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Monsoon Journal

A parfait media publication

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- The Truth -
"Three things cannot be long hidden: the sun, the moon, and the truth" - Lord Buddha [563 BC - 483 BC]



Sunrise in Madampe, Sri Lanka
[humanityashore.org]

Ontario Provincial Elections

The bread is buttered on both sides for the Voter



Siva Sivapragasam

With hardly a week to go for the Elections, the voters are being fed by the leading parties with campaign promises and a better life if they are elected.

Judging by sample surveys and reports, the elections will be hard-fought. A recent survey reveals a razor thin margin exists between the two major parties - Liberals and the PC party. But surveys can go wrong specially with the last minute decision making voters.

The major issues in the coming elections can be summed up as follows:

- Government Funding for faith based schools
- Health Tax and Tax Credits
- Poverty Alleviation
- Crime and Violence

Of the above, funding faith based schools seems to dominate the election campaigns. Apparently this plank was used by the PC to get votes from certain religious communities. But due to protests, some from his own members, John Tory, the PC leader has now announced that there will be a free vote given in the legislature for his controversial plan. This announcement may take the funding issue back-stage in the campaign. Liberals argue that

such funding will reduce financial resources of public schools.

A recent polls survey has suggested that half of Ontarians think that poverty reduction should take priority issue number one for the next provincial government. Dalton McGuinty, the Liberal leader has already fired a letter to Prime Minister Stephen Harper requesting federal assistance for cash-strapped Toronto and hopes to introduce firm targets within a year, if they are re-elected.

On crime and violence, John Tory promises a "get tough plan" to reduce crime in the province. Howard Hampton, NDP Leader hopes for a minority government for balance of power. He has promised "greener energy supply that would fulfill Ontario's power needs".

This year's election has also another choice for the voter on the present electoral system. Whether the present system should be changed to the proportional system offering a better representation for all parties in the Legislature. Voters will be asked to cast their vote on this issue by way of a referendum.

Ontarians will gear up next week to exercise their democratic right to decide who will be their next Premier. Whoever wins or loses, the choice is with the voter!

PC Leader John Tory:

"I have always believed that listening to the people is at the very core of leadership"



Details in Page 37

Under fire, Sri Lanka takes swipe at UN and EU

Under fire amid a rash of civil war human rights abuses, Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapaksa has turned the tables on the United Nations, questioning its efficiency, and ability to help tackle terrorism.

Addressing the UN General Assembly in New York during the last week of September, President Rajapaksa, whose administration has vilified UN envoys for criticism, said

solutions to armed conflicts must be homegrown and rights should not be used as a tool to victimise countries.

"The UN has a mixed record of achievements. As resources received by the UN are limited, it has been only possible to deliver limited results," Rajapaksa told the assembly in his native Sinhala.

Continued in Page 36

Sri Lanka borrowing \$500 million amidst IMF warning to cut spending

Sri Lanka plans to go ahead with its \$500 million sovereign bond and the government has appointed the largest state bank, Bank of Ceylon, to co-manage the issue.

The main opposition United National Party has said it will revoke lead manager HSBC's local license for helping the government raise funds,

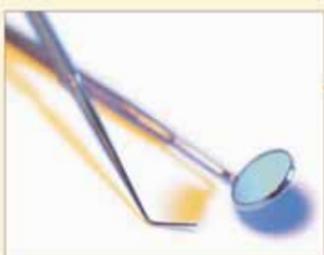
saying the bond would pose too much of a burden for the island's finances.

But the Ministry of Finance said in a statement issued late on Friday to only select media that the proposed amount had already been approved by parliament during the last budget.

Continued in Page 36

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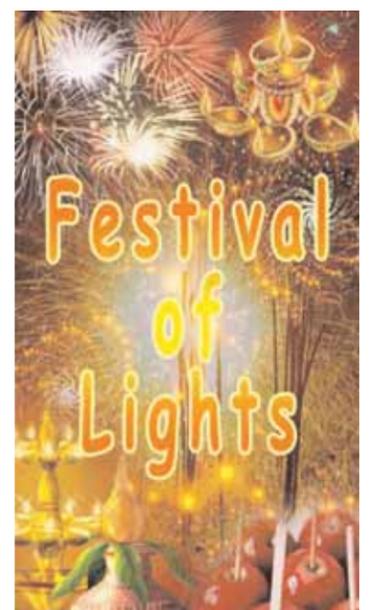
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Canada Newsline

U.S. official suggests Canadian dollar deserves lofty heights near parity with US dollar

The Canadian dollar continues with near parity these days, and a top U.S. government official suggested recently that its surprising strength may not be short-lived.

Responding to a reporter's question that speculation was driving the Canadian dollar higher, US Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson, in the Ottawa area to sign a new bilateral tax agreement on Sep 21st, said there were sound economic fundamentals supporting the Canadian currency.

"Canada's economy looks very healthy to me," he said. "I've been watching for some time and everything from the progress on the deficit, the growth, this is a solid economy."

Paulson's positive assessment of the Canadian economy were echoed by Finance Minister Jim Flaherty, who said Canada's economic fundamentals favoured the Canadian dollar's strength in comparison with the US dollar.

"We have a strong commodities market and prices are good, except for (natural) gas," he said. "We have the strongest economic fundamentals in G7. I leave it for the markets to take into consideration all the variables."

As the Canadian economy has moved from strength to strength, policy makers, including Bank of Canada governor David Dodge, have speculated that Canada could be sideswiped by the weakness in the U.S. housing market and the turmoil in the capital markets emanated from the subprime mortgage crisis.

But while he admitted the situation is serious, Paulson said he does not believe the U.S. will head into recession, adding that the remarkable strength of the world economy is lift-

ing all boats, including the once-dominant U.S.

"The housing slowdown and the capital markets turbulence we're going through now will take a penalty to our growth, but we're a diverse economy and I'm very comfortable we're going to continue to grow throughout this year," he said.

"Clearly we are benefiting in the U.S. economy from growth outside the U.S. and that's a good thing," the treasury secretary added. "We've never witnessed anything in the past like we've seen the last several years. We have developing countries (in Asia) growing three times the level they grew in the 90s and twice as fast as the developed countries. This is a very good thing."

Canadian dollar's rapid appreciation - up from 95 cents at the start of this month and from under 90 cents last spring - has come on the strength of Canada's resource-based economy. But the dollar's rise has squeezed the manufacturing sector concentrated in Central Canada.

Flaherty said on Sep 21st that the long-term health of Canada's beleaguered manufacturers will depend on how successful they are in modernizing and becoming more efficient.

"One of the advantages of a higher Canadian dollar is the easier acquisition of U.S. technology or technology from other countries priced in U.S. dollars," he added.

But frustration is building among Canadian consumers that they are not seeing the benefits a stronger dollar on store shelf prices. Two Canadian banks released reports this week arguing that Canadians are playing as much as 24 per cent more than



Americans on the same product.

Liberal MP Dan McTeague said Canadians have a right to know if they are getting ripped off and has asked Industry Minister Jim Prentice to order Statistics Canada to make public price differentials between the two countries. He also wants the House industry committee to hold public hearings on the issue.

"If we're going to lose in manufacturing and suffer a loss in tourism from the U.S., there should at least be a benefit for Canadians in stronger purchasing power," he said.

Meanwhile, pressure is building on the Bank of Canada to follow the lead of its American counterpart and cut interest rates at its next announcement date, Oct. 16.

Scotia Capital economist Meny Grauman said the bank is unlikely to move from its current neutral policy stance, but added there is now an "opening for discussions about the eventual need for rate cuts down the line, especially if problems in the U.S. intensify."

[CP]

Canadian money markets are functioning better says Governor Dodge

Canadian money markets are functioning better after being affected by this summer's turbulence, but they are not yet back to normal, Bank of Canada Governor David Dodge said in a speech to the Vancouver Board of Trade on Sep 25th.

Governor Dodge reiterated his message that the events of the summer have also highlighted the clear case for improved transparency in financial markets. "Markets need information in order to operate efficiently. So it is in the interest of market participants to make sure that par-

ties have access to all the necessary information."

It will take some time to fully assess the implications of the financial market turbulence for the Canadian economy, although it has already meant some tightening of credit conditions for borrowers, the Governor said. The extent of this tightening isn't yet known, although it should temper the growth of domestic demand. The Bank will provide analysis on these issues in the next Monetary Policy Report, to be published on 18th of October, said Governor Dodge.

Chronology of the Canadian dollar:

Aug. 20, 1957 - C\$1 worth US\$1.0614

1962 - 1970 - dollar fixed at 92.5 cents US

May 31, 1970 - Trudeau government floats currency

April 25, 1974 - floated currency peaks at US\$1.0443

Nov. 15, 1976 - Parti Quebecois elected

End of 1978 - C\$1 worth 84 cents US

Feb. 4, 1986 - worth 69.13 cents US

Nov. 4, 1991 - C\$1 worth 89.34 cents US

Jan. 21, 2002 - all - time low 61.79 cents US

Sept. 20, 2007 - loonie and greenback at par, first time since 1976



Canadian Dollar Aiding US Online Retailers



The ritual has resumed, as it always does when the Canadian dollar rises against the United States dollar. Large numbers of Canadians cross the border in search of lower prices and greater selection at American stores. But when the Canadian dollar reached parity with American currency recently, there was a new twist: online sales now let Canadians bargain-hunt in the United States without leaving home.

A report on the New York Times states that if early indications hold true, some of the biggest gains from the Canadian dollar's strength may be at online retailers based in the United States. Canada's small population compared with the United States, some 33 million versus 302 million, makes online operations less cost-

effective, relatively few Canadian retailers, less than a third by some estimates, sell on the Web, the report points out. It further says, that limited local competition, combined with the strong Canadian dollar and the moderate cost of expanding into Canada, make the country a tempting target for American electronic retailers.

There is no accurate tracking Canadian crossborder spending, virtual or otherwise. But shipping carriers, Canada Post and UPS Canada have reported a 38 percent increase over the last year in shipping. For a lot of retailing on the internet Canada is really being seen as the first step in a broad international expansion plan say the industry experts.

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From the Publisher's Desk ...

The 'other' vote on October 10th ... make your voice heard...

Counting down to the Ontario Election Day!

A hard fought election it seems, with new twists and turns that appears to be keeping the voters just 'entertained' on the surface at times; but nevertheless beaming the undercurrents as well, that will continue to impact our lives the day after vote casting as well.

You are not only going to elect your MPP but also voting on a new system to 'elect the government' on the upcoming Election Day. There is going to be a landmark referendum. This referendum, to adopt a new system is under the radar, away from the

public eye in many instances around the province due to other hot button issues and debates.

'Referendum Ontario', grabbing little attention of the voters now however is an all important 'other vote' that the voter will have the opportunity to voice on October 10th.

Ontario voters get a chance to change their current first-past-the-post voting system in favor of proportional representation, in what would be Canada's first shift away from the system inherited from Britain more than a century ago.

Backers of the proposed new mixed-member proportional (MMP)

system say it would be more representative of the actual election outcome; proposed MMP system would give each party a number of seats based on their percentage of the vote. Opponents say it would cripple the government and empower 'fringe' groups.

Such electoral systems prevail in Israel, Germany, Italy, New Zealand, Scotland and Sri Lanka - with mixed results in some countries, resulting in instability in governing.

www.yourbigdecision.ca, a website run by Elections Ontario, explains the process of the referendum as follows:

"When you vote during the advance polls or on Election and Referendum Day you will be given two ballots. One for voting for a candidate in the general election, the other will ask you to consider:

Which electoral system should Ontario use to elect members to the provincial legislature?

- The existing electoral system (First-Past-the-Post)

- The alternative electoral system proposed by the Citizens' Assembly (Mixed Member Proportional"

The selections are written in both English and French.

Letters to Editor & Opinions

An Open Letter to Ontario PC Leader John Tory -- For urgent attention

Re: Extending Public Funding to Faith-Based Schools in Ontario

Dear John, it is to your credit that you brought up the issue of public funding of faith-based schools (FBS) in Ontario, but you would accept that it had become the defining issue to the public in this election.

Catholic school funding, being the residual effect of the British North America Act of 1867 that accorded that benefit to the Catholic minority community of Upper Canada, was designed to benefit that faith while it was disadvantaged, and is now discriminatory to the other faith groups in this post-Charter period. Over one hundred years later, Catholic community, just to top it off, is the majority community in Ontario - diametrically opposite circumstance of what was intended in 1867.

Other faith groups had taken this differential treatment all the way to the UN, and the UN itself has agreed with them that it is indeed discriminatory. But in politics, all issues are local and it requires to be dealt locally. Today all our citizens are empowered equally before the law and no one can legally be discriminated with likes of head tax and denial of voting rights.

It is indeed laudable that you agreed openly that the practice of funding of one faith only is discriminatory. However, most Ontarian disagree with the manner by which you plan to rectify this discrimination. No doubt that many would agree with you if you would propose to follow the secular funding practices as adopted by the Quebec and the Newfoundland jurisdictions. Speaking of leadership, if not for your mentor's strong leadership and cooperation, you would agree that the Constitution would not have been repatriated in 1982 and in the same vein many would say that this present FBS crisis could have been avoided if it was dealt adequately 25 years ago.

Dear John, your proposal, as articulated in many editorials, will make a bad situation worse. Everyone is aware that Ontario and Canada today are not of the same religious composition as in 1867. The Ontario community now is a multi-faceted multicultural community, and is much more secular.

Canada was and is still a predominantly Christian country in ethics and

conduct. A pretty concept of multiculturalism is only just over thirty years. However, multiculturalism itself cannot be interpreted adversely to affect the benefit of living in a beautiful country committed to multiculturalism. Many people from all over the world have been allowed to come over and they have adopted this country as theirs because of this inclusiveness. This is a peaceful country by design. A fascinating intercultural experiment is in progress now, and the country has enormously benefited. In fact, many of the immigrants had run away from that the type of societies which would be created by this FBS funding.

Unlike the existing beneficiary - the Catholic school system, FBS will essentially cater to ethno-specific groups only; be that Hindu, Sikh, Jewish or Muslim, etc. etc., and its further restrictive subdivisions and derivatives therein. There will hardly be any interaction amongst children from the different ethnic groups, and the adverse effect on the society will be unfathomable. Extension of public funding for FBS will inevitably lead to a severely fragmented Ontario society and will effect a multi-pronged assault on the public school system with multitude of school trustees and administrations and the cost associated with it.

Your image, without patronizing, is that of a very intelligent person. Premier Dalton McGuinty, when faced with his commitment to healthcare, and the then existed deficit on assuming the power, did elect to keep one promise, and as it was not mutually exclusive, it did certainly affect the other. However, people could see through it -- essentially opting for a lesser of the two unpalatable options. You know only certain people do not change their opinion notwithstanding the weight of the evidence and contrary opinion.

The Catholic school system itself will likely to examine its raison d'être within a generation even if it is left alone. There are schools in its system with significant non-Catholic children, and system respects and treats them for who they are. The Constitution has remnants of the past that require revalidation from time to time to move forward in a progressive society. Studied responses, and not election rhetoric, are required to correct existence of such incongruence in this society.

FBS will encourage, enforced by peer pressure, for nearly all children

from same faith to go to their own publicly funded religious schools whether children are inclined or not. In fact, the government policy will effectively force the children to go their own religious systems, and the children will be subjected to the 'tyranny' of irrational and overly religious parents thus denying the benefit of living in a free-willed society. Past stories of this overzealousness are abundant.

Envious competition based on religious affiliation shall become norms even in a hockey area, as Newfoundland had witnessed it before eliminating public funding of religious schools.

Faith-based funding will affect the new immigrant children most. Within years, if implemented, FBS will definitely not bear a number like 55,000 or so as envisaged now. When new immigrants arrive, and when they find out that their own religious school is functioning at public expense, then they will naturally send their children to that school without thinking twice!

FBS funding cannot be and ought not to have been made a critical issue for this election. After all Catholic funding has been in existence for nearly one hundred and forty years. Let us study the issue in detail as its impact will be everlasting, just as the Confederate fathers could see only a disadvantaged minority community at that time. The solution to end this discrimination is to provide an excellent unified public school system.

Please accept that majority of the Ontarians are not with you on this

issue and we urge you to revisit it before the election date, and to assure Ontarians that this issue, if elected to form the next government, will only be studied and evaluated for another mandate, and you will not be implementing FBS funding in any form whatsoever during the currency of the next government.

You would have read that of many opinion-makers that the Ontario voters would have benefited immensely with the leadership choices available for them if not for the FBS issue that is masking all other issues. You demonstrated that, if your mayoral concession speech few years ago is any yardstick, you have the potential to provide an effective and compassionate leadership. We urge you to unshackle yourself and the Party by revisiting this FBS funding issue immediately.

Many would take the position that it is better to be defeated, if that happens, by being upfront and accept changes rather than being adamant and be defeated. FBS funding is a structural issue and not a moral issue -- like a policy on euthanasia -- to be adamant.

Yours sincerely,
Arul S. Aruliah
Committee on Faith-Based Public Funding Issue in Ontario
Ontario Tamil Community Chapter
September 30, 2007
(Arul S. Aruliah, was a spokesperson (1983-1990) for the Tamil community in Canada, and the founding Chair of Yarl Co-operative Homes in Mississauga.)

Ramayan's Existence in Sri Lanka

It has to be pointed out during the ongoing Ram-Sethu debate about various places that speak of Ramayan's existence in Sri-Lanka.

In the central hill town town of Nuwara Eliya which lies 7000 feet above sea level(Nuwaraeliya.org) there is a Hindu Temple devoted to Sita Devi was built by the Government of India (Can be verified through Indian High Commission in Colombo) at a place called Sita Eliya (Google search: Sita Eliya). The temple was built at the small creek where Sita was believed to have bathed. The adjoining rocks by the creek have foot marks showing two big deep landings and marched forward believed to be Lord Hanuman.

The cave Sita Devi was kept was adjoined to Ashoka Vanam which is

presently called Haggala Gardens. The argument that Ram Sethu was natural formation can be put to rest whoever visits these sites.

There is a Ganesh Temple in eastern Batticaloa village of Mamangam where Lord Hanuman supposedly doused the fire on his tail. These are preety common to most Hindu Sri-Lankan's. The Ravan's Rock adjoining the Hindu Temple at eastern port city of Trincomalee (Lord Shiva temple or Thiru-Koneswaram in Tamil) is another place has evidence on Ravan's existence.

I having witnessed these places as well as Rameshwaram temple can tell that these are not myths but facts!

Ramesh Sinniah
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Monsoon Newsline

ICICI Bank to expand operations in Sri Lanka

ICICI Bank is planning expansion of its operations in Sri Lanka.

"Besides looking at providing financial assistance to Indian corporates who have set up business in Sri Lanka, we are keen in becoming a major player in the retail sector," Ms Chanda Kochhar, Deputy Managing Director of the bank said recently.

Ms Kochhar, who was in Colombo on Sep 21st to address the 19th Anniversary Convention of the Association of Professional Bankers (APB), said the bank would not merely focus on the Indian expatriate community for widening its activities in the country.

"We do not target only the Indian expatriate community", she said, adding the ICICI Bank had the vast business opportunities in the country in mind while introducing new technology to stay ahead in the sector.

Ms Kochhar, after reviewing the bank's local operations and holding discussions about its future expansion plans in the country with the experts, said the per capita income in Sri Lanka was rising with new investments opportunities coming up.

"This is one of the main reasons for the ICICI bank in India to plan expansion in Sri Lanka", she said.

ICICI Bank is India's second-largest bank with total assets of Rs. 3,446.58 billion (US\$ 79 billion) at March 31, 2007.

The Bank currently has subsidiaries in the United Kingdom,



Russia and Canada, branches in Singapore, Bahrain, Hong Kong, Sri Lanka and Dubai International Finance Centre and representative offices in the United States, United Arab Emirates, China, South Africa, Bangladesh, Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia. ICICI UK subsidiary has established a branch in Belgium.

ICICI Bank's equity shares are listed in India on Bombay Stock Exchange and the National Stock Exchange of India Limited and its American Depository Receipts (ADRs) are listed on the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE).

Hindu Temple Opens Near Atlanta

By Aunshuman Apte and Niharika Acharya

The Hindu community in the southern U.S. city of Atlanta, Georgia recently opened a new religious and cultural center. The \$19 million facility is the largest temple of its kind in the United States.

Lilburn, a tiny Atlanta suburb, is home to one of the largest Hindu temples in the world. The white marble, limestone and sandstone Swaminarayan temple opened with great fanfare in August.

Craftsman carved the stones in India before shipping each piece to the U.S. where it was assembled following religious guidelines dating back thousands of years. "It's a huge temple, and a beautiful one. And I think it will only enhance the spiritual experience that people have," said one person involved with the construction.

Temple leaders want to use this space to fulfill more than just the spiritual needs of the local Hindu community. The temple's Anand Mehta says they plan to use the facility to reach



out to people of all faiths. "When natural disasters of any kind strike, we will mobilize our forces," he said. "We will build a family activity center which will host educational classes, teaching the Indian culture (and) Indian music."

Lilburn mayor Jack Bolton believes the new temple will raise Lilburn's profile and encourage tourism. "We don't have anything that becomes a landmark of that significance so in terms of Lilburn, it helps give us some recognition," said the mayor. [VOA]

Despite Buddhist links Lanka is silent on monks' stir in Myanmar

By P.K. Balachandran

The Sri Lankan government, the Buddhist clergy and the media, are all observing a resounding silence on the cataclysmic monks' stir in Myanmar, the nearest Buddhist country, which also follows the Theravada school of Buddhism.

Most of those who conduct foreign relations are currently in New York attending the UN General Assembly session. Therefore, they may be too busy to react to the developments in Myanmar. But the silence of the Buddhist clergy and the local media cannot be explained so easily.

When asked for a comment, the Venerable Athuraliye Rathana Thero of the Jathika Hela Urumaya (JHU), a Buddhist monks' party, said that he was unable to establish contact with his sources in Myanmar to know first hand, what was happening there.

The media in Sri Lanka has been reporting the events in Myanmar using wire copy, but there has been no edi-

torial comment yet. There have been only a couple of articles by foreign affairs columnists. Even here, there was no Sri Lankan perspective as such.

Is there a China factor working here? It cannot be denied that Colombo is sensitive to Beijing's views. And China has been against international intervention in internal conflicts. It has said so in the Myanmar case also, even as it asked the junta to take a softer line towards the rebellious Buddhist monks. China's stand in this regard strikes a chord in Colombo, which is also wary about international involvement or intervention in internal conflicts.

But most political observers rule out a China factor working in Colombo in regard to the Myanmar issue. Sri Lanka's relations with Myanmar have been good anyway, irrespective of who is ruling in Yangon. Relations have been based basically on the existence of a shared belief in Theravada Buddhism. Many Sri Lankans visit

Myanmar as pilgrims. Recently, there was a return visit from Myanmar in which the Myanmar delegation gifted an elephant to the Temple of the Tooth in Kandy.

More importantly, the military rulers in Yangon and the government in Colombo share an antipathy towards ethnic militants and terrorists. If the Sri Lankan government has been battling the Tamil Tigers, the Myanmar junta has been battling tribal rebels in the northern hills.

Earlier, elements of the Myanmar junta had supported or winked at the existence of an LTTE base on the coast in Twante. But that base no longer exists. Today, it is important for Colombo to see that Myanmar military officers or officials do not re-establish any links with the LTTE.

In all likelihood, Sri Lankans will wait for the crisis in Myanmar to resolve itself one way or the other, and avoid making any comments till then.

[courtesy: hindustantimes.com]

US Diversity Visa Lottery opens October 3, 2007

50,000 from around the world will win Green Card

The 2009 Diversity Immigrant Visa Lottery will be formally declared open in Washington, DC on October 3, 2007. This program allows randomly selected applicants to immigrate to the United States on an expedited basis, provided they meet all the criteria. A person may only enter the lottery if he or she has:

1) citizenship of a qualifying country (Sri Lanka and the Maldives both qualify); and

2) either a high school equivalent education (Six GCE O-Levels including compulsory subjects) or work experience within the past five years in a profession that requires at least two years of training or experience to perform. Individuals wishing to participate in the visa lottery are strongly urged to apply early to avoid any possible delays. 50,000 individuals will be selected for the lottery worldwide.

The lottery registration period will be October 03 to December 2, 2007. Registration for the Diversity Visa Lottery is free. The lottery will be conducted entirely by electronic means over the internet. Paper entries will no longer be accepted. The State Department has established a website for the submission of entries, which can be accessed at: www.dvlottery.state.gov. Successfully registered entries will result in the display of a confirmation screen containing the applicant's name, date of birth, country of chargeability (the country the applicant enters the lottery from), and a date and time

stamp. This confirmation screen can be printed as proof of registration in the lottery. An applicant may only register ONCE; more than one entry will result in automatic disqualification.

The Department of State Kentucky Consular Center in Williamsburg, Kentucky, will notify the lottery winners by mail (NOT e-mail)



between May and July, 2008. If they qualify, they will then have a one-year window in which they may immigrate to the United States. Under last year's Diversity Visa lottery program, 318 cases qualified for immigrant visa interviews.

No fee is charged to enter the annual Diversity Visa program. The U.S. Government employs no outside consultants or private services to operate the visa lottery program. Any companies or intermediaries who offer assistance to prepare DV casework for applicants do so without the authority or consent of the U.S. Government. Beware of persons or companies making claims of affiliation with the U.S. Government or promising improved odds of selection. The U.S. Government employs no outside con-

sultants or private services to operate the visa lottery program. Any companies or intermediaries who offer assistance to prepare DV casework for applicants do so without the authority or consent of the U.S. Government. Beware of persons or companies making claims of affiliation with the U.S. Government or promising improved odds of selection.

A qualified entry submitted electronically directly by an applicant has an equal chance of being selected by the computer at the Kentucky Consular Center as does an entry submitted electronically through a paid intermediary who completes the entry for the applicant. Use of any outside intermediary or assistance to prepare a DV entry is entirely at the applicant's discretion.

Every entry received during the lottery registration period will have an equal random chance of being selected within its region. However, receipt of more than one entry per person will disqualify the person from registration, regardless of the source of the entry.

[US Embassy, Sri Lanka Press Release]

Liberals Promising Reduced Surgical Wait Times

Expanding Wait Times Strategy To Include General Surgery Will Cover 40 per cent Of All Surgeries, Up From 13 per cent

Only the Ontario Liberals will move public health care for families forward by expanding our successful wait times strategy to include general surgery, says Premier Dalton McGuinty.

"We need to keep moving forward if we are to meet the needs of a growing and aging population, and speeding up access to general surgeries is the next important step forward," McGuinty said.

"Under the Harris Conservatives, confidence in medicare was eroding: hospitals were being closed, nurses were being fired, and wait times for important procedures were far too long," he said.

"Now, we're building and expanding hospitals, hiring nurses, and delivering faster access to specialized procedures, including cardiac, cataract and cancer surgery. It's time to build on this strong, new foundation."

Areas of the body treated by general surgery include the stomach, liver, appendix and the skin. The brain, heart, eyes and feet, to name a few, are areas that require specialized surgical repair.

In their first term, the Ontario Liberals led the first government in the province's history to measure and then reduce wait times for five key specialized surgeries and diagnostic procedures: cataract surgery, hip and knee replacements,

cancer surgery, cardiac procedures, and MRI and CT scans.

The improvement in wait times, ranging from 20 days sooner for cancer surgery to 181 days sooner for cataract surgery, is the result of working together with health care providers to deliver almost 1.3 million additional procedures.

The specialized surgeries and procedures included in the wait times strategy during our first term account for 13 per cent of all surgeries in Ontario.

When general surgeries are included in our second term, the strategy will cover 40 per cent of all surgeries, including hernias, spleens, and appendectomies.

The government will set targets for reducing wait times for general surgeries by working with doctors and other experts.

"The expansion of the successful wait time strategy to all of general surgery is exciting news. The lessons learned in driving down wait times in the first five areas can now be applied to this significant area. Patients and general surgeons can expect to benefit from reduced wait times and increased transparency through its inclusion in the Wait Times Information System," said Dr. Philip Barron, past President of the Ontario Association of General Surgeons.

McGuinty made the announcement while visiting the Ottawa Hospital to underscore the progress made in public health care over the past four years.



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Monsoon Newsline

Lanka urged to help Burmese monks



A leading Buddhist monk in Sri Lanka has urged the island's authorities to support protesting Buddhist monks in Myanmar, previously known as Burma.

Leader of the Dambulla Chapter of the Siyam Sect told BBC Sandeshaya that it is the duty of the Buddhist monks in Sri Lanka as well as the authorities to help other Buddhists in the world.

Tens of thousands of Buddhist monks and other civilians marched through Rangoon recently mounting anti-government protests.

They were defying the army's warning to stay off the streets.

Some chanted "we want dialogue" while others simply shouted "democracy, democracy".

Earlier, lorries with loudspeakers warned residents that the protests

could be "dispersed by military force".

"Buddhist monks should be pro-people," Sumangala Nayaka thero told BBC Sandeshaya.

The Sri Lankan government, the Nayaka thero said, should also help the monk-led protest as a Buddhist-majority government.

"It is the duty of the Buddhist monks to work for the betterment of the laymen in this life and the next life," the Nayaka thero added.

Asked by Sandeshaya as to why certain Mahanayakes who were conferred Agga Maha Panditha silent ion the issue, the Nayaka thero said:

"In fact it was conferred by the military junta against which the Burmese Buddhist monks are at the moment are protesting".

[Sandeshaya]

Sethusamudram: Can Sri Lanka Speak?

by Dr. T T Sreekumar

One of the important issues in the Sethusamudram debates is the near total obliteration of the Sri Lankan perspective(s) by the Indian Media. Understanding the Sri Lankan per-

spective(s) is critical for two reasons. First, it is more than evident that the canal will be in India but its impacts would cross Indian territories with the suspended sediments and dredged toxins affecting the bio-domains surrounding Sri Lanka. Second, given the shared concerns of food security, arms race, unresolved national struggles (Elam, Kashmir etc.) and continuing sectarian social conflicts in the region, an India-centric view on bilateral and multilateral issues such as defence, environment, foreign policy and economic growth is politically inadequate.



tor that offers lessons on understanding the potentials and limitations of democratic struggles for right to livelihood in South Asia while pointing to the deepening crevasses between State and civil society in almost every nation and nationality in the subconti-

ratives as well as in affirmative technocratic discourses on Sethusamudram project in India. The two meta-narratives in India, the one which wants everyone to view the issue primarily from a national security and/or economic angle and

the Hindutwa view which wants to highlight the mythological importance of the Ramsethu as a cause and occasion for consolidating its waning influence have received the maximum attention in the Indian debate. Communalization and 'nationalization' of the issue by BJP led NDA and Congress led UPA-CPM alliance respectively has resulted in a highly uneven debate on the issue.

The fact is by now clear to observers that Hindutwa nationalism would morph into an opportunistic economic nationalism while in power and would divorce it while in opposition. This is just one of the interesting crude empirics of fascism, an analysis of which does not necessarily hinge on its inevitable iteration. Hence invoking the genealogy of the project to NDA period to rebuff BJP's current opposition to the project is only self serving for the ruling UPA-CPM alliance. Fortunately for the ruling alliance, no archives of past CPM position on the NDA initiative appear to be available. Against the grain, I want to believe that the old leadership of that party might have wanted to oppose it on internationalist and environmental principles.

Civil society would not necessarily want (or not want) BJP's support in this struggle. But it certainly would want to oppose the UPA-CPM alliance's rather hegemonic opportunism as reflected in their differential approach to US Nuclear deal and Sethusamudram project and an aggressive divisive politics of communalization unleashed by the NDA. Indian media taking a broader South Asian perspective in this regard would provide a critical support for the Sri Lankan movement against Sethusamudram canal and deeply challenge the collective hallucinations of the consolidated 'secular' Indian response.

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Political parties including those preach internationalism have been guided primarily by parochialism and self serving patriotism typified in their differential positions on the issues of Sethusamudram and 123 Deal. Reports on the Indian side showing a resolute refusal to address the concerns raised by the various Sri Lankan delegations that visited India during the negotiations have been suppressed. The fact that every single evidence, challenging the economic and environmental viability of the project, has been dismissed by the Indian side and that it has not been subjected to the media criticism it deserves can be seen as an indication of the media complacency (if not compliance) in the hegemonic overdrive that characterizes India's foreign policy in the region. It is difficult to dismiss as a coincidence that the issues of 'sea tigers' and Katchatheevu had always figured prominently in the mainstream media's imaginative nar-

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Tamil Nadu leader joins God row

The chief minister of India's southern state of Tamil Nadu, M Karunanidhi is sticking to his controversial statement questioning the existence of Hindu God Ram.

Hard-line Hindu groups say the chief minister's statement is blasphemous.

Karunanidhi's remarks that there was no proof for existence of Lord Ram and the Ram Sethu was only man-made drew widespread protests from Sangh Parivar outfits.

His remarks made a former BJP MP Vedanti to issue a fatwa for beheading him, which in turn sparked off protests from the DMK and its ally PMK. While senior DMK leader had announced that he would lead a picketing programme in front of the BJP office here if the fatwa was not withdrawn, the PMK founder described it as "barbaric".

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M Karunanidhi, an avowed atheist has been peddling the rationalist principles of his mentor Periyar.

So is this a political gambit? Or just evidence that the embers of old rationalist fire still smoulder?

"Please do not glorify it by calling it rationalism. Karunanidhi says Hindu

fasts are all silly but observing Ramzan is purification for the body and soul. Where is the rationalism in that?" said Cho Ramaswamy, political analyst.



A Sri Lankan resort's gambit pays, at least in the media

A Sri Lankan resort pumped recently that it is offering what it called "the world's most expensive dessert", at \$14,500. It got the attention of many of the prime cyber media such as Yahoo! News to many newspapers around the globe.

But The Chicago Sun-Times reported on Sep 26th that it has never been ordered as of yet.

The dish at the Fortress, on the

Southern coast of Galle, is a gold leaf Italian cassata flavored with Irish cream, with mango and pomegranate compote and a champagne sabayon enlighten. Decorated with chocolate and an 80-carat aquamarine stone.

The Tourism industry in Sri Lanka is suffering as many tourists avoid and see the island paradise as a trouble spot these days.

Sri Lankan church worker killed in attack while delivering aid

Fr Nicholas Pillai Pakiaranjith, a 40-year-old priest, has been killed in a claymore attack in Kilinochi, north east Sri Lanka, while delivering essential aid to people made homeless by the conflict.

The Caritas Confederation strongly condemns the brutal attack and calls on all sides in the conflict to safeguard the security of aid workers.

Fr Packiaranjith was killed in a claymore blast in the Mallavi area on 26 September when he was carrying humanitarian supplies to a camp and orphanage at Vidathalvu for people affected by the war.

Fr Packiaranjith, who had been serving as a priest for the past 10 years, was also the District Coordinator of Mannar for the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS).

Caritas Sri Lanka National Director Damian Fernando said, "The killing of Fr Packiaranjith has shocked us. He was deeply committed to the cause of the poor and the marginalized. It is a heinous crime to attack and kill such peace-loving and unarmed heroes of our society."

"We strongly condemn all acts of violence that inflict pain to innocent civilians. We call on Sri Lankans of all religions to condemn this act of violence and unite to bring about a lasting solution for peace in the country. We also call all parties involved in the conflict to find a political solution to the conflict. We call on the international community to condemn this killing and effectively voice their strong condemnation of the ongoing senseless war."



Caritas Internationalis Secretary General Lesley Anne Knight said, "This incident is a reminder to us of the gravity of the situation and of the need to establish lasting peace in Sri Lanka."

"Humanitarian aid workers and the religious personnel are the ones who accompany, serve and plead the cause of the innocent victims of war and violence in this country. All sides in the conflict must ensure their lives are protected and that they have the security to be able to provide humanitarian assistance."

"We wish express our deepest sympathies to the people Fr Packiaranjith worked with and served, to the Church in Sri Lanka, to JRS, and to his family."

Over the past several months there has been an increase in the number of violent attacks against innocent civilians. Two Caritas staff members were killed last year in attacks. Caritas is also calling for an independent investigation into the disappearance of Fr T. Nihal Jimbrown last seen crossing a government checkpoint last year

[caritas.org]

Renewal of Emirates Sri Lankan Airlines deal in the balance

"Make or break offer from global carrier Emirates, awaits Sri Lankan response before end October amidst alleged moves to derail deal", says a report in leading Colombo Business Journal, The Bottom Line.

The report further says: The renewal of Sri Lankan Government's deal with UAE-based award winning global carrier Emirates on Sri Lankan Airlines hangs on the balance with speculation that certain vested parties were endeavouring to derail or delay it.

Emirates wings, Sri Lankan Airlines has substantially improved its operations and service levels in addition to winning global and regional awards.

It is learnt that Emirates has come up with a strong proposal on the basis that it would get enough freedom to effectively convert Sri Lankan Airlines to a highly successful carrier. Sources said that Emirates hasn't fancied too much interference from the Government which indeed had stifled its growth.



Subsequent to high level talks held recently Emirates submitted what is believed to be no holds barred and make or break conditions and is awaiting a response from the Government. The understanding was reached when the two parties met last. The Government response came before the end of October.

There was speculation in the airline circles that certain vested parties were attempting to delay or derail a renewal. Mihin Air the controversial state owned budget carrier has been ruffling the aviation market through its suicidal pricing and heavy Government subsidy and funding. Emirates part owns Sri Lankan Airlines in addition to managing it. Since it came under

Emirates, despite being owned by the UAE government, has grown to be one of the biggest and most profitable carriers largely on account of operational and management autonomy as well as zero Government subsidy, says the report on The Bottom Line.

News reports quote Sri Lanka government sources saying that the agreement between SriLankan Airlines and Emirates will be revised to 'benefit more to Sri Lanka'.

SriLankan Airlines is managed by Emirates and their agreement will expire in March next year. Emirates has asked the Sri Lankan government whether the agreement would be extended or terminated.

WFP welcomes food shipment to Jaffna

The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) has welcomed the shipment of 3,500 tons of food for Jaffna that will be distributed to the families among the most vulnerable populations in the isolated peninsula. "I am very pleased with these recent positive developments but I am concerned about our resourcing situations as we will be running out of food in November" said Jean-Yves Lequime, Acting Country Director of the World Food Programme in Colombo, adding "this is the moment to mobilize food for the vulnerable people."

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Monsoon Newsline

Text messages help get tsunami alert out in Sri Lanka

Mohideen Ajeemal said his voice cracked with panic and he literally turned white when he received a 20-word text message on his mobile phone in the late afternoon of 12 September.

"Tsunami warning for Sri Lanka north, east and south coast. People asked to move away from coast - Disaster Management Centre," it read. The warning was given shortly after a magnitude 7.9 earthquake had struck off the southern coast of Sumatra, Indonesia.

"What should I do? I live right on the beach," the Muslim fish wholesaler from the coastal village of Sainathimaruthu in Ampara District, eastern Sri Lanka, later told the friend who had sent the message from the capital, Colombo, 350km away.

The fish seller was among hundreds of thousands who bore the brunt of the December 2004 tsunami. His house was damaged and he saw two of his children, a young daughter and an infant son, drown. He was lucky to survive with his wife and two other children, but the nightmare is still fresh.

Villagers like Ajeemal say at least 3,500 died in Sainathimaruthu and two nearby villages, Marudamunai and Karathivu, in the 2004 tragedy, which in Sri Lanka left 35,300 dead, half a million displaced, 27,000 injured and 1,500 children orphaned, according to the government and donors.

Text messages spur evacuation

Ajeemal's business demands that he live close to the beach. After the 2004 tsunami, he overcame his fears and stayed put - renovating his beach front house that doubles as his work place. At his wife's insistence, however, Ajeemal bought a second home - a small one about a kilometre from the coast.

When Ajeemal received the text message, he took quick action and moved further inland with his family.

"There are about 800 families near the coast where I live," said Vincent de Paul, who lives in Point Pedro on the northern Jaffna Peninsula. "All of them moved out within 45 minutes," he said. "We did not wait till the official warnings came, we moved before that to a church about a kilometre away."

Like Ajeemal in Ampara, the Point Pedro community had been alerted to the potential threat by personal text messages sent by friends.

It was the same situation 450km to the south at Ahangama town in Matara District. "We live about a kilometre from the beach, but we did not want to take a chance," Upul Jayathileke told IRIN. He and his family delayed moving back to their house until the next day, even though the tsunami warning was lifted only two hours after it was issued. Jayathileke said the family remained nervous,

particularly so when news came in that two smaller earthquakes had occurred off southern Sumatra the following morning.

Lessons learned

Unlike in the 2004 tsunami, when no warnings were issued, on 12 September those living in coastal communities were given quick notice. The government had learned the lessons of 2004.

Only a month after it hit, the government, with financial and technical assistance from the UN Development Programme (UNDP), set up the Disaster Management Centre (DMC), which monitors potential natural disasters around the clock.

"We have an integrated system," Gamini Hettiarachchi, the DMC director-general, told IRIN. "Once we decide to issue a warning we make use of this system," he said. "We tried to get the message out to government agents in all 25 districts, the military, the police and the media."

DMC coordinators are present in

all districts and coordinating units are located in nine districts, Hettiarachchi said.

In addition to text messages, many people learned of the tsunami alert through TV and radio networks which cut into their regular broadcasts to air warnings. In remote locations in the north and east, the armed services sent personnel onto the streets to convey the warning.

There was, however, one new lesson learned after phone networks became jammed due to heavy traffic just after the warning was announced: The national telecommunications authority has now asked subscribers to stick to text messaging during national emergencies.

Nonetheless, the DMC's director-general feels the warning system worked well: "We got the message out fast and people were evacuated... and the alert remained in effect till the stand down was announced at 8.30pm that night," said Hettiarachchi.

[irinnews.org]



Fishermen and wholesale buyers at the beach in Sainathimaruthu village in Ampara District, eastern Sri Lanka - Photo by Amantha Perera



Mohideen Ajeemal, left, with a friend in front of his rebuilt house. The Muslim fish wholesaler from the coastal village of Sainathimaruthu in Ampara District, eastern Sri Lanka, lost his house to the December 2004 tsunami.

Sethu project: A strategic blunder

By Col (Retd) Anil Athale

The Sethusamudram project to link Palk Strait with Gulf of Mannar by dredging a deep channel in sea and cutting the Ram Sethu has evoked controversy on several grounds. It destroys the Ram Sethu, a land bridge described first in Rishi Valmiki written Ramayana around 200 BC, a cultural heritage for not just India but many South East Asian countries as well (it is also a national epic of Muslim majority Indonesia).

Ecologists and environmentalists object saying it will destroy the fragile eco system in Palk Strait and Gulf of Mannar and rich marine life there. Many express fear that the breaching of Ram Sethu will subject the western coast to tsunami threat since Indonesia and sea around it are prone to earthquakes. While it may be argued that only a small channel is being cut in the natural (or manmade) land formation of Ram Sethu, marine and hydraulics engineers will testify that the largescale transfer of water in an uncontrolled manner (there is no proposal to install any kind of underwater gates etc) will eventually erode the entire Ram Sethu barrier in course of time. What that will do to the rich thorium, monazite, zircon and other mineral deposits on Kerala beaches is a huge question mark.

But most surprisingly and regrettably, the military strategic aspects of the whole project have not even entered public discussion. By the accounts in the media, the channel passes very close to Talaimanar coast of Sri Lanka, far to the South East of centre line dividing the sea between India and Sri Lanka. It is most likely within the Sri Lankan territorial waters. The reason why Sri Lanka has not forcefully objected to this is because the Talaimanar area is in LTTE's control (Liberation Tigers of Tamil Elam). In any case the channel, if completed on the lines planned now, the South Eastern end will be controlled by Sri Lanka. Control and ownership of this channel will be a new point of dispute between India and Sri Lanka. Since it appears to be clearly inside the Sri Lankan territorial waters, at some point, Sri Lanka (with the help of an outside power, obviously) will not only claim control but also may decide to deny us the use of this channel.

There is likelihood that under the existing regime of law of the sea, this will fall under the category of 'International Waterway', like the Suez and Panama Canals or Dardanelles and Bosphorus straits. Thus it will not be farfetched to see the Chinese moving their warships through this, establishing their right. The Americans regularly do this in case of Hormuz Strait joining Gulf of Oman with Persian Gulf defying the Iranians.

The alternative proposal of dredging a channel to the North West of the current alignment and cutting a link channel through the Rameswaram makes eminent strategic and ecologi-



cal sense. By creating a controlled water body with inlet gates, there will be no surge of waters from one ocean to other, thus saving the marine ecology as well as ore deposits of Kerala. But most importantly, the canal will be well within our territory and control. Strategically this will be most useful in time of tensions. It will also make sure that another point of friction with Sri Lanka is avoided. Obviously there will be some cost escalation and even extra time. But looking at the long term benefits and payoff, it is a price worth paying.

In any case the extra cost can easily be recovered from fee levied on shipping, both domestic and international. Canal management and associated works will create jobs for the locals, thus getting their support.

India has a history of committing strategic blunders in last 60 years! The loss of Skardu in 1947, the famous 'throw out the Chinese' remark by Nehru on 12 September 1962 and disastrous 'forward policy' that led to the 1962 humiliation at the hands of the Chinese or failure to push for severing the land link between Pakistan and China during the 1971 war. The list is long and seemingly unending. It was the hope and expectation of think tanks like Inpad that a formal structure like the NSC (National Security Council) that we lobbied for over 10 years, will cure us of this disease. But the episode of Ram Sethu project that seems to have ignored the military strategic factors puts a question mark on the efficacy of the government apparatus.

The second possibility is that the political leadership overruled the strategic experts and decided to go ahead with its plans! In that case, is it the pressure of Secularist Taliban that forced the government to go ahead with the plan not so for the sake of easing the problems of navigation between India's East and West coast but with an aim to further consolidate its vote bank? The denial of historicity of Ram seems to show that this is an attempt to woo back the vote bank that seemed to be drifting away due to Indo-US nuclear deal. In the second part we will deal with this deep-seated mindset of Secularist Taliban of India.

[Col. (retd) Anil A Athale is a Fellow at the Centre for Armed Forces Historical Research. A former Joint Director (History Division) and infantryman, he has been running an NGO, Peace and Disarmament, based in Pune for the past 10 years. As a military historian he specialises in insurgency and peace process.]

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Neethan Shan:

The Youth worker honoured as 'vital person' now candidate in Scarborough-Guildwood

Neethan Shan, running for election as your MPP in Scarborough-Guildwood says he has "the experience to get things done, and to ensure fairness and respect for our community."

He has experience in various capacities that will be put to use and serve the people he represents, says Neethan Shan. "I want to use my experience as a school trustee, a community worker, a teacher and an executive director to address the challenges confronting Scarborough-Guildwood". Neethan Shan further says, "Howard Hampton and Ontario's NDP have always put today's working families first. You can count on us to stand up for fairness. And to deliver on your priorities. That's why more and more Ontarians know they can count on Ontario's NDP".

Howard Hampton's NDP continues to stand up for you by saying no to the MPP pay raise; by speaking up for better public health care, education, and standards of care for seniors; by fighting smog and global warming; by championing a \$10 minimum wage NOW; and by saving quality manufacturing jobs, says Neethan Shan.

In 2003, Neethan completed Bachelor of Science degree with Honours and a Bachelor of Education degree at University of Toronto. Neethan has also obtained training and served as a teacher before taking on a very challenging but personally rewarding role as a Manager for youth programs at Malvern Family Resource Centre. As a Manager at the centre, Neethan, with the help of 22 staff members, had overseen over twenty different programs serving hundreds of youth from all different backgrounds and with diverse needs. Neethan developed a number of prevention based programs for youth in general and specific programs to help "at-risk" youth to get back on track.

Neethan Shan was among a group of 12 community leaders across the city, named as recipients of a Vital People Grant Award in 2005 towards recognition of their contributions to Toronto.

Neethan Shanmugarajah, as manager of the youth centre at the Malvern Family Resource Centre, received the grant through the program, which is run annually by the Toronto Community Foundation (TCF), a charitable organization dedicated to making Toronto a better place in which



to live.

The Vital People grant program, which was launched in 2004, intended to enable recipients to build their skills by covering the costs of formal training or development opportunities. The program awards grants to Torontonians who demonstrate leadership and make outstanding contributions through non-profit organizations that improve the quality of life in Toronto.

"Our 2005 Vital People grant recipients demonstrate the innovation, creativity and diversity of Toronto's emerging community leader," TCF president and CEO Anne Swarbrick said in a statement, when the "By dedicating themselves to making Toronto a better place to live, the Vital People grantees help keep Toronto's vital signs healthy."

TD Bank to Acquire New Jersey based Commerce Bank

TD Bank Financial Group and New Jersey-based Commerce Bancorp Inc recently announced that they have signed a definitive agreement for to acquire Commerce Bank in a 75% stock and 25% cash transaction valued at US\$8.5 billion.

"Acquiring Commerce Bank offers a singularly unique and compelling opportunity for our shareholders - one that is both a strategic fit and a superior value creation opportunity through accelerated organic growth. The combination of Commerce with TD Banknorth doubles the scale of our US banking business and accelerates our transformation to a leading North American financial institution," said Ed Clark, President and Chief Executive Officer, TD Bank Financial Group. "Commerce brings an impressive geographic footprint and market share in a contiguous region and a complementary North American retail banking business model."

Commerce Bancorp has 15,000 employees at 460 branches in New Jersey, New York, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Washington, D.C., Virginia, Maryland and south-eastern Florida.

TD, with over 1,000 branches in Canada,



already owns New England-based TD Banknorth, as well as a large stake in the TD Ameritrade U.S. brokerage.

Analysts predict there may be other such deals in the offing especially due to the near parity of the Canadian and US dollars.

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- Assisting with Medications
- Assisting a Person who is dying
- CPR & First Aid

JOB OPPORTUNITIES

Personal Support Workers may find employment in Community Health care Agencies, Long-Term Health care facilities, Retirement Homes, Hospitals, Hospices, Group Homes, Rehabilitation Clinics etc. as

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Monsoon Newslines

US Ambassador Urges Political Solution at Fullbright Association Seminar in Sri Lanka

Addressing a seminar on "Sri Lanka: the Way Forward," in Colombo on Friday, Sep 21st organized by Fullbright Association, the U.S. Ambassador for Sri Lanka, Robert Blake, categorically stated that Sri Lanka's conflict cannot be won by military means. He said whatever the Sri Lankan government achieved in terms of military victories in the last several months, were merely "tactical" successes. The Ambassador who didn't want to mince words, cautioned the Colombo government against possible failures, hoped on All Party Representative Committee (APRC) and harped on development especially in the East.

The Ambassador observed, that the Colombo government faces significant risks if it fails to seize its opportunity in the East. He was referring to orderly transition from military to civilian control, consultation with elected representatives of Tamil, Muslim and Sinhala communities and control on the paramilitaries.

Mr. Blake also cautioned against resettlement and development plans that change the ethnic composition of Eastern districts, restrictions on livelihood, and slow economic development.

"We hope that all parties in the APRC will frame the final APRC proposals in a manner that avoids the use of divisive, emotive terms like 'federalism' and 'unitary,'" the Ambassador said, urging negotiated settlement to achieve lasting peace for the crisis in Sri Lanka.

Full text of the transcript issued by the U.S. Embassy in Colombo:

Ambassador Robert Blake's Remarks at Seminar on "Sri Lanka: the Way Forward"

September 21, 2007 - Galle Face Hotel, Colombo: "First let me express my thanks and commendation to the Fullbright Association both for arranging this seminar on "Sri Lanka: the Way Forward," and for putting together such a glittering panel of speakers. Let me also thank Tissa for putting me first, because whatever I have to say will pale in comparison to the more erudite and lucid comments to follow!

"Since time is short and we Americans are known for not mincing our words, let me get right to the

point on the topic at hand.

"The Government of Sri Lanka has achieved some important victories in the last several months. The expulsion of the LTTE from the East and the recent sinking of several LTTE ships carrying arms and other provisions mark important military successes.

"But these tactical successes should not tempt the Government to re-consider whether Sri Lanka's conflict can be won by military means. It cannot.

"While the Government must continue to defend the nation against terrorist attacks, the way forward lies in continuing to lay the basis for a negotiated settlement that will meet the aspirations of all of Sri Lanka's communities: Tamils, Muslims and Sinhalese.

"A key part of that equation will be for the All Parties Representative Committee to complete its important work on a power-sharing proposal. From all accounts the APRC has made substantial progress.

"But difficult issues remain that will test whether all of Sri Lanka's parties can work together to arrive at a just and equitable proposal that will receive the support of Tamils, Muslims and Sinhalese. To achieve a compromise that will lead to lasting peace will require statesmanship from all sides and the will to put the national interest above narrow party interests.

"The governing coalition must demonstrate it represents the interests of all Sri Lankans, not just southern Sinhalese.

"The opposition UNP, which deserves much credit for the important steps it took to advance peace in 2002-2003, should, for the sake of all Sri Lankans, build on that record of achievement and work responsibly with the Government to ensure a successful APRC outcome.

"And we hope that all parties in the APRC will frame the final APRC proposals in a manner that avoids the use of divisive, emotive terms like "federalism" and "unitary."

"Let me say a word about the stabilization and reconstruction process in the east, which also is an important part of the way forward.

"Now that conflict has subsided in the east, the Government has a significant opportunity to stabilize and



develop the east in a manner that would demonstrate to all Sri Lankans, but particularly Tamils and Muslims, that they have a bright future within a united Sri Lanka and that the Government is serious about ensuring their rights and providing opportunities equitably within a pluralistic state. In short, a successful transition in the east can be an important confidence builder and a building block for a future negotiation process.

"Conversely, the government faces significant risks if it fails to seize its opportunity in the east. Specifically, a failure to effect an orderly transition from military to civilian control, a failure to consult elected representatives of the Tamil, Muslim and Sinhalese communities on the development and other programs now being devised for the east, and a failure to rein in paramilitaries are all likely to destabilize the east and harden minority attitudes about prospects for negotiated settlement. Likewise, resettlement and development plans that change the ethnic composition of eastern districts, restrictions on access to means of livelihood, and slow economic development will produce similar negative effects.

"In conclusion, let me emphasize that a solution to Sri Lanka's conflict is in reach. But it will require Sri Lanka's government and parties to work together to put the national interest first. The United States, as a friend of Sri Lanka and a Co-Chair, stands ready to assist in any way we can."

Sri Lanka's government must end forced return of IDPs to unsafe areas

Almost half a million civilians are still displaced by Sri Lanka's civil war between government forces and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), and the warring parties continue to disregard their rights and those of other civilians in the country's conflict areas, according to a report released recently by the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC). The report describes how many internally displaced people (IDPs) have been forced to return to areas still widely considered unsafe, without having any means of making the decision for themselves.

"The government must do more to involve displaced people in the planning and management of their return, ensuring that returns take place voluntarily, in safety and with dignity", said the Norwegian Refugee Council's Secretary General Tomas C. Archer.

Since April 2006, more than 300,000 people have been forced from their homes by the hostilities. Despite the government's return programme, Sri Lanka still has one of the largest displaced populations in all of Asia - with some 460,000 people displaced by the conflict adding to those still without a home following the 2004 tsunami. The country's minority Tamil and Muslim groups are disproportionately affected.

The government's return programme may stem from a disinclination to allow another large displacement situation to become permanent, and as such it should be welcomed, but the pace of its implementation may actually be endangering the life of the returnees. Many returning IDPs still risk being caught in hostilities or conscripted into armed groups, and so they cannot be considered to have found a durable solution to end their

displacement. Even if they are not forced to flee renewed conflict, returning IDPs will face huge problems recovering their livelihoods in the face of the large-scale militarisation of farmland and fishing grounds.

In the course of the conflict, abuses of international humanitarian law have been frequently perpetrated by government forces, the LTTE, and in



the east, the Karuna militia group which is reported to be aiding the army. These have included the use of civilians as human shields, retaliatory killings, indiscriminate bombings, abductions and disappearances, all of which have encouraged people to flee. With aid workers increasingly targeted in the conflict, all parties must also take steps to let humanitarian agencies play an active role in IDPs' return and reintegration.

The report underlines that while all parties share the duty of ensuring that civilians in areas they control can live in safety and dignity, the government must develop and implement a national response to IDPs' needs in line with the United Nations' Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement.

[For more information, see the full IDMC report at www.internal-displacement.org]

Alaska on May 19, 1994. Their names, "Kulusiq," or iceberg, and "Ayveq," or walrus, were drawn from the Siberian Yupik language. Witnessing the calf's birth was especially exciting for New York Aquarium staff Kate McClave and Paul Sieswerda, as well as WCS Senior Veterinarian, Dr. Paul Calle, who participated in the '94 rescue effort.

Kulusiq and Ayveq now weigh 1,800 and 2,700 pounds, respectively. Male walrus can grow to 12 feet long, while adult females grow up to 10 feet long. In nature, a female walrus typically breeds once every two

Ukiivak, Utumek and Akituusaq, which mean, respectively, ice cube, king island, earth and gift given in return in Yupik, an Eskimo language spoken in western Alaska, where the calf's parents are from.

Parents:

Kulusiq, "Kulu" to her closest acquaintances, is one proud mama. She's been protecting and snuggling with her calf from its earliest moments. According to senior veterinarian Paul Calle, "The most remarkable thing about the birth was that immediately, Kulu was a spectacular mother. Within seconds, she was already caring for the baby and attentive to his needs."

This spectacular mother has come a long way. Kulu arrived at the New York Aquarium in the spring of 1994 as a baby herself. A team of aquarium staff had traveled to Alaska to rescue orphaned walrus calves off the waters of St. Lawrence Island. The calves' mothers were casualties of a subsistence hunt, and the youngsters could not survive on their own. The rescue squad returned to the Aquarium with the big babies in tow. They named one of the females Kulusiq-"iceberg" in the native Alaskan Yupik language. The male, who would later sire Kulu's baby, was called "Ayveq"- "walrus."

Aquarium staff raised the orphans by hand for the first eight months, with bottle-feedings and lots of human company in and out of the water. Later, the little ones joined two older walrus in the Sea Cliffs exhibit. This social group proved to be just the right mix for the newbies to thrive.

[nyaquarium.com]

New York's Biggest Baby Makes His Debut!

The New York Aquarium has proudly announced the birth of a little giant.

On June 12, 2007, Kulusiq, AKA "Kulu," a 13-year-old female Pacific walrus, delivered her first calf. This rare event marks the first birth of a walrus at the Aquarium-and in the history of New York City. The calf was introduced to the public on Sep 27th, 2007.

Once Aquarium staff confirmed that Kulu was pregnant last winter, preparations began for the birth. The keepers acclimated the expecting mother to an off-exhibit site that would serve as the birthing area. Cameras were installed to capture the first-ever photos and videos of this rare event. They would also allow the mother and calf to be monitored around the clock.

Though Aquarium and veterinary staff were ready to intervene should the new mother or her baby require assistance, the delivery proceeded smoothly. At 4:17 p.m. on June 12, Kulu gave birth to a hefty boy of



approximately 115 pounds and measuring 44 inches long. Their connection was instantaneous, and Kulu took on her new maternal duties with confidence.

The growing boy nurses frequently and is gaining one to three pounds per day. As of mid-September, he tips the scales at more than 250 pounds.

Already a good swimmer, he is busy exploring his Sea Cliffs habitat and playing with his mom, who is often by his side. Regular weigh-ins on a specially designed scale help the staff track his development.

The calf's mother and father were originally rescued as babies themselves from the St. Lawrence River in



years, giving birth to a single calf in the spring. Kulu will nurse her calf for 18 to 24 months.

Visitors to the Aquarium can see Kulu and the baby in Sea Cliffs, a rocky ocean-edge habitat inspired by the Pacific walrus's natural habitat, the Pacific coast from California to Alaska. Their pool adjoins the habitat for Ayveq and Nuka, another adult female Pacific walrus. Two viewing areas, above and below water, offer visitors an opportunity to view the marine mammals diving, swimming, and resting on land.

And on Oct. 12, he will be given a name. The staff at the aquarium has come up with four choices: Utvak,

Monsoon Health



Pink with Purpose

By Mithura Anandarajah

Over the next few weeks the colors around us start changing. The leaves go from green to autumn oranges and reds. In the midst of all this vibrant foliage, the color pink may stand out. It may be in the products that you buy at the grocery store, like M&Ms or a box of tissues. It may be the color of appliance that you choose to buy. Or it may just be a ribbon pinned to a jacket lapel. The color pink this month symbolizes a lot more. It stands for caring, sharing and learning.

October is breast cancer awareness month and pink is the color we use to acknowledge it, support it and conquer this disease. Breast cancer is the most common cancer affecting Canadian women, and therefore it affects each one of us. It may be a colleague, a friend or a family member. It is highly likely that it has touched your life in some way. While it has daily consequences for thousands of people, October is just one opportunity we stop as a community and acknowledge it.

In 2007 over 20,000 women will probably be diagnosed with this disease. Over 5,000 will die from it. Understanding what it is, its risks, screening tools and treatment will allow us to detect it early. Breast cancer is a cellular growth or tumor found in the breast tissue. Sometimes the growth is noninvasive and is benign. Other times, the uncontrolled growth of these cells can spread and interrupt the tissues nearby. This is considered malignant and can be life-threatening. Breast cancer if detected early can

result in effective treatment.

It is important that women understand their body and routinely self-exam for changes in tissue. It is important to know your breast tissue; to look and feel for changes. If a change is noted, go to your family physician. A clinical breast examination is also done routinely by a health provider and should be incorporated as part of a physical. Also, a mammogram is done generally for women over 50 or if indicated by your physician.

There are different imaging techniques used in the detection of breast cancer. Beside a mammogram, a breast ultrasound may also be used to detect changes in the breast tissue. Once breast cancer has been detected, it is then important to do a biopsy. This is the removal of the affected cells that will then be tested in the laboratory to determine if the tumor is malignant or benign. Cells may also be removed in the lymph nodes to determine if the cancer has spread. Once diagnosed, the treating physician will be able to determine the best course of treatment. This may include surgery to remove the affected tissue and/or radiation or chemotherapy.

The emotional, psychological and physical impact of this disease is extensive. Shock, fear, anxiety and hope are all part of the range of emotions. Living with breast cancer will impact family, finances and work. It is important to be educated and aware of this disease before it has a direct impact on you. The Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation is committed to the research, education and funding



of community programs. More information regarding this disease can be found on their website www.cbcf.org or ask your physician about your risks, screening tools etc. Discuss these risks with the women in your life.

In addition to learning about this condition, make a donation towards this cause. You can contribute directly to the foundation or simply buy pink M&Ms. Wear a ribbon to show your support to the thousands of families affected by this disease and all the people involved in the fight against it. See pink this October.

Mithura Anandarajah is a Registered Physiotherapist working in the Mississauga area. Please email all inquiries at mithura_rehab@yahoo.com

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Margosa Credit Union Launch

Siva Sivapragasam

Margosa Credit Union, first of its kind for the Sri Lankan community, launched its first organizational meeting last week at Hotel Radisson. The meeting was attended by its incorporators, Media and others. The organization is the brain-child of certain businessmen and retired Bankers.

Margosa Credit Union is a financial institution formed to provide a full range of competitive personal financial services of a superior quality to members-owners of the Sri Lankan community and South Asian members. The Union has 43 Incorporators who had invested \$ 5,000 each to enable the Credit Union to go ahead with the project.

Margosa Credit Union will offer basic retail banking services, such as

chequing and savings accounts, term deposits, RRSP's, personal loans, mortgages, lines of credit and credit cards. The organization hopes to offer a convenient savings service and low-interest loans. Individuals and organizations can become members of the Union by paying a fee of \$ 100.00 and become account holders.

The Union will soon be issuing the Share List for subscription and the public will be made aware of this through the Media and other marketing tools.

The Credit Union has found a suitable location for their operations and will be housed at 2100 Ellesmere Road, Scarborough. The Credit Union also hopes to have a variety entertainment show in the months ahead to popularize the institution amidst the public.

The new Board of Directors was elected at the launch function. The members of the Board are Dr. S. Ariyaratnam (Chairman), Mr. Stanley Arnold (CEO/Director), Mr. Sree Kannuthurai, (VicPresident), Mr. George Thambithurai, (Corporate Secretary) Mr. Charles Thambithurai (Treasurer), Mr. Manuel Jesudasan, Mr. Victor Santhiapillai, Mr. Nihal Deegala, Mr. Mohan Perera, Mr. Adolf Furtado, Mr. V.S. Thurairajah

The alternate Board in order of Replacement consists of Mr. Vijit Witane, Mr. Mahen Singarajah, and Mr. Warren Kanagaratnam. As a non-profit financial organization, Margosa Credit Union will certainly be an attractive service oriented institution for the Sri Lankan and other South Asian communities.

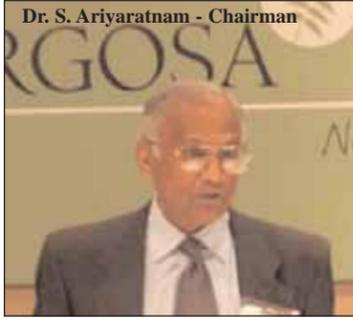
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Dr. S. Ariyaratnam - Chairman



Stanley Arnold - CEO/Director

A new star is born with the launching of the biggest South Asian indoor shopping centre in the GTA

Plans for an ambitious shopping centre were unveiled today in Scarborough. The developer, Tai Foong Property Development Limited Partnership, launched the biggest indoor shopping centre in the GTA, catering to the unique needs of South Asian and other cultural communities. Spread over 240,000 sq. ft., the shopping centre claims to be the only one of its kind in North America.

The shopping centre will be called The Sitara, which means "star" in Hindi and Urdu. Star also stands for "brightness" which symbolizes this unique shopping centre as a "shining new star" for the South Asian Community. Designed from the ground up with modern architecture and cultural elements, the SITARA indoor shopping centre promises to be an eclectic confluence of eastern shopping and western trends.

Speaking on the subject of tailoring the shopping centre to South Asian tastes, "The South Asian market segment is the fastest growing in the GTA," says Mr. David Lam, developer of the project. "We discovered that this community has unique shopping needs which are currently being met by stores scattered across the city. We felt the time is ripe for the community to have their very own shopping centre."

The Sitara has unique features that would appeal greatly to South Asians. "The Sitara will have one of the largest convention centre in the city, which offer multi-purpose functions, e.g. grand banquet hall, enter-

tainment show, etc." says Raja Mahendran of HomeLife GTA Realty Inc., exclusive sales agent for the project. "It's spread over 46,000 sq. ft. with a maximum of 40 ft. ceiling and can accommodate more than a thousand guests. This would be the perfect venue to host a lavish wedding reception, as well as exhibitions and trade shows. The Sitara will also have an atrium that can comfortably seat 300 audience; soaring two floors high can entertain 500 patrons, where they can watch entertainment on stage."

While the younger patrons will be entertained with star concerts, seniors will leisurely savour cross-cultural cuisines in the spacious food court or stroll along its comfortable boulevards.

Investors and entrepreneurs are keenly looking at the opportunities of locating their businesses here. Located at the busy intersection of Markham Road and McNicoll Avenue, the Sitara is situated in a growing multicultural neighbourhood, near community spots like temples, mosques and churches, only a short drive from major highways.

"The Sitara invites everyone to play a leading role in building a landmark that will shape the South Asian cultural landscape in the GTA," says Mr. Lam. A glitzy advertising campaign kicked off over the last weekend with teaser ads that will be followed by full-blown exciting advertising in the coming days. The campaign includes TV commercials produced in Mumbai, home to the Bollywood stars.



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and six new hybrid buses for Hamilton.

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"Our families are counting on us to ease gridlock so they can spend

more time together, and our economy is counting on us to ensure we can move people and goods more efficiently, so we need to act now."

MoveOntario 2020 will deliver 52 rapid transit projects, covering 902 kilometres, at a cost of \$17.5 billion. Construction begins next year with 95 per cent of the massive plan to be completed by 2020.



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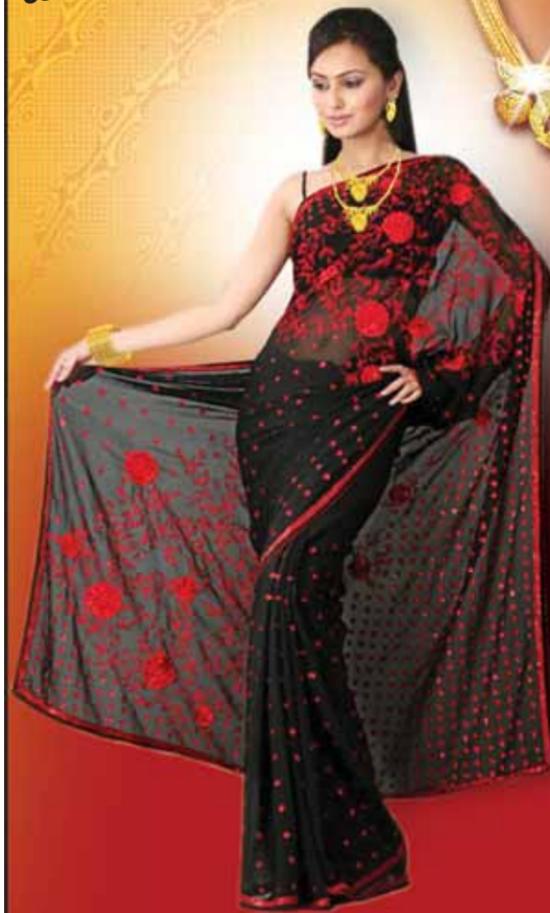
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Monsoon Arts



"Simple sweep of the arm both geometrically gorgeous and a gesture including the Milky Way"

Many forms of the Indian dances are being held all over the Western capitals these days. Bright costumes are just a start of star attraction to Indian dances to the art lovers here and New York Times Dance critic Alastair Macaulay recently wrote what he saw in a performance by Shantala Shivalingappa at the "Fall for Dance Festival" in New York city.

Born in India, brought up in Paris, Shantala is the child of east and west. She grew up in a world filled with dance and music, initiated at a tender age by her mother, dancer Savitry Nair. Deeply moved and inspired by Master Vempati Chinna Satyam's pure and graceful style, Shantala dedicated herself to Kuchipudi, and received an intense and rigorous training from her master. Driven by a deep desire to bring Kuchipudi to the western audience, she has performed in important festivals and theatres, earning praise and admiration from all.

Excerpts of review by Alastair Macaulay as follows:

Program 1 was happy in several further respects. It included three established hits: Twyla Tharp's "Deuce Coupe" (1973) and Paul Taylor's "Arden Court" (1981), both of which have been seen and loved at City Center in decades past, and Alexei Ratmansky's striking "Middle Duet" (1998), which New York City Ballet has been dancing since last fall. Two nice twists were that "Middle Duet" (though without the angels and the second couple of Mr. Ratmansky's more complete version) was performed by two dancers from the Kirov Ballet, for which this work was created, and that the 34-year-old "Deuce Coupe" is now danced (as at a marvellous Joyce Theater matinee last spring) by Juilliard Dance.

The American Mr. Taylor and Ms. Tharp, the Russian Mr. Ratmansky and Program 1's choreographer stranger, Shantala Shivalingappa of India, all have one striking feature in common: each has an advanced, indeed brilliant, conception of how dance can respond to music. In one crucial respect, Ms. Shivalingappa emerged brightest from this all-hit evening: she alone danced to live music. (Each Fall for Dance program includes one item with live music. Bravo in advance to all concerned.)

In the best Indian tradition, her four musicians sat cross-legged at stage right, and part of the witty charm of her solo dance, "Varnam" (an excerpt from "Gamaka"), was in the play between dance and music, above all in her suspenseful pauses (often balanced on one leg) before suddenly pouncing back into matching the rapid percussion rhythms. Of



course, since she carries bells in her fingers and wears jangling anklets, she becomes part of the music. Though her feet are bare, they too are an intricate part of the rhythm, with both ball and heel making their contributions clear. No barefoot American modern dancer has yet matched the percussive skills of Indian dance footwork.

Ms. Shivalingappa, a specialist in the Kuchipudi dance style of South India, was making her New York debut as a choreographer. She has, however, performed with international dance companies, most recently with that of Pina Bausch, and her "Varnam" included brief moments that may have been influenced by Western dance (one sweeping balletlike grand rond de jambe, for example).

Mainly, though, this was a beautiful example of Kuchipudi's range of moods, now coolly compelling in its alternation of curving sculptural positions, now brightly engaging in its use of the eyes and gestures to the audience, now rapidly precise in its stamping and skipping clusters of footwork. To this Westerner, it most evoked the sublime in the rich arcs made by the arms: four ballet dancers know, as quite a number of Indian dancers do, how to make a simple sweep of the arm both geometrically gorgeous and a gesture including the Milky Way.

Isaikkethu Ellai - 17th Show

by Vidya

Isaikkethu ellai had conducted two main events on that day. First session was the competition "Akkini Kunchugal" and second was the performance by Mr. Uma Ramanan, the very first performer of Isaikkethu ellai. The tickets were sold in the auditorium on the same day and were not sold previously. The filled auditorium showed the reflection of real music lovers of Isaikkethu ellai.

The competition was pretty good, but to my disappointment not many had participated. One performer even withdrew from the competition at the

last minute. Competitions are healthy platform for the young talents and winning and loosing should not be the priority. Another disappointment is that not a single new talent has come forward to face the competition.

The second session of Isaikkethu ellai performance was not as impressive as I expected. It was quite obvious that the performer was not well prepared and songs were not rehearsed properly with the orchestra. Undoubtedly, Mr. Ramanan has got a lot of talent but his performance was not up to the rank, which could be expected from such an experienced artist. He is got a beautiful voice but

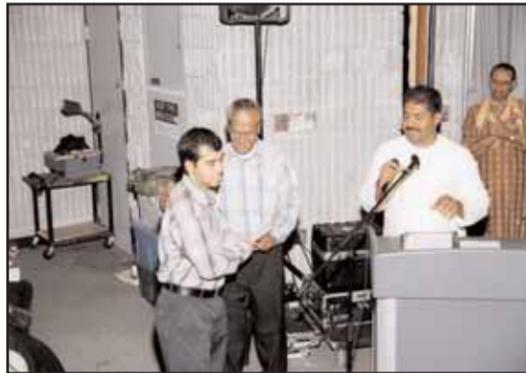
the feeling or should say bhava was missing a little in his performance. Also there was a struggle in the way the songs were presented. Understanding between the singer and the other musicians plays a big role in a stage performance. It was quite obvious that the link was missing. As audience we expect a lot from the artists and it is a duty of each and every one of them to bring out the best possible. Hopefully the future would fulfill the dream of not only us but also that of Isaiyarrangam, A MUSIC OF OUR OWN, and its best.

Those who won the prizes

- Best voice** Nimal
- Best Melody** Mohan Remisier
- Best Lyrics** Jeyakumar
- Best Song** Avas Zavahir

Those who participated in the 17th Isaikku eathu ellai

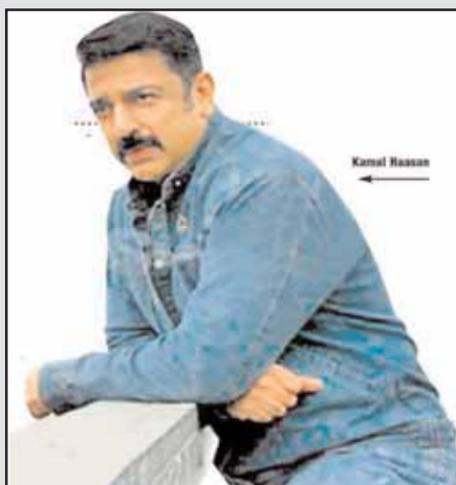
- Vocal** Uma Ramanan
- Violin** T. N. Balamurali
- Sitar** Raju Ragavan
- Keyboard** Fayas Zavahir
- Tabela** Thivayarajan Keerthanam
- Mirdangam** Gajajeyan Pararajaseharam
- Octo Pad** Pradeepan



Kamal, Rajni, Mani in Reliance film

The Reliance group will now make its foray into film production in South India under the banner of Reliance Entertainment. And to start off with, they have signed on Kamal Haasan for two projects. According to sources, the first project features Kamal in the lead role while the other cast and crew are yet to be finalised. The second project, which will be produced under Kamal's home banner, will be directed by Mani

Rathnam and features Rajnikanth in the lead. Kamal makes a guest appearance in the film which is reportedly being made at a huge cost of about Rs 100 crores. On a similar vein, the company has approached Nagarajuna for a film that will be directed by Gangaraju of Aithe fame. According to the grapevine, Nagarajuna may surely take up this film after the completion of his current film Don.



Fall foliage in New York

New York State is home to some of the most spectacular fall foliage around, and that makes the perfect backdrop for a host of exciting events and travel destinations. Autumn is just getting started, but it won't be here for long - and there are so many things to choose from. Choose a region from the menu above, or use the trip planner on the right, and get started on your fall getaway now

Vibrant, near-peak autumn color is already making its way to New York's Adirondacks region, according to observers for Empire State Development's I LOVE NEW YORK program. As of end of September, other areas of the state showing the most color progression are the Catskills and Thousand Islands-Seaway regions.

The brilliant fall colors of the Adirondacks are making their way to the adjacent Thousand Islands-Seaway region, with St. Lawrence County expecting 40-50 percent color change marked by gold, amber and

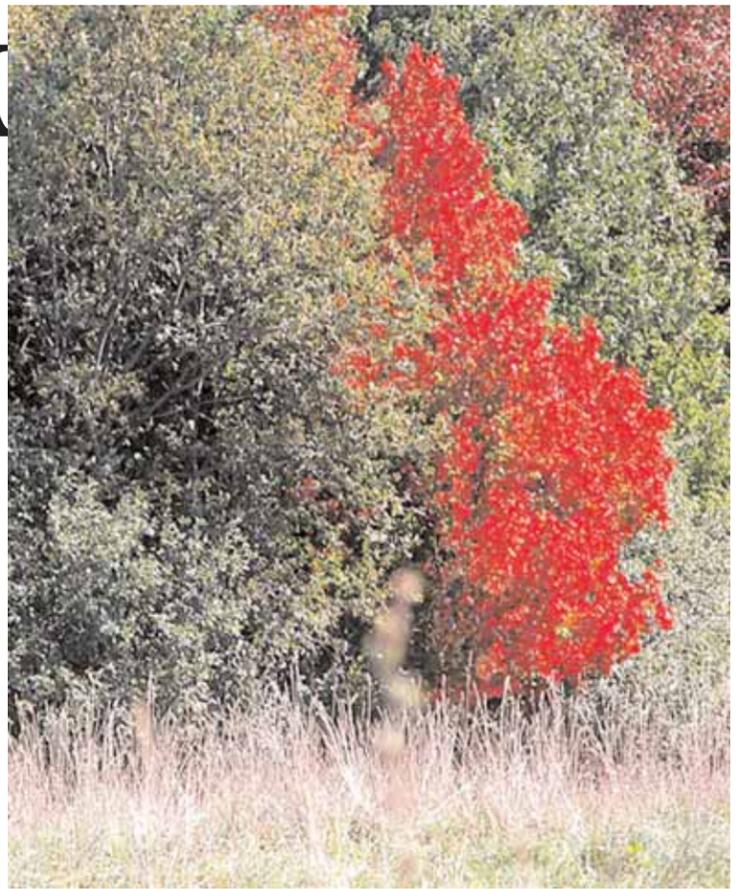
some yellow leaves of average brilliance. Some of the higher elevations of the county expect to be near peak as early as late September; other areas, especially the lower elevations, will be at mid-point later in October. In Jefferson County, Alexandria Bay projects 40 percent leaf change and yellow, red and orange leaves of average brilliance. Foliage spotters stationed at the Salmon River near Pulaski in Oswego County, project 40 percent color change by late September. Green is still the predominant color, with highlights of orange, yellow and red. Late summer flowers, such as the purple aster and goldenrod, are in full bloom.

Here is more as to what is happening in late September early October:

In Rochester and the surrounding area, expect around 15 percent color change by late September. Deciduous trees are still mostly green; weak trees are showing red and/or orange-gold hues; some healthy maples and

red oaks are beginning to show red-orange leaves; and ash and other trees are beginning to show yellow coloration. Also checking in with projections of 15 percent color change are Livingston and Wayne counties. Look for yellow, red and gold leaves of average brilliance. Other Finger Lakes reporting stations project 10 percent or less change by early October.

In the Greater Niagara region, look for the most color change in Niagara and Wyoming counties. At Letchworth State Park in Wyoming County, expect 30 percent change highlighted by bright yellow and red leaves. Lewiston, in Niagara County, is projecting 25-30 percent change, with dull green, brown and yellow/orange leaves. Orleans County is expecting 20 percent color change with some dull yellow and red leaves starting to emerge. Still not much change in Erie and Genesee counties. Look for 15 percent transition in Erie County and around five percent in Genesee County.



Former Prime Minister Chretien undergoes heart surgery in Montreal



Jean Chretien's office says in a statement the former prime minister has undergone a successful quadruple bypass surgery at the Montreal Heart Institute.

The statement quotes Dr. Michel Pellerin, who performed the surgery, as saying Chretien is expected to have a full and complete recovery. Pellerin performed the surgery on Wednesday, October 3rd morning.

The 73-year-old Chretien, who led the Federal Liberal governments for a decade since 1993, was supposed to speak to an Asia-Pacific mining conference in Vancouver on Oct 2nd. But organizers say he cancelled at the last minute after feeling sick and being advised by his doctor not to travel.

Lankan 'Dosa Man' is New York City's top street chef

For Thiru "The Dosa Man" Kumar, the third time is the charm.

The Sri Lankan, who runs NY Dosa, a vegan food cart in Manhattan, won the third annual Vendy Award, given to the city's top street chef vendor.

Kumar, who had competed unsuccessfully for the two previous Vendy Awards, won for his specialty Pondicherry dosas, a type of filled crepe. He accepted the large silver Vendy cup on the night of Sep 29th, 2007.

Kumar, who operates his cart at Washington Square Park in New York City, beat out four other finalists, including carts for tacos and falafel.

The public whittled several hundred entrants down to the five finalists. A panel that included former Food Network host Sara Moulton selected the winner after a cook-off.

Kumar said he learned how to cook in his native Sri Lanka, where his family owned a restaurant.

Here is what www.streetvendor.org says about Thiru:

"Thiru makes super fresh Indian food-- mixed in with his own influences from Sri Lanka. All under the constraints and philosophy of vegan-



Thiru "Dosa Man" Kumar from NY Dosas

ism. He's always exceptionally nice and professional. Everyone knows that if money is scarce, you can get a meal from him and pay later. He's a great guy, humanitarian and environmentalist all while being one of the most legit chefs in the city. And his food is cheap. I essentially survive because of Thiru."

WORLD RECORD ATTEMPT 168 HOURS RUNNING ON TREADMILL FOR 720 KM

Once again, with GUINNESS WORLD RECORDS 2007 Hall of Famer Suresh Joachim of , Canada & who was listed in 2008 Guinness World Rcord Canadian No 1 Record Holder will take a shot at setting the record for Longest Treadmill Marathon For 168 hours running for 720 km (The record for the greatest distance run on a treadmill in one week is 717.85 km (446.05 miles) set by Thomas Wenning (Germany) at the Fitness Company in Bocholt, Germany, between 24 and 31 December 2006) . Joachim, who already has broken an unbelievable 52 Guinness World Records,

Some of the records Suresh currently holds include Fastest time to peel & eat a 135 g lemon 30.97 seconds, balancing on one foot for 76.5 hours, non-stop crawling for 56.62 km, riding up and down an escalator 11.791 times, Car pushing 24 hours 19.2 km, carrying a 4.5 kilogram brick for 135.5 km, dribbling a basketball for 156.71 km in 24 hours, running 100 km on a treadmill in just over 7 hours, 100 hours of continuous dancing, 24 hours moonwalk, played non-stop drumming 84 hours, performed non-stop musical 42 hours, Rocking on the chair 75 hours, Watching TV 69 hours in Regis & Kelly show, Running 1000 hours, Radio DJ 120 hours and

the list goes on.

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The most remarkable demonstration 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, 2009 in Jerusalem and end at 5:00 p.m. on June 24, 2010 in Mississauga, Canada. During his voyage, Suresh will travel through 88 major cities, in 54 countries passing a symbolic peace torch to dignitaries in each place. The journey will end with the peace torch being handed over to the Canadian dignitary and followed by a huge musical celebration. Once his journey is complete, Suresh will have traveled over 6,000 KM, taking him a total of 181 days. During this time he hopes to raise minimum One Billion dollars for Charity. Also Suresh Joachim will submit a petition to the United Nation with million signatures to make June 24 a global cease fire day.

Suresh Joachim's Next Attempt:



Rowing machine for 24 Hours

Some of Suresh Joachim's upcoming attempts

" Elvis singing for 50 hours

- Radio DJ for 250 hours

For More Information Please Contact

the program coordinator

Markus Lanz General Manager fit-

ness Clubs of Canada Phone (905)

276 0040 Email markuslanz@hotmail.com.

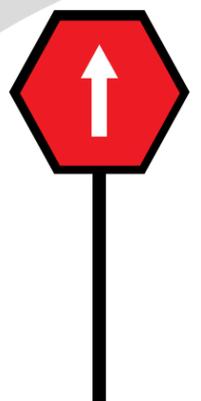
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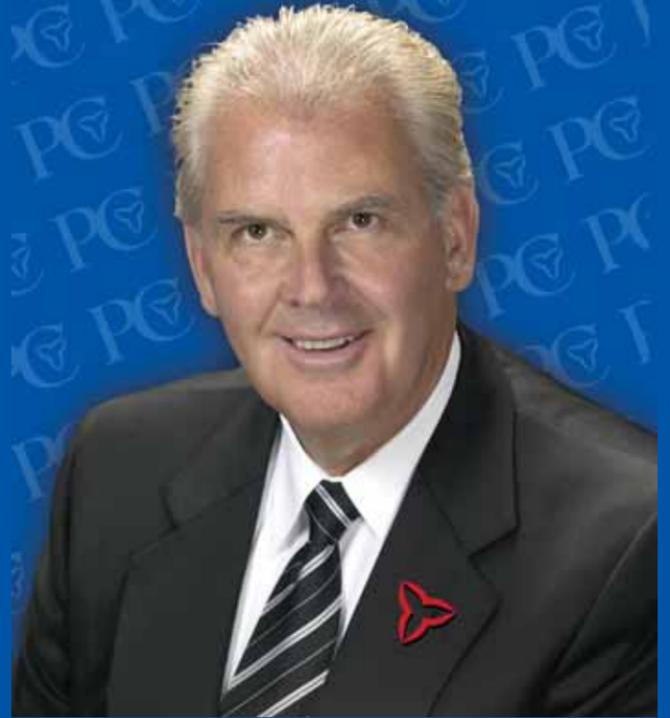
ON OCTOBER 10th

ELECT

Phil

BANNON

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Phil Bannon

YOUR JOHN TORY PC CANDIDATE

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“Phil is very
passionate
about issues
affecting our
community”

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Nuclear Scientist,
Professor & Entrepreneur
President - Victoria Manor
Rate Payers Association

“Oak Ridges-
Markham needs a
man like Phil to
be our next MPP”

ERIC TAPPENDEN
Markham Business
Owner

“He listens to his
constituents and
acts in their best
interests”

MIKE WHITTAMORE
Whittamore Farms
Markham

“Phil leads by
example and is
very active in the
community”

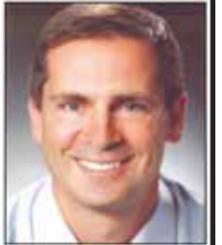
ROB HARGRAVE
Councillor, Town of
Whitchurch-Stouffville



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VOTE

Brad Duguid

Election Day October 10, 2007

Scarborough Centre

Involved in politics for more than 23 years, Brad Duguid has always been a strong advocate for affordable housing, emergency services, waste management and crime prevention.

He was first elected to the Ontario Legislature in October 2003, and was then appointed Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, as well as sitting on several committees. In his capacity as Parliamentary Assistant, Brad has been very active in the creation of the Greenbelt, the reform of the Tenant Protection Act, and the devolution of the OMERS pension plan. He was also instrumental in the City of Toronto Act, improvements to the Municipal Act and the restructuring of the Ontario Municipal Board and Planning Acts.

Brad's political career began in November 1994 when he was elected as a municipal councillor in the former City of Scarborough.

After amalgamation, he was re-elected as a Toronto Councillor. As Chair of the Community Services Committee, Brad led initiatives to create new permanent shelter spaces for the homeless, encouraged investment in affordable housing and to improve fire and emergency services. The following term, Brad became Chair of Toronto's Works Committee, where he championed the city's waste diversion and disposal efforts, including the implementation of the hugely successful Green Bin Program for organic waste.

As Chair of the Toronto Task Force on Community Safety, he drafted a crime prevention strategy for Toronto adopted in March 1999, and helped create CityWatch. He also developed a coordinated approach to address youth crime, which was adopted by Council in May 2002.

Brad remains active in the community by hosting and participating in a number of community events including the annual safety showcase, his annual community picnic, greenspace clean ups and tree planting. In addition to all this, he also lends his time to improving access to sports and outreach for youth.



S&C100207



Keep Ontario Moving Forward

Authorized by the CFO for the Brad Duguid Campaign

This election is about choosing the future we want for our families



The Ontario Liberals have spent the last four years bringing positive change to Ontario. Better public health care, better publicly funded schools, a healthier economy.

But there's more to do for Ontario families. That's why we're moving forward on:

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- ✓ A new caregiver tax credit to help with the cost of taking care of an aging parent or relative
- ✓ More family doctors and another 9,000 nurses for better patient care
- ✓ A new long weekend in February, a much-needed winter break for families
- ✓ A new textbook and technology grant of \$300 for university and college students to help them get started each year at school.
- ✓ A \$500 property tax grant to help low-income seniors keep their homes

On October 10, vote Ontario Liberal

Because we're all in it together.

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On October 10th

Elect

SAMY APPADURAI

Your John Tory Candidate for Scarborough Centre

*A Strong and Experienced Voice for you
 in Queen's Park*

INVESTING IN PUBLIC EDUCATION

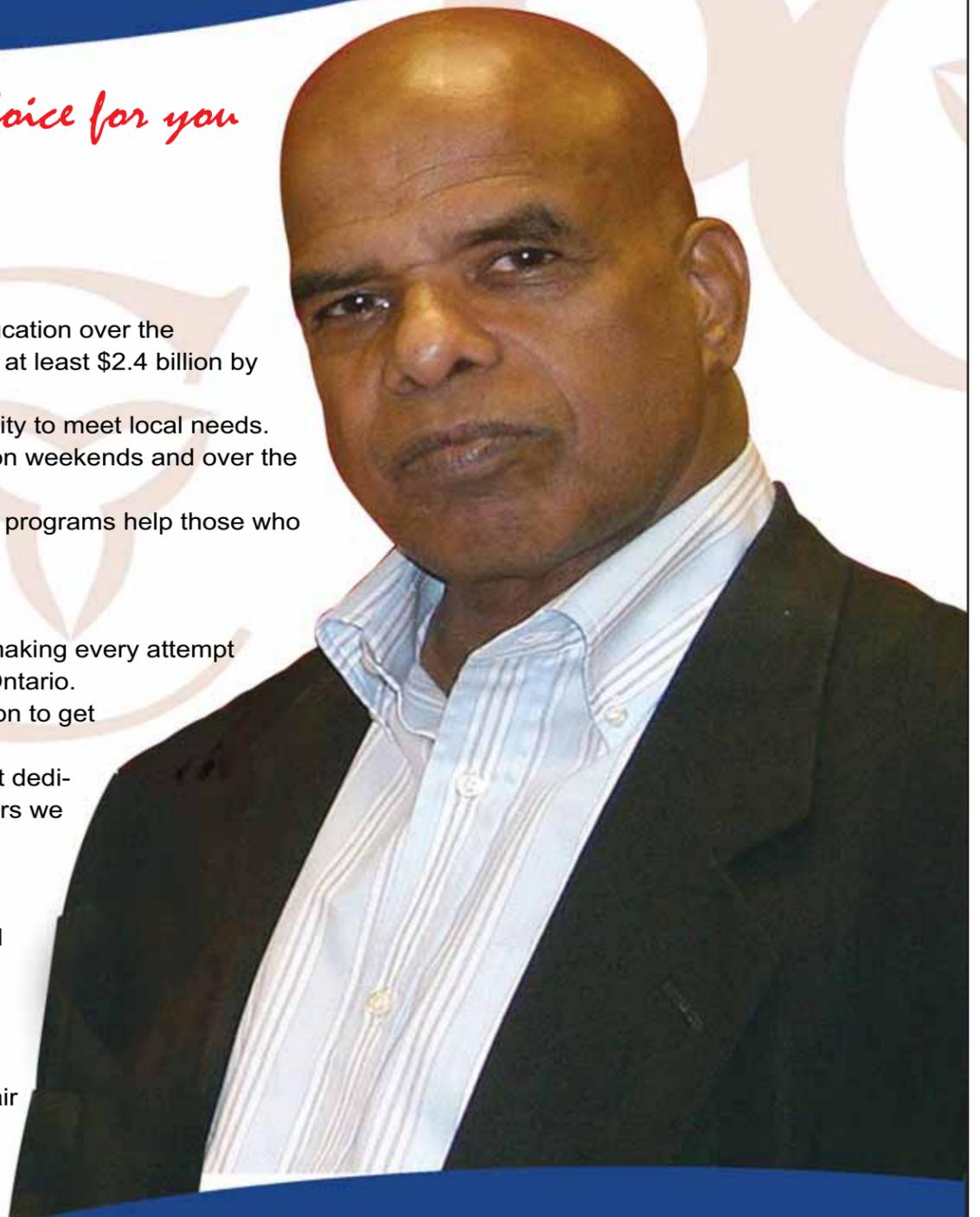
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Ontario Provincial Election special

October 10, 2007



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Leader: John Tory, MPP, Leader of the Opposition, Leader since 2004,
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Phil Bannon, candidate for Oak Ridges-Markham handshaking PC Leader John Tory at Stouffville on Oct 2nd when visiting business places in Main Street



Canada Saivite Council for Spitual Support in Healthcare and Certification of Saivite Spitual Care Workers were donated on August 17, 2007 at Richmond Hill Hindu Temple. Photo above- K K Li, candidate for Markham-Unionville handing over the cheque to Dr. A. Shanmugavadivel and Jayasingh David is present.



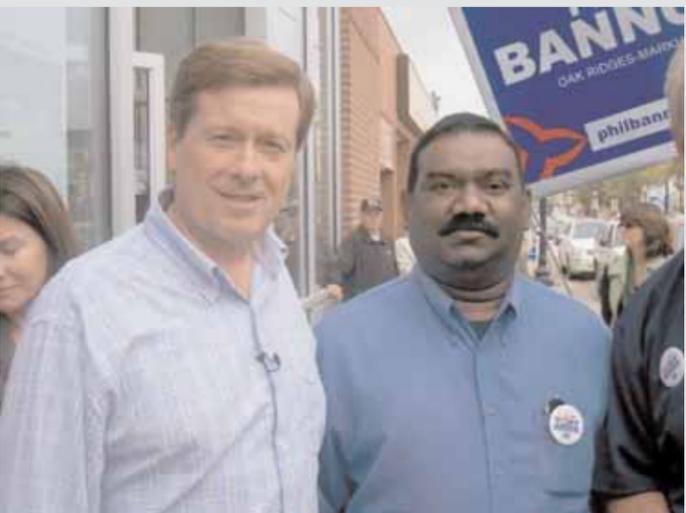
Shan Chandran from Uthayan News with PC Leader John Tory at Stouffville on Oct 2nd when visiting business places in Main Street



Zoran Churchin and K K Li, PC Candidates during the opening of K K Li's Campaign office by Hon. Federal Finance Minister Jim Flaherty



K K Li, PC Candidate and supporters during the opening of K K Li's Campaign office by Hon. Federal Finance Minister Jim Flaherty



Sri Suppiramaniam of Ceylon TV with PC Leader John Tory at Stouffville on Oct 2nd when visiting business places at Main Street



ELECT

Zoran CHURCHIN

CANDIDATE - Mississauga East-Cooksville



On October 10, 2007 make a positive change - vote **ZORAN CHURCHIN.**

RBC STUDY QUANTIFIES EXPERIENCES OF NEW IMMIGRANTS FROM SOUTH ASIAN COUNTRIES

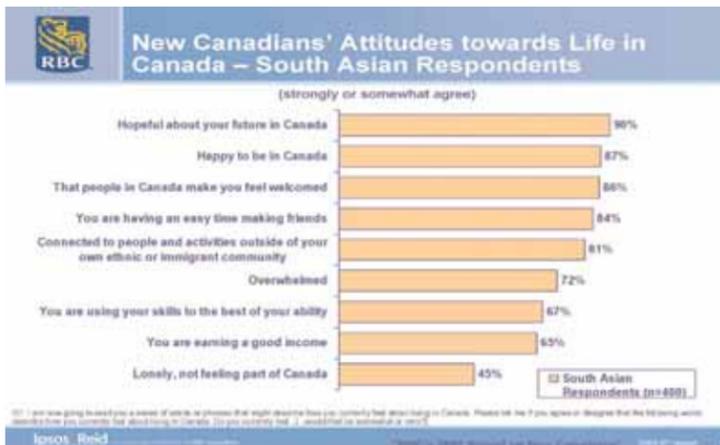
Owning a Home is the Most Likely Indicator of Feeling Settled

A new study from RBC and Ipsos Reid shows a large majority (87 per cent) of new immigrants from South Asian countries are happy to be in Canada and hopeful about their future (90 per cent), but more than half (62 per cent) feel they are still in the process of settling into their new lives here.

"We initiated this study of immigrants who have been in Canada 10 years or less because we have many customers who have been through the immigration experience. We wanted to develop a deeper understanding of that experience and learn more about what makes newcomers feel settled into their new lives," said Mark Whitmell, RBC's director, Cultural Markets. "For instance, having a better appreciation of how important something like home ownership is to people going through this significant life transition, gives us a better perspective on how we can hopefully help make that goal happen faster."

Stages of settling in Canada

According to South Asian survey respondents, 17 per cent still feel new to Canada, 62 per cent feel they are



getting settled and 21 per cent feel truly established. While length of time living in Canada is a good indicator of feeling established, this is not always the case. Eleven per cent of new South Asian immigrants who have been in Canada for less than three years already feel established, while the same percentage who have been here for five to ten years still feel new to Canada.

"We have learned that regardless of a person's country of origin, age or economic situation, most newcomers

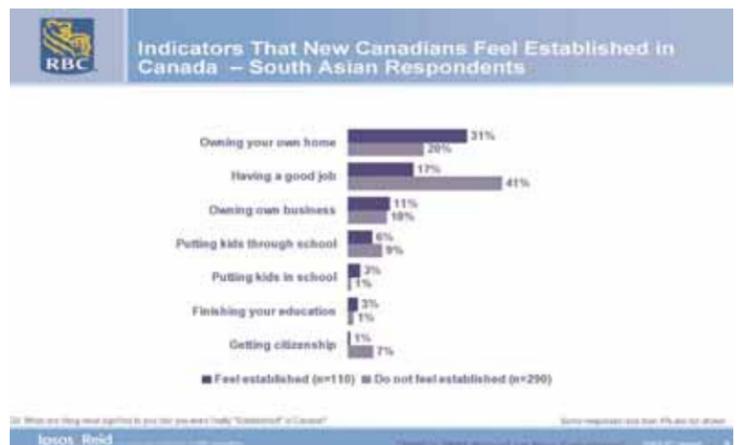
go through a common immigration experience - from feeling new, to getting settled, to becoming truly established," explained Mr. Whitmell. "Each stage has a different focus and each individual moves through those stages on their own unique timeline."

Demographic Profile of New Immigrants from South Asia

The RBC study shows the majority of new immigrants from South Asian countries are young, with 73 per cent of them being between 25 and 49 years of age. This data is particularly relevant as only 46 per cent of Canadians overall are represented by people in this age range. New immigrants from South Asian countries also tend to be well educated, with 62 per cent saying they have at least some university education. Fifty-one per cent come to Canada as "skilled workers"; followed by "family sponsored" (31 per cent); and "investor/business" (eight per cent).

Indicators of feeling settled

The top two indicators of feeling settled for all new immigrants are having a good job and owning a home. For South Asian new immigrants who already feel established in Canada, 31 per cent say owning their own home



is the true signifier of being settled; while 17 per cent say it is having a good job. For South Asian immigrants who do not feel settled, 41 per cent rank having a good job as the primary signifier of being established, while one in five (20 per cent) says it is owning their own home.

Attitudes towards life in Canada

When it comes to attitudes towards life in Canada, new immigrants from South Asian countries have mostly good things to say about their experiences. Eighty-six per cent agree people make them feel welcome, while 81 per cent say they feel connected to people and activities outside their own ethnic or immigrant community.

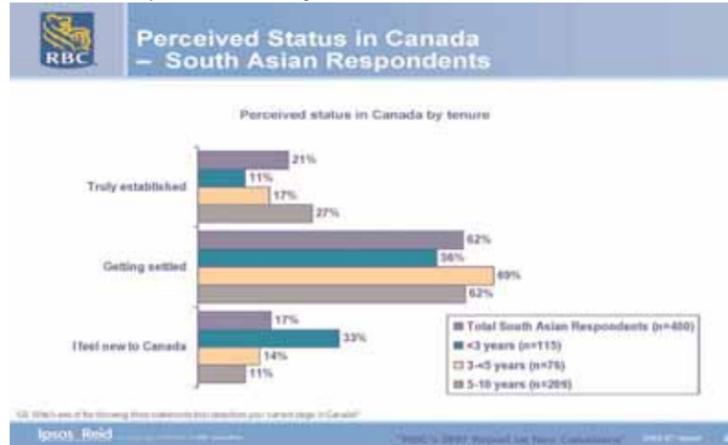
"The survey results also illuminate the challenges of the immigration experience," added Mr. Whitmell. "Almost three quarters (72 per cent) of immigrants from South Asian countries say they feel overwhelmed and almost half (45 per cent) are likely to feel lonely and disassociated from Canada. It's indicators like these that truly make us stop and think about the personal side of starting over in a new country. Given the important role

immigration plays in Canada's future, helping newcomers achieve their settlement goals is really a priority for all of us."

About the Survey Methodology

These are the findings of an RBC /Ipsos Reid survey conducted between March 15 and April 30, 2007. The poll was based on a randomly selected sample of 400 new South Asian immigrants who are 18 years of age or older and have been in Canada for 10 years or less. With this sample size, the overall results are considered ± 4.9 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, of what they would have been if all new immigrants had been surveyed. The survey was conducted by telephone and the interviews were held in Hindi, Punjabi, and English. The findings were weighted to reflect the actual regional distribution and ethnic composition of new Canadians immigrating to Canada within the past 10 years.

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Monsoon Food Court



Italian Cuisine

Italian cuisine as a national cuisine known today has evolved from centuries of social and political change. Its roots can be traced back to 4th century BCE but lead into the Middle Ages which brought Arab and Norman influence to certain regions along with introduction of notable chefs such as Maestro Martino that cooked an elegant refined Italian cuisine. The 16th and 17 centuries brought about introductions of other dishes still known today by Bartolomeo Scappi who wrote of the Neapolitan pizza, Giangiaco Castelvetto who introduced a vegetable centered cuisine, and Bartolomeo Stefani who was the first

both national and regional. Many dishes that were once regional, however, have proliferated in different variations across the country in the present day. Cheese and wine are also a major part of the cuisine, playing different roles both regionally and nationally with their many variations and Denominazione di origine controllata (DOC) (regulated appellation) laws. Coffee, and more specifically espresso, culture has become highly important to the cultural cuisine of Italy.

Meals are structured in a cyclical order in Italy and variable contain no less than 3-4 courses. Meals are seen as a time to spend with family and

consist of either risotto or pasta (both being excellent sources). Modern Italian cuisine also includes single courses (all-in-one courses), providing carbohydrates and proteins at the same time (e.g. pasta and legumes).

Antipasti- hot or cold appetizers, Primo - "first course", usually consists of a hot dish like pasta, risotto, gnocchi, polenta or soup. "Second course", the main dish, usually fish or meat. Traditionally veal, pork and chicken are the most commonly used meat, at least in the North, though beef has become more popular since World War II and wild game is very popular, particularly in Tuscany. Fish are those which are caught locally. "Side dish" may consist of a salad or cooked vegetables. A traditional menu features salad along with the main course. Cheese and fruits: the first dessert, usually served together. Dessert, such as cakes and cookies Caffè - Coffee/Espresso Digestivo- which is liquors/liqueurs (grappa, amaro, limoncello) sometimes referred to as ammazzacaffè "Coffee killer"

Italian Coffee

Italian style coffee (caffè), also known as espresso, is a concentrated coffee prepared by forcing boiling water through finely ground coffee beans at high pressure. It is usually served in a demitasse in relatively small quantity. Caffè macchiato is a topped with a bit of steamed milk or foam; caffè ristretto is made with less



water, and is stronger. Cappuccino is mixed or topped with steamed, mostly frothy, milk. It is generally considered a morning beverage. Caffe latte is generally equal parts espresso and steamed milk, similar to café au lait, and is typically served in a large cup. Latte macchiato (spotted milk) is a glass of warm milk with a bit of coffee.

Contrary to popular misconception, espresso is not made from special "espresso" beans. Rather, it is made from the same coffee beans as any other style of coffee. However, beans prepared for espresso are usually roasted dark, and are often a blend of coffees of various origins.

Vegetarian Lasagna

8 lasagna noodles (5 1/2 ounces total)

1 teaspoons olive oil
2 large onion, finely chopped
4 cloves garlic, minced
1 pound mushrooms, thinly sliced

chopped 1 pound spinach
1 1/2 teaspoons grated lemon zest

1 1/2 teaspoons salt
1/2 teaspoon pepper
2 pound silken tofu
1/2 cup low-fat (1%) cottage cheese

1/2 cup part-skim ricotta cheese
1/2 cup grated Parmesan cheese

1 can (8 ounces) tomato sauce
4 tablespoons tomato paste
1 egg
2 egg whites

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F. In a large pot of boiling water, cook the lasagna noodles according to package directions until firm-tender. Drain.

2. Meanwhile, in a large skillet, heat the oil over moderate heat. Add the onion and garlic, and sauté for 4 minutes or until soft. Add the mushrooms and sauté for 3 minutes or until they begin to give up their juices. Add the spinach and cook, stirring, until no liquid remains. Transfer to a medium bowl and add



the lemon zest, 3/4 teaspoon of the salt, and 1/4 teaspoon of the pepper. Toss well.

3. In a food processor, combine the tofu, cottage cheese, ricotta, 6 tablespoons of the Parmesan, the tomato sauce, tomato paste, whole egg, egg whites, the remaining 3/4 teaspoon salt, and remaining 1/4 teaspoon pepper, and process to a smooth purée.

4. Spray a 7 x 11-inch glass baking dish with nonstick cooking spray. Line the bottom with 2 of the lasagna noodles. Spoon half of the spinach mixture and one-third of the tofu mixture over the noodles. Make another layer of noodles, the remaining spinach mixture, and another one-third of the tofu mixture. Top with the remaining lasagna noodles and the remaining tofu mixture. Sprinkle the remaining 2 tablespoons Parmesan on top. Bake for 30 minutes or until hot.



chef to introduce "normal food" to his repertoire.

It was the discovery of the New World that helped shape much of what is known as Italian cuisine today as well. Such items as potatoes, tomatoes, bell pepper and maize, which are all central parts of the cuisine were not introduced in scale until the 18th century. Antonio Nebbi was the first chef to give importance to the tomato as-well-as the potato. It was also at this time that books started to be aimed at the bourgeois housewives instead of professional chefs; because of this a distinctly regional cuisine began to emerge in these books.

Ingredients and dishes vary by region. There are many significant regional dishes that have become

friends instead of immediate sustenance, as such the regular daily meals can be a bit longer than other cultures. During holidays, many family feasts will last for many hours, if not the entire day.

Although it has to be said that nowadays the traditional Italian menu is kept for high days and special events (as weddings) whilst the everyday menu only includes the first and second course, the side dish (more and more often joined to the second course) and coffee (if not in a hurry). One notable and often surprising aspect of an Italian meal, especially if eaten in an Italian home, is that the primo, or first course, is usually the more filling dish, providing most of the meal's carbohydrates, and will

Italian Stuffed Chicken

6 prosciutto slices
12 fresh basil leaves
1 cup freshly Ricotta Cheese
6 skinless boneless chicken breast halves (about 1 1/2 pounds)
1 cup milk
1 1 cup Italian breadcrumbs
1/2 cup white wine
1/2 cup chicken broth
2 teaspoons margarine or butter

Place chicken in 13x9 baking dish. Pour wine & chicken broth over chicken. Dab 1/2 tsp of butter or margarine on the top of each breast. Bake at 400°F for 40 minutes or until done. Served with Pasta and marinara sauce.



On a clean work surface, lay out prosciutto slices. Top slices with basil leaves and sprinkle evenly with ricotta. Starting with the short end, roll up each prosciutto slice.

Flatten chicken breasts with a rolling pin or meat mallet. Dip each breast in milk and then dredge in breadcrumbs. Roll breaded chicken breast around prosciutto, securing together with toothpicks.

Chef Nate

Comments & Suggestions to: chef@monsoonjournal.com

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SARASWATI PUJA PERFORMED AT SHRI RAM MANDIR



Over 60 young school going children along with their parents assembled at Shri Ram Mandir and offered aarti - puja before starting their new classes as it is considered that the Goddess herself is blessing the books and the instruments. Goddess Saraswati represents intelligence, consciousness, cosmic knowledge, creativity, education, enlightenment, music, arts, and power. She is not only worshipped for secular knowledge, but for the true divine knowledge essential to achieve moksha.

A Prayer to Goddess Saraswati

Yaa Kundendu tushaara haarad-havala, Yaa shubhra vastraa vritha|
Yaa veena varadanda manditakara, Yaa shwetha padmaasana||
Yaa brahmaachyutha shankara prabhriti bhir Devaisadaa Vanditha|
Saa Maama Paatu Saraswati Bhagavati Nihshesha jaadyaapahaa||

English Translation

"May Goddess Saraswati, who is fair like the jasmine-colored moon, and whose pure white garland is like frosty dew drops; who is adorned in radiant white attire, on whose beautiful arm rests the veena, and whose throne is a white lotus; who is surrounded and respected by the Gods,

protect me. May you fully remove my lethargy, sluggishness, and ignorance?"

Goddess Saraswati is associated with purity and creativity, especially in the context of communication, such as in literary and verbal skills. In the post-Vedic age, She began to lose her status as a river goddess and became increasingly associated with literature, arts, music, etc.

She is mainly associated with the color white, which signifies the purity of true knowledge. She is shown to hold the following in her hands:-

A book, which is the sacred Vedas, representing the universal, divine, eternal, and true knowledge as well as her perfection of the sciences and the scriptures

A mala of crystals, representing the power of meditation and spirituality.

A pot of sacred water, representing creative and purificatory powers

The veena, a musical instrument that represents her perfection of all arts and sciences

Saraswati is also associated with anurâga, the love for and rhythm of music which represents all emotions and feelings expressed in speech or music.

Kanayalal Raina

BOOK REVIEW

Living with Saints and Sages

Raymond Rajabalan

It was indeed a great challenge yet a pleasant task for me to review a masterpiece titled 'Living with Saints and Sages' authored by Devadas Chelvam, a former Sri Lankan Tamil Catholic priest who later in life adopted a variety of ultra modern views about world religions.

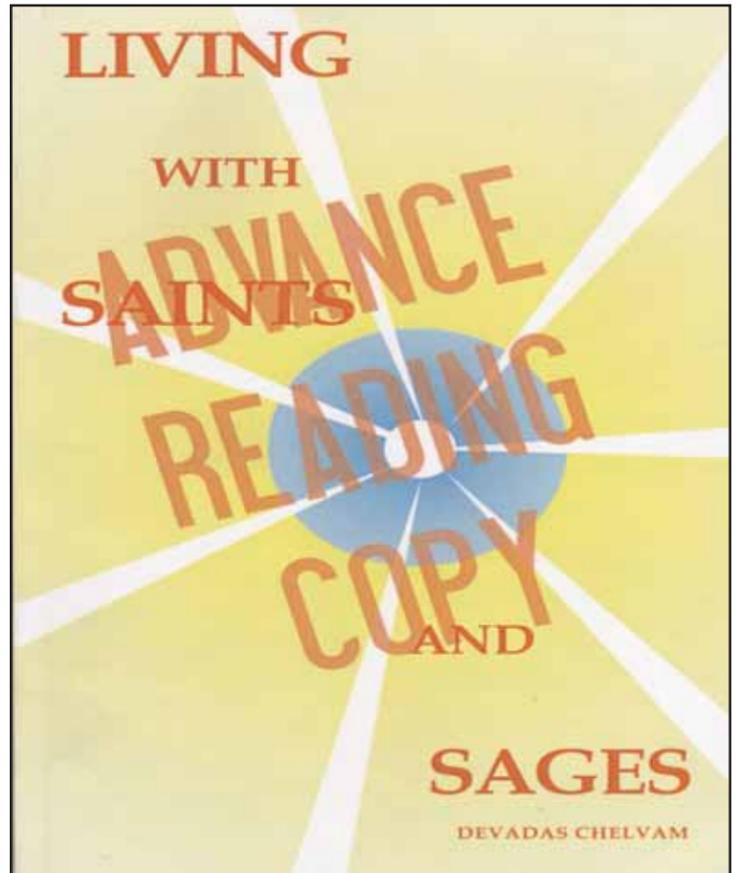
It will be a relatively easier task to comment on the contents a book written about one single religion. However it is an uphill task to read through a collection of informative essays encompassing all major religions in the world and comprehend the central theme.

Having read the book from cover to cover in order to comprehend the complexity of various religious beliefs, I was amazed to note that some one who was raised in Roman Catholic family, had his education in a Catholic institution and ordained as a Catholic priest has developed the courage, will and wisdom to have a broader look of the lives and teachings of various sages and saints with diverse views and to conclude that all religions have so much in common.

The author is bold enough to pinpoint the flaws in Catholic religions and the need for introducing changes in keeping with the modern trend. Catholic church or for that matter any religion that fails to address the needs of the common man will be forced to face serious problems. Just adhering to century old rituals alone will not be able please the followers of any religion. However the author trying to comment on the infallibility of Bible is sure to create opposition from many Christians.

At the very beginning of the book the author has chosen a most appropriate quotation of Srimad Bhagavatam, "Like the bee gathering honey from different flowers, the wise man accepts the essence of different scriptures and sees only the good in all religions"

Quoting extensively from the lives of a number of blessed persons including Jesus Christ, Lord Krishna, Buddha, Prophet Mohammed, the author has done a commendable job in proving the existence of a common element among all of them. It is one thing to just chronicle the teachings and beliefs of all these mostly well known figures but to interlink their



teachings in a coherent manner proves beyond any doubt the encyclopedic knowledge of the author.

The author is quite right in stating in the preface that "a deeper knowledge of the lives of the sages and saints and continued contemplation on their words of wisdom and teach-

ings one is actually inspired and moved beyond doubts leading us to a life full of bliss and life.

Living with the saints and sages, is a book worth reading to understand the teachings of various religions and holy men so that one can develop a wider vision of world religions.



Activists from India's Bharatiya Janata Party shout during a protest in New Delhi on 14 September 2007, against the proposed construction of The Ram Sethu Samudram Shipping Canal Project in the Palk Strait between India and Sri Lanka. (AFP/File/Raveendran)

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Photo Gallery of Vembadi Old Girls Association Annual Dinner held on Saturday, September 29th 2007



Committee members of Vembadi Old Girls Association



President Rathy Arulanantham addressing



Committee members singing the school song



Committee members of Vembadi Old Girls Association



Guests at the Function



Guests at the Function



Gayathri Gangadharan & Sobana Neethan



One of the items in the Cultural Programme

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With over 7 branches in the province of Ontario and 1 branch in new Brunswick, Sensei Sriram has developed 100's of students and has dedicated in developing and expanding the Rajaguru way of martial arts around the globe.

He started at the age of nine years under the watch full eyes of So Shihan Rajaguru T. Ravindran and credits the successes in his life to Rajaguru and Karate.

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(Photos taken on Sep 22, 2007 at a ceremony to felicitate the 8 students from rajaguru Martial Arts Academy, who went to take part in an international tournament in India, who successfully returned home with a trophy. Those student are seen with Sensei Sriram.

Photos by: Gnane Gnanendran



Waterloo News



City of Kitchener continues work with Sri Lanka on Post -Tsunami Recovery Efforts: Delegation in Kitchener to Learn Some Best Practices in Municipal Government

KITCHENER - As part of an ongoing partnership and working relationship between the City of Kitchener and several Sri Lankan municipalities, earlier this evening Kitchener City Council welcomed a group of five Sri Lankan delegates to its regularly scheduled meeting of council.

The Sri Lankan delegation included Mr. Chellappah Gnanaganeshan – District coordinator, FCM-MCP, Trincomalee, Mr. Tharumalingam Yogeswaran – Programme Assistant, Urban Council, Trincomalee, Mr. Nadarajah Koneswaranathan, Accountant Urban Council Trincomalee, Mr. Sivaguruthas Thayaparan – Budget Officer, Batticaloa Municipality, Mr. Thiyagarajah Mahendran, I.T Specialist, Municipal Council – Batticaloa.

The purpose of the delegates visit is for them to gain hands-on knowledge of how the City of Kitchener operates, specifically in terms of its municipal finance and accounting systems, and apply those concepts to their own municipal systems in Sri Lanka that were devastated by the Indian Ocean tsunami in December 2004.

After arriving in Kitchener on Friday, the delegates spent the weekend sightseeing in the area before touring a number of City facilities and departments today. An information-technology training session was also provided to give the delegates a better idea of how the City functions.

The Sri Lankan delegates visit is also part of Kitchener's participation in

Sri Lanka and Indonesia; and he was chair of the FCM's standing committee on International Relations for the last two years, before he was elected vice-president: at-large of the FCM this past May.

Ongoing Partnership: Since 2006, a number of City representatives have been working with the Sri Lankan government to rebuild services such as municipal library systems, and municipal finance and accounting systems.

"The strength of a local government's municipal finance system has a direct impact on the quality of municipal operations, service delivery and public participatory mechanisms that enhance accountability to citizens," Vrbanovic said. "Getting these services back up and running is crucial."

This past May, Pauline Houston, the City's treasurer and general manager of finance, and Joyce Evans, the City's director of revenue, completed a mission to Sri Lanka to provide assistance with the restoration and improvement of the country's municipal finance and accounting practices. Funding for their travel was provided by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities. The current study tour to Canada is part of that specific project.

"Seeing the damage that Sri Lanka has suffered at the hands of the tsunami was an eye-opening experience to say the least," Houston said.

"It certainly made us appreciate the conditions we work in even more, and it inspired us to work even harder to help that country get back up and



Mr. Thiyagarajah Mahendran, I.T Specialist, Municipal Council – Batticaloa



Mr. Sivaguruthas Thayaparan – Budget Officer, Municipality of Batticaloa



Mr. Nadarajah Koneswaranathan, Accountant Urban Council Trincomalee



Mr. Tharumalingam Yogeswaran – Programme Assistant, Urban Council Trincomalee



Mr. Chellappah Gnanaganeshan – District coordinator, FCM-MCP, Trincomalee

build more social cohesion among our citizens, which benefits us all."

In addition to Ms. Houston's and Ms. Evans mission to help rebuild the country municipal financial and accounting practices, Laura Reed, coordinator of children's and young adult services with the Kitchener Public Library, has completed two missions to Sri Lanka. KPL also hosted a study tour of Sri Lankan librarians last year.

Reed's involvement has helped two municipal libraries that were damaged by the tsunami to restore and improve their services, particularly for children and youth.

Background: The tsunami disaster disrupted the ability of local authorities to conduct financial transactions and to collect the revenues required

to sustain services.

Most local governments in Sri Lanka rely on manual records of financial transactions, thousands of which were damaged in the disaster.

Through the Municipal Co-operation Program, finance experts from the City are providing "peer to peer" training in finance and accounting, information technology, customer service and public engagement.

Program objectives include:

- * To improve accounting records of the finance branch of each municipality by providing necessary equipments and training and by automating current processes to prepare for a local government accounting software package.

- * To streamline financial opera-

tions by developing appropriate financial

policies and procedures and providing adequate training to staff, particularly new staff

- * To improve customer access to council financial services by providing appropriate instructions and direction to visiting customers and optimizing

available office workspace.

The program is funded by the Government of Canada through the Canadian International Development Agency, which has contributed \$9 million to the effort.

FCM and Canadian municipalities have also contributed to the program through donations of more than \$250,000 and through in-kind contributions of staff time to share expertise.

Technical assistance activities are supported by the Municipal Strategic Fund, a \$2.2 million mechanism of the Municipal Cooperation Program that assists tsunami-affected local governments to purchase equipment or replace small-scale infrastructure.

The Municipal Strategic Fund supports the finance and accounting project by enabling local governments to replace office materials and equip finance departments with computers.

City of Kitchener Mayor Carl Zehr welcomed the delegation and handed over gifts to all members. Local Tamil community members were in hand to assist the delegation.



(L-R) Mr. Sivakumar – President, Tamil Cultural Association of Waterloo Region, Mr. Mahendran, Mr. Thayaparan, Mr. Koneswaranathan, Mr. Gnanaganeshan, Ms. Joyce Evans, Director of Revenue – City of Kitchener, Mrs. Ariyaratnam.

a four-year program (2005-2009), managed by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM)

and funded by the Canadian International Development Agency that works with local governments in five districts to restore municipal services affected by the tsunami disaster.

"It's a pleasure to welcome our guests; and to share with them on a first-hand basis how our City operates, as well as hopefully provide them with some of the tools and knowledge they need to continue rebuilding their own public services," said Councillor Berry Vrbanovic, chair of the Tsunami Advisory Committee, and a participant of a national assessment mission to Sri Lanka in 2005 that determined where Canadian municipalities could best provide assistance.

Coun. Vrbanovic has put a great deal of effort into providing aid to the countries affected by the tsunami - including Sri Lanka, Indonesia and Thailand. He is co-chair of FCM's project steering committees supporting

running. While time has passed, there is still a lot of work to be done in Sri Lanka."

Evans said there were a lot of valuable lessons for local representatives to bring home from Sri Lanka.

"We have a lot to learn from the issues and challenges that these municipalities have faced and continue to work through," she said. "Seeing what they've gone through

and how they've managed since the disaster is a great resource for other countries and municipalities, such as our own.

"We are in a great position to add a lot of value to Sri Lanka's rebuilding efforts. It's a role we're committed to on a number of levels, not the least of which being that it's our global responsibility to help," Evans added.

"Being able to see and experience people's realities in other cultures helps us to better understand and relate to the diversity and the different needs that exist in our communities," Houston said. "This helps to

Pattimandram - Pulam Peyerntha Thamilar Vaalvu

Waterloo: Tamil cultural Association of Waterloo Region organised a Pattimandram on Sept. 23rd in Waterloo. It was held under the leadership of "Kavinayagar" Kandhavanam of Toronto. The participants include Mr. T. Sivabalu, Kavi. Buhari, Mrs. Kothi Amuthan, Mr. R. N. Logendralingam, Mrs. Raj Meera Rashiah, "Kani" Vimalanathan.

Mr. Dennis Loyola, the director of Special events welcomed all the guests. The introduction was given by Prof. Pala Kannapan. "Kavinayagar" Kandhavanam welcomed the team members and opened forum. The topic was "Pulam Peyerntha Thamilar Vaalvu - lypnama?, Innala?, Yettrama?" (The life of Tamil Immigrant's - Prosperity? Difficulty? Success?). All three groups put forward their views and arguments. It was very interesting and the topic was related to a day to day immigrant life in Canada. The views put forward by Mrs. Kothi Amuthan's on lypnama (Prosperity) won the hearts of the large number of guests.

The participants were awarded with gifts by Mr. Sivakumar, the President of the association, Mrs. Indra Logendran, Vice - President and other executive members. A light dinner was served at the end of the event.



Monsoon Features

Why are young offenders created in the society?

Raymond Rajabalan

Every child is born as a bundle of joy with sweet innocence, bringing great happiness to the parents conferring upon them the proud title of "parenthood". Depending on the environment of growth, the child is bombarded with a variety of situations. During pre school years the young children follow the examples of parents and siblings and close relatives.

Once admitted to preschool, the child is now faced with new and complex life situations day in day out. Over a period of time, the cumulative effects of such experiences - whether pleasant or unpleasant - leaves a lasting impact on the child's mind, contributing to their choice of life directions, beginning from their adolescent years. If these choices turn out to be socially unacceptable, the youths end up seriously misdirecting their lives and deviating from the accepted norms of civilized societies. In a few



youth. All of them generally conclude that Home is the cradle of violence.

In Western world, an interplay of factors contribute to the situation of some youths going astray from the main stream.

abandoned and compelled to seek safety outside the home.

Women who get separated from their life partners are compelled to lead their life as single mothers. In the absence of the father, the normal set up of the family is seriously disturbed, and in many cases the mothers are helpless in guiding their children.

After obtaining divorce, a number of fathers fail to pay alimony resulting in the children being deprived of their basic needs. This in many cases leads to the children attempting to obtain their financial needs by methods unacceptable in civilized societies.

Apart from this, the children of new immigrants coming from war-torn nations face additional problems. Ethnic conflicts, civil war, military offensives, forced conscription etc have created indelible wounds in the minds of children from the early age. Many of these children have witnessed brutal killings of their family members, observed with mortal fear their residences flattened by carpet bombing and watched with frustration their opportunity for higher education being deprived by the majority governments in power. The resulting frustration create a revenge feeling and the suppressed anger often gets misdirected forcing them to commit acts of violence against the society.

The complex chain reaction resulting from these situations leads to a variety of social complications.

The violence among youth evolves at various stages of life. When the children are in their early teens,



either due to poverty or due to the mistaken belief of indulging in acts of thrill, they begin to shop lift in supermarkets.

Strengthened by these crimes the level of crime evolves later in their lives into extortion, robbery, stealing of motor vehicles etc.

Some of these misguided youths resort to bullying their fellow students in high schools. What starts as simple fun, when left unchecked mushrooms into formation of gangs resulting in group violence. Each year countless tragic killings taking place within the school premises in North America. It is painful to note that the lives of so many youths are lost due to these senseless killings, most of which take place over some petty things, blown out of proportion. There is a general feeling among the Canadians that the government should take more serious efforts to punish the culprits and at the same time find the root causes.

Many social groups have expressed concern that the present rules are not severe enough to curb youth violence. As a result of this situation, some youngsters feel emboldened and begin indulging in acts of destruction of lives and property. Youthful ignorance and false sense of bravado together with formation of street gangs results in a lethal cocktail some times causing mayhem.

However, it should be appreciated that the governments in all levels are now taking greater interest in recent times to put a brake from youth violence spiraling out of control.

Some of the suggestions put for-

ward by social organizations are:

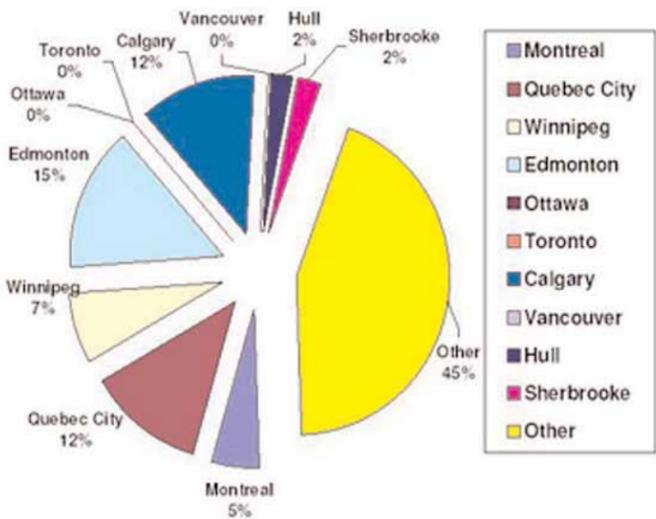
Parents should monitor the activities of their children and advise them of the various choices available for them in this great country. All the while the children should be treated with respect and their views should be listened with attention so that a suitable compromise could be reached whenever there are conflicting views. Imposing the traditions of the East upon the children already torn apart by clash of cultures will only aggravate the situation.

Canadian social groups must organize more frequent seminars and conferences for youths. Sri Lanka Canada graduates Association and Canadian Tamil Youth Development Centre are two organizations that have been doing a great service for Tamil youths. There are many other organizations offering valuable services to youths from all communities.

The government must produce hand books that will help the youths go in the right direction and distribute them through high schools, universities and social and religious groups.

There is a general saying in this country "More flies are caught by honey than vinegar". As such the society must understand the root causes of the problems faced by youth and approach them with compassion, kindness and genuine interest so that the wall of barrier between them and the society can be brought down, resulting in immense benefit for all concerned.

E-mail: rraja2007@yahoo.ca



instances these wrong choices results in the youths losing their lives, as has been indicated by recent tragic events across the country.

Statistics indicate that since 1950 up to now, incidents of youth violence's has doubled. A number of scholars involved in the field psychology such as Kalmuss and Seltzer (1986), Decker (1988) Sacco and Kennedy (1994) and Ellis and Decker Seredy have made extensive studies on the causes for violence among

The difference of opinion occasionally arising between married couples are magnified and compounded due to mechanical and stressful life. If left unchecked at the early stages, the festering wounds of disagreement leads to stress and depression finally ending up in divorce. In worst case scenarios, there have been tragic deaths of either parent or sometimes both parents further convoluting the already confused situation. Needless to say, it leads to the child feeling

India wins glowing tributes and praise during "The India Experience in New York"

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Above themes dominated Business Conferences, CEO Sessions and Cultural Programs as policy makers and corporate leaders from India and USA got together to celebrate 60 years of India's independence in New York at several venues around the city from September 23rd to September 26th, 2007.

A four-day long celebration called Incredible India@60 started in New York city on September 23. The event was organised by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of and the Confederation of Indian Industry.

The streets of New York were

taken over by 'brand India' - hoardings, banners and posters which urging New Yorkers to 'Experience India'

Following is excerpts from speeches, glowing praise and tributes made about India during the New York City event:

India has the dynamic leaders required in both government and business. - Madeline Albright, Principal of The Albright Grop LLC and former US Secretary of State

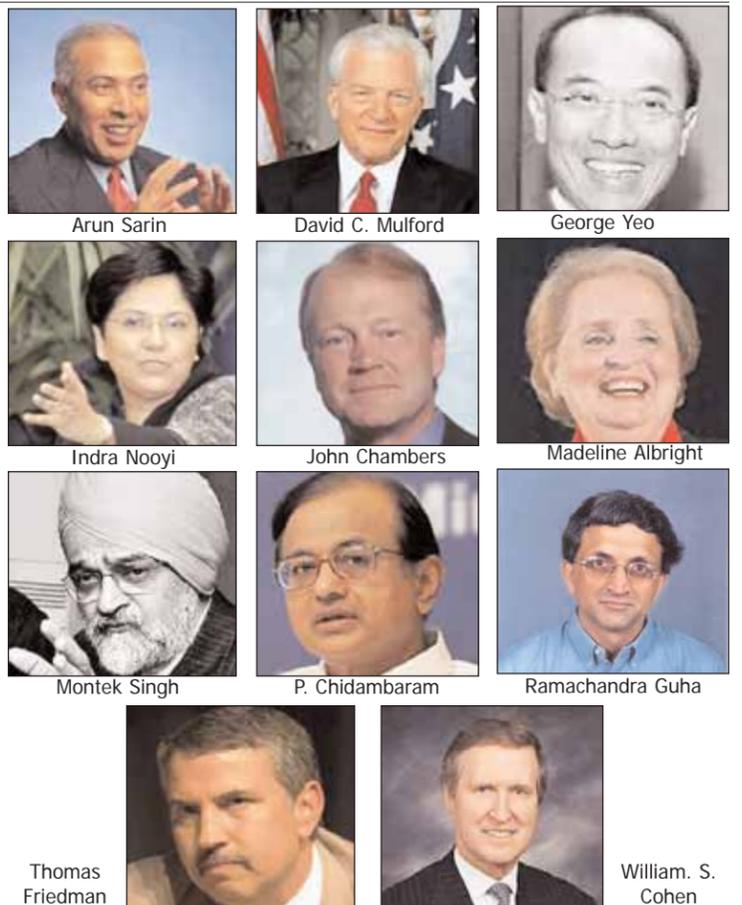
The Taj Mahal, the Shore Temple at Mahabalipuram and others are sentinels of an Incredible India. The strong and prosperous economy is the Credible India....A strong and prosperous India at the heart of Asia will become a source of peace and harmony in the world. - P.Chidambaram, Minister of Finance, India

India needs US\$ 492 billion of investment in infrastructure over the next 5 years. This can only be done with public-private partnerships and the right mix of policies. - Montek Singh Ahluwalia, Deputy Chairman, Planning Commission of India

We go to India to see a rich com-

plex diverse democracy that is destined to be a great power in stability and peace in the world. - William S. Cohen, Former US Secretary of Defense and Chairman and CEO, The Cohen Group.

India at 60 with its large population, parliamentary democracy, rule of law, secular government, religious tolerance, large private sector economy, great degree of human freedom, and diversity lives at peace with the world. It is nothing short of a modern miracle. - David C. Mulford, US Ambassador to India.



From Wrong decisions to right decisions

During an interview of a successful executive the reporter asked the secret of the executive's success. "Two words" the executive said, "Right decisions". The reporter probed further, "How are right decisions made?" The executive responded, "It is one word: experience." Very much impressed by the crisp response the reporter further asked, "how do you gain experience?" The executive responded "the answer for that question is once again two words" "What are they?" asked the young reporter for which the executive replied smiling "Wrong decisions"

It is true we all learn from our mistakes. Don't we all say failures are the pillars of success? Aldous Huxley in 'Texts and Pretexts' mentions "Experience is not what happens to a man: it is what a man does with what happens to him". One has to pause and find what went wrong so that next time it can be avoided, or else misery met by the mistake will be in vain.

February 2007 Sri Lanka will be celebrating its sixtieth anniversary of independence whereas India and Pakistan had it last month. Except change of name has Sri Lanka advanced in any way? On 28th of February 1948 Ceylon became an independent nation in the Common wealth. Yes, you guess it correct; it was then called Ceylon, and was referred as the pearl of the Indian Ocean.

At the time of the independence Ceylon had a robust economy. The economy was depended principally on her export. Tea, for which Ceylon was justifiably famous, together with Rubber and coconut were the other major sources of wealth. There were also other sources of income like plumbago, gems and few other mineral products which had a steady market. Immediately after the Second World War these exports produced enough revenue to pay for the imports of rice, flour etc.

The economy was so good there were Indian citizens from southern states illegally migrated into Ceylon in search of a future. These men were of working class who came in search of jobs. They were nicknamed as 'kalla thoni'. Meaning stolen boats, as these boat people were illegal migrants who came across in boats. To day, the exodus is in the opposite direction, where Sri-Lankans are illegally going on boats to India in fear of death. India with a trade balance nearing one trillion is overtaking many developed countries of the west. What went wrong since independence of Sri-Lanka?

Ceylon is about half as big as its last foreign ruler, the British. It was freed from subjection after centuries of foreign rule. They were first ruled by the Portuguese then followed by the Dutch, and finally by the British. Though the first two rulers had occupied for around two hundred years, when the British took power there were still two different nations living with mutual respect and good will. In 1799 Hugh Cleghorn, the first British Colonial Secretary recorded in the minutes;

"Two different nations, from a very ancient period, had divided between them the possession of the Island. First the Sinhalese (Sinhalese) inhabiting the interior of the country, in its southern and western parts, from the River Wallowe to that of Chillaw, and secondly the Malabars (Tamils), who possess the northern and eastern districts. These two nations differ entirely in their religions, language and manners..."

Till the time of invasion by the foreigners, the two nations co-existed peacefully, though there were occasional wars akin to sibling rivalry. With the active commercial interest in Ceylon (Unified by the rulers to make it easy to administer) by the colonial masters, the centre of gravity of the

Sinhalese population had shifted south and southwestward. The traditional ancient capitals of the Sinhalese like Anurathapura and Polonaruwa were abandoned. The Tamils concentrated in the north and north eastern maritime plains. The once fertile plains were consumed by dense tropical forests. This resulted in actual physical isolation of the two main racial groups, the Sinhalese and the Tamils.

When the British gave independence to Ceylon like in the case of India and Pakistan they unified the two kingdoms in Ceylon and treated it as one country and left with a unitary form of Government. Independent India thrived well, but in the case of Pakistan, it split into two countries Bangladesh and Pakistan. The both halves of Pakistan have Islam as their national religion but the West Pakistan had Urdu as national language whereas Bangladesh (East Pakistan) has Bengali as their national language. They were two different races and geographically apart. As a unified country both communities bled. After separation slowly but surely both countries are thriving.

Ceylon was made into one nation by the oppressors, and the people of both nations were made to believe themselves as one people. This is the first mistake. Yes, it is true for the oppressors they were all people of a colony. But the absolute truth is they are two distinct people joined together to drive away the common enemy the colonial masters. The ruler's effort to make them believe as one people had done great damage. Two lovely kind races are on each others throat. As the executive mentioned earlier at the beginning of this article, the rulers should learn from the mistakes done in the past. Instead to-day the whole Island is bleeding.

In the case of India, the unified country with a federal government is thriving by bounds and leaps. This diverse country has 325 spoken languages, and 1,652 dialects. The country has 18 official languages (Sri-Lanka is unable to have two) and 29 states with 5 union territories. Having so many spoken languages ensures that no one language can dominate over the others. The founder of Modern independent India Mahatma Gandhi's mother tongue was Gujarati. It is the largest English speaking country in the world. Unlike in duality there isn't any one group in India that will have a commanding majority over all others put together. Secondly it does have a wonderful working democratic federal government.

Only time when two races in a country prosper with the unitary form of government will be; either the Majority be magnanimous or the minority be meek. In the Sri-Lankan situation it is neither. The majority Sinhalese believed this is the promised land of theirs. Except for a very small number living abroad, Sri-Lanka is the only country Sinhalese live. They fear if the Tamils were given their legitimate aspirations they will lose that country too. So Mr. Solomon Ridgeway Dias Bandaranayake contested on the platform to make Sinhalese as the official Language and won the election in 1956. At that time English was the official language and only about five percent of Ceylonese knew English. The United Election front led by Bandaranayake was given massive support by an ad hoc organization of over 12,000 Buddhist monks who came out of their temples and hermitages to canvass openly against the Sir John Kotelawala regime which they claimed was influenced by the Christians.

Being a shrewd Politician Mr. Bandaranayake in the English version of United front squared his conscience by writing in a clause providing for the 'reasonable use of Tamil' but this was conspicuously absent in the more sig-

Kumar Punithavel

nificant Sinhalese version. It must also be pointed out that the Federal Party of the Tamils when ever translated to Tamil used the name 'Thamil Arasu Katchi', meaning Tamil kingdom party where as 'Samastik Katchi' should be the Tamil translation. This kind of politicking on both sides helped further polarizing the two communities.

How ever Mr. Bandaranayake signed a pact with then Tamil moderate leader (at that time there was no Tamil militant group) Mr. Selvanayagam giving a form of autonomy to the Tamils. The Prime minister used his eloquence to defend the



pact. Here too was a fatal mistake he made. As reported in Ceylon Daily News: 'The knotty problem of State had been successfully tackled by invoking the principles and tents of Buddhism. 'The Middle Path, Madiyama Prathipadawa', has been my magic wand and I shall always stick by this principle' he said. By this act he legitimized the political decision using religion. Of course the ultimate custodians of the religion (the Buddhist monks) felt otherwise, and who can challenge the monster which is already out. On the morning of 9th April 1958, about 200 Bhikkus (Buddhist priests) and about 300 others gathered agitating to repeal the pact in front of the Prime ministers residence. After all who is Mr. Bandaranayake to give the meaning of the Buddhist tenant 'Madiyama Prathipadawa'? On that day 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 minority. It strangely reminds the story of wolf complaining the lamb down stream has spoilt its drinking water.

Once the ascetic monks of Buddhism came out and enjoyed the challenges of the world were not in a hurry to get back to their monasteries and temples. They continued to linger in politics. The founder of the Buddhist philosophy Lord Buddha proclaimed that the cause of all suffering (Dukka) is desire (thanha). The desire of the ascetics to make Buddhism and Sinhalese as the only official Religion and Language has caused them so much suffering they have joined in the political mire pool by forming a political party 'Jathika Hela Urumaya' and gone into the parliament. This is a separate discussion on theological analysis of Buddhist philosophy.

As mentioned earlier, the majority Sinhalese couldn't develop enough compassion to allow the minority Tamils to pursue their dreams and aspiration. They decided to fright the minority Tamils to make them become meek. The repeated attack on the minority Tamils by the majority Sinhalese orchestrated by the majority politicians in 1956, 1958, 1961, 1974, 1977 and 1983 are ample proof of the intentions of the majority political leaders. One should not be mis-

lead to believe that there is peace for the last twenty years. In the last twenty four years there is an armed civil struggle is taking place. It is futile to continue making mistakes and not learning from it. On the 1983 incident of violence The International Commission of Jurists Review declared in December 1983 -

"Under the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, acts of murder committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group as such are considered as acts of genocide. The evidence points clearly to the conclusion that the violence of the Sinhalese rioters on the Tamils (in July/August 1983) amounted to acts of genocide."



The politicians of the majority never learnt from the mistakes of terrorizing the minority doesn't lead to peace, nor improve either community's life. It is the majority community politicians that cornered the Tamils to take up arms. University Teachers for Human Rights, a much-respected independent human rights organization which frequently strongly criticizes the Tamil militants for their misdeeds very boldly and very frankly on their report dated 3rd August 2007 on page 6 has mentioned;

'Any notion that the sovereignty of the state must be preserved through massacring and chasing minorities from their homes to create special zones is to deny them their birth right to their environment and renders them aliens who must seek their own protection. Such attitudes necessarily founded on violence and invite spiraling violence'.

As observed in the report the Tamils were given only two choices; Either They cave in and live as second class citizen in their own country devoid of any aspirations or dreams, or take up arms and fight back. The desire was to struggle, and there were many groups that came out to fight back against repeated pogroms and atrocities by the thugs who were orchestrated by the politicians. The moral responsibility to the formation of these armed groups rests solely on the political leaders of the different ineffective Sri Lankan Governments.

What is the result of these efforts of the politicians of the majority in trying to subdue the desires of the minority? First it erased what ever faith minority had in the majority's intention of appreciating their just desires. Secondly it made the majority to fear the Tamils and refuse granting of any reasonable freedom. Last but not least this communal rift has ruined the economy of the country to shambles. When I traveled out of Sri Lanka 1979 fourteen rupees was equivalent to an American dollar. Today it is plummeted to one hundred and twenty rupees to a dollar. Except for a few politicians' families whose sons and daughters are in politics the rest of the county, both Sinhalese and Tamils are choking in poverty.

Though the politicians of Sri Lanka failed to learn from their mistakes, there was a great leader of

another country who gained by the experience of repeated failures. The eighty three year old founder primer and present minister mentor of Singapore at a recent interview with The International Herald Tribune observed;

The basis of a nation just was not there. But the advantage we had was that we became independent late. In 1965, we had 20 years of examples of failed states. So, we knew what to avoid - racial conflict, linguistic strife, and religious conflict. We saw Ceylon.

The Singaporeans were smart enough to learn from the mistakes made by Sri Lankan politicians but not the Sri Lankan politicians.

To-day there is anarchy in Sri Lanka. Abductions and murder is a common feature. Both Sinhalese and Tamils are living in fear of death. Under the backdrop of unruliness it may be possible for the present government to put down the armed agitation of the LTTE with the air power, but it will not rid of the cause of the problem. If the present government manages to put down LTTE, then from their ashes will raise other militant groups fighting. Sri Lankan politicians have made many mistakes in the past by resorting to violence, and taken the country to very low ebb. One should not lose sight that the arms struggle is in response to the repeated thugery by successive governments. Come what may the politicians do not seem to learn the lesson from history.

With the loss of mutual trust it is futile to expect that the two races can exist in a unitary form of government. Had there been more magnanimity in the majority or meekness in the minority the two races might have merged as a hybrid producing a homogeneous society. The opportunity for this to happen is totally lost, by the actions of the selfish politicians. Even if the Tamils learn to speak Sinhalese language they will continue to retain their identity and this will bring discrimination. A snail will continue to be a snail even if it sheds its shell. To day many Tamils and Sinhalese who have migrated out of fear from motherland Sri Lanka have children who cannot speak their mother tongue, but they are still Tamils and Sinhalese by race. Thus there will be two races and there is bound to discrimination. The agitation armed or otherwise is only the symptoms of this unfair treatment of one race. The cause of the problem is the prevention of, and denying the aspirations and dreams of a race which is its legitimate right. Unless this is recognized and rectified such struggles cannot be prevented. The only out come of the present situation is a few politicians and their cronies are becoming richer and richer. Both Sinhalese and Tamil masses are undergoing untold suffering.

In order that the two races to be in harmony they must go back to the state they were when the foreigners came in. As British Colonial secretary Huge Cleghorn correctly pointed out in 1799 there are two nations. This has to be recognized. The two races must have their own autonomy so that they could achieve their goals and ambitions. It is meaningless for the majority to shed crocodile tears that the Tamils cannot survive on their own. If Tamils fail as a nation let it be called their karma. It is important that the Sinhalese people be educated that a federal form of Government is not partition of the country. When the unity cannot be achieved by unitary form of government, it is best to sacrifice the unitary government and form a federal government. Canada and India are wonderful examples of one such country. How many more mistakes the politicians are to be permitted, before they become smart enough to learn the lesson and turn the tide?

To reach Kumar Punithavel write to kumarpunithavel@yahoo.com

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"Inner Engineering"

Self-realized yogi and founder of Isha Foundation, Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudev, has designed an Isha Yoga program called "Inner Engineering" that will be offered in Toronto this fall. The class will be offered by a trained Isha Yoga teacher from Oct. 24th to 30th at 3330 Pharmacy Avenue, Scarborough, ONT - M1W 2V8. The program runs **Weds-Fri 9:00 am -12:00 noon & 6:30pm-9: 30 pm, Sat 9 am to 12 noon & Sun 8am to 5pm.** For more information please call 416 300 3010. Toll free nationwide, call 1-866-424-ISHA (4742). To register online visit www.ishayoga.org. For more detailed news and information on Sadhguru and Isha Foundation, Inc. visit www.ishafoundation.org.

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Philip Fernandez is running as an Independent candidate in Toronto-Centre Riding. His is a teacher who works in the literacy field. He is a leading member of the Ontario Regional Committee of the Communist Party of Canada (Marxist-Leninist), the Toronto Spokesperson of the People's Front and a member of No One Is Illegal (Toronto). Philip says: " Today in Ontario there are more homeless people, more people who are poor and working poor. A large number of them live in the Toronto-Centre riding. People who come here from the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Korea and other places to make a living face the worst kinds of abuse. Our youth are criminalized for problems that are caused by the economic and political system in Canada that is blocking their future. Now is the time to step up our struggles in defence of the rights of all and to organize ourselves to demand that the governments recognize and guarantee our rights to housing, education, healthcare and other basic rights so that everyone can live with dignity and security."



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CAREER COUNSELING WORKSHOP 2007 For HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS (GRADES 9-12) Organized By The ASSOCIATION OF SRI LANKAN GRADUATES OF CANADA And THE CANADA TAMIL PARENTS' ASSOCIATION In partnership with the COMMUNITY AND CULTURAL SERVICES, YORK REGION DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

The Career Counseling Workshop, as in the past years, is designed to serve as a forum for dissemination of information, exchange of ideas, and sharing of academic and professional experience of guest speakers and moderators including Doctors and Medical Students, Engineers and Physical Science Specialists, IT Specialists, Company Managers, Accountants, Business and Social Science Specialists, journalists etc. All of them are Canadian educated with several years of educational and professional experience in Canada in their fields of specialization. For the benefit of students, there would be three groups focusing on, Life Science, Engineering & Applied Science(including Computer and IT), and Business and Social Studies.

This year also, a special program, designed for the benefit of parents, focusing on expanding their knowledge on various fields of studies and helping them understand the problems their children face in selecting their field for higher studies will be held. This group will have a panel of experienced educators, teachers and others knowledgeable in various areas of concern to the parents and students. All parents will be encouraged to ask questions, exchange ideas and share their experience.

Venue: Milliken Mills High School, 7522 Kennedy Road, Markham
(Near Kennedy Road and 14th Avenue Intersection)

Date: Saturday, October 13, 2007

Time: 9:30 am to 3:00 pm

All Grade 9-12 students are invited to participate in the workshop.

Since the space is limited, enrollment will strictly be on a first come first served basis. Please call one of the following executives of ASGC to register your name in advance:

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Eighth Annual Awards of Excellence Ceremony Recognizes Exceptional Tamil Youth Achievements

Eighth annual Awards of Excellence ceremony organized by the Canadian Tamil Youth Development Centre (CanTYD), will take place on November 18th at the Toronto Centre for the Arts located at 5040 Yonge St. The reception will start at 6:00pm and will be followed by the awards ceremony at 7:00 pm.

The key note speaker for the evening will be Justin P.J. Trudeau, an educator, youth advocate and environmentalist. Education and empowerment of youth are priorities that have dominated Justin Trudeau's professional and personal life. Today, Justin works to increase the engagement of Canada's youth towards their country, their communities and their environment.

CanTYD, a non-profit organization focuses on youth empowerment. Our organization provides an environment for the fostering and the

growth of Tamil youth within the community. By adhering to the principles of advocacy, partnership, education, assistance, research and mentorship, the Awards of Excellence emulates CanTYD's vision to support Tamil youth in their academic, professional and personal pursuits.

Since 1999, the Awards of Excellence has been the signature event for CanTYD in recognizing and honouring the excelling achievements of Tamil high school students. The award categories include academics, athletics, overall achievements, community contributions, most improved, and arts. As of the year 2005, CanTYD has awarded nearly \$100,000.00 worth of scholarships to fund students' post secondary educational pursuits.

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Continued from Page 1

Under fire, Sri Lanka takes swipe at UN and EU

And in Geneva Sri Lanka recently attacked critics, including the EU, as neocolonialists. In a strongly worded statement, Dayan Jayatilaka, Sri Lanka's Ambassador to the UN in Geneva, said there was no "moral asymmetry" between Sri Lanka and the critics. "There is far too much naming and shaming going on and its flowing only in one direction," he said. "We did not spawn fascism on our soil. We did not have concentration camps, and we did not set out to conquer the world. We are only trying to defend and re-unify our country [...] We do not need lectures from those who did."

Coinciding with the visit of UN envoy

Manfred Nowak on October 1st, 2007 - the Special Rapporteur on Torture - allies of the Sri Lankan President again charged that envoys from various international institutions including the UN and the EU are 'coming to Sri Lanka' with the intention of tarnishing the image of the country.

The Former Canadian cabinet minister and ex - ambassador to the UN Allan Rock, aroused Sri Lankan Government ire after his ten day fact - finding mission to Sri Lanka in November 2006. Allan Rock found himself the favourite target of all those rushing to defend the human rights violations of the Sri Lankan security forces.

Continued from Page 1

Sri Lanka borrowing \$500 million amidst IMF warning to cut spending

"The gross borrowing limit of the government as approved by the parliament for the year 2007 is 655 billion rupees and the proposed international bond issue would be well within the overall annual borrowing limit," the finance ministry said in the statement.

The total outstanding debt of the government increased to 2,872.9 billion rupees at the end of July from 2,606.6 billion at the end of December 2006, central bank data show.

The government claims that the funds are for the development of infrastructures. However analysts say the government may have preferred this type of funding rather than IMF - World Bank soft loans which usually come with strings

attached on how they are spent.

The IMF recently urged Sri Lanka to cut spending in a report. The report said it needs to slash state spending and contain the budget deficit, warning that the island's debt exceeds gross national production.

It also rapped the Colombo government for not collecting enough revenue to meet day-to-day expenses and noted that investments were too low to sustain growth.

"Sri Lanka's gross capital formation is the lowest in the region and current government spending is high," the global financial lender said in a report.

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Continued from Page 1

PC Leader John Tory: "I have always believed that listening to the people is at the very core of leadership"



Ontario Progressive Conservative Party Leader John Tory today announced that proposed legislation to expand public education will only proceed after extensive consultation and support from Ontarians through their elected representatives.

"I have always believed that listening to the people is at the very core of leadership," said Tory. "That is how I have always conducted myself as a leader - in business, in community work, in sports, and now in public life. I cannot imagine leading any other way."

In a speech to the Economic Club of Toronto, Tory spoke about the passionate debate thus far in the election campaign about including children in faith-based schools in public education. Tory said any bill will only proceed with the support of the people, through their elected representatives.

"MPPs will be allowed a free vote, so they are at liberty to vote their conscience and represent the wishes of their constituents," said Tory. "In this significant way, the public can be more involved in the decision making. They have

expressed strong concerns, and I have heard them."

"On this issue, I have been open and honest about my views, and the motivation behind them. I have been clear today, before the election, that there will be a free vote and I have declared my own position in the matter; and I have always had the same position in public as I have had in private," said Tory.

Tory said that while many people have talked to him about the proposal to expand the public school system, many more have talked about the issues that matter to them most - about finding a family doctor, about struggling to keep up with the cost of living, about safe communities and about restoring trust in elected leaders.

"I have said from the beginning that this is not the most important issue in Ontario today," said Tory. "So let's talk about what the most important issues are, and why Ontario needs new leadership to make a difference on those issues."

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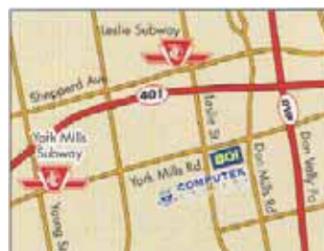
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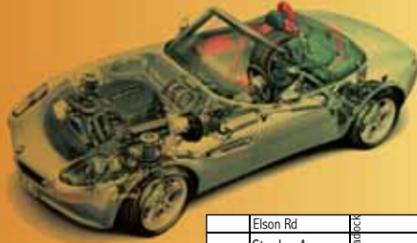
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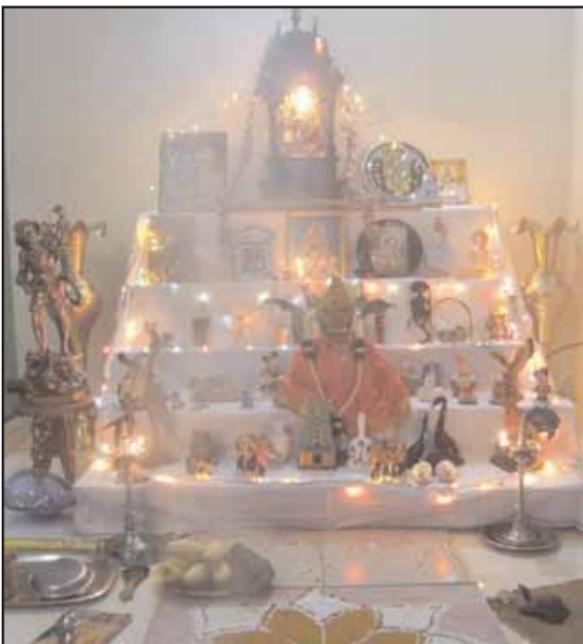
"Kolu": Navarathri display of religious and non-religious idols



Incense sticks are offered to the "Kolu"



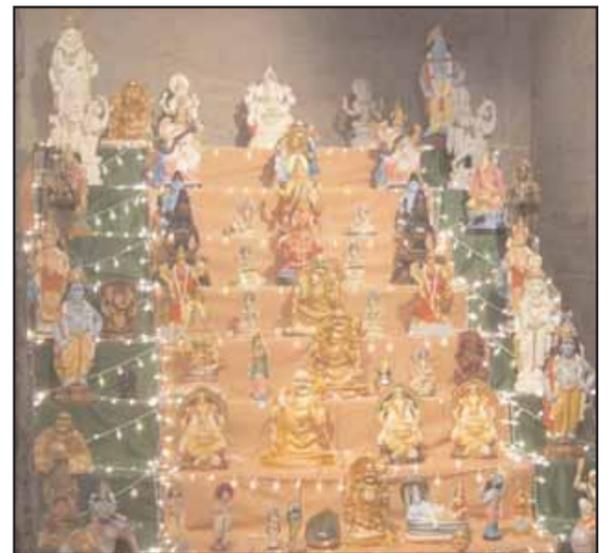
"Navathaniyam"- nine grains are planted in a clay pot during "Navarathri". The nine grains are "Nell"- Paddy, "Eil"- Sesame, "Koll"- Horse gram, "Payaru"- Green gram, "Uzhunthu"- Black gram, "Solam"- Maize, "Irungu"- another variety of grain, "Samai"- Millet, and "Kurakkan"- another variety of grain. These nine grains are grown for prosperity



A traditionally arranged "Kolu" in a house in Mount Lavana, near Colombo, Sri Lanka



The main "Kumbam" is dressed with silk, coconut is soaked in turmeric



A traditional display of religious idols are arranged beautifully on a nine-step staircase at Sri Ponnambalawaneswarar Temple of Kochchikade, Colombo 13, Sri Lanka [Pictures taken during Navarathri of year 2006]



"Kolam"- A traditional display of art for auspicious occasions. It's drawn with flour, turmeric, and "Kumkumam"



Sahana Ramachandran (12) sings "Sthothra Mala" for Goddess



Saraswathy Ramachandran has been arranging "Kolu" since she was a teenager. She says that, she loves to arrange it differently every year

BY
Dushiyanthini
Kanagasabapathipillai

Sivaji Ganeshan 79th Birth Anniversary Memorial Event

Oct 1st being NT's birthday, the Sivaji - Prabhu Charities has arranged a function to honour veteran artists and release the English edition of NT's autobiography. The venue was Music Academy and the function was slated to begin at 6.30 PM. When I reached the venue at 6 PM, there was a large crowd and it was surprising that so many people had turned up in spite of non availability of buses in view of the Bandh. The Hall was two tiered and all the seats in both the floors were occupied. Fans have come out from Vellore, Kanchipuram, Bangalore and even from Nagercoil - Kanyakumari.

The screen went up at the start of the function and at the same time the two screens kept at both sides of the screen came to Life showing NT's photograph. At the backdrop of the stage there was the Banner saying Nadigar Thilagathin 79-vathu Pirandha Naal - 01.10.2007 with a close up shot of NT's face. On the stage were seated Ramkumar, Prabhu, Union Minister for State Ms. Purandheswari and Cho. YG Mahendra was the compere. YGM came to the mike. The front side of the stand on which the mike was mounted had a portrait of NT as Chatrapathi Sivaji with a garland on it.

YGM announced Irai Vanakkam and punctuated with a comment Ithu Tamizhagathirukku Sivaji-yai kodutharkkaga Iraivanukku nandri sollum paadal.

After Irai Vanakkam, all the guests were honoured by Mr. Bhoominathan, the President of Akila Indhya Sivaji Rasigar Mandram.

YGM announced that N. Ram of Hindu is on the way and called upon Thalapathi Ramkumar to deliver the welcome address. Ramkumar came to the mike and welcomed the chief guest. It turned out that the union minister Ms. Purandheswari is the daughter of NTR and she grew up in Chennai and studied at Church Park along with Then Mozhi, NT's daughter and Kannama, wife of Ramkumar. Ramkumar went on saying that she is more of a daughter to NT and a sister to him. He said that the aim of the trust was to help the downtrodden and poor of the society and in addition to honouring the veterans of the cine field who worked with NT, the trust also does social service. The trust had adopted a middle school at Pappan chathiram, a village in Poonthamalli High Road in Tiruvalluvar district. During the 200th day celebration of Chandramuki, the trust in coordination with rotary club of Madras had given Rs 2 Lakhs and now they are giving one more Lakh rupees for the same school. Ramkumar also thanked the fans who had come from far and near and told them that the next function will be the NT statue unveiling at Madurai followed by statues unveiling at Salem, Tiruchy, Tanjore and Nagercoil. He also said next year being NT's 80th birthday, they are going to celebrate on a mammoth scale where the entire Tamilnadu would be involved. He finished his speech with a punch "Nammuduya Kaalam koodiya viravil varum. Athu varai porumaiyaga iruppom" which sent the crowd into raptures. YGM added that NT statue is required in every town so that the present day actors can improve themselves. By this time Mr. N. Ram had arrived.

YGM then announced that Ms. Purandheswari would be honoured and he told the audience an interesting episode involving her. While they were students at church Park, they were taken to Karnan. The next day NT's daughter Thenmozhi decided to play a joke on her and so went and told everyone that Puran's father NTR who acted as Lord Krishna was responsible for Karnan's death and so no one should speak to her. It so happened that no girl spoke to her the whole day and she was literally in tears. She went home and when NTR came back from shooting, she told him the whole story. NTR could not

convince her. The next day NTR came to school and spoke to her classmates and said sorry it seems. Having said this YGM called upon Ms. Kannama Ramkumar, Ms. Punitha Prabhu and Ms. Anuradha Giri to come to the stage and honour the minister. She was presented with a silk shawl and a big memento having NT's photograph.

Next it was the turn of veterans to be honoured. First to be called up was Ms. S. Varalakshmi and the screens went on showing clippings of Varalakshmi with NT. It started with Tigu tigu song from VPKB and changed to Saktivadivana vetri vadivelanai and then we could see the scene where NT is sent off to the war-front with a aarathi. When NT started "Neela vanathile oru chekka pizham-pu pol - "the fans went berserk. Then the scene changed to Raja Raja Chozhan where NT on his birthday (Rajarajan's birthday) would seek blessings from her sister for which Varalakshmi would reply " Dharmathai kappatharkaga andha deivame neril vandha avatharamappa nee" . With the sound reaching crescendo the screen went off and S. Varalakshmi walked into the stage helped by Prabhu. The minister presented her with the shawl, memento and a cheque.

The second one to be called up was M.N. Rajam (YGM comment: Tamizh-yai sariyaga ucharikka therindhavar) and the screen again went on. It started with " Kokkaro Kokkaroko Sevalae" from Pathi Bakthi and the decibel level increased when "Mayangukiral oru Madhu" started and when NT turns Savithiri's photo away from the bed and walks back and when the party scene was shown where MNN introduces MNR to NT, the level become more higher and higher and when two charanams of "Pattondu kettan " was screened showing NT on the piano, the entire back rows erupted and it was joy all round making YG comment " 46 varushathirukku appruamum ippadi oru rection irukku-na, ithu ethanai varusham analum ippadiyethan irukkum." M.N. Rajam came to the stage and she was also honoured the same way.

The third recipient was Mr. P.S. Nadarajan and he who started his career with NT at Bala Gana Sabha later became his costume designer and was there with him for 60 years and still serves at Sivaji Productions. For him the clipping started and My God it made the crowd go wild. Whoever had the editing has a good taste, I thought. It started with Easanadi potri showing NT as Shiva in Thiruvilayadal and the background song changed to Mannavan Vandhanadi, the majestic walk was shown. Without changing the song, the scene changed and the graceful father was walking down the steps followed by Kannan the unfortunate son and Vijayan the sophisticated son walking in to pick up the blank cheque. The Mannavan changed into Appar and Lord Shiva danced Rudhra Thandavam and when the viragu vetti walked away with honours after singing Pattum Naane we were treated to the fisherman walk and then you saw Mr. Gopal pleading please to make SaroDevi to sing Unnai Ondru ketpen again followed by that white and white walk of Aha mella nada . And when the Barrister Rajnikanth opened the door and came in everybody went out of their control. When the Surya putran next walked in and sat in the Simhasanam to hear Mazhai koukkum Kodai, the crowd refused to sit down and the fans from Bangalore were vociferous to the core. Neeyum Naanuma with King George followed and when the Mannavan Vandhaanadi song ended, it took another 5 minutes to restore normalcy to the crowd. Everyone was so emotional and charged up. Mr. Nadarajan came to the stage and he was presented with the memento, shawl and cash cheque.

Then the Minister was called up to present the Rs 1 Lakh cheque to the Pappan chathiram school. Clippings were shown how the school was there before, even without basic facilities and the changes that had come about now. The Rotary club president collected the cheque. Next the English edition of the Autobiography was released by N. Ram and received by Cho. The person who wrote this book Mr. T.S. Narayanaswamy and the English translator Ms. Sabitha Radhakrishnan, the publishers and the distributors were all honoured by the trust.

The Union Minister came to the mike and she apologized for not speaking in Tamil as she was not fluent with it. She recalled the days when she used to be at Annai Illam and she fondly remembered Appa asking her to dance. He used to compliment her when she finished and to just hear him say Sabash, she would dance. After marriage she moved to Hyderabad but she would find time to come down to Chennai and spend a whole day along with Appa and Kamala amma. The Minister without notes recalled the financial contributions made by NT to national causes, starting from 1962 Indo- China war, the 1965 and 1971 Pakistan wars and the amount of Rs 2 Lakhs NT gave to Indira Gandhi in 1972 for building houses for homeless people at Delhi, she was reeling of statistics which made even Ramkumar and Prabhu look at her with astonishment. She was also recollecting the bond that existed between her father and NT. She spoke of the characters that NT had played and remembered NT replying to criticisms about over acting "Acting itself is unnatural". She said that the power packed performances will live for ever and she thanked her brothers Ram and Prabhu for giving this opportunity to her.

Her pointing out the charity acts done by NT prompted YGM to remark "Avar niraya Dhanam panniyirukkar. Dharmam Panniyirukkar. Aanal Vilambaram illamal panniyirukkar. Andha tradition-ai avarthu arumai magangal pin thodarkirargal".

YGM announced that normally the recipients do not speak on the occasion but M.N. Rajam wanted to say a few words. Rajam came to the mike and said that Sivaji is a Baghyavan. In Life one cannot get all that one wants and even if somebody gets it his near and dear may not be there to see that. But NT attained all a man could achieve and that was witnessed by his parents, brothers, sister, wife, sons, daughters and grand children and to receive an award named after such a person is itself a Bagyam for me, she noted.

Next one to come to mike was N. Ram.

Ram also spoke mostly in English with intermittent Tamil. He confessed that he is not a avid cinema watcher and so he is not skilled enough to comment on NT. Though he has moved with him, his uncle S. Rangarajan (who produced Gowravam) had a close relationship with NT. But what he had observed was the sincerity and dedication he had brought to his profession and that was remarkable. The second point was the power packed performances and his ability to get under the skin of any character. Ram informed that Cho was telling him that if one word could convey about NT's acting prowess it was versatility and Ram wondered if a single Tamil word could be substituted for that. The third point was the way NT respected friendship. He was such a warmth person who could keep the friendship going in spite of political or ideological differences and the best example for this could be the friendship he maintained with the present TN CM MuKa. Ram said he wanted to know more about this person and the autobiography should help him to find out. He complimented Ramkumar and Prabhu for organizing the function

efficiently with the time consciousness and finished his speech.

YGM requested Cho to come and before that he recalled that in 1961 his father was conducting the play Petralthan Pillaiya and NT had come for watching the play. After the play was over NT went to green room and told " YGP, indha kadhai-yai enkitta koduthiru apprum indha mechanic madasamy-ya vandhane avan-yum koduthiru" . The play became Paar Magale Paar and Cho made his debut with it. With this he made way for Cho.

Cho started in his usual style. " Ram Sivaji-yai patri pesa thaguthi illai endrar. Sivaji nadippai vimarsikka thaguthi paartha indha ulagathile orutharalum mudiyathu. Ini oruthan pirandhudhan varanum. Naan-ellam thaguthi paartha vimarsanam panren. Appadi paartha naan endha vishyathai patriyum comment adikka mudiyathu." He said that deserving yesteryear artists are being honoured. About Varalakshmi "avanga paadi nadikka koodiyavanga. Indha kaalathile heroine pesuvathe periya saadhanai". About M.N. Rajam, Cho said " Thuglak padikkira ore nadigai M.N. Rajam than. Avangalukku politics-le avvalavu interest. Indira Gandhi-yode periya fan. Indira sey-yarathu ellam correct-impanga. Naan Jayaprakash Narayan-ai support panni ezhuthi iruppen. Adhanale ivangalukku JP appadi-nu peyar vachen. JP-na Jenma Pagai. Ithile innoru vishyam ennana Thuglak padikiravanga yaarume athai othukiradhillai enbatharkku evanga oru sirandha utharanam" Cho set the crowd into laughter. He continued " Nadarajanai pidicha pothum Sivaji-kitte enna kariyam vena sadhichukalam".

Cho recalled that NT had a very sharp sense of humour laced with sarcasm and he had been at the receiving end many a times. He particularly remembered NT coming and seeing his play "Yaarukkum Vetkamillai". He was there for the full time and the next day Cho had a shooting with NT. Cho was called to the make up room where NT was doing make up and the director, producer were also there. NT casually told him "un kadhai athukku poruthamana vasanam ellame nalla irundhuchu". Cho was on cloud nine. Leaving a gap NT continued " Neenga ellam summa vandhu ninna pothe nadagam nalla irundhuchu-na, neengalam nadichiengana evaluvu nalla irukkum" .Cho was lost for words. " Naan immediate ellorukkum badhil solliduvu. Aana avarkitte enna badhil solrathu-ne theriyale. Enda avarai parka vandhom -nu ayiduchu." .

Cho elaborated further on this when he recalled NT's comments when Cho was about to launch Thuglak. " Kurangu kallaiyum kudichitu athai Thelum kotti, athu kai-ile oru poo maalai-yum kodutha eppadi irukkum? Adhu madhiri than un kai-ile pathirikai". After some months when Cho asked him "Ippo eppadi irukku?" Udane NT "appadiye than irukku". Once when AVM Saravanan asked him why he always made fun of Cho, NT replied "Avanai pathi enakku

theriyum. Ennai pathi avanukkum theriyum"

Cho further said that he was discussing about VPKB with NT once and NT told him that he would show another method of acting for the same scene which was shown earlier. He spoke in a voice which would be audible only to the person sitting next to him but Cho was astonished by the way he delivered. "enakku appadiye pullarichu pochu". He also recalled the different walks he showed for different characters and said nobody can even imagine doing them. It was God's gift and Saraswathy Kadatcham was there for him 100%. His only weakness was if you take away the camera he cannot act. "Ellathaiyum open-aga pesiduvuvar. Adhanaldhan avar politics-le vetri pera mudiyavillai. Sondha pondatity kitte-ye nadikanum. Appathan politics-le jeyikka mudiyum. Avar nermaiyaaga irundhar. Unmaiyaaga irundhar. Adhanal vetri pera mudiyavillai" . For this the whole crowd gave a standing ovation.

Cho said that he had not seen sons like Ramkumar and Prabhu anywhere. "Avangalai madhiri mariyathai therinjavangalai naan paarthathe illai. Ippadi oru rendu pillaingali avar koduthutu poyirukirar. Sadharanama konjam panam pugazh vandhale mandai garvam vandhudum. Ivalavu paarthatarkku pinnalaeyum avanga kaatra madhippu mariyadhai romba sirappanadhu. I wish hem all success". With that Cho signed off.

Now it was vote of thanks and Ilaya Thilagam Prabhu came to the mike. He thanked all the chief guests and he was particularly emotional about Purandheswari and recalled that she still calls him Anna and she never behaves like a Union Minister. He said Cho is a well wisher of his family and he always had good will for NT. He thanked Ram and the veterans and turned to the fans. "Neenga illaina naangaellam illai. Appa poi 6 varusham achu. Aana avar mela neenga vachirukira anbu koodikittathan varuthu. Enakku theriyum innikku vandhadhu quarter than. Sivaji padai fulla vandha athirumille. Viravil indha muzhu padai-yum varum. Neenga ellam engolode irukira varaikkum naanga nalla iruppom. Eppavum ungalode dhan iruppom. Adutha varusham pramadham irukkum." He concluded his speech.

It was time for National Anthem and the function ended with a big Jaihind from the fans.

Like last year the Kolapodi specialist Kalimuthu from Aruppukottai had shown his skills on the floor and this time it was SP. Choudry looking at you with his piercing eyes. Man! This guy is blessed with talent. It was so real.

As usual Prabhu and Ramkumar found it very difficult to wade thro' the fans. They smilingly obliged everyone before moving away.

For me again it was an opportunity to travel down the memory lane and relish the present.

- T. Murali (from Chennai)

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Kollywood Film Review



by Anand J

Malaikottai

Vishal flexes his muscles and defies all the rules of gravity in the name of stunts, cracks one-liners most of the time and romances Priya Mani the rest. If you are keen on watching a movie that does not slip from the predictable rules of commercial cinema, Malaikottai is just the kind you are looking for. For it has six stunt scenes, five song sequences, a romantic sidetrack and an acceptable mixture of wisecracks not necessarily in that order.



Boopathy Pandiyan seems to have a simple conviction for his movies. An undemanding plot decked with a neat script strewn with the necessary pot-boiler ingredients. Pandiyan has been partially successful with this theory for Malaikottai. Loaded with all the racy elements, the first half of the movie travels at a supersonic jet's pace. However, the director seems to have just lost track soon after that is evident from the sluggish tempo of the movie in the second half.

Vishal is a youngster who lives in Pattukottai. One of these days, he gets into an ugly scuffle with the desperado of the town who tries to extort land from his friend's father. After being arrested by the cops for this offense, Vishal is produced in the court where the justice releases him with a condition that he signs in the Police Station in Trichy (there goes the title reference) everyday.

This circumstance brings Vishal to Trichy where his love blossoms with Priya Mani. The girl is, however, ignorant of Vishal's love and trying to get rid of him, lies that she is in love with Ajay - who incidentally is the brother of another baddie Devaraj. Soon enough, for this deception, Priya Mani gets into trouble with Ajay who tries to take advantage of her and the situation. And the rest of the story, as you can garner, isn't too unpredictable.

Vishal hasn't squandered even a mere possibility to show what he got. He plays football with a tender coconut, performs unmistakably choreographed aerobics to squash the baddies, and does his best to fit into the romeo-act. Here is a slice of one of his stunt sequences to better evaluate the director's creativity. Vishal pounces upon the villain and throws him onto an electricity distribution transformer. The transformer explodes with a heavy thud after the collision and all the electric cables break free.

Vishal, complemented with a thundering background score, picks one of the smoldering cables and lights his cigarette.

If Priya Mani's Paruthiveeran performance hasn't elapsed from your mind, you might be in for a rude shock in Malaikottai.

Apparently, it isn't quite unheard for a commercial movie to fritter away the female lead's full potential. Nevertheless, Priya Mani hasn't quite let down her fans; proof remix version of the famous song 'Aatha Aathoramba Vaariya'.

The couple Ashish Vidyarthi and Urvasi tries their best to tickle your funny bones and makes no bones about their intention. Ajai, Devaraj, Kadhal Thandapani, and Ponnambalam are the other villains whose villainy is belittled by the director's decision to show them in a lighter vein. Mani Sharma's music is just passable, however, the Aatha Aathoramba Vaariya remix is sure to stay in the charts for quite some time. Vaithi's camera speaks by itself and Editor Sashi has rendered a crisp job in the first half of the movie.

In all, we recommend Malaikottai if all you need is a mindless laugh, however, don't expect it to be a laugh-a-thon.

Verdict : No Malai. No Kottai. Only a mole hill.

Satham Podathey

Making a thriller love story is not an easy job these days. Some directors tend to think that only creating some special effects is enough to make a thriller. Vasanth is the latest entrant in the league of such directors, and his recently released Satham Podathey seems to be a half-hearted attempt, leaving an unpleasant experience in the minds of the audience. Only due to the peppy musical score by Yuvan and enthusiastic acting of Prithviraj, the hapless viewers remain on their seats with utmost patience.

There is nothing special in the



story (but the director had earlier claimed that it is based on a real life story which happened in Andhra). Bhanu (Padmapriya), gets married to Ratnavel (Nitin Sathya) a guy who works in railways as he is a sportsman. But soon the relationship turns sour, when the couple realize after an alcoholic rehabilitation forum member (Nasser) tells the wife that Ratnavel is an impotent man. In spite of family pressures to get a mutual divorce, the tradition bound Bhanu adopts a child

and doesn't break away from the marriage.

But with the arrival of the baby, Ratnavel becomes more insecure and tells her that the child reminds him about his weakness. Immediately, Bhanu decides to return the child but when she realizes that her husband was an alcoholic who knew about his impotency and had betrayed her, she walks out on him. Bhanu's brother makes all his efforts to get her approval for a second marriage. He tries to play the cupid by arranging meetings for her with Ravichandiran (Prithviraj) a happy-go-lucky person, and as a result Bhanu enters into a new marital bliss with Ravichandiran. But Ratnavel, who had vowed to make life miserable for Bhanu, returns. He kidnaps Bhanu (the idea is very foolish) and keeps her under his custody in a sound-proof concealed room. The remaining part of the film is a depiction of how the hero saves his wife from her ex-husband.

Directors like Vasanth should at least watch some of the acclaimed Tamil thrillers like Manivannan's Nooravathu Naal or K.Bhagyaraj's Hindi blockbuster Aakhri Raasta to learn how to make a typical Tamil thriller! Vasanth has committed a lot of logical mistakes in the script. It seems that the director has reposed a lot of faith in his so called 'sound proof' technique rather than on his script!

Is it possible for one to leave one's wife screaming in pain in a soundproof room, while doubtfully looking the other way? How could an unknown person come to one's house with a big mortuary van, drop a dead body, and kidnap a woman after setting the house on fire with the help of a gas cylinder? How come nobody witnesses such a heinous crime committed in the busy area like Palavakkam, as has been shown in the movie?

The first part of the movie moves as slowly as a mega serial and the second part become a big test for the viewer's patience. The director makes real mockery of the climax when he tries to justify the happenings in Ratnavel's life.

Yuvan's music composition is good and is the saving grace for the movie for 15 to 20 minutes. Songs like Azhagu Kutty Chellam and Pesugiren, Pesugiren are a class apart, but their placing in the film could have been better, and they end up further slowing down the pace of the film.

Prithviraj has done his part well, and Nitin Sathya needs a special mention for doing the role of a semi-psychotic. Padmapriya doesn't entice the viewers in any way. In a few scenes, she looks aged and brash which doesn't do justice to her portrayal as an innocent village girl in the movie.

All in all, watching this film is sheer wastage of one's precious time!

Verdict: Only Sound. No Substance.

Contact: cine@monsoonjournal.com

Brand MGR still rules Kollywood

By M Bharat Kumar

MGR. It's a name that spells magic on the silver screen even today. Marthur Gopala Ramachandran (MGR) virtually dominated Tamil cinema for over three decades beginning 1950. He rose to stardom by playing characters that featured him as the saviour of the poor. An actor-turned-politician, MGR still charms Kollywood.

To cash in on MGR's huge fan base that exists even today, several films are titled after MGR's blockbusters, his hit songs are remixed and retuned and several actors have adopted him as their role models. Films like Ayirathil Oruvan, Nam Naadu, Anbae Vaa, Nadodi Mannan, Ninaithathai Mudipavan, Pachaikili Muthucharam, Thottal Poo Malarum are inspired by the movies and songs of the legend.

Even after two decades of his death, MGR still manages to hold his sway in Kollywood. When asked, a prominent director says, 'it is natural that every film personality gets inspired by MGR. After all, we grew up watching his films. At a time when mythological moves were the order of the day, he created a silent revolution coming up with movies on mass-based themes that were socially relevant.'

MGR has emerged as a brand today. Any project named after MGR's film or song attracts immediate attention, he adds.

To prove a point, a couple of MGR's blockbuster movies were re-

released recently. They have gone on to collect good revenue. Films like Nadodi Mannan, directed and enacted by MGR and Ayirathil Oruvan were re-released last year in over a dozen theatres across the State. It was celebration time for several thousand MGR fans, who thronged cinema halls in large numbers to watch their favourite hero. According to Marimuthu, an ardent fan of MGR, 'he is a God to us. We grew up watching his movies. No doubt, there is a huge demand for his movies and songs even today'.

Some of his popular songs like Thottal Poo Malarum, Adho Antha Paravai Polae, Nan Aana Ittal and Nan Yaar Nee Yar were remixed for some of the recent films. Says music director D Imman: 'Following a demand from the audience, we chose to remix some golden hits of MGR. But it is no easy job. I have to satisfy several thousands of his fans without spoiling the original charm'.

He is the biggest celebrity in Tamil cinema even today. His unique deeds and achievements are unparalleled, says director P Vasu.

'My father Peethambaram had worked as a make-up man for MGR and I had an opportunity to watch the matinee idol in very close quarters. He inspired me to enter filmhood,' he adds.

A demi-God to several film personalities, MGR will continue to rule the masses, say his fans in chorus.

Indian Actress Shilpa Shetty Still Feeling Effects of Controversial Kiss with US Actor

By Ray McDonald

Shilpa Shetty is still feeling the effects of her much-condemned kiss with fellow movie star Richard Gere.

Immigration authorities at Mumbai Airport briefly detained the Indian actress on September 26, saying she was still wanted for obscenity charges filed in the wake of her April 15 kiss.

Shetty's publicist Dale Bhagwagar said the 32-year-old actress was in tears after being stopped enroute to Berlin for the opening of the musical Miss Bollywood. Shetty plays the lead role. She was allowed to join her dance troupe after prolonged questioning. "I can understand something like this if I'd committed a criminal offense. But what was my offense, when I'm just an actor, going to perform a musical on foreign land," Bhagwagar quoted Shetty saying.

Gere embraced and kissed Shetty on the cheek during a public AIDS awareness event in New Delhi, sparking a nationwide outcry among conservative hard-line Hindus, who claimed the pair violated the country's strict anti-obscenity laws.

A regional court issued arrest warrants against Gere and barred Shetty from leaving the country. Bhagwagar said that while India's Supreme Court overturned the order, its ruling did not show up in the immigration department computer system.



Immigration officials at Mumbai's international airport could not be reached for comment, but Bhagwagar said Shetty's lawyers would take up the matter with authorities.

Shortly after the incident, Richard Gere apologized and returned to the United States. He said the controversy had been manufactured by a small hard-line political party. The 58-year-old actor is a frequent visitor to India, where he promotes health issues and the cause of Tibetan refugees, tens of thousands of whom live in India.

A star in India since 1993, Shilpa Shetty this year attracted international attention by winning the British reality TV series "Celebrity Big Brother." Shetty was at the center of an international racism controversy involving fellow contestants Jade Goody, Jo O'Meara, and Danielle Lloyd.

[VoA]



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The Purchaser submits deposit to the Vendor as security for the performance by him of his obligations under the agreement. The general position with respect to a default by the purchaser under an agreement is that the vendor has an election right. The Vendor can

elect to take the deposit in full satisfaction of its damages regardless of whether it has any damages or not. The right for the deposit to be forfeited is a right at law and applies whether or not it is expressly provided for in the agreement. The second election is the right to take the deposit towards the actual damages incurred by the vendor. If the actual damages are greater than the deposit the vendor can claim the additional damages from the purchaser. If they are less the difference must be repaid. If a deposit is paid to the vendor and the vendor absconds or is judged bankrupt, the purchaser's only remedy will be against the land. The purchaser will have a purchaser's lien for the amount of the deposit paid. In case of the new homes, if the builder absconds with the funds or otherwise does not complete the transaction and there is insufficient equity for a return of the deposits, the New Home Warranty Act protects deposits up to \$40,000.00 for new homes and \$20,000.00 for condominium units.

The agreement can be conditional upon the purchaser obtaining financing, conditional upon home inspection that is satisfactory to the purchaser or in case of condo purchase, conditional upon purchaser's solicitor reviewing a status certificate which outlines the status of the condominium. For an instance, financing condition allows you to cancel the agreement if you are unable to obtain the financing. Do not waive any condition until you are sure that all the conditions have been met. In case of purchase of new home, never sign an unconditional agreement of purchase and sale until it has been reviewed by a lawyer.

There are two ways purchasers can hold title together. When spouses or partners buy a home, they usually take title as "Joint Tenants". Each person owns an equal share of the property. If one dies, surviving joint tenant automatically becomes the sole owner. A joint tenant cannot leave his or her share to anyone else in a will. The other way title can be held is as "Tenants in

Common". This means that each party only owns a portion allocated to him or her. Upon the death of a Tenant in Common, his or her percentage ownership is passed to his or her heirs in accordance with the Last Will or law.

Purchasers of a home in Ontario must pay Land Transfer Tax to the Provincial Government upon the registration of a transfer/Deed of the home. The amount of tax payable depends upon the purchase price of the property. Under the Land Transfer Tax Act, a refund is available to eligible first-time purchasers of newly constructed homes. New homes purchased from a builder are subject to federal Goods and Services Tax (G.S.T.). Federal Program provides for a housing rebate on the GST paid on a new home.

In accordance with the Agreement of Purchase and Sale, the balance due on closing will be adjusted so that each party pays its proportionate share of those items that have to be paid prior to the closing of the transaction. Every Builder's Agreement of Purchase and Sale itemizes compulsory add-ons to the base purchase price. Here are some of the charges-

Hydro and Water meter installation, Driveway paving, Enrolment in the Ontario New Home Warranty Program. There may be also clauses in the agreement relating to subdivision costs, such as boulevard tree planting, walls and fences. How you can cope with these add-ons? Ask the sales person to put in writing the cost of all add-ons. All of these costs should be capped. It means you need to know the full amount of money which could be an extra to the initial purchase price you are to pay on the date of closing. Builders offers contain a clause requiring the purchaser to pay any increase in the development charges or education levies which are imposed by municipal governments after the offer is signed. This could potentially run each purchaser into the thousands of dollars. Make sure these clauses are deleted or a maximum amount is written into the offer. Another cost may be incurred for the security deposit until the Municipality release the builder from its obligation relating to grading of the property. Make sure there is a process for obtaining a refund.

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