront of the international human rights movement. If there is any one nation that can make a significant difference in bringing about a solution to the Sri Lankan conflict, surely it is Canada.

The GoSL lacks the political will to initiate a negotiated solution on its own accord. History shows this is the case, from the rejection of repeated attempts to politically negotiate settlements to the conflict, from the Bandaranayake Chelvanayakam Pact to the India-Lanka Accord, to the Interim Self Governing Authority (ISGA), to the Post-Tsunami Operational Management Structure (P-TOMS), all of which were abrogated by the various Sri Lankan governments. However, with increased international pressure, including economic isolation such as trade sanctions, Sri Lanka can be compelled to find an alternative to the war against Tamils.

A quote that comes to my mind is that "peace is not the absence of war, but the presence of tranquility". According to this definition of peace, there has been no peace in Sri Lanka for decades. Long before the LTTE even existed there was political turmoil and oppression of the Tamil minority. Even during the ceasefire period, the threat of the resumption of violence loomed overhead.

What Tamils in Sri Lanka and around the world yearn for is a

lasting and just peace; one that takes into account the legitimate aspirations of Tamils in their homeland to determine their own political destiny.

In this regard, the Canadian Government can take the following measures:

1. Urge the GoSL to immediately suspend military operations directed at civilians, undertake a ceasefire and return to the negotiating table to mediate a peaceful resolution to the armed conflict in Sri Lanka.

2. Urge the GoSL to immediately allow the free flow of humanitarian aid to the conflict zone and allow international aid workers unimpeded access to affected areas.

3. Urge the GoSL to allow journalists into the conflict area to report on the current situation in the North and East and to respect press freedom.

4. Urge fellow Commonwealth Member States to consider removing Sri Lanka from participating in and receiving any benefits from being a member of the Commonwealth of Nations.

5. Impose economic and diplomatic sanctions against the GoSL for violations of the Geneva Convention and gross human rights violations.

An entire generation of Tamil children and youth has grown up knowing nothing but war and violence. Over a million Tamils have been externally displaced around the world, while another million remain internally displaced. This armed conflict has claimed over 80,000 lives, the vast majority Tamils killed by the Sri Lankan government. It is our hope that together we can prevent another generation from being lost in this conflict.

Before I conclude, I would like to invite you all to attend a powerful exhibit "Understanding Sri Lanka's War" being held here on Parliament Hill on April 1st, in the Commonwealth Room (Rm. 238) from 2pm to 6pm in order to obtain a more thorough understanding of the Sri Lankan-Tamil conflict.

Considering the current deteriorating situation in Sri Lanka, this powerful exhibition serves as a much needed reminder of the tragic circumstances that led over 300,000 Tamil Canadians to uproot their lives from Sri Lanka, leave their friends and family, and embrace Canada as their home.

Thank you.

Legendary American Jesuit Fr. Henry Miller Leaves Batticaloa for New Orleans

By Maura O'Connor

On a recent quiet afternoon as a breeze began to blow through the large windows of his office located in the attic of St. Michael's College, Father Henry Miller looked back on a life-time in Batticaloa. "I have been able to do things that no one would dare to do; I could go and raise a clamour and I've done that many times," he mused from behind his desk, littered with pencils, sea shells, and rusty staplers.

For over six decades, Father Miller has acted as priest, protector, educator, and witness to generations of Batticaloans. On Sunday, he left Sri Lanka to return home to New Orleans, Louisiana in the United States for a six month extended leave. He said he has not decided whether to return.

"It's reached a stage now that there is no structure through which I can make a difference. There was a time when I could write a letter to the president or assemble senior police officers. None of those things would make a difference now."

In addition to what he sees as the shrinking sphere of his influence, Father Miller said there is also his advanced age to consider. When he arrived in Sri Lanka at the age of 23, it was by ship and

the journey took one month. It was September 1948 and Sri Lanka had just months before celebrated its independence from colonial rule for the first time in over 400 years.

Now 84-years-old, Father Miller sometimes asks children at St. Michael's which of the four houses named after Jesuit Fathers they belong to.

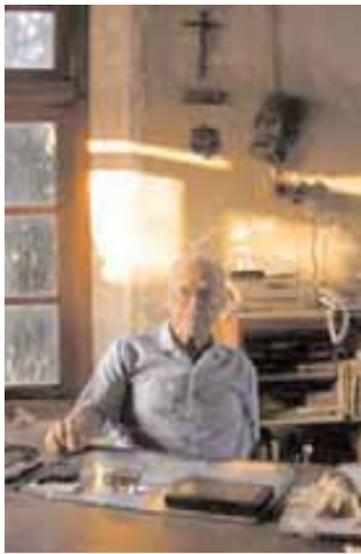
"Miller House!" some respond. "Who's Miller?" he asks them, curious.

And they shrug their shoulders.

But Father Miller's contributions to the people of the Eastern Province are hardly forgotten by all. In the week leading up to his departure, a steady stream of visitors arrived at his office door to bring gifts and best wishes for a safe trip, but also pleading with him to return as soon as possible.

"It's very sad," said one. "I told him to come back quickly. We need him here." Father Miller was born and raised in New Orleans to a devout mother and father who raised their children to attend Mass daily. Indeed, throughout his junior education, Father Miller said he attended Mass twice every morning, once with his family and once when he reached his Jesuit school.

At the age of 16, he decided



that he wanted to join the order, a decision that followed in the footsteps of his older brother. In all, six of his seven siblings would become Jesuits or nuns. "My other sister called herself the 'white sheep of the family' because the rest of us wore black clothes," he said with a chuckle.

Upon joining, Father Miller became the youngest in the class but the decision, in spite of his youth, was final. "No one joins the Jesuits and doesn't say, 'This is for life,'" he said. He studied for seven years and received a degree in physics before volunteering to be sent abroad.

At that time, the French Jesuit numbers in the East of Sri Lanka

had been depleted by two world wars and the Vatican had requested the New Orleans Province to help fill the ranks and aid in operating the dozens of schools in the area. Father Miller was among five Jesuits who were placed in Batticaloa.

He taught physics, English, history, and coached the soccer team, whose offense consisted of Tamil and Muslim forwards, Burgher midfielders, and Sinhalese wingers. "There were no signs of war in 1948, nobody fighting against anybody else," he said.

From 1959 to 1970, he acted as rector of the school and shortly after he stepped down from the position, the government took over the administration and curriculum.

Around the same time, Father Miller became instrumental in setting up forums for community leaders and religious figures to engage in dialogue with one another, eventually helping to start a peace committee. As the conflict and its effect on the people of the Eastern Province worsened, he also became a repository for thousands of human rights abuses and disappearances.

"What I have been able to do is, at least on the part of Jesuits, is put forward a full picture of



what the people need here," he said looking back on his work. "Understand the thinking between them, the gross grievances. But bridging that gap, no one has done it yet."

By 1990, only two of the original five who travelled by ship from New Orleans to Colombo were left in Batticaloa, Father Miller and Father Eugene John Hebert. But that year, during a rescue attempt of priests and nuns in Valachchenai--where Tamils feared Muslim retaliation over recent massacres--Father Hebert disappeared. He was believed to have been killed by a rioting crowd outside Batticaloa.

"I suppose I could have left at that time," Father Miller said. "But I just figured I was here for life."

These days, Father Miller seems to have undergone, if not a change of heart, then a realization that times have changed even from the stark days of the early 1990s. "I don't see anyone on the horizon who I can talk to, to get anything done. Meanwhile, people continue to disappear, rights are more and more eroded, and there is no sign of improvement. So, I think, maybe I need a holiday.

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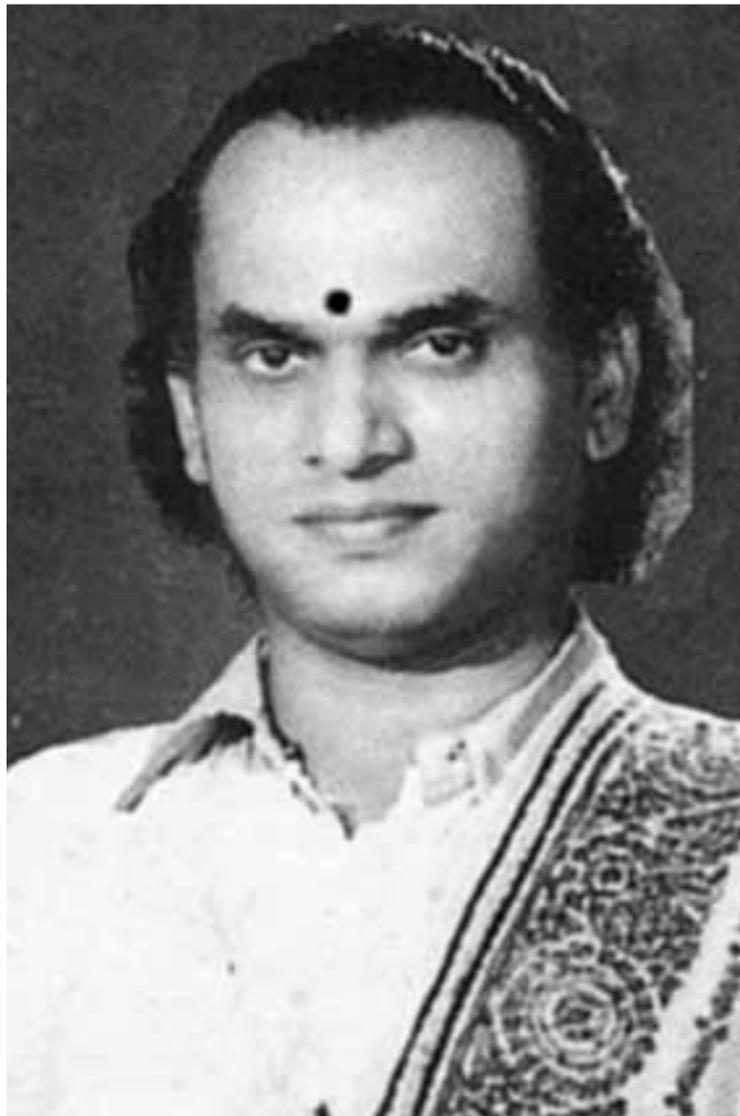
Singing stars! Doesn't the epithet take you back a long way, when music was king and queen in Tamil cinema? Those were times when the success of a play or film was measured by the number of songs it featured. This happened even in silent films when the music was provided live in front of the screen by an assembled band. Before playback singing came into being, the stars of the day had to do their own singing.

Mayavaram Krishnamurthy Thyagaraja Bhagavathar was perhaps the biggest draw among the singing stars of yesteryears excluding of course the sensational S.G. Kittappa. When the silver screen, the talkie with music, emerged by the late 1930s the tantalising voice of S. G. Kittappa was dominating the stage while that of M. K. Thyagaraja Bhagavathar, the silver screen. His melodious and divine voice made him nothing short of a cult figure.

During his heyday Bhagavathar acquired an unenviable place in the hearts of the Tamil people. Those who saw him in person have always held that his looks can only be compared to celestial beings. His complexion glittered like polished gold which finely matched his silk dress. His wavy shoulder-length crop and large diamond ear studs and rings became the most 'in thing' in male fashion. His hairstyle became very popular and came to be known as the 'Bhagavathar' crop. He owned palatial mansions, ate from gold plates, rode on horseback and motorbike, was driven in the latest model cars, and almost lived like the prince of Tamil Nadu.

An accomplished classical musician, Bhagavathar had a powerful yet pliant and mellifluous voice that traversed a great range and soared effortlessly to the utter delight of millions of fans. Among these ardent enthusiasts were the cognoscenti as much as the man on the street. His music was classical with an appeal that transcended that of proscenium concerts. His golden voice and the unique ability to add maximum lucidity to classical music kept him in good stead throughout his career. With his 14 films, he had etched an everlasting edifice for himself in the world of Tamil Films. His music resounds as the rarest of its kind

Thyagarajan was born on 1.3.1910 at Mayavaram (now, Myladuthurai.) His father Krishnamurthy was a gold-smith. His mother Manikkathammal hailed from Thanjavur. Later the family moved to Trichy and settled there permanently. At school Thyagarajan never took interest in studies; his attention was drawn only towards listening to



music and singing. His excellent singing caught the attention of F.G.Natesa Iyer a talent scout and dramatist. Natesa Iyer's was the one responsible for transforming the poor little girl from Kodumudi into the great singing sensation, K.B.Sundarambal. Iyer enrolled his new find, Thyagarajan, in his drama troupe. The lad's first play, 'Harischandra,' proved to be a great success and made him a star overnight. His fame as a child prodigy spread like wild fire in Trichy and other places. He was then ten years old.

Madurai Ponnu Iyengar, a famous violin vidwan of that period being much impressed with the singing of Thyagarajan in 'Harischandra' offered to train him in classical Carnatic music. Simultaneously he also trained in acting under Nataraja Vaadiyar (lyrist who wrote the famous songs 'Kayatha Kanagathe' and 'Androru Naal', both popularised by S.G.Kittappa and 'Gnanakumari' popularised by Bhagavathar.) Thyagarajan had his first classical music concert at the Peria Kaalamman temple in Trichy. He was accompanied in the mridangam, violin and ganjira by the greats of that time. After the concert, mridangam maestro Dakshinamurthy Pillai in his speech said that he had never ever heard such a sweet voice and such superb handling of ragas by any other boy of that age and added that Lord Murugan has presented to the Carnatic music world a wonderful gift. He then conferred the title

Bhagavathar on Thyagarajan - Trichy Thyagarajan became Thyagaraja Bagavathar. Let us now refer to him as Bhagavathar.

In 1934, Bhagavathar's popular stage play 'Pavalakodi' was made into a film by Meenakshi Cinetone of Madras. The film introduced many major talents to cinema and marked the debut of M. K. Thyagaraja Bhagavathar, the first superstar of Tamil films. It was also the debut of the pioneer filmmaker, K. Subramaniam as director, and the star-actress, S.D. Subbulakshmi. In the films of that era songs ruled the roost. Everybody sang - hero and heroine, message-bearing maids, comedians and all the king's men and women. Even the villain sang while approaching to dishonour the heroine. 'Pavalakodi' (1934) had as many as 50 songs all composed by the famous Tamil composer Papanasam Sivan. The film was released in 1934 and it enjoyed a nine-month run in many theatres.

With the success of 'Pavalakodi' Papanasam Sivan and his friend K. Subramaniam began to go places. The two worked together and the songs in 'Naveena Sarangadhara' (1936), with Bhagavathar and S. D. Subbulakshmi in lead roles became very popular. A song by SDS, about a dove as messenger of love, 'Venpuraavey...' became a raving hit.

The year 1937 was a leap-ahead year for Tamil film music, Papanasam Sivan and Bhagavathar. Two Bhagavathar

starrers, Y.V. Rao's 'Chintamani', and Ellis R. Dungan's 'Ambikapathi' established stunning box-office records and elevated its hero to superstardom. The films seemed to run endlessly - 25 weeks... 50 weeks... and more! The reason was the songs. Sivan being a musical genius knew the pulse of the listeners and chose ragas with accent on melody which could be easily sung by everyone. Sivan took extra care to compose for Bhagavathar's high pitched voice and Bhagavathar took extra care to bring out Sivan's emotions and sentiments. Bhagavathar and Papanasam Sivan became living legends.

Bhagavathar bestrode the Tamil film world like a colossus. He was a great romantic hero and a heartthrob among female fans. His voice had a timbre that was unique, and he enunciated the words with a clarity that made the song very attractive. Most of his films had music by Papanasam Sivan. The tunes were simple, with a minimum of background music. (The later films of MKT had music by G.Ramanathan and K.V.Mahadevan.)

The year 1943 saw another hit 'Sivakavi'. The film belonged to Bhagavathar, the superstar, who sang many melodious songs (composer

Papanasam Sivan). T.R.Rajakumari danced to one such song "Kavalayai

Theerpathu Naatiya Kalaiyey" (raga Nattakurinji.) The song and dance

sequence was one of the highlights of the film. Bhagavathar always excelled in the role of an ardent devotee of God.

In 1944 came the blockbuster 'Haridas' which was directed by Sundar Rao Nadkarni. The film was based on the life of poet-saint Haridas. The role of Haridas was played by Bhagavathar. The film was released on Deepavali Day 1944 and it holds the record of being the first Tamil film to run continuously for 144 weeks at a single theatre. It witnessed three Deepavalis, 1944-1945-1946. N. C. Vasanthakokilam, who was often compared to M. S. Subbulakshmi as a singer, played the role of Haridas's wife. The film also marked the debut of renowned actress Pandari Bai. Thanjavur Ranganayaki Rajayee (T.R. Rajakumari) played a leading role in the film. Her love scenes with Bhagavathar were considered daring for the day and in one celebrated scene she danced to his immortal melody, "Manmadha Leelayai Vendraar Undo." Another unforgettable song from the film was "Annayim Thandayim Thane."

Bhagavathar's friend Nagar-koyil Sudalaimuthu (N.S.) Krishnan (1908-1957) was a brilliant comedian, satirist, singer and political activist.

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Krishnan had built his huge following during the war years, when it had become almost obligatory for a Tamil film to have a Krishnan sequence, though unrelated to the main plot. Krishnan had always written such sequences himself, and acted them with his wife, Mathuram, and other associates. During the war period over a hundred such sequences were made by Krishnan for many different producers. By the beginning of the independence era he was a figure of towering stature. Initially a Marxist sympathizer and a friend of Pa. Jeevanandan, Krishnan became first a nationalist and then a DMK supporter, producing C.N. Annadurai's film, Nallathambi, directing Panam and acting in the Karunanidhi-scripted Raja Rani and Rangoon Radha.

When Bhagavathar was in the height of popularity, fate came in his way in the form of Lakshmikantham, a notorious criminal and editor of a 'yellow' magazine called 'Indu Nesan'. Lakshmikantham was murdered by some unknown assailants. Bhagavathar and N.S.Krishnan were arrested in December 1944 for their alleged involvement in the murder plot. They served a thirty month term in prison and were acquitted by the Privy Council as "Not guilty" in April 1947. Legal experts and laymen felt that Bhagavathar, NSK and others were the unfortunate victims of the game of power politics. When Bhagavathar was in jail, his movie, 'Haridas', had created history in Broadway cinema by running through three Deepavalis and the songs "Manmatha leelai" and "Krishna Muguntha Murare," were reverberating in the air all over the country.

The real killers of Lakshmi-kanthan were never pinned down and the truth lies buried somewhere to this day. Indian legal history will record this case as one of the most tragic miscarriage of justice. It ruined the life and career of an astonishingly gifted musician. By the time he was released, India had seen many changes politically. Tamil cinema too was undergoing a rapid change from historical and mythological movies to social movies, a scenario in which Bhagavathar had very little role to play. Bhagavathar could not regain his charisma and the movies he made did not fare well in the box office.

Bhagavathar was quite a different man after the thirty dark months in prison. Destiny had robbed him of his happiness and self-confidence. He turned more inwards and became very philosophical. He fully realised the inherent danger in the 'ugly thing called popularity'. He became more spiritual towards the end of his life and undertook journeys to many pilgrimage centres. He lost interest in wealth and popularity. His lack of affluence was to a large extent voluntary. In one occasion he said, "ennai pol vazhnhthavarum illai, thaazhnhthavarum illai".

In drama, he matched the skills of Kittappa. In cinema, he dominated the field over many doyens of classical music who failed to create a similar impact as he did. In concert halls, despite his robust skills, he was grossly neglected. He did not receive much encouragement from any of the music associations (Sabhas) except the Tamil Isai Sangam. The reason for their reluctance was widely attributed to the fact that a particular section of the society which dominated the Sabhas, was jealous of an 'outsider's' unimaginable fame and popularity. It made the lame excuse that he could only sing popular cine songs in the concerts and this was

held as against traditional concert practises. There was then stiff orthodoxy in the world of Carnatic music. Tamil music was not given pride of place along with Telugu or Sanskrit music. Today, it is heartening to hear many young Carnatic musicians sing Bhagavathar's and other Tamil songs in their concerts.

During the closing days of his life, Bhagavathar suffered from high blood pressure and acute diabetes. On October 22, 1959, he was admitted to the General Hospital, Madras and he passed away peacefully on 1.11.1959. His body was taken to Trichy and was buried in Sangiliyandapuram, a small village in the outskirts of Trichy. No memorial has been erected anywhere to perpetuate Bhagavathar's memory. His 'samadhi' wears a deserted look. A plaque proclaims that the great Carnatic musician-cum-actor was laid to rest here beside his father.

When Bhagavathar passed away, Seergazhi Govindarajan sang two songs each in honour of Bhagavathar and N.S.Krishnan (who had passed away two years earlier). Both the songs were released as one gramophone record. His song on Bhagavathar, "Ezhisai Mannaa, engu nee sendraayo" is a very touching piece. The words aptly describe Bhagavathar's personality and contribution to the field of fine arts. "Kann izhanthaal enna, kanniyam athai un kaalam ulla varai kadai pidithaai" (Does it matter if you lost your eye sight, you preserved your dignity till the end of your time) are words of worthy tribute to MKT's sterling good character.

BHAGAVATHAR'S IMMORTAL SONGS

Bhagavathar's songs are well known and so I will not list them. Most of the songs are available in audio CDs. His first recorded song was 'Sivaperuman Krupai' (ragam - surati) from the film 'Naveena Sarangathara.' Bhagavathar had sung in many ragams including rare ones like Ratipatipriya, Rasaali etc. He deserves credit for popularising the then rare raga 'Charukesi.' Charukesi was not very popular in concerts until 'Manmatha leelai' was heard. Some of the songs sung by him in films were adaptations of popular concert songs. 'Manam Kaninde' in the raga Ratipatipriya is similar to 'Jegajjani,' popularised by M.M.Dandapani Desikar. 'Santhvaganabothan' in Jonpuri is similar to 'Eppo Varuvaaro' popularised by Madurai Mani Iyer. 'Dhyaname enathu' in Kaapi is similar to 'Janaki ramana', 'Adhi devane' in Nadanamakriya is similar to 'Mukthi Alithidum moolasthanarai' sung by Alathur Brothers in their concerts.

Ranging from a brisk and happy Sindhuhairavi in 'Vadaname Chandra bimbamo' to a mellow and slower Sindhuhairavi in 'Vanpasi pini' and 'Poomiyil manida', Bhagavathar has portrayed different emotions in the same raga. Similarly, while 'Vallalai paadum' is a devotional piece in Chenchuruti, 'Rathey unakku kovam' is a romantic song (the first half) in the same raga. These were two of Bhagavathar's favorite ragas. 'Chidambara Natha' is even today one of the best songs in Hemavathi. 'Deena Karunakarane' and 'Krishna Mukunda' are two of the all time great hits in Navroj raga. 'Amba manam kanindu', 'Maravai puthaitha', 'Unai Kandu', 'Soppana Vazhvil', 'Arputha leelaigalai', 'Gnana Kann', 'Annaiyum thanthayum', 'Maname nee' are some of the everlasting classics.

Silence in India on the horrors of Sri Lanka war is inexcusable

Government of Sri Lanka is using the propaganda of the 'war on terror' as a fig leaf to commit unspeakable crimes against the Tamil people and is on the verge of committing what could end up being genocide, writes Indian writer Arundhati Roy, in The Times of India of Monday, March 30th, 2009:

The silent horror of the war in Sri Lanka

by Arundhati Roy

The horror that is unfolding in Sri Lanka becomes possible because of the silence that surrounds it. There is almost no reporting in the mainstream Indian media - or indeed in the international press - about what is happening there. Why this should be so is a matter of serious concern.

From the little information that is filtering through it looks as though the Sri Lankan government is using the propaganda of the 'war on terror' as a fig leaf to dismantle any semblance of democracy in the country, and commit unspeakable crimes against the Tamil people. Working on the principle that every Tamil is a terrorist unless he or she can prove otherwise, civilian areas, hospitals and shelters are being bombed and turned into a war zone. Reliable estimates put the number of civilians trapped at over 200,000. The Sri Lankan Army is advancing, armed with tanks and aircraft.

Meanwhile, there are official reports that several "welfare villages" have been established to house displaced

Tamils in Vavuniya and Mannar districts. According to a report in The Daily Telegraph (Feb 14, 2009), these villages "will be compulsory holding centres for all civilians fleeing the fighting". Is this a euphemism for concentration camps? The former foreign minister of Sri Lanka, Mangala Samaraveera, told The Daily Telegraph:

"A few months ago the government started registering all Tamils in Colombo on the grounds that they could be a security threat, but this could be exploited for other purposes like the Nazis in the 1930s. They're basically going to label the whole civilian Tamil population as potential terrorists."

Given its stated objective of "wiping out" the LTTE, this malevolent collapse of civilians and "terrorists" does seem to signal that the government of Sri Lanka is on the verge of committing what could end up being genocide. According to a UN estimate several thousand people have already been killed. Thousands more are critically wounded. The few eyewitness reports that have come out are descriptions of a nightmare from hell. What we are witnessing, or should we say, what is happening in Sri Lanka and is being so effectively hidden from public scrutiny, is a brazen, openly racist war. The impunity with which the Sri Lankan government is being able to commit these crimes actually unveils the deeply ingrained racist prejudice, which is precisely what led to the marginalization and alienation of the Tamils of Sri Lanka in the first place. That racism has a long history, of social ostracisation, economic blockades, pogroms and torture. The brutal nature of the decades-long civil war, which started as a peaceful, non-violent protest, has its roots



[Indian writer and activist Suzanna Arundhati Roy (born 24 November, 1961); she won the Booker Prize in 1997 for her novel, *The God of Small Things*, and in 2002, the Lannan Cultural Freedom Prize]

in this.

Why the silence? In another interview Mangala Samaraveera says, "A free media is virtually non-existent in Sri Lanka today."

Samaraveera goes on to talk about death squads and 'white van abductions', which have made society "freeze with fear". Voices of dissent, including those of several journalists, have been abducted and assassinated. The International Federation of Journalists accuses the government of Sri Lanka of using a combination of anti-terrorism laws, disappearances and assassinations to silence journalists.

There are disturbing but unconfirmed reports that the Indian government is lending material and logistical support to the Sri Lankan government in these crimes against humanity. If this is true, it is outrageous. What of the governments of other countries? Pakistan? China? What are they doing to help, or harm the situation?

In Tamil Nadu the war in Sri Lanka has fuelled passions that have led to more than 10 people immolating themselves. The public anger and anguish, much of it genuine, some of it obviously cynical political manipulation, has become an election issue.

It is extraordinary that this concern has not travelled to the rest of India. Why is there silence here? There are no 'white van abductions' - at least not on this issue. Given the scale of what is happening in Sri Lanka, the silence is inexcusable. More so because of the Indian government's long history of irresponsible dabbling in the conflict, first taking one side and then the other. Several of us including myself, who should have spoken out much earlier, have not done so, simply because of a lack of information about the war. So while the killing continues, while tens of thousands of people are being barricaded into concentration camps, while more than 200,000 face starvation, and a genocide waits to happen, there is dead silence from this great country.

It's a colossal humanitarian tragedy. The world must step in. Now. Before it's too late.



How Singapore has unity and why Sri Lanka endless strife today

Thirty years ago, I launched this Speak Mandarin Campaign. Chinese students learn Mandarin in school. Unfortunately, they used to speak dialects among themselves and at home. When I watched interviews on our Chinese TV channel in the 1960s and '70s, I found students and workers speak Mandarin haltingly. They have not used Mandarin often. Mandarin has to be the common language of Chinese Singaporeans, regardless of their dialect groups. If the government had left language habits to evolve undirected, Chinese Singaporeans would be speaking an adulterated Hokkien-Teochew dialect.

To effectively promote Mandarin, we closed down all dialect programs on radio and TV from 1979. Also, I was setting a bad example making speeches in Hokkien in the 1960s and '70s to reach the largest number of Chinese. From 1979, some 30 years ago, I decided to stop speaking in Hokkien and switched to Mandarin. Had I not done this, Hokkien/Teochew will be the predominant common language for the Chinese in Singapore, not Mandarin.

The value of a language is its usefulness, not just in Singapore, but also in the wider world. If you speak Hokkien or Cantonese, you reach some 60 million in Fujian and Taiwan, or about 100 million in Guangdong and Hong Kong. With Mandarin, you can speak to 1,300 million Chinese from all provinces in China. Now, overseas Chinese and foreigners are learning Mandarin, not Chinese dialects. China is setting up 500 Confucius Institutes in different countries to teach Mandarin to many millions of people around the world.

I understand the strong emotional ties to one's mother tongue. However, the trend is clear. In two generations,

Mandarin will become our mother tongue.

English is the key language for our people to make a living. It is the second language of all non English-speaking peoples. Multinational companies use English. Internet data banks are mostly in English. PRC Chinese are learning English with great effort. If Mandarin were our first language, Singaporeans would be of little use to China. They do not need more Mandarin speakers to add to their 1.3 billion. English gives us easy access to English-speaking societies and the developed world. Thus, Singaporeans bring value-add to China. If Ms Lim Sau Hoong spoke only fluent Mandarin, she would not bring added value to her work in China. It is because she also speaks and writes fluent English that she has been able to compete in both languages in the advertising sector. That made her a valuable addition to Zhang Yi-mou's team to polish up the dramatic opening ceremony of the Beijing Olympics in August 2008.

To keep a language alive, you have to speak and read it frequently. The more you use one language, the less you use other languages. So the more languages you learn, the greater the difficulties of retaining them at a high level of fluency. I have learned and used six languages - English, Malay, Latin, Japanese, Mandarin and Hokkien. English is my master language. My Hokkien has gone rusty, my Mandarin has improved. I have lost my Japanese and Latin, and can no longer make fluent speeches in Malay without preparation. This is called "language loss".

All new countries have multiple dialects and languages in their mixed populations. To become a united nation, the population must speak a common language, so that they can communicate

with the government and with one another. Indonesia has hundreds of languages and dialects in their 17,000 islands. Since independence in 1949, they have been teaching and speaking Bahasa Indonesia. In secondary schools and tertiary institutions, they do their lessons only in Bahasa, and not the regional languages and dialects. Bahasa is now the language of government and business in all parts of Indonesia.

Singapore's multi-racial peoples will never be united if we had used Mandarin as our common language. All non-Chinese, 25% of Singaporeans, will be disadvantaged. The result will be endless strife, as in Sri Lanka, where Sinhalese was made the national language and the Tamil-speaking were marginalised. We made the right decision to use English as our common language. We also retained the teaching of mother tongues. Even in 1959 when we first became the Government, my colleagues and I could foresee a time when China would open up and become a huge economic power. Their common language is putonghua, not dialects. Our choice of English has enabled our fast growth. Now with China's growing economy, parents and students no longer complain of the burden of learning Chinese, a difficult language without spelling or phonetics. Dialects are being overtaken by Mandarin in the region where Mandarin is taught in all Chinese schools. Mandarin will become the common language of the overseas Chinese.

China wants to collaborate with us because through English, we are able to connect with the West. At the same time, our Mandarin is fluent enough to communicate with PRC Chinese on different topics and subjects.

The Speak Mandarin Campaign and our bilingual education policy have resulted in a growing number of young Singaporeans speaking Mandarin among themselves in schools, ITEs, polytechnics and universities. They also watch Mandarin TV more than English TV.

Quite a few Singaporeans with only "AO" or "O" level passes in Chinese have sent me emails from China to thank me for making Mandarin compulsory for them. With this basic foundation, they have been able to expand their vocabulary and increase their fluency after a few months in China. Singapore Press Holdings distributes a free bilingual newspaper called "Wobao" or "My Paper", which is bilingual in Chinese and English. They have a glossary of translations for the more difficult English and Chinese words and phrases. 250,000



Mr. Lee Kuan Yew

copies of "Wobao" are distributed daily, read by about 500,000. During train or bus rides or at home, you can read it and refresh your recognition of Chinese characters.

School examinations no longer concentrate on mo xie, dictation from memory, or ting xie, listening and writing. They are not needed in real life. With computer programs, you can type the pinyin and the characters will appear. Since 2007, we have allowed the use of digital dictionaries in national examinations.

Singapore's advantage has been that we have a Mandarin-speaking community. We have newspapers, magazines, books, and television programmes in Chinese. We need some 300 Singaporean graduates each year who have Chinese language and culture at a high level, to interact with their China counterparts. The flow of new migrants from

China as our citizens and Permanent Residents will help in this process.

English is our dominant language everywhere. Most students will have little difficulty in mastering working-level English. However, if parents speak in English to their children at home, learning Mandarin will be a problem. Research of American-born Chinese disclosed that when these second-generation Chinese try to learn Chinese in college, those who speak English at home found mastering Chinese as difficult as Caucasian-Americans; those whose parents spoke to them in Mandarin easily made the grade. My advice is for both parents to speak Mandarin to their children if they can. If one speaks in Mandarin and the other in English, the child will grow up speaking more English than Mandarin.

And with IT digital dictionaries that can translate from English to Chinese and vice versa and also pronounce the words, learning Chinese has become much easier and more convenient, something I did not have when I started learning Chinese in 1955 at age 32.

(SPEECH BY MR LEE KUAN YEW, FORMER SINGAPORE PREMIER AND MINISTER MENTOR, AT "SPEAK MANDARIN CAMPAIGN'S" 30TH ANNIVERSARY LAUNCH, 17 MARCH 2009, 5:00 PM AT THE NTUC AUDITORIUM)

Sri Lankan ethnic Tamil women wait to register with the police department during a "census" in Colombo, Sri Lanka, Sunday, March 22, 2009. Sri Lankan police have conducted these series of "censuses" numerous times in the recent past, for the people who moved in to country's capital from embattled north and eastern provinces within last five years. Tamil parliamentarians have protested for singling out just Tamils for this type of police action. (AP Photo/Eranga Jayawardena)



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Continued from March Issue

LEGAL ENTITIES



In Ontario, the availability of a corporate name is decided by the lawyer who helps to incorporate, but for federal incorporation the Industry Canada decides whether that name is available or not. It is advisable to apply for a 'Name Decision' prior to a federal incorporation.

Federal corporations which are incorporated as 'investment companies' come within the provisions of the Investments Companies Act (Canada), while provincial corporations do not. Loan and Trust corporations are incorporated under the Loan and Trust Corporations Act, R.S.O. 1990, c L.25. All loan and trust corporations must be federally incorporated before applying for registration to conduct business in Ontario. The Financial Services Commission of Ontario regulates the affairs of the loan and trust corporations.

'Professional corporations' should comply with the rules and regulations of professional licensing bodies. The articles of incorporation should provide that the corporation may not carry on a business other than the practice of the profession.

Under the Law Society Act (Ontario) one or more persons who are licensed to practice law in Ontario as barristers and solicitors may establish a professional corporation for the purpose of practicing law in Ontario. Lawyers intending to form a professional corporation must incorporate under the Ontario Business Corporations Act. Articles of Incorporation must include a clause restricting the issuance of the shares of the professional corporation. All of the issued and outstanding shares of the corporation should be owned by the persons who are licensed to practice law in Ontario.

The Real Estate and Business Brokers Act, and the Insurance Act, require clearance of name and objects with the respective Licensing Officer prior to filing articles of incorporation.

'Sole Proprietorships' and 'Partnerships' are unincorporated businesses and are not distinct from the individuals who form them. Under the Business Names Act, Ontario, any person who carries on a business under any firm name other than his or her full name must register that firm name. To register a Sole Proprietorship or general



Partnership a Form 1 under the Business Names Act, should be completed, and for Limited Partnership a Form 5 should be completed.

A 'Partnership' is a joint business enterprise carried on by two or more individuals or corporations with the intention of making a profit. The definition of a partnership contains three essential criteria. First, there must be a business. The second element required is that there must be a view to profit, (if the object of the activity is social or cultural, it will not be a partnership). The third criterion is an agreement to carry on business in common and to share the profits. The agreement may be a written contract or an oral agreement and subject to applicable provincial laws.

In a partnership, one partner can bind the partnership and may jeopardize all personal property of the remaining partners. If incorporated, however, one shareholder alone, as a shareholder, cannot subject the corporation to any obligation. The joint and several liability of partners involves so great a risk with so little protection that the scope of partnership expansion becomes inevitably circumscribed. In a partnership, the death or voluntary retirement of a partner dissolves the partnership. The death or withdrawal of a shareholder does not have the

effect of dissolving a corporation. Moreover each member of the partnership may bind the partnership by his/her dealings with its assets and even by his/her incurring partnership liabilities. A shareholder, as such, has no power to deal with the corporation's assets or to incur liabilities binding upon the corporation. Greater transferability of interest is one of the advantages of a corporation over any other form of organization, in that securities issued by the corporation are capable of being easily transferred. A shareholder can enter into contracts with a corporation whose shares he/she owns; he/she can also sue the corporation, since it is recognized in law as a separate legal persona. Because of the joint and several relationship between partners in a Partnership, while any one of them may deal with the assets of the firm, he/she cannot contract with the firm as such, nor can he/she sue the firm. In an unincorporated business the entire taxable income of the business is taxed to the individual owner or to the partners at the applicable rates for personal income, whereas in the case of the corporation, the taxable income of the business is taxed to the corporation, and only income received from the corporation by its shareholders as salary or dividends forms part of the taxable income of the individual recipients.

A Partnership may be a 'General Partnership or a 'Limited Partnership'. Subject to the terms of their agreement, all partners in a General Partnership are entitled to participate in ownership and management, and each assumes unlimited liability for the partnership's debts and liabilities.

A Limited Partnership can only be created by a written partnership agreement. In a Limited Partnership, there is a separation between the partners who manage the business (general partners) and those who contribute only capital (limited partners).

Contd. in the next issue

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U.S. Ambassador Blake recognized Magistrate Srinithy Nandasekaran on 24 March as a South Asian Regional Finalist for the Secretary of State's Women of Courage Award. "Women of Courage" is an honor bestowed by the U.S. Department of State on women who demonstrate exceptional courage and leadership.

In recognizing Ms. Nandasekaran, Ambassador Blake said, "Throughout her career as an attorney and magistrate, Srinithy has shown exemplary commitment and courage in the dispensation of justice to Sri Lankans of all ethnic groups, often while serving in the country's most difficult conflict-torn areas." Ambassador Blake noted especially Magistrate Nandasekaran's tireless efforts on behalf of Sri Lanka's children.

U.S. Embassies around the world annually select outstanding women leaders to receive "Women of Courage" recognition. This year, U.S. Embassies worldwide nominated over 80 exceptional women by for their extraordinary work in areas such as advancing human rights and advocating for the promotion of women's issues.

Srinithy Nandasekaran was a Regional Finalist for South Asia. The Secretary of State selected eight recipients to receive International Women of Courage Awards at the Department of State in Washington, including women from Niger, Russia, Yemen, Iraq, Afghanistan, Guatemala, Uzbekistan, and Malaysia.

Following excerpt is from UTHR(J) Report of May 31, 2007 on the incidents in Allaipiddy in 2006 and subsequent transfer of Magistrate Srinithy Nandasekaran by the Government of Sri Lanka authorities in the midst of judicial proceedings related to Allaipiddy:



Disappearance of Fr. Jim Brown and Abrupt Transfer of the Magistrate Srinithy Nandasekaran

Following the incidents in Allaipiddy on the night of 13th May when 8 persons in one house were among those killed, the

Srinithy Nandasekaran Honoured with U.S. Embassy's Women of Courage Award

parish priest Fr. Amalraj to whom the people turned for help came under threat from the Navy, accused of being a Tiger supporter. Bishop Savundaranayagam moved out Amalraj for his safety and Fr. Jim Brown was posted in his place. In the course of events leading to his disappearance, 34-year-old Fr. Thiruchelvam Nihal Jim Brown earned the highest respect from the people as both priest and leader.

When the Magistrate met the priests on 16th August, including Fr. Jesudasan, Rector of St. Anthony's, Kayts, she learnt that Fr. Jim Brown felt threatened by the local naval commander in Allaipiddy, who was known by his first name as Nishantha, or Commodore Nishantha. His second name sounded something like Koggala. On the 20th afternoon, Fr. Brown went to Allaipiddy on a motorbike to see the church along with Wenceslaus, father of six and a parishioner. Fr. Peter Thurairatnam parted company

Judicial Service Commission, to transfer her responsibilities as Acting Magistrate Kayts to the Jaffna Magistrate. Kayts Magistrate Trotsky was on leave from early August. The decision had nothing to do with her safety. Having been active in Jaffna she was thereafter confined to civil cases as Additional District Judge, Jaffna. In January 2007, she was transferred to the Juvenile Courts in Colombo. While the transfer of a magistrate is within the powers of the JSC, to do so in a manner that seems calculated to interfere with the investigation into a crime is questionable in law and an abuse of power.

After the Magistrate Mrs. Nandasekaran was taken off the case, the progress of the investigation is zero. According to a senior Catholic layman, the logbook at the Allaipiddy entrance, which Mrs. Nandasekaran had ordered the Police to take custody of, was never produced in court. This appears to have been a touchy

suspicious of Fr. Brown. Naval men according to locals thought there was something sinister about Fr. Brown having survived the shelling without a scratch. They thought he must have helped the Tigers to dig bunkers and was himself in a bunker with the Tigers. The fact that he was in the Vestry and had a narrow escape did not seem to make an impression on them. They were also evidently suspicious of the fact that he was originally from the Vanni. The fact that they had been encouraged to operate without inhibitions and to kill on suspicion appears to have sealed Fr. Brown's fate. The Navy subsequently transferred Nishantha, apparently to get him out of an area where he was a focus of legal attention. Reports suggest that he is now in Vavuniya where killers are given a free licence.

On the larger issues, there is something very alarming about these developments with grave implications for both human rights and humanitarian prospects. One concerns military strategy and practices, where security forces are quite happy about shelling and bombing indiscriminately, and denying timely medical attention to the injured. The second is of even greater concern and must now be regarded as the pillar supporting the outgrowth of impunity. This is the readiness of the Judiciary at the highest level - the Chief Justice and the JSC - to transfer magistrates who attempt to investigate abuses, where the Government feels threatened by the truth coming out. Such actions give the signal to the security forces that they could get away with anything.



with Fr. Brown and Wenceslaus at the Allaipiddy checkpoint at 2.15 PM. That was the last seen of Fr. Brown and Wenceslaus. An eye-witness also saw armed men on two motorcycles following Fr. Brown as he went towards the church.

It was on the 22nd that alarm was raised that Fr. Jim and Wenceslaus were missing and Magistrate Nandasekaran was informed about this by one of the fellow priests. She asked the priests to file an entry with the Police and went to Allaipiddy herself in the afternoon. She ordered the Police to take custody of the logbook maintained by the Navy guard at the entrance to Allaipiddy which had a record of movements in and out. The Navy refused to hand over the book.

When the Magistrate was on her way back to Jaffna, there was a huge explosion and firing noises from the Allaipiddy navy camp. The Policemen who accompanied her understood this as a warning to her.

The very next day, the 23rd, Magistrate Mrs. Nandasekaran was told of the order by the Chief Justice under the auspices of the

issue, besides her determination, which triggered her removal from the case. The layman said that when Bishop Savundaranayagam subsequently visited Allaipiddy, naval officials had told him that according to their record Fr. Jim Brown entered Allaipiddy at 1.50 PM and left at 2.10 PM. But it was at 2.10 PM that Fr. Thurairatnam parted from Fr. Brown at the entrance to Allaipiddy, suggesting that the Navy's times were an afterthought.

The local naval commander, Commodore Nishantha, is answerable for several murders, including the murder of the young family on 13th May. On the night of 30th April after an LTTE claymore mine attack near Allaipiddy junction, troops from the same navy detachment went into a nearby house, shot 74-year-old man Ramasamy Sangarapillai and injured his wife (Special Rep.21). The man died from medical attention withheld overnight. His wife and his daughter who witnessed the atrocity have since moved to the LTTE-controlled Vanni according to local sources.

After the brief LTTE-foray on 12th August, Nishantha was very

IDP's from Wannii:

An eye-witness account from an N.G.O

IDP's from Wannii: An eye-witness account from an N.G.O
A partner NGO supported by Christian Aid UK-Ireland has gathered stories from people living in the "welfare centres" in northern Sri Lanka. Here are their accounts:

Written by: An NGO in Sri Lanka

"My husband was pushing me on a bicycle, searching for safe areas", says a disabled mother, paralysed from the waist down.

"In the worst of the fighting we lost the bicycle - I was in a bad situation. Ultimately we all had to scatter and the family was separated. Somehow we were able to get out of the war zone and reach a safer place. We were then locked up in a fenced area, isolated from the people outside. But we were alive."

"There are many sad stories in the camp - so many people have been separated and everyone is longing to see the faces of their family members."

"My neighbour, who is mother of seven children and eight month pregnant, had been running along with us. In the second hideout where some of our village people were hiding, she lost three children from bombing. We do not know who was responsible. It was so horrid to hear her pain of losing her three children. She was telling us that she did not even cry that much when her ailing husband died."

"During our flight, she lost another three children and one was killed. At this point she wanted to commit suicide by hanging herself. We all stopped her from doing so. She wanted to escape from that place. While she was running, something exploded and she lost her leg. In the pain, she was pleading for taking her to hospital which none of us could. We do not know what happen to her."

The mother was relieved to escape the violence and reach the safety of the government camp. But the plight of the displaced people does not end here.

"We are prevented from freely meeting with visitors. Even if we can make contact with our families outside, all we can do is talk to them

through the wire fence. The people are suffering under these rigid restrictions. Wives, husbands, children, friends are kept apart and cannot share their painful feelings or support each other."

Due to multiple displacements most people have lost almost all their belongings. With minimal resources they move from place to place, on tractors, bicycles or on foot, through jungle, marshes and minefields - a seemingly endless search for safety, a chance for survival.

Arriving at government camps impoverished, exhausted and sick, the new arrivals often face crowded conditions. In many cases people are grouped together, irrespective of age, gender or disability, in rooms without any partitions for privacy.

Sometimes people have to sleep in corridors; even spaces adjoining the toilets are utilised. The camp residents want to live in separate huts with their family members.

Inequality can also be a source of frustration.

"A few of the displaced people are able to get food from outside. They're eating very well. But our children are hungry. They see this abundance and they long for a good meal. Such things are not available to most of us."

One man says: "We belong to a fishing community; if we are allowed to live in coastal areas we can make a living. We can gradually re-establish our livelihood and support ourselves."

The mother continues: "I hear the crying of many mothers who have school age children. They all repeat, we have lost all our hard-earned belongings. We want to get back the time and opportunities our children are missing by not going to school and not being able to study and work hard. We all treasure education as wealth, if that too is denied, what is the point of living?"

Creaking Canada Housing Market Likely Won't Collapse Like US

Immigration and fiscal policy measures aimed at benefiting the Housing will help improve the real estate markets in Canada and the USA. Featured here are a news report and an oped piece that appeared recently in The Wall Street Journal analysing the situation:

According to a recent report by RBC Economics, Canadian housing market is not expected to have a U.S.- or U.K.-style retrenchment as neither the stock of homes available for sale stands at excessive levels nor is the market plagued by under collateralized mortgages.

The Canadian housing market correction is more a symptom of the recession than a driver, according to experts in a recent Dow Jones News wires report, the publishers of The Wall Street Journal.

Here is the full report from Dow Jones News Wires:

Canada's housing market is creaking and groaning under the stress of a sustained correction and a sharply weaker economy, but its stronger foundations suggest it won't experience the kind of collapse witnessed in the U.S. or the U.K.

By any measure, the Canadian housing market has been correcting for several months, with sales, prices and starts all down substantially from peak levels in 2007-08.

"We all know the Canadian housing market is clearly in a recession, and the housing market is, to some extent, reflecting

the weakening domestic fundamentals," said Milan Mulraine, economics strategist at TD Securities in Toronto.

Unlike the U.S., however, the Canadian housing market correction is more a symptom of the recession than a driver. Also, unlike the U.S., the Canadian housing market was not built on a wobbly foundation of undercollateralized, uninsured, non-recourse mortgages.

The pace of decline accelerated in the last quarter of 2008 and into this year, although recent data have not been uniformly negative. February resales rose 8.6% in seasonally adjusted terms from January, an unexpected burst some observers attributed to low interest rates.

Housing starts headed in precisely the opposite direction in February, dropping by 12.3% from the previous month to 134,600.

Most analyst believe several months of declines are likely before the correction is finished and sustained recovery can begin.

TD's Mulraine expects the housing market decline to continue to the middle or end of this year for the simple reason the domestic fundamentals also will continue to decline, particularly the labor market, a key driver of housing demand.

Mulraine believes housing starts will drop into a range between 120,000 to 130,000 from the 250,000 area about a year ago for a 40% drop from the peak. "This quick adjustment in home building is likely to be positive in the sense in that it will

mean we are not going to have that significant drag (from inventories)," he added.

The decline in sales of existing homes has been in the same 40% range as the decline in starts, said Doug Porter, deputy chief economist at BMO Capital Markets.

"I think we are going to have a pretty serious correction on the housing market front, here. I think we're already well into it," Porter said.

Resale prices also show weakness. Raw data from the Canadian Real Estate Association show average resale prices falling 9.2% in February from a year ago, a slight improvement from a string of results closer to 10%

declines in the four preceding months.

A weighted version that attempts to compensate for the changing mix of homes sold showed a price decline of 5.3% year-on-year in February is likely more accurate, said BMO's Porter, who's calling for another 5% to 10% decline in prices.

That's not good, but it contrasts markedly with the roughly 25% decline in the S&P/Case-Shiller housing price index in the U.S. It also is consistent with the view of most analysts that the Canadian and U.S. housing corrections will ultimately prove to be of different orders of magnitude.



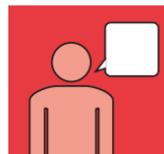
"They have gone through as serious a downturn in the housing sector as we've seen in the post-war period. I don't think Canada is in the same league," Porter said.

"While prices and sales are likely to continue to weaken in 2009, we do not look for a U.S.- or U.K.-style retrenchment as neither the stock of homes available for sale stands at excessive levels nor is the market plagued by undercollateralized mortgages," said a report from RBC Economics.

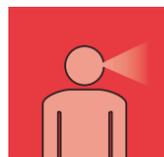
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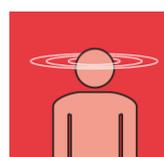
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MONSOON FEATURE

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

EAGLE GLEN

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

ty and tranquility of the neighbouring countryside.

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

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

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

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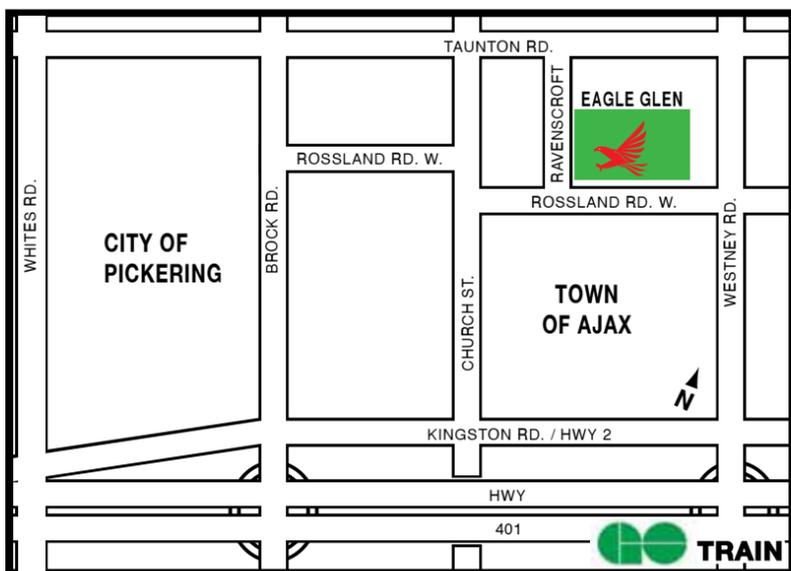
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International Monetary Fund as Last Resort to Fund the 'Ending' Genocide War

- Arun Senathirajah

Sri Lanka government has allocated \$1.6 billion in its 2008/09 budget for the war against the Tamil Tigers and has submitted application for borrowing \$1.9 billion from the UN-affiliated International Monetary Fund (IMF). Virtually, Sri Lanka is seeking almost 85% of the genocide war expenditure from the IMF. The IMF is now in preparation to announce the \$1.9 billion facility approval for Sri Lanka government's policy goals. The Sri Lanka government's policy goal as evidenced by its budget proposals is clearly for spending more on war against Tamils. This clearly shows that the proposed funds would be used for 'quasi military' purpose or to cover up the allocated \$1.6 billion in its budget. An IMF team in the country for negotiations with the central bank on a \$1.9 billion has left and the loan is expected to be announced in Washington, a Sri Lankan central bank official said on Thursday April 03, 2009. The Government of Sri Lanka has indicated in its application the purposes of the loan are for: resettlement and redevelopment in the Northern Province and for the accelerated development programme in the Eastern Province. Central Bank of Sri Lanka has indicated that officially the loan is required to improve the living conditions of the people affected by the decades old ethnic conflict and to bring a permanent and lasting solution to the ethnic problem and to implement it successfully. The IMF officials have not received any warranty from the Government of Sri Lanka whether the proceeds would not be used for war purposes. Some circles in UN has expressed that setting up resettlement camps is an military oriented activity so that the funding cannot be granted for this purpose. Everyone knows the fact that Sri Lanka has no any justifiable solution plan to solve the ethnic problem.

Government's Policy Goals

With IMF's lending focused on achieving the government's policy goals which include rebuilding reserves, reducing the budget deficit and bringing about balance of payment sustainability. Any government's policy goals are reflected in its annual budgets. While Sri Lanka's budget deficits have been continuously increased the due to ever before increase in expenditure for ethnic cleansing war against Tamils, now the IMF has come to bail out the war adamant Sri Lankan government which clearly does not have a power devolution based solution for the Tamil issue.

With the slogan 'Terrorism' inherited from former US president George W. Bush to cover up

all the human right violations and to carry out ethnic cleansing of Tamil minorities and aligned with Iran and China, when those so called democratic westerners start talking about human right violations, Sri Lanka is now back again bending knees to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) - an institution it chased away in January 2007 - for a bailout package worth US\$1.9 billion as the country is struggling to manage the financial burden. Before the global crisis, the government was so certain about the access to cheap credit from commercial sources that one powerful Finance Ministry official told a senior World Bank staffer: 'We don't need your conditional money. We have access to cheap credit without conditions, having in minds resources as Iran and China.' Sri Lanka government's access to cheap commercial borrowing from foreign sources to fund the costly war against separatist Tamil rebels and other state expenses has dried up with the global financial meltdown.

Central Bank governor Ajith Nivard Cabraal who is a political appointee and former advisor to President Mahinda Rajapaksa was trying to fool the Sinhala public by saying the 'IMF's facility offer was without conditions' which never or ever happened in the history of IMF's lending programs. Its financial facility packages always have conditionality. The conditions such as demands for a reduced budget deficit, cuts in government spending, tighter monetary policy and a flexible exchange rate policy, which would allow the rupee to float freely against major currencies are some examples. The governor has been criticized by economists and opposition legislators for misleading the country on the state of its finances. Economists said much of the Sri Lanka's spending, particularly on the military, came from domestic borrowings and when that dried up; it came from foreign borrowings from commercial sources China and Iran. Sri Lanka has been relying on China for political and economic support after turning away from the once-favoured West, which has been repeatedly critical of the government in Colombo over human-rights violations.

The central bank officials also hide economic status of the country, as like their political leaders cover up human right violations. They all have well developed skills to say lies and to cover up that lie by coming out with another lie. Totally they mislead the Sinhala population whose medium of education is Sinhala only and they heavily rely on Sinhala media only for updates.

Economic Crisis

The drop in export earnings combined with the spiralling cost



of imports, especially due to increased military purchases to sustain the war, is impacting the dwindling foreign reserves, forcing the government to seek bailout from the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Decreasing export income and the Central Bank using the few dollars it has to intervene in local money markets to defend the rupee from depreciating against the US dollar. The country had \$1.7 billion in gross official reserves at the end of December, sufficient just for 1.5 months of imports, compared with more than \$3.5 billion a year earlier. Sri Lanka's economy is going through a severe crisis as key exports including garment and tea significantly drop with buyers staying away. According to a recent survey in the past four years, many large international garment buyers moved their business out of Sri Lanka and into cheaper manufacturing destinations. In seven provinces 75 factories have closed down in this period and out of this around 24 factories closed down over the past six months alone, according to the survey. Out of around 50 main international garment buyers registered with the Sri Lanka Garment Buying Offices Association, 12 shut down their offices in Sri Lanka within the last three years. The survey blamed the unstable security situation along with comparatively higher cost of production in Sri Lanka as reasons for foreign buyers leaving Sri Lanka. Island's other big earner, tea, is also not faring well according to the Sri Lanka Tea Board, which announced a 30% drop in overseas sales in January. Sales from tea shipments fell to 6.9 billion rupees (61.37 million dollars) in January, compared to 9.8 billion rupees in the same period a year earlier.

Sri Lanka in Debt Trap

In 2008/09 budget the government has raised external borrowing by 25%. Sri Lanka's external debt amounted to \$12 billion

at the end of 2007, almost 40 percent of gross domestic product, according to the central bank. This 25% would further worsen its rating. The current borrowing proposal from the IMF will bring another adverse impact on the economy. Senior economist Sirimal Abeyratne from the University of Colombo told Inter Press Service (IPS) that the financial crisis is so acute that Sri Lanka had few choices. 'Otherwise, why ask for money if we have money, particularly from an institution - IMF that the government didn't want,' he said. Dushni Weerakoon, senior economist at the Institute of Policy Studies, said Sri Lanka's main problem has been the "outflow of foreign exchange last year following the global economic crisis and using whatever resources we have to defend the Sri Lanka rupee in local money markets'. She told IPS that in addition to an outflow of \$600 million after foreigners withdrew money in central bank bonds in the second half of 2008, the bank has been pumping some \$200 million a month (in the last three months of the year) in an unsustainable exchange rate policy to prop up the rupee. With foreign reserves fast dwindling, the central bank, whose governor in February, announced two measures to shore up reserves: raising \$500 million from Sri Lanka's diaspora and currency swaps with other central banks in the region. However neither has worked as expected. Economist Abeyratne said Sri Lanka was in a debt trap, where one had to borrow to pay off debts. 'We are down to our lowest levels. Diaspora funds have not come as expected. Last year, the government paid close to half a million dollars in debt payments and this year it will be higher. So we are borrowing to pay off our debt - which is where part of the \$1.9 billion IMF facility will go.' Weerakoon said the debt payments will increase this year



once some central bank bonds expire and payments are made. There was also payment to be made to Iran for an oil credit line, she said. 'There is quite a list of payments.' 'We believe these are the principal sources of risk for the Sri Lankan economy, which, in the unfolding environment of slowing economic growth, unfavourable global economic and financial market conditions, increases the stress on Sri Lanka's debt service capacity.'

Continuous Decline of Floated SLR and Sliding of Colombo Stock Exchange (CSE)

Sri Lanka's rupee hit a new life low against U.S. dollar on April 3, 2009 - Thursday on importer dollar demand without central bank intervention. The rupee hit a new life low of 116.05/15 a dollar before closing at 116.00/116.10, down from its previous record closing low of 115.90/116.00 hit on Wednesday. But central bank officials have said the rupee fall was purely market-driven and not due to devaluation. Market players since around October have been saying that the rupee would have fallen on its own barring state intervention. Currency dealers on Wednesday said the central bank was in the process of devaluing the rupee as a precondition for the IMF loan. As like the Central Bank governor, Nandalal Weerasinghe, the chief economist at the central bank, declined to comment except to say the bank has already said it is allowing greater flexibility in the exchange rate. 'The fall might be due to market demand and supply,' he said. This is a clear indication that the central bank has floated the rupee to fulfill a condition for the IMF loan,' said a currency dealer. 'Otherwise, why should it stay away now without intervention after protecting the rupee heavily since September?'

The Colombo Stock Exchange (CSE) dragged down on lack of direction, with investors expecting another quarter of gloomy earnings in the three months ended on March 31. Analysts said the IMF loan, prolonged war, and high lending rates despite the central bank's loosening monetary policy stance along with negative corporate earnings have kept investors away from the market until they get clear directions.

Country Credit Rating and SLR Currency Rating

On October 10, 2008 World Bank has named Sri Lanka as one of the 28 countries 'fiscally vulnerable'. Sri Lanka's credit rating was cut to five levels below investment grade by Standard & Poor's, citing mounting public debt and political and security concerns, Bloomberg reported on 15 December 2008.

Contd. in page 39...

Global Recession Hits South Asia's Apparel Industry

By Anjana Pasricha

South Asia's export based apparel industry is reeling under the impact of the global recession as demand for clothing from Western countries slows down. The industry is one of the biggest employers in this region.

For the last three years, 40-year-old Phekan sewed buttons on cotton shirts in a small factory in Gurgaon, on the outskirts of New Delhi earning about \$100 a month. But she lost her job earlier this month after the European retailer buying the shirts slashed orders.

Phekan is worried how she will continue to live in the city while searching for another job.

Phekan says her landlord will demand rent on the first of the month, and she does not know how she will pay the money.

She is among tens of thousands of workers in India, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh who have lost jobs as the recession

in the West slows down orders for garments. These countries are among several Asian countries where the apparel industry boomed in recent years as demand in the United States and Europe grew steadily.

Raghav Gupta, President at India-based consultancy Technopak Advisors, says bigger manufacturers are able to absorb the impact of the slowdown, but many smaller units are badly hit.

"The bigger



people, because economies of scale and cost pressures are important, are still going to grow, but it is small companies which don't have economies of scale, they might go out of business,"

Gupta said.

The industry is impacted slightly less in India, where strong domestic consumption is providing a market for manufacturers. But the export dependant industries in Bangladesh and Sri Lanka have been impacted

more severely by shrinking retail sales in the West.

According to the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association, an estimated 25 percent of orders have been cancelled by Western buyers.

The Association's Vice President, Shafiqul Islam Mohiuddin, says the industry was hoping to exceed last year's exports which totaled over \$10 billion, but is unlikely to meet the target.

"The export goal initial in this year was \$13 billion, and we are little scared whether we will be able to achieve that goal," he said. "Buyers are delaying the goods because of falling demand. We are struggling for survival in these bad days."

The textile and garment factories in the region provide jobs to tens of millions of people, especially women, and are the biggest employers in the region after agriculture.

[VOA]

India's Mobile Phone Market Grows Rapidly Despite Economic Slowdown

By Anjana Pasricha

India's mobile phone industry is growing at a furious pace despite the country's slowing economy. India is the world's fastest growing cellular market.

For over 10 years, 35-year-old Shankar Das, a plumber, earned about \$100 a month working in a New Delhi company that provides services such as plumbing, carpentry and painting.

Earlier this year, he quit, and invested in a mobile phone. He offered his services to customers at half the price which the company charged. Within months, Das has built up a huge clientele, and has more than tripled his earnings.

Das says he could never have struck out on his own without the mobile phone, on which his customers contact him anywhere, anytime.

He is among nearly 25 million people who bought mobile phone connections in the first two months this year - the highest number ever

during that period.

The economic slowdown has failed to dampen growth of India's mobile phone market. Connections are being added at the fastest pace in the world. Many of the new subscribers are those working on their own such as vegetable sellers and taxi drivers, or low income earners such as maids and laborers.

Girish Trivedi, a senior analyst at consultancy Frost and Sullivan, says mobile phones have become a handy tool for millions of people who work in the unorganized sector.

"We have seen that mobile phones as a utility tool has got a mass acceptance, in the sense people can use to improve their livelihood, and this has actually helped to a large extent to grow this particular service," said Trivedi.

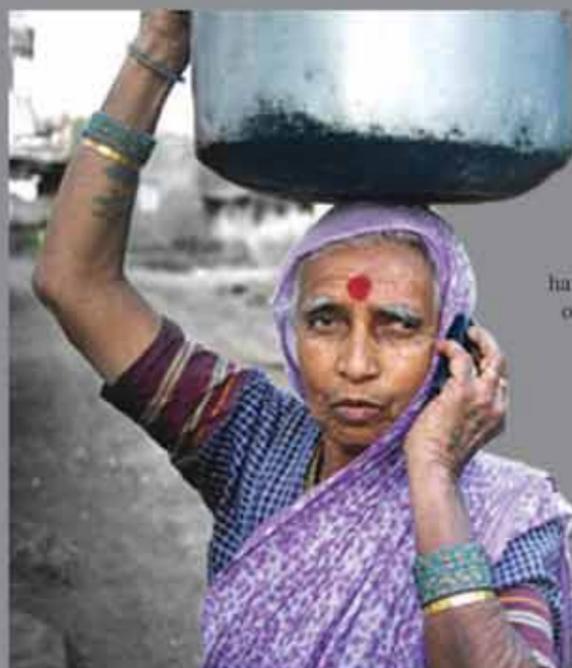
Affordability is driving growth in a country where average earnings are low. Call rates have dropped over the years to just two cents for a one minute call. Cheap handsets introduced into

the market are available for less than \$20. This has put mobile phones within the reach of those earning less than \$100 a month.

About 375 million people in the country now have mobile phone connections. Trivedi says that in a country of over a billion people that still leaves huge room for growth.

"We are still below 35 per cent penetration level in the country. We have practical examples around the world of countries having shown growth even beyond 100 per cent penetration level. So there is a huge amount of market requirement which still needs to be filled in," said Trivedi.

Phone companies say they expect to see most of the growth in the future come from rural areas where two thirds of India lives. The Cellular Operators Association expects that the number of mobile phone subscribers will rise to 525 million by 2010. [voa]



Courtesy Wildlife Conservation Society

Scientists Discover Rare Dolphins in Bangladesh

Researchers with a wildlife conservation group say they have discovered thousands of rare Irrawaddy dolphins living in the waters of Bangladesh.

Authors of a study say they found nearly 6,000 of the endangered freshwater animals in the Sundarbans mangrove forest and in the adjacent waters of the Bay of Bengal.

Wildlife protection agencies say before the study, only small populations of Irrawaddy dolphins were known to exist, numbering fewer than 200.

The scientists began counting the dolphins in 2004.

The results were released Wednesday at a marine wildlife conference in Hawaii, and published in the Journal of Cetacean Research and Management.

The lead researcher, Brian Smith of the New York-based Wildlife Conservation Society, said the find "gives us great hope that there is a future for Irrawaddy dolphins."

In a statement from the conservation group, he said Bangladesh is an important sanctuary for the endangered mammals, and "conservation in this region should be a top priority."

Smith warns that even the large population of the dolphins in Bangladesh is being threatened by entanglement in fishing nets, as well as by threats to its freshwater habitat posed by global warming.

Irrawaddy dolphins can grow to up to 2.5 meters in length and live in several waterways in southeast Asia. The animals were declared a threatened species last year by the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN).

In addition to Smith, the study's other authors include scientists Benazir Ahmed from the Chittagong University zoology department and Rubaiyat Mansur Mowgli from a Bangladeshi whale and dolphin research program. [VOA]

THE WORLD FASTEST MOVIE WORLD RECORD ATTEMPT

Script to Screening in 12 Days

Guinness Hall of Famer and Canada's #1 record breaker Suresh Joachim of Canada now taking on a whole new challenge. This time he will be making a world record movie in India. Suresh will be taking on the leading role in this movie. He will be making this 2 hours feature length film script to screening in 12 days. It has been 20 years since the current world record was established. Now it will be up to Suresh Joachim to set a new world record.

Andrew Raymond & Suresh Joachim will be producing this film Under Suresh Joachim Entertainment Inc.

This multi-talented person, who is gifted with various talents, has been breaking world records since 1996. Suresh has been traveling around the world and has broken world records in four continents. He drummed continuously for 84 hours, ran 3,495 KM within an hour, every hour for 1000 consecutive hours, ran on a treadmill for 168 hours to cover 659.27km, bowled for 168hrs, carried a 4.5 kg brick in a nominated ungloved hand in an uncradled downward position for 135.5 km, non-stop crawling for 56.62 km, dribbled a basketball for 156.71 km in 24 hours, ran 100 km on a treadmill in just over 7 hours, 100 hours of continuous dancing, 24 hours moonwalk, non-stop musical performance with band for 42 hours, pushed a car for 19.2 km in 24 hours, watched TV for 69 hours on Regis & Kelly show, Radio DJ 120 hours, watched 56 movies for 123 hours at Netflix movie watching world championship and the list goes on.

The latest confirmation from Guinness

The Current Record is:

The shortest time ever taken to make a feature length film from scripting to screening is 13 days for THE FASTEST FORWARD (UK 1990) . Produced By Russ Malkin and directed by John Gore (both UK)

Strict rules from Guinness World Records

1. The film produced must have a running time of no less than 75 minutes in length.

2. The clock starts with the meeting /discussion/concept of writing a film script.

3. The clock stops as soon as the completed, classified film appears on the screen at its premiere performance

The film will be made in 12 days, starting from writing the story, screenplay, songs, title, shooting up to 60 scenes and editing it into a two-hour feature film. It will have English subtitles and it will also be released in three different languages (Tamil, Hindi & Telugu).

The Kollywood film industry and the artistes, who have come forward to work with him, are all very excited about this record attempt. They are all supportive and are able to give him 12 days of call-sheet without break, which is very important for this record attempt which will begin on April 13, 2009 at 6 pm 2009. It will be inaugurated by Puducherry Chief Minister V Vaithilingam. The film will be directed by V Krishnamurthy, who had worked as assistant director in films including Pulan Visaranai, Captain Prabhakaran and Rassaiyah. Prominent artistes including Meera Jasmine, Vivek, Suman, Bose Venkat, Rajeev, Thiyagu, Alex form part of the cast.

The other credits are V Prabhakar (dialogues), Srinivasm, Indrajith and Jamal Deen (cinematography), Deva (music), Vairamuthu (lyrics), V T Vijayan (editing) and Kathir (art direction). The movie will be ready on April 25, 2009 at 6 pm 2009. The attempt is to create awareness on peace and universal brotherhood.



Event Schedule:
Start: April 13, 2009 @ 6.00 pm at Nallafarms, Pondy-Tindivanam Road, Murattandi (Arowil Post) Pudhucheri India
Finish: April 25, 2009 @ 5.30 pm at Sathyam Cinemas, 8 Thiruvika Road, Royapettah Chennai - 600014 India

Suresh is planning to give an opportunity to one poverty stricken talented sightless person to sing in his movie. By this he wants to expose the exceptional talent this individual was born with. On April 25th 2009 when the movie gets screened, he is

planning to help 50 children from Pandecherry and Tamil Nadu who are born with some type of disability.

Andrew Raymond who is producer of this movie is a well known musician / singer and producer in Toronto for the past 30 years. He was born in Trinidad and Tobago and comes from one of the most popular music bands there, THE RAYMOND FAMILY. Andrew is still in the music industry, and now he is venturing into the film industry with this "RECORD BERAKING MOVIE"

The most remarkable demon-



stration of Suresh's commitment to help suffering children will be the World Peace Marathon. This incredible journey will begin at 12:00 a.m. on December 25, 2010 in Jerusalem and end at 5:00 p.m. on June 24, 2011 in Toronto Canada. During his voyage, Suresh will travel through 88 major cities, in 55 countries passing a symbolic peace torch to dignitaries in each place. The journey will end with the peace torch being handed over to the leader of the country followed by a huge musical celebration. Once his journey is completed, Suresh will have travelled over 6,000 km, taking him a total of 182 days. During this time he hopes to raise One Billion dollars for Charity. Also Suresh Joachim will submit a petition with millions of signatures to make June 24 a world wide cease fire day. Not only will he be raising funds for the children at the same time, but he will be breaking 20 world records including LARGEST PETITION SIGNED 500,000,000 IN ONE YEAR

Suresh Joachim's Next Attempt:

Longest political speech for 168 hours (Subject: World Peace & Child Poverty)

Nonstop Drumming for 100 hours

For More Information Please Contact

Suresh Joachim: (Canada) 416-666-8476, (India) (91) 996-298-2916, (91) 987-720-4191

Email: suresh@sureshjoachim.org
Andrew Raymond (Coordinator) 647-869-7337, Email: white5spoke@hotmail.com

Sylvester Rajaratnam (Manager): 416-230-3733
www.sureshjoachim.org & www.worldsuperheroes.com.

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**MONSOON
FEATURE**

By Anthony Xavier

There is a division in the heart of the people in Sri Lanka. Fragmented heart gives rise to hatred and anger. Hatred leads to racial riots, murders and periodic wars.

The question arises as to whether the division of the heart, discrimination and hatred are basic qualities in man. If they were essential elements in human nature, the situation in Sri Lanka would be altogether hopeless. Fortunately the correct answer points towards the opposite.

We are all one. It is not a mere concept but a definite fact according to the conclusions of modern science. That everything is interconnected, interdependent and inseparable is the finding of quantum physics. (Bell's Theorem)

Those who meditate very deeply experience a profound, ineffable unity with everyone and everything. They understand that they are not thereby creating a sense of unity but becoming aware of what is already given. We become wise, as we grow in the awareness of our essential unity. It is constantly abiding in such wisdom that made Lord Buddha in ancient times, and the great Indian sage Ammachi in the modern world, manifest unlimited

compassion and love towards all living beings.

The possibility of human communication, or the fact that we can talk with each other, and be understood, implies that we are truly one. The experience of love and hatred is based on our fundamental unity. Hatred is a distortion of love. Hence our differences and divisions are superficial to us.

Attributing substantial importance to superficial differences is a dangerous delusion. It can make us wage a war, forgetting that we are utterly one. An earnest search for truth is bound to reveal our absolute oneness. We can and must move towards realizing the sense of our basic unity, a sense that is amazing, peaceful, and quietly bubbles with joy.

Modern technology is fast changing human psychology. In order to survive, humanity will be obliged to co-operate more than ever before. Soon we will begin to see more global warming, rampant unemployment worldwide, increasing poverty everywhere, financial breakdown, and the threat of major wars. The global economy will be rationalized and restructured to deal with such problems.

Wasteful, polluting production and consumption will be eliminat-

ed. We shall find creative ways, and work hard to preserve the planet for the future generations. There would be an open and fair exchange of goods and jobs, with an equitable distribution of wealth.

The global economy can be facilitated in a genuinely democratic, transparent, and rational manner, only when the whole world is governed as one body. Individual freedom and regional autonomy can be enhanced in this process.

In the future world, the borders between countries will not have much significance. People will be able to go around the world without visas or travel permits. Wars, unemployment, and poverty would have been abolished.

In the meantime, Sri Lanka can escape from its current plunge into corruption, cruelty, and general insanity by accepting the present division of the country into two interdependent, autonomous Sinhalese and Tamil-speaking regions. Facing facts is peace, whereas shared delusion wrecks havoc.

When people are selfish and caught in delusion, there is hardly any room for authentic leadership. Most of us become entangled in the play of self-deception and the deception of others. It is

not at all easy to find the strength within us to move out of such a delusory state.

Can Sri Lanka find a genuine leadership which is honest, humble and courageous enough to face the facts and be real? Will they be intent on cultivating inner peace so that they may be assiduous about establishing peace externally? When will we start respecting ourselves and others equally?

It is not possible to show disrespect to another human being, unless one is sick at heart, and despises himself profoundly. One may cover up an unconscious or conscious self-hatred by pride and pretension. However his or her behavior will reveal a clear lack of self-respect.

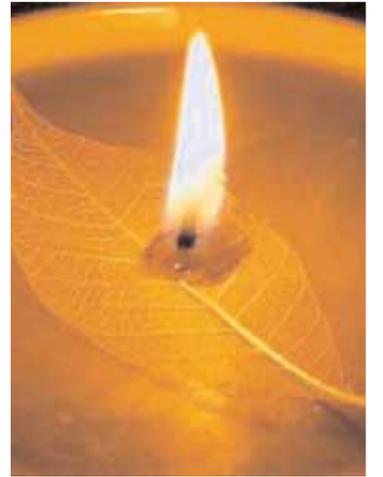
William Shakespeare hit straight on the mark when he emphasized the importance of being true to oneself, in order to be true to others.

"This above all,- to thine own self be true;

And it must follow, as the night the day,

Thou canst not then be false to any man." (Hamlet)

When we are completely true to ourselves, we will be sincere and happy. Then it is easy to realize that the life of each and every human being is sacred and pre-



cious, needing to be nourished and nurtured in every way, and at all cost. Moreover we will avoid the game of pointing to the past, and blaming each other, which depletes the energy required to appreciate the present, and move confidently towards the future.

Our divided hearts can be healed and made whole. That is just a matter of being who we truly are, instead of continuing to indulge in false pretensions. It may be quite hard to give up our selfish habits based on falsehood and pernicious pretension.

As we succeed, life becomes rather simple and easy. Then we would be free to take great delight in nature and the people around us. This can happen, as Ammachi says, only when we renounce the love of power, and embrace the power of love.

Yogam Experience the change Swami Paramahansa Nithyananda Visit

By: Pudhuvai Raman

Human life throughout the world is being affected due to every day's tension with multi various problems economically, socially, culturally. As such non violence, racism, extremism, terrorism etc are threatening many parts of the world. In families most of the seniors, who are affected by ill health, family problems and mental stress do experience peace less environment to lead a contended an average life. As the consequence of these effects, everyone prefers to surrender their grievances towards God with prayers and special poojas. To create an awareness among all, particularly to impart the knowledge and the art of self realization to the younger generations, through divine spirituality, number of saints, yogees and philosophers are spreading godly messages and give training viz., Meditation, Yoga Practices. One among them Swami Pramahansa Nithyananda an Enlightened Master from India, has been doing wonderful services throughout the world by his mission to re establish the Science of inner bliss in every individual. He offers guaranteed solutions for issues as common as daily worries and



stresses to those as profound enlightenment. His authenticity, broad appeal, sense of humour and ability to make the Vedic wisdom both practical and enjoyable have allowed his teachings to reach far and wide, crossing language, age and general boundaries.

Life Bliss Foundation, the non-profit organization, he founded in 2005, is a part of a worldwide movement for meditation and healing with thousands of centres. It aims to raise individual consciousness and ultimately, to significantly raise the collective consciousness of humanity. To achieve this, the Nithyananda Mission aspires to initiate 100 million people into the unique meditation technique. Nithya Dhayan and for 100.000 individuals to 'live

enlightenment'.

On the above basis, swami makes to realize everyone to this conscious miracle of Existence. Existence is trying to express itself through you. What you call your potential is nothing but the expression of Existence through you. When you freely allow, this you will start realizing your infinite potential. When you start becoming the fulfillment of Existence you become flowing energy, which he calls as Living Enlightenment. Living Enlightenment is living with the flowing of Existence, in synchronicity with its miraculous happenings.

When you live this way, you will find there is no personal barrier, no emotional baggage, nothing holds you back in life. Life flows continuously like a river car-



rying bliss and fulfillment every moment. As the result of which, you will experience the five most important things viz, Shakthi, Buddhi, Yukti, Bhakthi and Mukti in your life.

It is time to wake up and realize that world peace does not only depend upon our leaders. World peace starts within each one of us. We are not individual islands. Our thoughts, our emotions, and our feelings not only affect us but they affect the rest of the world also. Individual stress, hatred, and violence cause an increase in the collective stress, hatred and violence in society! We need to break this cycle; otherwise it will just continue to cause more calamities - both natural and manmade.

The change our world needs. These are the main objectives of Swamiji to spread throughout the world through his missionary branches, which he has been promoting this art uniformly with innumerable disciples and devotees.

In his words "Do you think that this is all that you are?"

You are not just this body that you use. You are not just this mind - You are much more. You are all that and something more. You are the whole world. You are the Universe. You are the cosmos - Simply discover it" Achieve this through the ultimate practice for Body, Mind and Being.

Nitya Yoga - going back to the roots of yoga, as originally intended by Patanjali, the Father of Yoga - is not just about adding more movements to your life. It is about adding more life to your movements.

The universe responds to the state of your being believing that the universe is just matter is what causes conflict. If we believe that the universe is Intelligent Energy, that is compassionate and that it responds to us, then peace prevails.

Swami Paramahansa Nithyananda visited Toronto during the first week of March and conducted two days program of Meditation workshop and practices of Patanjali Yoga Sutras - The ultimate Instruction of Yoga and Kalpataru Program, which were held at Chandni Banquet Hall, 125 Chrysler Drive, Brampton, organized by the Toronto Nithyananda Meditation academy, which has three branches at Scarborough, Woodbine and Brampton.

Contd. Next Page...

WORDS OF PEACE

The Best is Here

People often imagine that the best is yet to come, or that things are better somewhere else, but the best is right here and now, says Maharaji, an international voice for peace who encourages his listeners to find peace within.

"There's an old saying," Maharaji says, "that the grass is always greener on the other side of the hill.

"In order to irrigate a field without an electric pump, farmers used to tie an ox or a camel to a pole. They would blindfold the animal and lead it around in a circle to turn a gear that, in turn, rotated another one that pumped the water from the well.

"The ox would just walk and walk in a circle. Since it was blindfolded, it was said that it probably imagined it was traveling to a distant land, and at the end of the day, that ox must be thinking that the grass must be really green where it now was. Yet when the blindfold was removed, it would find itself in exactly the same place.

"What's the point of thinking and imagining that the grass is greener on the other side of the hill?" he asks. "That green grass is right within us--and it's as green as it gets. We have an imagination, but it's up to each one of us how we use it. How do you use it?"

Maharaji spoke publicly even as a child about the need for each individual to find peace. Throughout his adult life, he has traveled internationally to bring to people on every continent the possibility of experiencing peace and contentment within.

"It's waiting," he says, "to be discovered; to be embraced, accepted, and understood by us--by each of us."

Understanding what he means by peace is one difficulty some people have, Maharaji says, when they listen to him speak.

"When people use the word



people ask me to give them the magic formula," he says. "I'm saying you already have the magic formula. It's inside of you."

Understanding that fact is a first step toward feeling peace, he says, but some people shun peace out of habit. "We have learned to ask questions," Maharaji says. "Have we also learned how to accept an answer? Maybe you're brilliant at asking questions. Maybe you can ask amazing questions, but are you also brilliant enough to recognize the answer?"

"If people know that peace is inside of them, they can stop wasting time, because then they know they won't find it in the

peace," he says, "I don't know if we're talking about the same thing. Everybody has their own version of peace. Some think that if their neighbor went away, that would be peace. Others think that if there were no traffic on the highways, they'd feel peace."

What does Maharaji mean by peace?

"If you want to know the answer to that question," he says, "the answer is not going to come from the outside. It's going to come from inside of you. That's because inside of you is a thirst for peace, and inside of you is the water that will quench that thirst."

Maharaji says what he can do is show people how to discover what they already have. "A lot of

Himalayas or in a book. People who believe satisfaction within can be accomplished by reading a book should try just reading a recipe book the next time that they're hungry, or reading a book about water the next time they're thirsty. We know it doesn't work like that. Hunger is real. It requires eating food, not a theory or a philosophy."

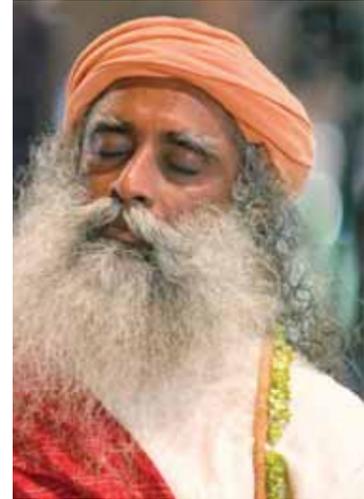
The path to peace, he says, is actually very simple.

"Don't forget what's real in this life," Maharaji says. "Maybe my message is as simple as that."

For more information, www.wordsofpeace.ca
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Death is a fiction

Though you have no first-hand experience of death, nor did you ever meet a dead person, nor did you anytime see a dead person – you might have seen dead bodies, but you have never seen a dead person. Nor did you meet somebody who died and who came back and who told you about their death. So you have not heard it, you have not seen it, you have not experienced it. But still, somewhere you started believing that there is something called as "death." Death is a fic-



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

tion created by ignorant people. Death is the creation of the ignorant. Death is the creation of the unaware. If you are aware, it's life, life, and life alone.

If one has to experience the eternal nature of life, one must kill death. If death is alive, then there is no eternal life. Only when you put death to death, only then there is eternal life. If we look at life and death as a happening in terms of your experience, one thing that we can look at is your breath. Your inhalation is life; your exhalation is death. When life began for you as you know it today, when you were born as a child, the first thing that the child does is: One gasp of an inhalation. And, if you look at your life, what is the last thing you are going to do? You may say, "No, I am going to think about God. I am going to say, 'Shiva.'" Nothing like this. The last thing that you will do is exhalation. You exhale now; if you do not take the next inhalation that means you are dead.

Right now I want you to experiment and see. You take one big exhalation, one big inhalation and see how your body

and your mind is. Which is more relaxing? In fact, whenever you get tensed up, when things build up too much in you; the natural mechanism in the body wants to exhale. This is what you call as a sigh.: It relaxes you a little bit. So between life and death-- life needs a certain tension, otherwise you cannot keep it going. Death is utter relaxation. In the very process of life, if you know the relaxation of death, then life is an utterly effortless process.

This is how it would have naturally been if your mind had not banished death as evil. If your traditions and cultures had not taught you that death is evil – it should be avoided – you would breathe in a completely different way. Right now, if you observe, for almost ninety-nine percent of the people, their exhalation is never complete. Because their mind has rejected death, their exhalation will not happen totally. They will inhale, but exhalation doesn't happen totally. This is one of the reasons why, over a period of time, you build up so much tension within the system that it is reaching a point of snapping, mentally and physiologically.

Monsoon Journal wishes everyone a Happy Tamil New Year's Day and Vishu

Yogam Experience the change Swami Paramahansa Nithyananda Visit
Continued from previous page ...

Swamiji's disciples' swami Bakthananda, Swami Chachinanda, Shri Rajmohan, Mrs Chandra Thanabalasingam made all pre arrangements for the successful conduct of this two days programme.

On 7th March 09, Swamji conducted free meditation classes which were attended by more than 1000 people from GTA. On 8th for Kalpataru Training programme, the pre registered people (320 participants) attended

this program. Presently Swamiji is touring other parts of Canada and he will be back during the month of May 09 to conduct classes in Tamil and English for four days from May 23 to 26th.

For further information please contact 1-800 853 8249 - 905 507 2729 and the website is www.yogam4you.org, Watch over 500 free discourses of Paramahansa Nithyananda at www.youtube.com/LifeBlissFoundation.

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MONSOON FEATURE

Veteran writer Balamanoharan has come out with another first of its kind piece of writing of him recently. His Bleeding Hearts is a first ever novel based on the settings of Vanni, written in English. More than three decades ago, when Balamanoharan wrote Nilakkili, it was widely appreciated for the 'scent of earth' it was emanating and was acclaimed as the first Tamil novel coming from Vanni. Three decades of his maturity and the impact of changes that have taken place during this time in his beloved homeland are obviously perceivable in his latest work.

Nilakkili, his earlier novel was more on the romantic side, refreshingly bringing out the human-environment intimacy. Even though this is very much present in Bleeding Hearts too, as the very basics of narration, unlike Nilakkili the theme of Bleeding Hearts is rather more abstract, symbolic and universal, but at the same time with an uncanny ease explains the driving force behind what is happening in Vanni today and what is likely to happen tomorrow.

The honesty of Balamanoharan as a creative writer is that in Bleeding Hearts he stops at 1977. He migrated to Europe in the 1980s.

1977 marked significant changes in the political and social life of the people of the island of Sri Lanka, brought in changes in the ethnic relationship and above all marked the end of Vanni's land-based agricultural resurgence and resultant prosperity cum awakening which were the very basis for the genesis and recognition of Balamanoharan's earlier novels.

Despite his dipped in personality as a man of Vanni, Balamanoharan didn't venture in his latest novel on the futile exercise of projecting himself imaginarily into a time span in which he was not physically present in Vanni to witness the happenings.

But he can't stop at mere 1977. Nostalgia is useless unless it is relevant to the present.

This is where the writer shows remarkable skill and ingenuity.

He narrates the story within a time frame of his mastery and stops there. But the theme was universalized to go beyond it. The

symbols and the abstract messages he has brought in tell the story of the decades that followed and will follow.

The novel Balamanoharan wrote is the very discourse of his own personality. He left Vanni quarter a century ago, but his mind is still haunting around Vanni. His novel stops at 1977 but its spirit dwells in the years that follow.

Bleeding Hearts centers around an old man, Vinasiyar and his grandson Sena, in the hamlet of Aa'ndaanku'lam, near the Kumuzhamunai village of Mullaiththeevu district of Vanni. The time setting is pre-pogrom 1977, the story beginning in January and ending in August.

Vinasiyar the personification of the older generation of Vanni is relentlessly obsessed with the task of capturing and taming a wild buffalo that threatens his habitat and flock. Sena, a grade 10 student of Mulliyavalai Vidyananda College is an admirer of his grandfather and is a novice to his arts. He is in love with the Sinhala girl Nanda, daughter of the head-labourer of a Survey Party camping in Aa'ndaanku'lam.

Ethnic relations were becoming tense. Along with the 1977 change of government came the ethnic pogrom against Tamils. Mutual suspicion and the role of army brought in repercussions even in the remote parts of Vanni. Tamil youth was turning to militancy.

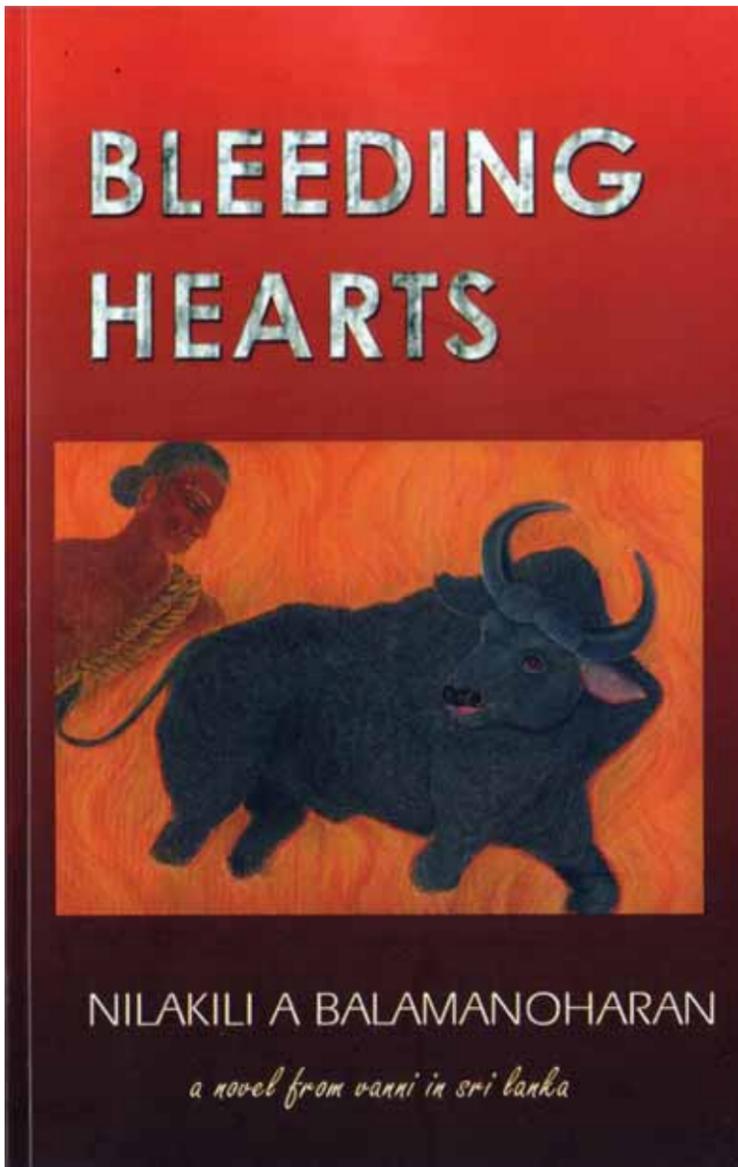
Nanda has to go with a heavy heart. Vinasiyar succeeds in capturing the buffalo, but dies. Sena takes up grandfather's gun, determined to continue his legacy.

Balamanoharan's models of characters and images in the novel are comparable to those found in two streams of the island's literature. One is the Tamil folk literature of Vanni, such as Vealappanikkan Oppaari and the other are works like Leonard Woolf's Village in the Jungle and R L Spittel's Vanished Trails.

But, Balamanoharan differs in the treatment of his theme.

Vealappanikkan's wife boldly faces the challenge posed to her husband's prestige and succeeds in taming the tusker by her sheer will power, but succumbs to the pressure of mental exertion.

Vealappanikkan only wails.



Vealappanikkan only wails.

Balamanoharan's Vinasiyar also ultimately captures the wild buffalo that threatens his habitat and dies of exertion, but a grandson comes to continue his legacy.

Leonard Woolf who started his career in the northern province of Ceylon chose to base his acclaimed novel on the southern province where he worked later. Spittel covered the Vedda territory of the East. Another deserving part of the island, the Vanni, did never get such a literary treatment. It took nearly a century for a Balamanoharan to come to fulfill that task.

Naturally one may find many characters, images and settings of Balamanoharan's novel sharing similarities with those of Woolf's and Spittel's. But the colonial writings were from an Age of Romanticism and Universalism.

In contrast, Balamanoharan has a specific social task, meant for Eezham Tamils in general and the people of Vanni in particular

is the issue.

"Even if I am about to die, see to it that I die on my own land. My last breath should become a part of Aa'ndaanku'lam air and my ashes should only be mingled in the rivers there", says his Vinasaiyar.

"Aren't you ashamed to flee like this? Don't you have any guns? If you show them that you are afraid of them, it will only hasten your end! You must not budge an inch from your villages, even if your life is at stake", roars Vinasaiyar.

The novel ends with an act of Sena: "He put Nanda's bangles in his shirt pocket and bent down to retrieve the gun that was still in Vinasaiyar's hands...Standing erect, the exact replica of his grandfather Vinasaiyar, Sena was ready to face the world as a man, fully conscious of the responsibilities that had come to rest on his shoulders."

Why 'Bleeding Hearts' the title of his novel? Through the mouth of the schoolteacher KP, Balamanoharan tells a story of a leader whose bleeding heart shone like a torch, showing the way to the salvation of his people. [TamilNet]

Contact details:

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Publishers: Mithra Publications, Chennai.[<http://mithra.co.in/store/shop/index.php>]

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HELP VICTIMS OF WAR IN SRI LANKA, A MESSAGE TO OPRAH



Canadian University Students walk to highlight the plight of Sri Lankan civilians on the Oprah Winfrey Show in Chicago

Six students from various colleges and universities across Ontario are walking from the US Consulate in Toronto to Millennium Park in Chicago IL, USA. Their goal is to be walking for about two months through the freezing cold and snow in hopes of getting an audience with Oprah Winfrey, the ever popular Talk show host. The purpose of the walk is to highlight the plight of Tamil civilians in Sri Lanka on the Oprah Winfrey Show.

The students were invited for a stop over at University of Waterloo by the Sri Lankan Tamil Students on March 17. The students were introduced to the community by the representatives of University Students of

Waterloo. Mr. Myuran the group leader in his speech said that as fellow humans we have to stand up to the sufferings and the lost future of fellow Sri Lankans and to victims around the world. We, Canadians see things in a compassionate way than most people who live in conflict countries. We are not political actives but highlighters of Human sufferings. Sri Lankans in the North and Eastern province have been in the internally displaced camps for over twenty years. More than 70,000 people have lost their live, hope, education and Health over a period of 30 years. They are people without voice and we are bringing their plight to the centre stage. We want to meet Oprah Winfrey to seek her help.

In his speech Mr. Kris Balasingam said "We started the walk in Toronto. The amount of

support from strangers is overwhelming. People give us encouragement and moral support by walking with us. We do not support any organization or sponsored by anyone. We are only six ordinary students. We get donations and support from individuals on our way to Chicago. That's all"

We want to make a difference in life and are not taking sides in conflict or political issues. We want to highlight the plight of Sri Lankans whether they are Tamils or Sinhalese. This war has gone too far and civilians are the only true victims said Mr. Kannan Sreekantha.

Mr. Jeyaraj Annamali of Kitchener was very impressed of these young students. "I wish I could join them".

For almost thirty years, the Sri Lankan government has been

engaged in a bloody civil war with the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). More commonly known as the Tamil Tigers, the LTTE wants an independent state for the island's Tamil minority. Tamils have been discriminated by successive Sri Lankan governments since 1948. For a lasting peace, experts say the government will need to find a political solution to the ethnic conflict between the majority Sinhalese and the minority Tamils that has plagued the country since its independence. The civil war has killed nearly seventy thousand, and watchdog groups have accused both the LTTE and the Sri Lankan military of human rights violations, including abduction, extortion, and the use of child soldiers.

The website of the student group is www.oprahgiveusavoice.com

avoice.com

We want to make a difference in life and are not taking sides in conflict or political issues. We want to highlight the plight of Srilankans whether they are Tamils or Sinhalese. This war has gone too far and civilians are the only true victims said Mr. Kannan Sreekantha. We want fellow Canadians and members of Srilankan community to send e-mails to Oprah Winfrey, requesting us to be part of her talk show. Her website is oprah.com and log onto - Do you have a great idea for a show? We need your support.



SRI LANKA: Students walking to Chicago to increase awareness of crisis and hopefully appear on Oprah Winfrey's show

Tamils 'walking for humanity' Ann Ariyadasa, Special to Sun Media

"Oprah Give Us a Voice" is imprinted on the back of the jackets of six Tamil students as they trekked yesterday from London's city hall to the University of Western Ontario.

The students visited London on their 1,000-kilometre walk from Toronto to Chicago, where they hope to appear on the Oprah Winfrey Show to raise awareness of the dire situation in Sri Lanka.

"She's a highly influential person," said Kannan Sreekantha, one of the walkers. "It's a very effective way of creating awareness. We look at Oprah Winfrey as a symbol of hope."

Supporters of the students have contacted the show, but they are still waiting to hear if they will appear.

The battle between the Sri Lankan government and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (also known as Tamil Tigers) has killed almost 3,000 Tamil civilians since January.

The bombing of hospitals, indiscriminate shelling in safe zone areas, and restrictions on medical and food supplies by the

government of Sri Lanka has contributed to the death toll, the students said. The Tigers have been fighting for an independent Tamil state since 1983.

The Tamil community has held many protests and rallies, pleading the Canadian government to take action, but no one has stepped up, said Ramanan Thirukketheeswaranathan, another of the walkers.

"We felt like, by asking the government, we're not getting anything. It's time to create awareness among the people," Sreekantha said.

He and five other members of Toronto's Tamil community came up with the idea to walk to Chicago from Toronto, pitching in their own money.

"We started with about \$600 and nothing else but hope. Right

now it's picking up and the Tamil community is supporting us," Sreekantha said.

One Tamil from London who walked yesterday with the students from city hall to Western said she has more than 15 family members trapped in the war zone with whom she has lost contact.

"I think Oprah can create an impact by talking about the issue," said Neeraja Ganeshalingam. "My grandmother, my aunt and my cousins, I want to know they're safe."

Since beginning the walk, the students have been to Mississauga, Brampton, Guelph, Waterloo and Kitchener. Before



leaving London tomorrow evening for Windsor, they plan to volunteer in homeless shelters.

Battling colds and fevers, along with swollen and bruised toes, the students say nothing will stop them from arriving in Chicago within three weeks.

"Every day we walk we meet people and explain the situation. We're walking for humanity," Thirukketheeswaranathan said.

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MONSOON FEATURE

(C.Kamalaharan)

PROLOGUE

During my visit here last time, I was able to meet most of my countrymen, especially those from my village. I was overwhelmed to see almost everyone leading a happy, prosperous and peaceful life. It's

YEARNING TO RETURN

only the elderly folks, who seem to regret for having been unwillingly transplanted here, from their homeland.

A relative of mine was one among them, who came to see me. I really felt sorry to see him, with his flabby body too tight in warm clothing, being led into the living room. He came trudging his way and took his seat in an armchair just enough to push himself in. Feeling uneasy his first remark was "What life is this thambay, when will I return to my 'sorka poomi' (heaven on earth)? The predicament in which he was, reminded me of a poem where the poet laments for his 'lost' village.

'...How often have I loiter'd o'er thy green

Where humble happiness
endear'd each scene!

How often have I paus'd on
every chaThe shelter'd cot, the cultivated farm...'

'...Remembrance wakes with all
her busy train,

Swells at my breast, and turns
the past to pain...'

Olive Goldsmith

(The Deserted Village)

This meeting has inspired the following creative portrait with the above relative as the central character, under an assumed name, reliving his old rustic life.

The pealing of temple bells and the clarion call of the roosters, the unfailing timekeepers of the village, in the wee hours of the morning, shook him out of his peaceful sleep.

It was only when he stretched out of bed, did he realize his presence in Toronto and not in his native village.

Maniam had occasional flashes of thrill, during such dreaming episodes, but today when he opened his eyes, he was thoroughly disappointed to find himself lying cosily in bed and not in the bare wooden bed in the open, soothed by the fresh gentle breeze.

Like many others in their ripe age, having been forcefully uprooted from their traditional homeland he wept and reminisced the happy days he spent there, leading a simple carefree and contented life.

On this day too he went down memory lane with a feeling of nostalgia and recalled with relish his daily routine. After the morning ablutions he went to the temple to get His blessings for the day and after applying a bright stretch of 'viputhi' from one end to the other end of his forehead, he headed towards his farm and began preparing his soil for the winter cultivation. As though fortune smiled on him, he had a successful harvest year after year. "What an independent and profitable vocation farming is; no obeisance to higher authority, no restrictions by weather conditions and no time frame and above all the happiness one derives, when reaping a rich harvest is immeasurable," felt he. Those days were golden memories for him.

His day dreaming sequences took him to a morning scene at the junction close to his house, where a flurry of activities take place. The row of shops selling grocery and other retail items, the tea kiosks, women selling fruits and vegetables on the wayside, the plying of C.T.B. buses and other vehicles, the parading of school children on two wheelers and the rattling landmasters and tractors, are pleasant sights, that keep on flitting across his mind.

While reposing after lunch, on the soft cushion couch, he once again moved into the world of the past and reminisced the happy days he spent in his 'lost' paradise. "How pleasant the picturesque evenings

were, in the company of men, women and children, busy toiling among the rolling lush green crops, stretched far and wide! "he remembered. The shimmering landscape at sunset, provides a much more pleasing sight, when the weary farmers return home, with the load of harvested farm produce. Maniam envied them, as he sat thinking within the fully enclosed air conditioned palatial apartment, being severely afflicted with Diabetes, BP and Obesity, due to the lack of proper exercise. He sadly murmured," all these afflictions could have been avoided through manual labour, had I remained in

my peaceful hamlet."

After dinner, while on bed, sandwiched between the thickly cushioned mattress and the insulated quilt, he thought of the food that was served. He hated cooked food, stocked in fridges, heated in microwave ovens and served, especially the nauseating hamburger and pizza. He longed for the meal, in his native place, prepared from locally produced cereals and vegetables, the best under the sun.

Maniam quite often thought of his companions, whom he left behind in his dear land. Whenever he was free from farm work, he joined them in a game of cards and 'thaayam', under the spreading banyan tree and sitting on improvised seats. For them, it is also a place of relaxing, where they share newspapers to read and discuss politics and local news.

Temple festivals are special occasions for the whole village to congregate. They come attired in their traditional dresses and enjoy the spiritual discourses, vocal and nathaswaram music, dance recital, 'therukkoothu' (folk dance) and 'villu paaddu' (group narration in verse form, of epics) besides the usual funfare. Maniam and his associates would be among the first to arrive and keep awake till late into the night, when the celebrations would end.

Maniam was also among the jubilant spectators watching 'kilihaddu' (a popular rural game, played in a restricted area), volley-



ball, soccer and soft-ball cricket, besides the crowd drawing annual sports meet. These were the favourite entertainments during his relaxed life.

Uncomfortable from head to toe in tight fitting warm clothing, that firmly holds back his bulging belly, Maniam longed for his loose fitting clothing, he wore in his village, while roaming about freely on foot and on bicycle.

He was also disgusted with the life in Toronto, which is very much sophisticated, without much distinction between the affluent and the less privileged, both following the same pattern of life; living in fully furnished apartments and owning BMWs, Toyotas and the like, all these being purchased through mortgages and loans, repayable in long term monthly installments, at high interest rates, for which they have to toil hard for years. But in his native land, the people being thrifty, lead a peaceful and contented life, within their means, breathing fresh air and drinking non-chlorinated unboiled fresh water, drawn from wells. They also dwell in houses built within limits of their own savings.

Earlier Maniam led a glorious life, with wholesome mental faculties. And here today his body had been badly afflicted and spirit damped, due to isolation, boredom and exposure to extreme weather conditions. With disgust writ on his face, he reveals his only desire to whoever visits him,

"I wish to breath my last in my dear native land and wish my mortal remains were laid to rest, in that ever fertile soil. Is it too much to hope for!" he wonders.

EPILOGUE

There are thousands like Maniam, in the evenings of their lives, languishing and lamenting in foreign soil and yearning to return to their native land. But the unrest and the uncertainty prevailing in their country, force them to remain wherever they are. Those in Canada are fortunate to enjoy all facilities provided by the State. Our children are making proper use of the opportunity, having acquired fluency in speaking flawless English phonetically, excelling in studies and holding lucrative positions in public life. Our senior citizens too are being well looked after; put on the dole if necessary, provided with free medical facilities and all necessities and assured pension relief in the evening of their lives. A citizen of Canada is free to take up any job, from menial to lucrative positions, in accordance with his or her ability and academic excellence.

OUR RESPONSIBILITY

At this juncture it is our sole responsibility, to express our gratitude to the State, by respecting the laws of the country and contributing towards its development. We should also conduct ourselves in the most exemplary manner, without being a hindrance in any way to the State. At the same time, we should not be swept away by the Western way of life, which is at times too open; permitting to vices like drug addictions and violent behavior. Instead we should uphold our much cherished traditional, cultural and moral values and maintain our identity as the most refined, law abiding and respectful offsprings of our ancestral home.

Renovations continue at Psychiatric ICU Psychiatric Intensive Care Unit to open soon

Following feedback from staff, further enhancements to the new five-bed Psychiatric Intensive Care Unit (PICU) are being undertaken.

In addition, staff training to deal with violent and aggressive patients is being developed and rolled out with extensive staff involvement.

Ongoing facilities enhancements include installing more security cameras and upgrading locks of bedroom and bathroom doors. To implement these enhancements the unit, which had opened March 23, has been temporarily closed.

The PICU allows for a more

secure environment for mental health patients, who require enhanced monitoring and may pose a greater safety risk to themselves and others around them. The five-bed unit is the last phase of the consolidation of Rouge Valley's mental health inpatient beds.

"The final phase has taken longer than we had planned. But we are pleased to say the 15 medical-psychiatric beds have been in place for more than a month already. We have listened to our staff and are being extra diligent to ensure our facilities and staff can offer the best quality care to our patients and are as

safe as possible for our staff," says Rik Ganderton, President and Chief Executive Officer of Rouge Valley Health System (RVHS). "We anticipate the PICU portion of our inpatient mental health facilities will be accepting admissions again within a couple of weeks, if not sooner."

Ganderton adds, "Rouge Valley adheres to strict patient and staff safety guidelines. Quality and safety are being maintained for patients and staff."

RVHS announced its plans to consolidate its mental health inpatient services to its Centenary hospital campus in March 2008.

Outpatient services continue

at both hospital campuses: Rouge Valley Ajax and Pickering; and Rouge Valley Centenary. The vast majority of mental health patients at Rouge Valley, and across the province, access services on an outpatient basis.

As part of the consolidation, crisis intervention mental health services at both hospital campuses have been increased to 16 hours a day, seven days a week. This is an increase from the previous 12 hours a day on weekdays and eight hours a day on weekends.

Rouge Valley Health System (RVHS) - The best at what we do. - RVHS is an excellent acute care

community hospital with many programs, including 24/7/365 emergency, cardiac care and mental health. Rouge Valley consists of several health sites, including two community hospital campuses: Rouge Valley Centenary in east Toronto; and Rouge Valley Ajax and Pickering in west Durham. Together, a team of physicians (224 general practitioners and 325 specialists), 1,000 nurses and many other professionals care for a broad spectrum of health conditions. Working in consultation and partnership with community members, other hospitals, health care organizations, the Central East Local Health Integration Network and the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, Rouge Valley continues to improve its programs and cater to the needs of the growing communities of east Toronto, Ajax, Pickering and Whitby.

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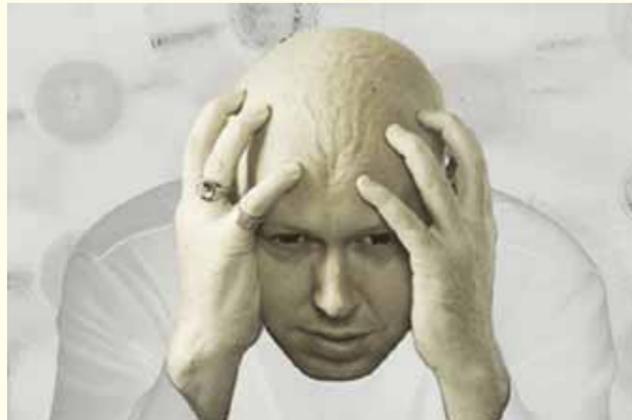
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CHILE PRESIDENT MICHELLE BACHELET'S LOVE FOR TAMILS

[Chilean President Michelle Bachelet takes part in a meeting organized by one of India's leading trade bodies, the Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (ASSOCHAM), in Mumbai, India, Thursday, March 19, 2009-pic:AP Photo/Gautam Singh]

It was Chile's President Michelle Bachelet's love for Tamils that made her to accept the honorary doctorate degree from the University of Madras, according to S. Ramachandran, Vice-Chancellor of the University.

Recalling that President Pratibha Devisingh Patil was conferred the degree by the University of Chile in Santiago in April last year, Dr. Ramachandran said that the Indian authorities decided to reciprocate the gesture when the tour programme of Dr. Bachelet was prepared. About a month ago, the Madras University mooted the proposal when representatives of the University of Talca were here to work out the modalities for signing a memorandum of understanding (MoU). "She could have chosen to accept the honorary degree from other universities such as Mumbai but she selected the University of Madras as there are approximately 1.5 lakh Tamils living in Chile," the Vice-Chancellor said.

He added that when Dr. Bachelet's predecessor Ricardo Lagos visited India four years ago, he did not come to Chennai.

The Pro-Chancellor and Director of International Relations in the Chilean university Antony Raj was an alumnus of the Madras University. Before Dr. Bachelet was given the honorary degree, the University of Madras and the University of Talca signed a MoU.

Noting that the Talca University was the first South American University to enter into the MoU with the Madras University, Dr. Ramachandran said there would be cooperation in frontier sciences such as nanotechnology, biotechnology and bioinformatics.

[courtesy: The Hindu]

Bollywood Comes to Life on US College Campuses

By **Tommy Shavelson**

The Academy Awards for Slumdog Millionaire have brought new attention to India and the Bollywood cinematic style of over-the-top songs

and dances. But it's nothing new for American college students.

Fierce intercollegiate dance competitions in the Bollywood style are staged across the country throughout

the winter and early spring. The largest one is held each February on the campus of the University of California, Berkeley.

Bollywood Berkeley 2009 drew 2,000 students into UC

Berkeley's Zellerbach Hall to cheer for the eight college teams presenting their original choreography to the music of sappy, overacted Bollywood movie love stories.



UCLA team member Sanjara Seelam prepares for her performance by applying makeup

CLASSIC BOLLYWOOD WITH AN AMERICAN TWIST

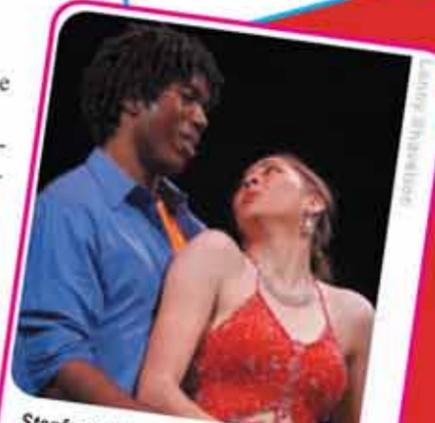
Recorded music from those films blasts from the speakers as the dancers synchronously jump and boogie in acrobatic, gravity-defying moves. They're dancing out 8-minute stories, lip-syncing the lyrics, changing into increasingly exotic costumes.

Their themes are classic Bollywood: Boy meets girl; girl avoids boy; boy does something dramatic to win girl over. And then, the required happy ending: They marry.

"Bollywood's a fairy tale. It's not even real life," observes Rohan Vora, a

business and administration major at the University of Southern California and a member of the school's dance team. "It's a getaway from reality. That's why it's so popular in India, because Bollywood is an escape. It's song, dance, festivities, per-

fect love." He compares it to Shakespeare's classic love story Romeo and Juliet, but as seen through a contemporary - and much larger-than-life - prism.



Stanford University's dance team performs in the contest, which is the largest Hindi film dance competition in the United States

PURELY FOR FUN

Vora and the other dancers competing in these Bollywood competitions are mostly high-achieving Indian-American college students who were born in the United States. He says they don't really believe in these perfect love stories.

"The ideas presented in these Bollywood films come from our parents, and they're well ingrained in us as we grow up. You know, find the perfect girl for you, and so that just comes out when we're planning these Bollywood dances. We know that it's purely

for fun."

Northwestern University's team captain, Ronak Vashi, doesn't see the Bollywood films as stereotyping. She says the love story characters come just as much from the European tradition as the South Asian.

"I more kind of see it as that kind of Cinderella story that people here grow up with," she explains.

And that's the story line her team's dance follows. It's about some studious girls who can't get the boys to notice them.

"And then we transform into the hotter

versions of ourselves, and then we kind of fall in love, and everyone's excited and happy at the end."

Corny, trite, stereotypically sexist or not - Bollywood produces more than 2,500 songs and dances every year, a fusion of East Indian classical, bhanga, and now hip hop, jazz, salsa and folk. And college teams bring the productions to life at competitions across the United States, from New York, to Philadelphia, to Chicago, to Berkeley... where the winner of Bollywood Berkeley 2009 was UC Irvine.

[voa]



Teams of eight to 20 members create 8-minute dance routines filled with acrobatics, dramatic facial expressions and synchronized dances by sari-draped women and flashily dressed men



UC Irvine's first-place dance team performs "I'm Going to Make You a Big Bollywood Star"

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Omakkuchi Narasimman passed away

Renowned comedian Omakkuchi Narasimman passed away on March 12th after a long battle with cancer. He is survived by his wife Saraswathi, Three daughters and a son. Narasimman, one of the best comedians of Tamil Cinema, was a very noble man, who loved to keep his company happy and smiling, a character that made him a brilliant comedian.

Narasimman used to work with LIC but his interest in acting lured

him to Kodambakkam. With his good sense of humour and experience of having acted in more than 100 plays, he soon became an indispensable part of Tamil movies released in the 70s; he was seen in almost every movie released in that period! The ensuing years saw Narasimman scale unprecedented heights - for a comedian - and become one of the most noted actors of Tamil Cinema.

In a career that spans more than

Three decades, Narasimman had acted with many famous actors including Rajinikanth and Kamal Haasan. Samsaram Adhu Minsaram, Indian, Suriyan and Mudalvan are some of the best remembered films of Narasimman.

Narasimman's death is a huge loss to the film industry; he was a legend. Narasimman - a noble soul who toiled hard to put a smile on someone's face - now rests in peace.

IT'S SUSI'S ALL THE WAY

Vikram

The trailers of the much-expected Kanthaswamy, starring Vikram were released at a grand function in Chennai recently. Produced by Kalaipuli S Thanu and directed by Susi Ganesan, the movie Kanthaswamy has musical score by Devi Sri Prasad and cinematography by Ekambaram.

Speaking on the occasion, Vikram was all praise for Susi Ganesan and stated that he never imagined that it would become such a mammoth project. 'All credit should go to Susi Ganesan. He extracted the best from everyone involved in the movie. It is out-and-out Susi's show'.

Vikram, who has crooned all the songs, said, 'I should thank my producer S Thanu and music composer Devi Sri Prasad. They encouraged me a lot'. A visibly thrilled Vikram said,

'the trailer of Kanthaswamy shot in a stylish manner would woo film-buffs. Susi Ganesan will go places after the movie's release'.

Outlining the basic theme of the film, Susi Ganesan, said it is about a Robinhood-type of man who goes about providing justice to the poor and needy. It may be recalled that the team had adopted two villages near Madurai during its launch. The two villages Sangampatti and Gandhi Nagar had lacked infrastructure facilities and the Kanthaswamy crew had been to the village and provided the welfare measures.

On 14 April, the audio of Kanthaswamy would be launched in a grand manner. We are planning to adopt 30 more villages on the day, Susi Ganesan said and added, 'it is



a movie with a purpose both on and off the screen'. Susi showered his admiration on Thanu and mentioned that he provided complete freedom.

Thanu, who completes his silver jubilee year in filmdom, said, 'Kanthaswamy has come at an appropriate time. I am happy to have been associated with a talented director like Susi and a multi-faceted actor like Vikram. Everything is grandeur in the movie'. Producer and exhibitor Abirami Ramanathan, who acquired the distribution of Kanthaswamy for Chennai spoke.

Actress Shriya, music composer Devi Sri Prasad, cinematographer Ekambaram, lyricist Viveka and Sony BMG official Nandini were also present on the occasion.

I will better my dad

Prashanth



changes in the script to suit the audience, says Thiyagarajan.

Besides wielding the megaphone, Thiyagarajan has penned the story, screenplay and dialogues for the movie. Raveesh Menon's associate Anil Sekar handles cinematography. Plans are on to release the movie after elections.

Prashanth is back in the hunt now. He is playing the lead role in Mammattayan, a remake of yesteryear hit titled the same that featured his father Thiyagarajan as protagonist.

Directed by Thiyagarajan himself, the movie features Meera Jasmine in the role enacted by Saritha while Prakashraj would don Jayashankar's role. Vadivelu, Mumthai Khan, Kotta Sreenivasa Rao and Kalabhavan Mani are also in the cast.

Says Prashanth, 'My father had lived the character. Even today people call him affectionately as 'Mammattayan'. I want to better him now. Thanks to his guidance, the movie has progressed well'.

'I always have a great regard for my father's acting capabilities. In Shock, I appear all through the movie. But my father made a cameo and walked away with applause', Prashanth says.

Mammattayan was shot in dense forests in Sathyamangalam, Anthiyur, Hogennakkal and adjoining areas in Karnataka. We have made necessary

I don't talk cinema at home

Suriya



Coming from a family of actors, Suriya says he hardly discusses about cinema at home.

Addressing mediapersons in Chennai recently, Suriya said, 'Neither my father (veteran actor Shivakumar) nor my wife (yesteryear heroine Jothika) talks about films with me'.

'Jothika is the best home-maker and her world revolves around our daughter Dhiya. She spends all her time with her', Suriya said.

Describing Jothika as one of the popular actresses in Tamil cinema, he wondered at her success rate in Tamil filmdom. Eagerly awaiting the release of Ayan, Suriya said, 'it is an intellectual entertainment. The movie is laced with commercial elements with logic'.

Produced by AVM and presented by Sun Pictures, Ayan features Suriya, Tamanna, Jagan and Bollywood actor Akashdeep Saigal in the lead.

Akashdeep Saigal played a villain in Ekta Kapoor's tele-serial Kyunki Saas Bhi Kabhi Bahu Thi besides taking part in Jhalak Dikhla Jaa, a dance reality show. The movie was shot in various countries like Tanzania, Botswana, Namibia and Zanzibar island. Harris

Jeyaraj has scored the music while M S Prabhu has handled the cinematography.

Franz Spilhaus, a stunt team, which worked for Hollywood movies like The Poseidon Adventure and King Solomon's Mines have choreographed the stunt sequences in this film.

Further, Suriya said, 'Ayan' means some one excellent and outstanding. I thank K V Anand, who chiselled my character.'

When Suriya made his debut in Nerukku Ner, Anand handled cinematography. Said Suriya: 'Since my initial days in Kollywood, Anand had been a source of encouragement to me. He strived hard to show me as perfect man on screen'.

Heaping laurels on AVM Productions, he said, 'Ayan is my second movie with them (Perazhagan being the first). A production house with great reputation, they gave us enough liberty, helped us well to come up with an excellent product. I learnt a lot on how to be a good producer after working with them'.

Suriya is happy with the positive response for his dual role in Varanam Ayiram. He said, 'actually, I'm lucky. Different scripts have come to me. And I have dealt with them sincerely. With expectation escalating with every film, I understand I have a bigger responsibility'.

'So I'm trying to better my performance in every film and push the boundary further. I know I'm not a perfectionist. I'm just trying hard to get there'. Thanking his fans for their support, he stated that he wants to do movies since it is his passion. 'God has blessed me with good life. I thank him for that'.

[Newstodaynet.com]



Bollywood actress Aishwarya Rai Bachchan (R) receives India's fourth highest civilian award, Padma Shri, from Indian President Pratibha Patil during an award ceremony at the presidential palace in New Delhi March 31, 2009.

Raymond Rajabalan

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Good Friday



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

How the Cross did become a symbol of Redemption?

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

In those days , only the worst criminals were crucified under the Roman rule .Those who were offended by the teachings of

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

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

The enemies of Jesus Christ scored a temporary victory by crucifying Him to death. However, what they considered to be their victory finally proved to be a huge victory for Jesus over death. The death of Christ on a Friday turned out to be day of victory over sins and that is why, we can consider it to be a Good Friday since it has brought so much good to the mankind.

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

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

Many of our Saviour's most

profound teachings are counterintuitive. "Love your enemies" is an example. The solutions that our



minds are prone to develop are often different from those the Lord would have us pursue. "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord" (Isaiah55:8).

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

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

IMF... Contd. from page 27

Sri Lanka's long-term foreign currency rating was lowered B from B+ by S&P in December 2008, stating 'the ratings on Sri Lanka reflect high government and external indebtedness, weak revenue mobilization, political and security concerns, rising balance of payments pressures and the resultant decrease in foreign reserve cushion.' Adding to the country's financial woes, in February, Fitch Ratings downgraded Sri Lanka long-term foreign and local currency Issuer Default Ratings (IDRs), making it harder for Sri Lanka to borrow in the global markets. Fitch cited 'the increased vulnerability of sovereign creditworthiness to adverse shocks associated with rising inflation, persistently large fiscal deficits and worsened terms of trade due to soaring oil prices in the context of greater government recourse to commercial and market-based financing' for the downgrade.

IMF's No Comments

For Inner City Press asked about the war situation with Tamil Tigers and government forces killing civilians and the calls from UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon for cessation of fighting, what restrictions the IMF might place on the loan, IMF spokesman David Hawley mentioned that 'they're focused on achieving the government's policy goals which include rebuilding reserves, reducing the budget deficit and bringing about balance of payment sustainability.' For another question 'what provisions are in place to make sure that such a loan doesn't indirectly simply support military action?' Hawley didn't give proper answer 'Our discussions are still ongoing with the Sri Lankan authorities on a possible program, so let us wait

for the outcome of those discussions.'

Sinhala Settlements in the Name of Development

Development in the NorthEast means setting up of internment camps for permanent Tamils residents and bring Sinhala settlements in lands belonged to the Tamils and initiating projects and enterprises where the Sri Lankan government bring Sinhalese from south. A Sinhala sociologist Dr Susantha Goonatilake, has clearly represented the mono-ethnic military possessing Sri Lanka Government agenda of resettlement and redevelopment plans in Tamil lands. He has mentioned in Sunday Times (Sri Lanka) of January18, 2009 '...the mono-ethnic nature of the North should be dismantled...Defense colonies settlements should be established all over the North. Retired husband and wife, ex-employees of the armed forces should be settled in such strategic settlements...Armed forces owned industries should be established in these areas both for defence and civilian production. Our forces should be further strengthened to deter any future attempts...' It also should be noted Mahinda Rajapakse's brother Basil Rajapakse who has already started Sinhala settlements in Tamil land in the Eastern Province is in the forefront of this IMF loan application process.

Tamils have reasonable fear that this is what going to take place with the IMF's \$1.9 stand-by agreement funding to the Government of Sri Lanka. While disbursing the much needed funds for 'economic revival', although they stipulate conditionality eventually there are no proper mechanisms to monitor them.



First among US Part - 3B

By: Raymond Rajabalan

national list MP in what was then considered a controversial move. A few months later, he along with former TULF Jaffna MP. V. Yogeswaran was gunned down in cold blood in Colombo. TULF president M. Sivasithamparam was wounded seriously in the incident.

Amir in the beginning was an artful advocate. He had the makings of a brilliant lawyer. Yet, politics soon became the center of his life. He neglected his professional career preferring to construct a mass base rather than build up a legal practice.

Amirthalingam in his younger days was a fiery politician. He was the darling of the Tamil youth. He was an inflammatory orator given very much to rhetoric. He had a genuine zeal for his cause and a passion for his people. This sincerity of purpose sometimes manifested itself in the form of bombastic statements. The larger the crowd the greater his rhetoric. Former "Daily Mirror" editor Reggie Michael once referred to him in the following manner. "Amirthalingam is a man who is capable of moving crowds and crowds are capable of moving him. After the TULF victory in 1977 there was a meeting held at the Ramakrishna Hall, Wellawatte. The date was August 5th 1977. The TULF had swept the polls in the Tamil dominated areas of the North and East on the slogan of a

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

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

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

and despair affecting every community in the country.

There were many stages in Amir's political evolution. The young fire brand baton charged by the police for leading a black-flag demonstration against then Prime Minister Sir John Kotelawela visiting Jaffna, leaving Galle Face Green after Satyagraha and debating in parliament with bloodied in bandages, leading a tar and brush campaign against the "Sri" letterings on CTB buses in Jaffna, travelling to Batticaloa by boat from Jaffna at the height of communal troubles in 1958 etc.

The long spells of incarceration for political reasons, the heated debates and cross-talk in parliaments; the trial-at-bar case which has gone down in legal history as A.G. Vs Amirthalingam, the unprecedented no-confidence motion against the opposition leader in parliament, the various incidents of friction with members of the police and armed forces where guns were levelled at him at point blank range, Tamil youths disrupting his political meetings



against the power structure. Later the popular MP became somewhat domineering and unpopular. The 1970 defeat was a watershed. Amirthalingam re-invented himself as a popular leader after the 1970 defect. He learnt to control his notorious temper and curb his caustic tongue. He began to mix with people easily and assiduously cultivated the youth. All this paid dividends politically.

After the tumultuous period between 1977 - 1983, Amirthalingam again went into a period of self-exile to Madras. These years against marked a conspicuous change in his political make-up. He was able to perceive objectively the social fabric

None of the frontline leaders aided or abetted it. Some of them however had ambivalent attitudes and approaches. Also the party itself did not view these acts of violence as terrorism but as the acts of freedom fighters. Some of the youths allegedly involved in violence were members of the TULF youth wing. This resulted in TULF leaders involving themselves legally in these cases. But what must not be forgotten is that the overall Tamil political mood was sympathetic to the armed Tamil youths. The TULF too was caught up in this process.

Mr. Amirthalingam too realized this later and regretted a certain course of action followed earlier by the TULF. He felt that the Federal Party and the TULF could have possibly adopted other strategies and tactics. He was somewhat remorseful of the ambivalent relationship the TULF had with the Tamil armed movements at a certain stage of their development.

The death of Amirthalingam to use a cliché marked the end of an era. It was symptomatic of the new political culture that had eaten into the body politic of the Tamils.

Amirthalingam the mature statesman could have led his people not into the promised land of Eelam but into the realm of a viable political alternative that could have ushered in peace, stability and prosperity. But that was

This event was prelude to a variety of anti Tamil violence acts and ethnic riots directed against Tamils. It has continued for nearly four decades claiming the lives of nearly 80,000 making the island nation once known as Paradise Island being now being labeled "Blood Island".

with gunplay, his long exile in India etc, are all but shifting scenes of a varied and fruitful life span.

Retrospectively one is able to discern the various phases of political changes in Amirthalingam the politician. These changes and experiences were very much reflective of the turbulent changes undergone by the Tamil community itself. Amirthalingam the defiant youth leader led many campaigns and demonstrations



separate state. The party considered it as a mandate for the sovereign state of Tamil Eelam. There was euphoria in the air as speaker after speaker emotionally re-iterated their commitment of Eelam. Finally Amir spoke. At one point he said in Tamil.

"Tunku Abdul Rahman had the statesmanship to allow Singapore to secede from Malaysia peacefully. But the Sri Lankan rulers do not have that wisdom. I stand on this stage without fear and state that Tamil Eelam will be born only through violent struggle and bloodshed. We are ready for the bloody struggle" Yet what seemed highly irresponsible statements at that time certainly was to be prophetic but at what cost!! The radicalization of Tamil politics through the Eelam slogan and its consequent violence has engulfed the nation resulting in death, destruction, displacement



not to be and a voice that articulated the Tamil cause for nearly four decades was stilled for ever.

The enfant terrible of the Federal Party who metamorphosed into the elder statesman of the Tamil United Liberation Front strode across the Tamil political horizon for more than thirty years. A lifetime of toil and service to his community was cut short in 1989 July when he fell victim to bullets fired by unidentified gunmen.

Sam.A. Sapapathy - Mayor of Jaffna

The first Mayor of Jaffna, the late Sam A. Sabapathy laid the foundation stone for Jaffna Library on March 29, 1953. He, together with the late Irish Rector, Rt. Rev. Father Long of St. Patrick's College, Jaffna spearheaded the construction of the Library.

A. Amirthalingam - Leader of Opposition

Amir or "Amir Anna" as he was known to his younger followers was born in Pannagam, Vaddukkodai in 1927. He was of middle class origin and received most of his schooling at Victoria College, Chulipuram. He later entered University and then the Law College passing out as an advocate. He was attracted



towards Trotskyite politics in his undergraduate days and was for a short time a devout disciple of Dr. N. M. Perera. He was initially involved with the Tamil Congress but cut his teeth in politics as a member of the newly formed Federal Party. He accepted the ascetic S.J.V. Chelvanayagam as his political leader and therefore followed him as a trusted lieutenant.

He contested the Vaddukkodai electorate as a Federal Party (FP) candidate unsuccessfully in 1952. However, in 1956 he won Vaddukkodai and held the same seat continuously through the March 1960, July 1960, and March 1965 elections. In 1970 may he was topped by former school Principal A. Thiyagarajah of the Tamil Congress. After seven years Amirthalingam returned triumphantly to parliament with a thumping majority in 1977. Only this time he contested the Kankesanthurai constituency which had been represented earlier by S.J.V. Chelvanayagam.

During 1977 General elections, the massive voter swing in favour of United National Party (UNP) had reduced Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) to a mere 8 seats and the Tamil United Left Front (TULF) with 18 seats became the largest opposition party. After S. Thondaman of Ceylon Workers Congress (CWC) turned the offer down Amirthalingam became Leader of the Opposition.

The July violence of 1983 and the Sixth amendment to the constitution led to the TULF boycotting parliament thereby rendering their seats vacant.

After the Indo-Lanka accord of 1987 the TULF contested elections to parliament again in 1989. Amirthalingam himself contested in the Batticaloa electoral list and lost. But he managed to enter parliament as the nominated

Political Events

Tamil Political Party - ALL Ceylon Tamil Congress (ACTC)

The ACTC was founded in 1944 by G.G. Ponnampalam

Due to the cooperation of the ACTC with the United National Party a group led by S.J.V. Chelvanayagam broke away in 1949, forming the Federal Party (FP). The ACTC stood for the principle of minority over-representation, so that the minority Tamils who had been promoted over the majority Sinhalese by the British colonialists wouldn't lose their status after gaining independence from the British. The ACTC asked for a 50% representation of Tamils in parliament even though the Tamils only constituted 20% of Sri Lanka. This was immediately rejected by the British Governor General Lord Solbury as a "mockery of democracy".

The ACTC was largely discredited when their ally the UNP moved away from bilingual and bicomunal policies towards a pro-Sinhala stance.

**First Pact with Sri Lankan Government
Bandaranaike - Chelvanayagam Pact, 1957**

Mr.S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike, the leader of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party, became Prime Minister in June 1956, after winning the General Elections.

At the Trincomalee Convention of the Federal Party in August 1956, the following demands were made to the new Prime Minister:

1. Federal Constitution
 2. Parity of Status for Tamil and Sinhala languages;
 3. Repeal of citizenship laws which had discriminated against Tamils of Indian descent;
 4. Immediate halt to the colonization of the Tamil homeland.
- Direct action by non violent means was threatened if these demands were not met within one year.

On 26 July 1957, an agreement was entered into between Mr.S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike, the then Prime Minister of Ceylon and Mr.S.J.V. Chelvanayagam, Leader of the Thamil Arasu Katchi (Federal Party). It was known as the Bandaranaike Chelvanayagam Pact

The agreement was repudiated by Mr. Bandaranaike in April 1958 in view of a campaign led by the Buddhist clergy and sections of the Sinhala political leadership which included President J.R. Jayawardene, who was then leader of the opposition in Parliament and who on 4 October 1957 led a march to Kandy to invoke the blessings of the gods for his campaign.

Representatives of the Federal Party have had a series of discussions with the Prime Minister in an effort to resolve the differences of opinion that had been growing and creating tension.

At an early stage of these conversations it became evident that it was not possible for the Prime Minister to accede to some of the demands of the Federal Party.

The Prime Minister stated that, from the point of view of the government, he was not in a position to discuss the setting up of a Federal Constitution, or regional autonomy, or take any step that would abrogate the Official Language Act.

The question then arose whether it was possible to explore the possibility of an adjustment without the Federal Party abandoning or surrendering any of its fundamental principles or objectives.

At this stage, the Prime Minister suggested an examination of the Government's draft Regional Councils Bill to see whether provision could be made under it to meet, reasonably, some of the matters in this regard which the Federal Party had in view.

The Agreements so reached are embodied in a separate document.

Regarding the language issue, the Federal Party reiterated its stand for parity, but in view of the position of the Prime Minister in this matter they came to an agreement by way of adjustment. They pointed out that it was important for them that there should be recognition of Tamil as a national language, and that the administrative work of the Northern and Eastern Provinces should be done in Tamil.

The Prime Minister stated that as mentioned by him earlier it was not possible for him to take any steps that would abrogate the Official Language Act.

After discussion, it was agreed that the proposed legislation should contain recognition of Tamil as the language of a national minority of Ceylon, and that the four points mentioned by the Prime Minister should include provision that, without infringing on the position of the Official language as such, the language of the administration of the Northern and Eastern Provinces be Tamil, and that any necessary provision be made for the non-Tamil speaking minorities in the Northern and Eastern Provinces.

Regarding the question of Ceylon citizenship for people of Indian descent and the revision of the Citizenship Act, the representatives of the Federal Party put forward their views to the Prime Minister and pressed for an early settlement. The Prime Minister indicated that the problem would receive early consideration. In view of these conclusions the Federal Party stated that they were withdrawing their proposed Satyagraha campaign.

It was agreed in principle to implement the following:

1. Regional areas to be defined in the Bill itself by embodying them in a schedule thereto.
2. That the Northern Province is to form one regional area whilst the Eastern Province is to be

divided into two or more regional areas.

3. Provision is to be made in the Bill to enable two or more regions to amalgamate even beyond provincial limit; and for one region to divide itself subject to ratification by Parliament. Further provision is to be made in the Bill for two or more regions to collaborate for specific purposes of common interests.

4. Provision is to be made for direct election of regional councillors. Provision is to be made for a delimitation commission or commissions for carving out electorates. The question of M.P.s representing districts falling within regional areas to be eligible to function as chairmen is to be considered. The question of Government Agents being regional commissioners is to be considered. The question of supervisory functions over larger towns, strategic towns and municipalities is to be looked into.

5. Parliament is to delegate powers and to specify them in the Act. It was agreed that regional councils should have powers over specified subjects including agriculture, co-operatives, lands and land development, colonization, education, health, industries and fisheries, housing and social services, electricity, water schemes and roads. Requisite definition of powers will be made in the Bill.

6. It was agreed that in the matter of colonization schemes the powers of the regional councils shall include the power to select allottees to whom lands within their area of authority shall be alienated and also power to select personnel to be employed for work on such schemes. The position regarding the area at present administered by the Gal Oya Board in this matter requires consideration.

7. The powers in regard to the regional council vested in the Minister of Local Government in the draft Bill to be revised with a view to vesting control in Parliament wherever necessary.



8. The Central Government will provide block grants to the regional councils. The principles on which the grants will be computed will be gone into. The regional councils shall have powers of taxation and borrowing.

The Abrogation of a Pact

On the morning of April 9, 1957 a police message reached Mr Bandaranaike warning him that about 200 bhikkus (monks) and 300 others were setting out on a visitation to the Prime Minister's residence in Rosmead Place to demand the abrogation of the Pact. They finally arrived at 9 a.m.

The Prime Minister left the house early that morning to attend to some very important work in his office. The bhikkus came, the crowds gathered, the gates of the Bandaranaike Walawwa were closed against them and armed police were hurriedly summoned to throw a barbed-wire cordon to keep the uninvited guests out. The bhikkus decided to bivouac on the street. Peddlers, cool-drink carts, betel sellers and even bangle merchants pitched their stalls hard by. Dhana was brought to the bhikkus at the appointed hour for food.

In the meantime, the Prime Minister was fighting off the opposition to the Pact among his own party colleagues with desperate fury.

At 4.15 p.m. the B-C Pact was torn into pathetic shreds by its principal author who now claimed that its implementation had been rendered impossible by the activities of the Federalists.

Launching of SUPERIOR STAR & SOUBHAGYA (GOOD FORTUNE) (Wellness, Meditation, Yoga & Astrology Monthly)

The launching of Superior Star was on a beautiful Friday morning at Sri Sai Adhyamic Cultural Center in Brampton, Ontario. It was an auspicious Gudi Padma New Year celebration day, March 27, 2009.

The magazine is a 2-in-1 English-Hindi monthly titled "SUPERIOR STAR AND SOUBHAGYA (GOOD FORTUNE) published 12 times a year. The magazine covers meditation, Yoga, Astrology, Wellness, Naturopathy, Palmistry, Numerology, Astronomy etc. The magazine aims at creating an environment of healthy body-happy mind. It is distributed free in Toronto; readers can find it in most meditation, Yoga, Reiki and Holistic Health centres and stores.

The Editor and Publisher Prof.

Saran Ghai have had number of books published on Meditation and spirituality. He is well known to the readers of Monsoon Journal, a regular contributor to the paper. Professor Saran Ghai is also a palm reader and a numerologist too.

The magazine is available in print as well as on the web. To subscribe Superior Star and Soubhagya or to invite Prof Saran Ghai for meditation sessions please contact

E-mail: superiormonthly@yahoo.ca, soubhagyamonthly@gmail.com, Website: www.muktipathmeditation.com

Monsoon Journal extends its wishes to Prof Saran Ghai and his editorial team.



Top Pic: Monsoon Journal Publisher Logan Velumailum and his wife Geetha receiving copy of Superior Star from Publisher Prof. Saran Ghai.



Bottom Pic: Prof Saran Ghai being blessed by Priest

Tamils against genocide

Tamils against genocide (TAG) is now working on three major legal projects: Action against the IMF funding to Sri Lanka, Indictment of Sri Lanka Defence officials in the USA for war crimes and for the murder of 5 students in Trincomalee.

Financial support to the TAG by the Tamil Diaspora is extremely vital to sustain these projects. To make a donation at the earliest - The link for online donation is: www.tamilsagainstgenocide.org

Tel: 301.806.1866



By Richard Lefrak and
A. Gary Shilling

The Obama administration should seriously consider granting resident status to foreigners who buy surplus houses in this country. This makes more sense than the president's \$275 billion housing bailout plan, which Americans greeted with a Bronx cheer.

The federal bailout forces taxpayers to subsidize overextended homeowners who bet on ever-rising house prices and used their abodes as ATMs, and it doesn't get to the basic problem -- the huge inventory of excess houses. We estimate that 2.4 million houses over and above normal working inventories are left over from the 1996-2005 housing bubble. That's a lot, considering the long-term average annual construction of 1.5 million single- and multi-family units.

Excess inventory is the mortal enemy of house prices, which have already fallen 27% since the peak in early 2006. We predict another 14% drop through the end of 2010 if nothing is done to eliminate the surplus.

Doing nothing to eliminate the excess inventory might well push the recession through 2010 and into a depression. Declining home values, for example, are eliminating the home equity that has funded oversized consumer spending for years.

As consumers retrench, pro-

Immigrants Can Help Fix the Housing Bubble

duction is cut, payrolls are slashed, and consumer confidence, incomes and spending are savaged in a self-feeding downward economic spiral. But if the government buys surplus houses and sells them at low market-clearing prices, other house prices will drop, destroying more home equity and driving many more mortgages under water. Bulldozing excess houses would be an inefficient end for perfectly habitable structures.

A better idea is to offer permanent residence status to the many foreigners who are clamoring to get into the U.S. -- if they buy houses of minimal values (not shacks). They wouldn't need to live in those houses, but in order to remove the unit from the total housing market, they couldn't rent them. Their temporary resident status granted upon purchase would become permanent after, perhaps, five years, if they still owned the houses and maintained clean records. The mere announcement of this program might well stop the ongoing collapse in house prices, especially in cities such as Las Vegas, Miami, Phoenix and San Francisco, where prices are down 40% -- but where many foreigners like to live.

Each year, 85,000 H-1B visas are granted for foreigners with advanced skills and education, and last year, 163,000 petitions were filed in the first five days after applications were accepted. The Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation estimates that as of Sept. 30, 2006, 500,040 residents of the U.S. and 59,915 individuals living abroad were waiting for employment-based visas. Many would buy homes if their immi-

gration conditions were settled.

These people tend to be highly productive. In 2006, foreign nationals residing in the U.S. were listed as inventors on 25.6% of the patent applications filed in the U.S., up from 7.6% in 1998. A Council of Graduate Schools survey found that in the fall of 2007, 241,095 non-U.S. citizens were enrolled in graduate programs. Some 55% were in engineering and the biological and physical sciences, compared with only 16% of U.S. citizens. In 2007, more people on temporary visas received doctorates in physical sciences and engineering than U.S. citizens.

There is a high correlation between education and incomes, and in today's uncertain economic climate, many wealthy foreigners desire U.S. resident status just as a number in Hong Kong secured residences in Singapore and Canada before the British handover to China in 1997. They rapidly became over a quarter of Vancouver's population, and brought in billions of dollars to buy houses and make other investments.

We could benefit from such an influx. Merrill Lynch estimates that in 2007 there were 10.1 million individuals in the world, 7.1 million outside the U.S., with at least \$1 million in financial assets that totaled \$29 trillion. If new immigrants bought the 2.4 million excess houses at today's \$184,000 median price with funds from abroad, they would bring



untold billions. The immigrants would also buy consumer goods, pay taxes, and start many new businesses.

The blueprint for a program to sell surplus housing to immigrants is already in place with the EB-5 visa program. Each year, 10,000 EB-5 visas for this country are available for foreigners who each invest \$1 million in a new enterprise (\$500,000 in economically depressed areas) that creates at least 10 full-time jobs. After two years, the entrepreneur and his family can become permanent residents.

America's relatively open immigration policy makes this country better off than many other developed lands whose governments also must fund the pensions and health care for growing numbers of retirees. Yet there's still a huge need for more productive and skilled people, both current residents and immigrants, who will produce enough

goods and services to provide for their own needs and for those in retirement. Otherwise, entitlement spending eventually will touch off intergenerational warfare.

Granting permanent resident status to foreigners who buy houses in this country will curtail a primary driver of the deepening recession and financial crises -- excess house inventories and the resulting collapse of prices. Since the people who will buy these houses will tend to have money, education, skills and entrepreneurial talents, they will be substantial assets to America in both the short and long runs.

[Courtesy:

<http://online.wsj.com>]

Mr. Lefrak is chairman and CEO of LeFrak Organization, a real estate builder and developer. Mr. Shilling, an economic consultant and investment adviser, is president of A. Gary Shilling & Co.

A Newcomer's Story

My name is Wanderley Neves, I have come from a city, which is considered one of the most beautiful cities in the world, Rio de Janeiro, in Brazil.

I have a post secondary degree in Business Administration and a Bachelor's degree in Law.

In the beginning of 2004 I heard from a very close friend, who now lives here in Vancouver, about Canada's Immigration Program. After attending the Canadian Consulate presentation in my hometown, I started to consider immigrating to Canada. It took me a couple of months to make the decision and start the process to come.

In the spring of 2005 I started my new life in Canada, a life of new experiences and challenges.

Besides cultural impact and language barrier, another huge challenge was finding a job. Even though I had quite a few years of banking experience, considering almost 20 years of my professional carrier was spent in Caixa Econômica Federal, one of the two federal government banks in Brazil, I could not achieve a position in this industry. The feeling of frustration was unavoidable and the possibility of going back home crossed my mind so many times.

Like a multitude of new immigrants, despite having a good resume, I ended up working in positions far below my skills and expectations, like cleaning and physical labor in a warehouse to name a couple.

About two months ago, I met an engineer from Brazil named Rodrigo Camelo who told me about the YMCA Connections program that supports newcomers to Vancouver. He introduced me to Cathryn France here at the YMCA who was extremely friendly and gave me some good advice.

Two weeks ago, through an email from Cathryn, I learned about the CIBC YMCA Connection to Employment program and I was really excited. I am pretty sure that this course will be the changing factor that helps me to finally achieve a position in the bank industry.

I have no words to express my gratitude to CIBC and YMCA. Through this partnership you will help newcomers like me get positions in the banking sector. You will give us the opportunity to apply here, in our new country, the years of experience we have gathered and brought from abroad.

Thank you.

Prayer meeting held at Shri Ram Mandir

Prayer meeting held at Shri Ram Mandir

A prayer meeting and a shanti path was conducted by Pandit Roopnauth Sharma at Shri Ram Mandir which was attended by over 30 Kashmiri families who are now settled in GTA. The prayer meeting was held in connection with the death of a Kashmiri student Aman Kachroo, (first year student of Dr Rajendra Prasad Medical College), in Himachal Pradesh (India), who died because of beastly act of ragging on the campus.

What is ragging? "Any disorderly conduct whether by words spoken or written or by an act which have the effect of teasing, treating or handling with rudeness any other student; indulging in rowdy or undisciplined activities which causes or is likely to cause annoyance, hardship or psychological harm or to raise fear or apprehension thereof in a fresher or a junior student or asking the students to do any act or perform something which such student will not do in the ordinary course and which has the effect of causing or generating a sense of shame or

embarrassment so as to adversely affect the physique or psyche of a fresher or a junior student."

What is the cause of this evil? A desire to derive "a sadistic pleasure or showing off power, authority or superiority by seniors over their juniors or fresher's.

Anti-ragging movement should be initiated by the institutions right from the time of advertisement for admissions. The prospectus, the form for admission and/or any other literature issued to aspirants for admission must clearly mention that ragging is banned in the institution and any one indulging in ragging is likely to be punished appropriately which punishment may include expulsion from the institution or suspension from the institution or classes for a limited period or fine with a public apology.

The punishment- may also take the shape of: (i) withholding scholarships or other benefits, (ii) debarring from representation in events, (iii) withholding results, (iv) suspension or expulsion from hostel or mess and the like. If there be any legislation governing ragging or any provisions in the

Statute/Ordinances they should be brought to the notice of the students/parents seeking admissions. The tendency to brush ragging incidents under the carpet by concerned institutions and their failure to report the incident to police or the delay in doing should make them liable for culpable negligence apart from leading to reduction in government grants.

In fact hardly a year passes without a death or suicide not taking place in some college in India generally of a new entrant as a result of beastly and depraved behaviour of seniors. Clearly such occurrences are an affront to a civilised society. A student joins college motivated by greater ideals and higher ambitions. This is a phase which acts as a springboard in his career. That he runs into brusque and totally uncaring seniors in hostels in particular is indeed a pity.

Aman Kachroo's death has shocked one and all. May his soul rest in peace.

Kanayalal Raina
Brampton

Wakeley Paul, Esquire

A Passion for Life from 1930 - 2009

Wakeley Samson Wijiyekumar Paul died on March 9th, 2009, at the age of 79 in Whiting, New Jersey, USA. He was the eldest son and child of Professor Dr. Milroy Aserappa Paul, who was one of the most brilliant surgeons in Ceylon, and Winifred Hanah Ponmany, the daughter of Dr. & Mrs. Mudaliyar William H. Ponniah Canagasabai. Milroy Paul was one of the very few Ceylonese admitted into the medical profession's elite, at the time where this group mostly consisted of British personnel. Milroy was even invited and attended Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II's Coronation in 1953.

Milroy's brother and Wakeley's Uncle, was the late Dr. A.T.S. Paul, Wakeley Paul casual who was a surgeon and first cardiothoracic surgical specialist at the General Hospital in Colombo. Wakeley's grandfather was the distinguished Dr. Samuel Chelliah Paul, who was the first Asian to obtain fellowship of the Royal College of Surgeons in 1901. He was also the first Ceylonese FRCS, and the first Senior Surgeon at the General Hospital in Colombo. Wakeley's great-grandfather was the late Dr. William Thillaiyampalam Paul, who was also distinguished in his own right. Though coming from generations of highly esteemed Tamil Medical Doctors, Wakeley had a passion for law, which he excelled & practiced in Ceylon (presently Sri Lanka) and America.

Royalist

Wakeley was an Old Royalist, having graduated from the esteemed Royal College in Colombo, Ceylon. He was a founding member and past President of the Royal College Old Boys' East Coast Association in USA.

Cambridge and Stanford alumni

After Royal College, he then went on to attend Emmanuel College at the University of Cambridge in England, receiving his Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) in Law in 1953, and Master of Arts (M.A.) in Law in 1957. He also received his Masters of Law (LL.M.) from Stanford University, USA, in 1962 for International Law.

He was a Crown Counsel in Ceylon for almost 12 years, a Barrister-at-Law, Middle Temple, London, England, and a Criminal Defense Attorney in New Jersey, USA, for 33 years.

Wakeley tried the first capital case in Bergen County, New Jersey, after the reinstatement of the death penalty in 1982. Among his many notable defendants was Mr. Joseph Harris, a postal worker at Ridgewood, New Jersey, who went crazy and killed five people. Mr. Harris added to the American slang term "going postal". Wakeley did a wonderful job defending Mr. Harris as he did for all of his clients. His clients adored him. He always upheld his clients' right of being "innocent until proven guilty."

President of Ilankai Tamil Sangam, USA

Wakeley was passionate about justice, both locally and internationally. He was the past President of Ilankai Tamil Sangam USA, and represented the Tamils on behalf of Ilankai Tamil Sangam at the United Nations Human Rights Commission in Geneva in the 1980's and 1990's, and the International Association of Democratic Lawyers - Paris Conference in 2005. He was a speaker and attendee of Tamil World Conferences. He spoke and wrote extensively on the Tamil national question, and was a passionate and committed supporter of the Tamil Eelam Struggle for Freedom.

Though his commitment and passion to the Tamil struggle cost him support from some friends and colleagues, he had a deep resolve for what was right and just, and for what he believed will bring peace in the end.

Wakeley was known as a true gentleman, and had a great exuberance for life. He had a proud command of the English language and was a natural orator. He was a wonderful raconteur who told the best stories. He was also a great debater, and a fierce opponent. Wakeley was well traveled and loved his curries hot! He was a Christian who regularly attended St. Stephen's Episcopal Church. In his latter years he liked to take photographs, and was a member of the Crestwood Camera Club which had regular exhibits of his work. He was also past President of the Creative Writers of the Glen club. He wrote articles, poetry, and was published in the Crestwood Village Sun. Before his passing, he wrote his own autobiography. He was also an honorary member of a speaker's club. People found

Wakeley to be urbane, witty, charming, and worldly. He was well respected by his friends, colleagues, and relatives. Most of all, he was loved as a husband, a father, father-in-law, and grandfather.

Wakeley is survived by his wife Sandra, to whom he was married for 46 years, daughter Galina, son Dayan, and his doted grand-children Seryozha, Misha, Natasha, Aiken, and Aryck.

Here is an example of the many poems that Wakeley wrote, which also peeked into his character:

THE WEAKNESS OF COMPROMISE

By Wakeley Paul, July 30, 2008
*Many believe how best it is to accommodate
 and ease the pace of life,
 That is so much more practical
 than getting involved in a fight*



*with someone who firmly believes
 in his duty to do what's right.
 Chamberlain was a compromiser
 whose clamor for peace gave way to war
 while he conceded everything,
 hoping peace will soar even though
 Hitler swore and tore up every promise
 he chose to ignore.
 Churchill on the other hand defied the world*



*who thought he was too drunk to realize the value of surrender instead of which he warned his doubters
 that compromise was unwise cause Hitler would dominate those he controlled
 despite every promise to accommodate them as he had promised Chamberlain to do.
 Oh you gutless compromisers be constantly be aware that weakness is a sneaky way of getting what you want at a cost than can be costly and chock full of loss,
 for today's upliftment will make you shake and toss that your short term advantage might have made you a boss that's as weak and as soft as a pot full of floss.*

N.P. Jeganathan

26 August, 1926 - 18 March 2009

(Former Permanent Secretary and Government Agent of Jaffna and Mannar)

By Siva Sivapragasam
 The recent demise of Mr. N.P. Jeganathan, a proud product of the now defunct Ceylon Civil Service, Permanent Secretary and a former Government Agent of Jaffna and Mannar, removes from our midst an illustrious son of Sri Lanka's Tamil community.

The Late Jeganathan had his secondary education at St. Patrick's College-Jaffna, a prestigious educational institution well known for discipline and decorum. On completing his school education, he entered the University and passed out with an Honours Degree in Mathematics, specializing in Statistics. At that time entry into the Ceylon Civil Service was through a highly competitive exam where only a chosen few were lucky to enter the "Elite Club". Mr. Jeganathan's brilliant academic record stood good in his selection for the Civil Service. He served as a cadet during the initial years in Colombo and was later posted to the outstations for higher and more lucrative positions.

It was during these postings that he held the position of Government Agent of Mannar and Jaffna. During his tenure as

a Government Agent in Mannar Mr. Jeganathan will be well remembered as a Public Servant who helped the needy and the deserving, specially in Land allocation and re-settlement. He went out of his way to allocate crown land for the landless and helped the poor and needy. In Jaffna, he was a familiar figure in many community functions. Although he was a Catholic, his presence was felt in almost all Hindu functions.

Mr. Jeganathan's career in the Public Service rose high when he was appointed Permanent Secretary to the Ministry of Regional Development and Hindu Affairs with Mr.C. Rajadurai as the Minister. Although Mr. Jeganathan was a Catholic, his appointment to the Hindu Affairs Ministry as the Permanent Secretary spoke well of his fairness and impartiality. He was of great assistance to Mr. Rajadurai in running this Ministry. After his long and eventful career in the Public Service he eventually retired and took up an educational posting in Nigeria. It was from Nigeria that he migrated to Canada where he spent the rest of his life in peaceful retirement



until his demise recently. Mr. Jeganathan's wife Theresa Leelawathie pre-deceased him and he leaves behind his children Lanka, Ruhuna, Rajan, Jeyam, Ratna, Mano and Charmaine.

The passing away of Nicholapillai Patrick Jeganathan has removed from the scene a person from the Sri Lankan Tamil community who was diligent in his duty and played a significant role in the Public service with incredible enthusiasm. His family has been blessed with his loving spirit and living presence for many years. It could truly be said that his life was gentle and the elements were so mixed in him that Nature would stand up one day and say "Here was a Man".

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Prof. Saran Ghai

"Why bad things happen only to me?" is the most common question callers ask me. They feel that they are the most harassed and the worst sufferers on this earth. They say, they do not understand why God keeps punishing them for no fault and no reason of theirs'. They do not harm anyone knowingly (unknowingly no one knows) still everything wrong happens to them. Whatever they want to do or start doing, ends up result less.

Why bad things happen only to me?

Whatever plan they start working on disrupts for one cause or the other. To them it looks like the words like 'success' and 'happiness' have disappeared from their dictionaries. All their efforts to accomplish an objective, gets worthless and they reach again to the stage zero again. To them the phrase - 'Man proposes and God disposes' is the biggest truth of their life.

Job, marriage, family, diseases, love, business, money, kids and many such reasons people have to worry about. The more they want to come out of these problems, the more deeply they dip into. One problem they solve, two other start haunting their peace of mind. To them, this world is just a troubled ocean and their life is full of tsunamis.

Those who are in business are worried for falling stocks and shares. Those who are in job are worried for recession and layoffs. Those who are unmarried, want to marry ASAP as their age is increasing day by day and they are losing charm on their face and on the other hand some of those who are married, are struggling to divorce as they are not happy with their life partners. Those

who have kids are worried as their kids are slipping from their clench and those who do not have kids, are getting medical treatments and engaging themselves in obtaining blessings from their respective religious priests. Those who are suffering from diseases are worried for their ill health and those who are in love are worried as they may not be parted from their beloved for any odd reason.

Mean to say, there is no person in this world, who is not worried, who is not suffering and who is not in trouble. Everyone is having one or the other problem. So, just to think that I am the only person who is suffering the worst,

accomplishment in life, our destiny has calculated a time. We should remember that no one gets more than what is in his destiny and nothing he gets before his time. Whenever we start making efforts to improve our life status, we find that we failed again. You know, what is the reason? The reason is that we started the efforts before time. A better time is yet to come in our life at its scheduled time. Before that, our efforts result in nothing but failure. We keep on adding those sufferings and finally the end result is the same question - "Why bad things only happen to me?"

writer. They only have a choice to write and keep writing without waiting for their readers' comments.



Remember just one thing in your mind - Some people are just lucky, for the rest it takes planning. You would have noticed that one person buys a lottery ticket for just one dollar and wins millions. On the other hand others keep on buying lottery tickets, invest thousands of dollars every year but do not get anything. Then they start cursing God. They forget that God helps those who help themselves. If you are doing a work in which you are investing your swat, your time, your money, your efforts, and you are not getting positive results, of course, you are entitled to ask God, "What wrong did I do?" But not winning lottery, sorry sir that is not for God to take care about.

As a matter of fact, it is not only our current deeds to accomplish something in life, but our

deeds in previous lives and not only our own previous lives but of our ancestors deeds in their lives also have an impact on our fate. The reason why we fail while others succeed is because of the impact of those deeds on our present life.

So, the best way is to keep your efforts on to achieve your ambitions and leave rest of the things in the hands of that great power, who we recognize as God. He will give us, what is good for us and will save us from what is not good for us.

Keep working, keep worshipping and keep smiling.

-Saran Ghai

Ph: (416)816-5559, Blog: saranghai.blogspot.com, E-mail: ghaisaran@gmail.com, website: www.muktipathmeditation.com.

- Continued...

(Prof. Saran Ghai is an Author, Editor and Publisher of a number of Books, Magazines and Newspapers. He is a Palm Reader and a Numerologist too. To book appointment to know about your present and future, Love, Marriage, Business and other problems, make an appointment on phone. Prof. Ghai publishes a 2-in-1 English-Hindi monthly magazine titled "Superior Star" & "Soubhagya" (Good Fortune) covering Meditation, Wellness, Naturopathy, Yoga, Palmistry, Astrology, Numerology, Astronomy, Reiki and many other alike subjects. To Subscribe Superior & "Soubhagya" please e-mail - superiormonthly@yahoo.ca or soubhagyamonthly@gmail.com.

is not that true. There are people, who do not have anything, they are homeless, their families are not with them and they do not know who they belong to. There are people who live in slums. Are they not suffering more than you?

Whenever you are in depression, look at a person who has better reasons to be in the state of depression. But he is living too, so, what is that, that worries you more? It is just nothing but a fear of losing your comfort zone. As a matter of fact, my studies reveal that there are three chief factors which cause worries:

1. I want a better life.
2. I may not lose my present accomplishments of life.
3. That other person is in a better comfort zone. I want to have more than him.

You may claim that these are negative factors. But according to me, these are not the negative factors. All the three factors are positive factors and each one of us should base his life on these factors. In fact, they are the guidelines for stability and progress in one's life. Problems start when we desire more than we deserve. The other thing we want everything right at the time when we wish them. For our each

You may ask that in that case we should not do anything but wait for the right time. Also, who would tell us that this is the right time? You would be surprised with my answer - Every moment is the right time. We have to start whatever we want to plan for our life - now. No other moment is better than this moment. No other time is prosperous than this time. The only thing what I would make you remember what Lord Krishna told to Arjun - Do your work but do not attach your deeds with the desired result. Just keep doing what you are expected to do and leave the result in the hands of God.

We do not fail but for each of our efforts we want a result, that too according to our expectations. That is the whole cause of the trouble. You can understand this by a simple example. When an author of a book or a column writer of a magazine writes on any subject matter, he does foresee would the readers accept it or not, what would be their comments, what happens if nobody says anything about their work? Even before starting writing, if they start thinking about the comments, they would never be a writer, not to talk of a successful

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Coldwell Banker Awards Gala on March 27th, 2009 at Westin Harbor Castle, Toronto



Among the many participants from all Canadian branches, seated are Coldwell Banker Exceptional Real Estate Brokers Judith Boda-Lazar, Maroof Mohammed, Broker of Record, Dale Thom & Broker Mary Carson.



Some of the Award Recipients are from Coldwell Banker Exceptional Real Estate Broker Logan Velumailum, Broker of Record Dale Thom & Broker Mary Carson

McDonald's "Save Time. Save Lives." Campaign

Life-saving equipment for Rouge Valley Centenary Emergency will reduce wait times

From March 16 until May 6- which is McHappy Day-23 Scarborough-area McDonald's restaurants will be fundraising for Rouge Valley Centenary's (RVC) Emergency Department. RVC is a part of Rouge Valley Health System and serves the east Toronto community. Partial proceeds raised from McDonald's counter coin boxes, bedpan coin drives and the sales of certain menu items on McHappy Day will be allocated to the purchase of a portable ultrasound machine.

This vital piece of equipment will save time diagnosing specific and potentially life-threatening ailments in a patient brought in to the Emergency Department. The portable ultrasound machine can instantly determine heart muscle activity, show fluid around the heart, detect abdominal aortic aneurysms, find problematic ectopic pregnancy or determine internal bleeding.

Every single Emergency patient will benefit from this donation. The equipment can be used on men, women and children alike and, even if a patient

doesn't require an ultrasound, faster diagnoses enables improved patient flow and reduced wait times for all.

McDonald's owners and staff are thrilled with the opportunity to be a part of a life-saving team for their local hospital. "This is a community campaign: Scarborough restaurants and customers investing in Rouge Valley Centenary!" says Dale Bartlett, owner. "We know the importance of our community hospital and want to take the lead in this great campaign."

Appreciative of this partnership is Dr. K.C. Moran, RVC Emergency Site Chief, who will use the machine and see first-hand its cascading time-saving effects. "This will change the way we work. If you can find a life-threatening problem sooner, then you greatly improve patient care and outcomes."

The media was invited to attend a special launch and photo opportunity on Tuesday, March 24 at 10 A.M. at the Port Union & Hwy 2 McDonald's. Attendees included Ronald McDonald, Dr.

HOLI HAI... HOLI HAI

It is said, "Life turns Colourful" when it is time for Holi. HOLI HAI... HOLI HAI... Come Holi and the temples will reverberate with the chants of Holi hai... This very scene was felt by thousands of Shri Ram Mandir devotees who thronged into the temple on 10th March to celebrate Holi right up to 10 PM.

Millions of people all over the globe celebrated the Holi festival with music, dance and delicacies to herald the arrival of spring. At Ram Mandir, men, women and children took a break from their everyday chores to boisterously join the celebrations by smearing colored powder on each other amid shouts of "Holi Hai!" (It's Holi!). The celebrations were at their colourful best when Pandit Roonnauth Sharma sang wonderful songs of Holi to the delight of devotees and burning of Holika.

Holi is an ancient festival of India and was originally known as 'Holika'. Holi celebration takes place with lot of joy and verve throughout the country. The enthusiasm of the people reaches its peak and matches with the nature which is in full bounty at the time of Holi. Ideally, the joyous festival of Holi is meant to celebrate the arrival of spring while the colors used in Holi are to reflect of the various hues of spring season.

The literal meaning of the word 'Holi' is 'burning'. According to Narad Purana, this day is celebrated in the memory of Prahlad's victory and the defeat of his aunt 'Holika'. There are various legends to explain the meaning of this word, most prominent of all is the legend associated with demon king Hiranyakashyap.

Hiranyakashyap wanted everybody in his kingdom to worship only him but to his great disappointment, his son, Prahlad became an ardent devotee of Lord Naarayana. Hiranyakashyap his sister, Holika to enter a blazing fire with Prahlad in her lap. Holika had a boon whereby she could enter fire without any damage on herself. However, she was not aware that the boon worked only



when she enters the fire alone. As a result she paid a price for her sinister commanded desires, while Prahlad was saved by the grace of the god for his extreme devotion. The festival, therefore, celebrates the victory of good over evil and also the triumph of devotion and the arrival of spring.

All of the devotees were enjoying and putting a little colour on the faces of the elders and young ones! Most of them were enjoying with family and friends but frankly, I avoided putting too much colour on people's faces. Also, I like playing mild with colours and no harsh substances.



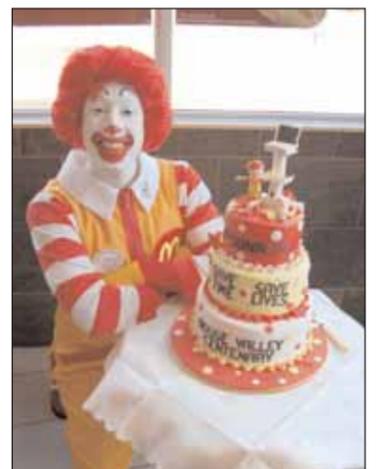
Moran, and Councillors Ron Moeser, Paul Ainslie and Raymond Cho and Owner Operators Dale Bartlett, Terri Toms, Terry Brazill, Deborah Feaver and John Pang.

Rouge Valley Health System Foundation - Enhancing care in the community -

The Rouge Valley Health System Foundation's mission is to partner with the community to invest in superior healthcare at

Rouge Valley Health System. The Foundation raises funds to support the purchase of leading-edge medical equipment and support major capital expansion projects.

Contact: Kerry McLeish, Communications Officer, Rouge Valley Health System Foundation, (905) 683-2320 x1227, kmcleish@rougevalley.ca, www.rougevalley.ca/rvhsf



Monsoon Kids Corner

Color Me Competition - 14

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Color me Competition - 14



Entry Form: April 2009

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Steps-Taking it one at a time

by: Abizar Badani

As the City of Toronto has become a haven for violence, most people have pointed its fingers to the youth of the city.

However, after meeting the youth at the crescent town youth community talent showcase, that was held in the Danforth area, it only demonstrated that this event has once again proven those fingers wrong in all areas. It was a celebration of youth and their talent, an ever lasting bond between the youth of the community and the community itself. I met a whole lot of wonderful talent at the show but some really caught my eye, which in a few words I shall share with you my readers, Fabien Reid is one such example, a fine human being who works with the neighborhood link support services, shared how they had got together with various organizations bringing talent onto one platform. This event had in itself a lot to offer, a film screening, in which Youth in Action had got together to screen films produced by various youth in the city.

Apart from this what really caught attention were the various dance and music performances that were enacted by children and youth of the area, just to prove again that if this city needs a solution, the youth need to be encouraged and shown the appreciation for their work instead of making them feel targeted for the misfortunes in the city.

STEPS 2009 truly represents

the colors of success for every youth in the community.

Apart from the visual side the event had more to boast about with the garland of celebrities including noted radio personality Jemeni, Janet Davis (Councillor), and Micheal Prue (MPP), again a true picture when youth are encouraged by the city itself, STEPS 2009 has in every way been a success in celebrating the wide range of talent that the city of Toronto has to offer, and I would congratulate every participant and performer who made this event a event to be remembered for days to come and stay in out hearts as a golden memory.

For information on this feature email us at: n_issac@hotmail.com



SCHOOL LUNCHES-FUEL FOR SUCCESS

by: Habiba Badani

Healthy lunches are a fuel for your kids tank. It helps them stay alert, productive and improves behaviour.

Healthy lunch foods should consist of: protein to keep your child alert, a few examples such as hard boiled eggs; complex carbohydrates for slow energy release energy like whole wheat bread; calcium for growing bones and teeth such as skim or 1% milk (flavoured); and fruit and vegetables for vitamins and minerals.

In order to make sure that your child eats healthy find out what your child likes. Mix up breads and buns, wraps. Jazz up sandwiches with fillings in new combinations like canned tuna with sliced apples and raisins. Always remember to pack small bite size pieces of fruit, baby car-



rots, cherry tomatoes, raisins or dry fruits, nuts, or cheese slices or cubes.

When it comes to beverages as a parent you must include either 100% pure fruit juices or skim milk (flavoured).

Also have your child help you pack their lunch so that they can

learn firsthand and get the "A" they deserve, because a healthy body is the key to a healthy mind.

For more info contact:

Habiba Badani
(Early Childhood Educator and
Child Care Provider):
habibabadani@hotmail.com

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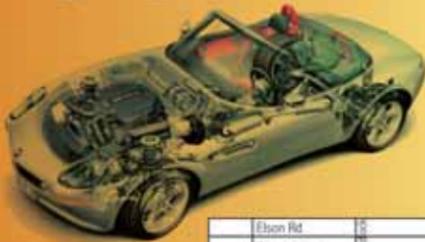
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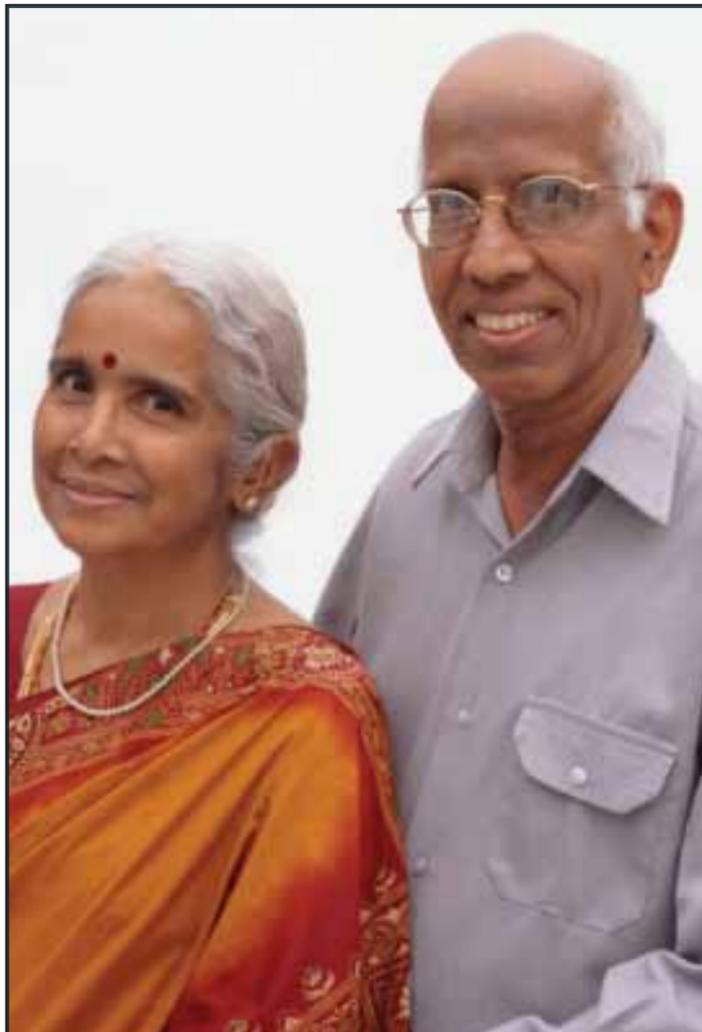
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