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Canadian Tamil Congress strongly condemns the burning of effigies and pictures of MPs of the Tamil people

The Canadian Tamil Congress (CTC) strongly condemns the burning of effigies and images of TNA leaders, Mr. Sampanthan and Mr. Sumanthiran. We believe these acts are aimed at weakening the democratically elected leadership of Tamil people in Sri Lanka and thereby silencing the democratic wishes of Tamil people.

In the last presidential elections, the Tamil people voted in large numbers to bring about change, as per the advice of these very TNA leaders. In the past few weeks, they have started working with the new Sri Lankan government and international community to address the many issues faced by Tamils, some of which have been in existence since the independence of

Sri Lanka 67 years ago. This work is without doubt, very difficult and the path ahead poses many challenges. Mr. Sampanthan and Mr. Sumanthiran have been acting in a very responsible manner, building trust among the communities in Sri Lanka with the ultimate goal of resolving the problems faced by Tamils in Sri Lanka.

CTC believes that this democratically elected Tamil leadership should be given space and support to perform without any distractions including these irresponsible and meaningless acts of burning effigies. CTC therefore urges Tamil Canadians and Tamil Diaspora to extend their support to the TNA leadership at this crucial time..

(Source: CTC Press statement)



R. Sampanthan and M.A. Sumanthiran

PRIME MINISTER STEPHEN HARPER ANNOUNCES UPCOMING LEGISLATION TO KEEP CANADA'S MOST HEINOUS CRIMINALS BEHIND BARS FOR LIFE

Prime Minister Stephen Harper today announced the Government's intent to introduce legislation to keep Canadian families and their communities safe by ensuring that the most heinous criminals will be sentenced to life behind bars without possibility of parole. The Prime Minister was joined by Peter MacKay, Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, and Roxanne James, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness.

Canadians expect their Government to protect them from the worst type of criminal, those who truly deserve to be called a menace to society. Individuals who commit the most heinous crimes, such as: those who plot kidnapping or sexual assault that results in murder; those with such contempt for law and order that they kill the police and correctional officers who are charged with protecting our streets; those who despise our values and way of life that carry out deadly acts of terrorism; and those who commit crimes of a particularly brutal nature.

That is why our Government will introduce legislation to amend the Criminal Code to ensure that Canada's most heinous criminals – those whose actions mean we cannot risk permitting them on the streets – receive a life sentence with no chance for parole.

This legislation will follow through on the 2013 Speech from the Throne commitment to ensure that a life sentence means a sentence for life, building on the Government's ongoing commitment to keep Canada's streets and



communities safe by holding violent offenders accountable and ensuring that the rights of victims are placed over the rights of criminals.

This legislation will build on the Government's tough-on-crime measures to keep our streets and communities safe by ensuring that criminals who are convicted of the most serious murders or those who are convicted of high treason will be imprisoned for the rest of their natural lives with no access to parole. This will include a mandatory sentence of life without parole for first degree murders involving:

- sexual assault;
- kidnapping or forcible confinement;
- terrorism;
- the killing of police officers or corrections officers; or,
- any first degree murders that are found to be of a particularly brutal nature.

The Prime Minister also recently announced the Government's intention to introduce legislation that would end the practice of making early release available for repeat violent offenders.

"Our Government believes in standing up for victims of crime and their

Tips for Canadians Packing for Their Next Holiday

The Honourable Lynne Yelich, Minister of State (Foreign Affairs and Consular), on February 11th reminded Canadians to travel smart by using the Government of Canada's Travel.gc.ca website to prepare for their next holiday out of the country.

"Whether Canadians are hitting the surf or the slopes, it's important to read the safe travel information and tips on how to travel smart and pack smart," said Minister Yelich. "That is why we have developed a whole host of online tools and tips to help Canadians be prepared to deal with the sudden accidents, illness or excess sun and heat that can take the fun out of any holiday."

More than ever, Canadians need access to information and services and expect to receive it at the click of a button or touch of a screen. As part of Canada's 21st Century Consular Plan, the Government of Canada is continuing to develop more useful tips and tools to assist travellers. Before leaving home, Canadians are encouraged to consult Travel.gc.ca, the Government of Canada's one-stop shop for accessing the latest safe travel information, including:

- country-specific Travel Advice and Advisories, where travellers can keep up to date with security conditions in their destinations;

-the Registration of Canadians Abroad service, a free, mobile-friendly way to keep connected to Canada in case of an emergency abroad or at home;

-the Travel Smart mobile web app, which gives travellers on the go key information at the touch of a smart phone; and

-the Travel Insurance Factsheet that guides Canadians on the type of travel insurance to purchase and on what should be included in the policy.

"Don't forget to pack travel insurance, and purchase the best travel insurance—including health insurance—you can afford before leaving Canada, even if you are only going for a short period of time," said Minister Yelich. "Foreign hospitals can be very expensive, and health care can become very costly should you require treatment or suffer an accident while you are abroad. Your provincial or territorial health plan will not cover you when you leave Canada."

In 2014, Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Canada responded to 15 major emergencies worldwide and managed over 2,500 emergency consular files.

am proud to announce that next week our Government will introduce legislation to ensure that the most heinous criminals who commit the most horrific crimes face serious criminal penalties, and that a life sentence in Canada will mean exactly that: a sentence for life."

- Prime Minister Stephen Harper



from the publisher's desk

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'Step it up' for gender equality

This year International Women's Day, celebrated globally on 8 March highlights the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, a historic roadmap signed by 189 governments 20 years ago that sets the agenda for realizing women's rights.

The Beijing Platform for Action focuses on 12 critical areas of concern, and envisions a world where each woman and girl can exercise her choices:

1. Women and Poverty

More than 1 billion in the world today, the great majority of whom are women, live in unacceptable conditions of poverty, mostly in the developing countries. Poverty has various causes, including structural ones. Poverty is a complex, multidimensional problem, with origins in both the national and international domains.

2. Education and Training of Women

Education is human right and an essential tool for achieving the goals of equality, development and peace. Non-discriminatory education benefits both girls and boys and thus ultimately contributes to more equal relationships between women and men.

3. Women and Health

Women have the right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health. The enjoyment of this right is vital to their life and well-being their ability to participate in all areas of public and private life.

4. Violence against Women

Violence against women is an obstacle to the achievement of the objectives of equality, development and peace. Violence against women both violates and impairs or nullifies the enjoyment by women of their human rights and fundamental freedoms.

5. Women and Armed Conflict

An environment that maintains world peace and promotes and protects human rights, democracy and the peaceful settlement of disputes, in accordance with the principles of non-threat or use of force against territorial integrity or political independence and of respect for sovereignty as set forth in the Charter of the United Nations, is an important factor for the advancement of women.

6. Women and the Economy

There are considerable differences in women's and men's access to and opportunities to exert power over economic structures in their societies. In most parts of the world, women are virtually absent from or are poorly represented in economic decision-making, including the formulation of financial, monetary, commercial and other economic policies, as well as tax systems and rules governing pay.

7. Women in Power and Decision Making

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that everyone has the right to take part in the Government of his/her country. The empowerment and autonomy of women and the improvement of women's social, economic and political status is essential for the achievement of both transparent and accountable government and administration and sustainable development in all areas of life.

8. Institutional Mechanisms for the Advancement of Women

9. Human Rights of Women



Human rights and fundamental freedoms are the birthright of all human beings; their protection and promotion is the first responsibility of Governments. The Platform for Action reaffirms that all human rights - civil, cultural, economic political and social, including the right to development are universal, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated, as expressed in the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights.

10. Women and the Media

During the past decade, advances in information technology have facilitated a global communications network that transcends national boundaries and has an impact on public policy, private attitudes and behaviour, especially of children and young adults. Everywhere the potential exists for the media to make a far greater contribution to the advancement of women.

11. Women and Environment

12. The Girl Child

The Convention on the Rights of the Child recognizes that "States Parties shall respect and ensure the rights set forth in the present Convention to each child within their jurisdiction without discrimination of any kind, irrespective of the child's or his or her parent's or legal guardian's race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or status".

While there have been many achievements since then, many serious gaps remain.

This is the time to uphold women's achievements, recognize challenges, and focus greater attention on women's rights and gender equality to mobilize all people to do their part.

To this end, the theme of this year's International Women's Day is the clarion call of UN Women's Beijing+20 campaign "Empowering Women, Empowering Humanity. More info is available via unwomen.org.

In her message for International Women's Day 2015, UN Women Executive Director Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka says gender parity must be reached before 2030, so that the sluggish trajectory of progress can be reversed that condemns a child born today to wait 80 years before they see an equal world. She calls on all countries to "step it up" for gender equality, to reach 'Planet 50-50' before 2030.

Monsoon Journal joins in the observation of The International Women's Day and the many achievements that have come since the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and galvanize action to address the gaps that still remain in making gender equality a reality.

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“Kindness is the golden chain by which society is bound together.” - Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (August 28, 1749 - March 22, 1832), German writer and statesman

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

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Applications Open for Ontario Student Summer Jobs Helping Over a Million Youth Discover Their Passion



Youth in Ontario can now apply for summer jobs and gain valuable skills and experience this summer.

Since 2004, Ontario's Summer Jobs programs have helped almost 1,100,000 students find summer jobs, start businesses and access employment services. Each year, the programs help more than 100,000 students and youth:

Find a summer job through Employment Ontario or community agencies.

Get help with résumé writing and preparing for interviews.

Apply for funding to start their own summer businesses.

Gain experience working with the Ontario government.

More information is available at www.ontario.ca/readysetwork, along with details on year-round programs to help youth under 30 build skills, start a business, or find a job.

Helping young people get work experience is part of the government's economic plan for Ontario. The four-part plan is building Ontario up by investing in people's talents and skills, building new public infrastructure like roads and transit, creating a dynamic, supportive environment where business thrives and building a secure savings plan so everyone can afford to retire.

QUOTES

"Providing Ontario's young people with access to a wide variety of summer work opportunities helps them build valuable experience while saving for their future education. By supporting Ontario's Summer Jobs programs, our government is helping students test their skills and discover their passion, which is a vital investment in the future of our province."

— Reza Moridi, Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities

"Today we're marking an historic milestone – one million summer job opportunities for youth created since 2004. Through efforts like our Jobs

for Youth Program and the Youth in Policing Initiative, we're giving at-risk youth the opportunity to change their lives and build the foundations for future success, not only for them but for Ontario. Investing in our youth through programs like these is a wise investment in the prosperity of our province."

— Tracy MacCharles, Minister of Children and Youth Services

"The YMCA is a strong partner of the Ontario government in providing a wide range of employment support and programs to individuals to improve their skills, build confidence to gain and retain meaningful employment, identify their career goals and connect with employers."

— Darlene Holowachuk, Senior Vice President, Operations, Employment and Community, YMCA of Greater Toronto

QUICK FACTS

In 2014, Ontario's Summer Jobs programs allocated almost \$78.5 million, which helped 117,217 students.

Ontario is offering employers a \$2-per-hour hiring incentive to hire summer students.

Ontario's Youth Jobs Strategy is investing \$295 million over two years to help 30,000 young people aged 15-29 find work, build job skills and start their own businesses.

The strategy's signature program, the Youth Employment Fund, recently exceeded its two-year goal of helping more than 25,000 young people find jobs and access training.

Employment Ontario offers year-round services to help Ontarians find employment.

In 2013-14, Employment Ontario served approximately 155,000 youth across a range of programs, and the network now offers online support through Employment Ontario Live Chat.

There are more than 35 government programs to help youth build skills, find a job or start a business.

The Perils of Potholes: Who is liable for bad roads during Ontario Spring?

By Robert Durante

Springtime is here. Cold temperatures, snow and ice will thankfully subside, but in their wake they will reveal the dreaded pothole.

Drivers know when they've hit a pothole. The thumping sensation and jarring noise is unmistakable. And while hitting a pothole can damage tires, wheels, and suspension the damage can be much more severe, including injury and in some cases death. From potholes to ice and snow, and overall bad road conditions, the question is: who is liable for bad roads in Ontario?

Ontario's provincial Ministry of Transportation ("MTO") and local municipalities have a duty to keep the roads under their jurisdiction in a reasonable state of repair and have a legal duty to take reasonable steps to keep their roads free of hazardous conditions.

The question is: what constitutes reasonable?

A regulation to the Municipal Act (Minimum Maintenance Standards Regulation), designed to restrict claims against municipalities, deems a pothole to be in repair if it is less than 8 cm deep and 1000 square centimetres in surface area on a city street that carries over 10,000 vehicles a day. This regulation puts road users at risk.

Nevertheless, as recently as December 2012, the Supreme Court of Canada ruled against the City of Oshawa in

the long-running and high-profile saga of Port Perry sisters, Erica and Shannon Deering, who suffered catastrophic spinal cord injuries and were left permanently wheelchair-dependent after a car accident in 2004.

The Deering accident was a bad road design case, not a road maintenance case, but it shows that the highest court in the country has confirmed that municipalities have a positive duty to make country roads safe for reasonable drivers.

The legal duty of MTO and municipalities does not mean that roads must always be kept in a perfect condition. That would be impossible. However, employees responsible for maintaining roadways have timelines that they must meet in order to avoid legal liability. The timelines demand that the busiest roads with the highest posted speed limits be treated with priority.

If the MTO or a municipality fails to maintain a road within the expected timeline and someone is injured in a crash caused by bad road conditions, the courts sometimes hold the MTO or the municipality liable. If you have been involved in an accident or your car has been extensively damaged it might be worth your while looking into the responsibilities of the local municipality.

Robert Durante, is a senior partner with Oatley Vigmond - Ontario's largest personal injury law firm.

50th anniversary of the National Flag of Canada



His Excellency the Right Honourable David Johnston, Governor General of Canada, on the Occasion of the 50th Anniversary of the National Flag of Canada, issued the following message:

OTTAWA— Fifty years ago this very day—February 15, 1965—thousands of Canadians gathered on Parliament Hill to watch as our country's flag was hoisted high and flew for the first time.

General the Right Honourable Georges P. Vanier, Governor General of Canada at that time, was one of those thousands there that day. As the

frigid February winds whipped across the red maple leaf, General Vanier called that new flag a symbol of the unity of purpose and high resolve that would further shape our Canadian culture. What that day, those words and, most of all, that flag represented was then—and remains now—unmistakable. From that day on, we would think bigger and reach further than ever before.

On this 50th anniversary of the National Flag of Canada, I ask you to consider what you will do to continue reflecting the values of unity, inclusion and generosity that our flag embodies.



U.N. Human Rights Council defers Sri Lanka conflict report until September

Commissioner makes it clear that the deferral is "for one time only"

By Siva Sivapragasam

The UN Human Rights Council has agreed to grant a request by the Commissioner for Human Rights to defer the sensitive Sri Lankan alleged violation of human rights report by six months until September.

Sri Lanka's Foreign Minister Mangala Samaraweera urged the UN to postpone the discussion of the report since the new Government needed some time to set-up mechanisms to deal with any recommendations in the report, due for release on 25th March 2015.

Jayantha Dhanapala, seasoned Diplomat and Senior Advisor on Foreign Affairs to President Maithripala Sirisena also met the High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein in Geneva recently and briefed him on the policies of the newly elected Gov-

Zeid said. "There are good arguments for sticking to the original timetable, and there are also strong arguments for deferring the report's consideration a bit longer, given the changing context in Sri Lanka, and the possibility that important new information may emerge which will strengthen the report."

"In addition, I have received clear commitments from the new Government of Sri Lanka indicating it is prepared to cooperate with my Office on a whole range of important human rights issues – which the previous Government had absolutely refused to do – and I need to engage with them to ensure those commitments translate into reality."

The High Commissioner noted that the three distinguished experts who



Jayantha Dhanapala



Navi Pillay



Mangala Samaraweera

ernment. Dhanapala is a former United Nations Under Secretary-General for disarmament affairs and a former ambassador of Sri Lanka to the United States and the UN in Geneva.

Credit also goes to both Foreign Minister Samaraweera and Dhanapala in convincing the UN body for the postponement of the discussion of the report based on the changing context in Sri Lanka due to the change in regime.

The UN Human Rights Commissioner has however made it clear that the postponement is for "onetime only" and will therefore be taken up for discussion coming September.

UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein on Monday, Feb 16th explained, his recommendation to the Human Rights Council to delay the consideration of a long-awaited report into alleged human rights violations during the conflict in Sri Lanka for six months until September 2015.

The High Commissioner guaranteed that the report would be published by September. His request for deferral was granted by the Council on Monday, Feb 16th afternoon.

"This has been a difficult decision,"



Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein

were appointed by his predecessor Navi Pillay to advise the investigation, had informed him that, in their unanimous view, a one-off temporary deferral would be the best option to allow space for the new Government to show its willingness to cooperate on human rights issues. Taking all this into account, I have therefore decided, on balance, to request more time to allow for a stronger and more comprehensive report."

"There should be no misunderstanding," the High Commissioner continued. "I give my personal, absolute and unshakable commitment that the report will be published by September. Like my predecessors, I believe that one of the most important duties of the

Royal College felicitates it's old boys who are Ministers and MPs now



By Siva Sivapragasam

Royal College, one of Sri Lanka's premier and prestigious educational institutions, held a ceremony very recently to felicitate its old boys now serving the country as Prime Minister, Ministers and Members of Parliament.

Prime Minister and UNP leader Ranil Wickremesinghe and UNP Deputy Leader and Housing Minister Sajith Premadasa were among those who were honoured. Among others who were felicitated were Ravi Karunanayake (Finance Minister) D.M. Swaminathan (Resettlement, Rehabilitation & Hindu Affairs Minister), Rauff Hakeem (Urban Development, Water Supply and Drainage Minister), Gayantha Karunathilake (Media Minister), Lakshman Kiriella (Plantation Industries Minister) and Dr. Harsha de Silva (Deputy Minister-Policy Planning & Economic Development)

Royal College is considered to be the leading public school in Sri Lanka and is often referred to as the Eton of Sri Lanka. The school was founded in the British Public School tradition having being named as the Royal Col-

lege Colombo. It was one of the first schools to be designated as a national school by the Sri Lankan Government in the 1980s. As a national school it is funded by the government as opposed to the provincial council providing both primary and secondary education. The school was selected as "one of best innovative colleges" in the world by Microsoft in 2009.

The school has produced many distinguished alumni among whom are presidents of two countries (Sri Lanka & Maldives), and three prime ministers. (Sir John Kotelawala, J.R. Jayawardene & Ranil Wickremesinghe)

Many of the prominent leaders of the independence movement in the early twentieth century including Anagarika Dharmapala, E.W. Perera, Sir James Pieris, Sir Ponnambalam Arunachalam, Sir Ponnambalam Ramanathan, and C.A. Hewavitharane were educated at Royal College, then known as the Colombo Academy. The present Chief Minister of the Northern Province in Sri Lanka Mr. CV. Wigneswaran is also an old boy of Royal College.

High Commissioner for Human Rights is to act as a strong voice on behalf of victims. I want this report to have the maximum possible impact in ensuring a genuine and credible process of accountability and reconciliation in which the rights of victims to truth, justice and reparations are finally respected.", Zeid stated. Mr. Zeid's predecessor, Navi Pillay, visited Sri Lanka in 2013, at the end of which she sharply criticized the then Government.

Political sources told "Monsoon Journal" that the postponement for "onetime only" in a sense strengthened the determination and commitment of the UN to go ahead with the report. It also means that the ball is now in the Sri Lankan Government's court

to not only cooperate with the United Nations inquiry, but also demonstrate between now and September whether it can credibly mount its own investigation into possible wartime atrocities – and whether it can take on criminal prosecutions of the most serious offenders. Sources explained that the postponement also conveys a binding for the Sri Lankan Government to implement its promise to the UN of setting up mechanisms to implement any recommendations of the report.

The same sources also explained that the stand and commitment of an International body like the UN acting as a strong voice on behalf of the victims should allay any fears of those affected that the report will not be shelved.



Sri Lankan President Sirisena says that he has an agreement with the Tamil people...

Contd. from page 1

He expressed hope of solving the fishing dispute between Sri Lanka and India through negotiations at official level.

A number of people's representatives in the Northern Province including Chief Minister C.V. Wigneswaran and parliamentarian Mavai Senadhiraja pointed out a number of issues faced by the people in the Northern province to the President at the meeting.

President Sirisena added that problems with regard to health and education sectors in the province will be given priority. He added that the shortage of staff including consultants and medical officers in all hospitals in the province will also be rectified in the future. The President also said the water issue of the Northern province will also be solved by implementing projects with the help of donor agencies.

President Sirisena added that a special program will be in place for women widowed by the war. He said Deputy Women's Affairs Minister Vijayakala Maheshwaran has also been assigned with some responsibilities in this sector. "The war has left more than 80,000 women in the North and Eastern provinces without husbands," he said. The

President also added that there are many women in other parts of the country who became widows due to the war and a special programme has to be implemented for these women too.

President Sirisena said the government has given priority to solve issues with regard to lands among the people living in the Northern province. The Security Forces have started the process of releasing the private lands to the original owners, he said. The President added that Resettlement and Hindu Religious Affairs Minister D.M. Swaminathan has been assigned to look into this matter.

The President stressed that he had succeeded in appointing an administrative officer as the Governor of the Northern Provincial Council. He said people's representatives in the Northern Province had been demanding the appointment of an officer from the Sri Lanka Administrative Service as the Northern Province Governor for a long time without success.

He reiterated that there was no agreement between him and the Tamil National Alliance though the opposition was in the habit of charging him of having signed a secret pact with the TNA. The President said there is an



President Maithripala Sirisena at Nallur Kandswamy Temple on March 3

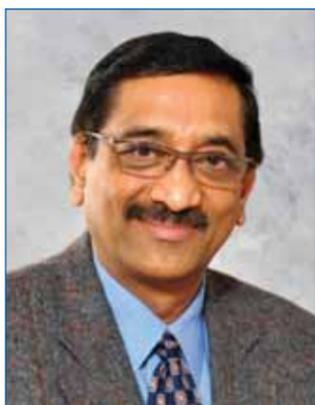
agreement within his heart and that is an agreement of humanity.

"We may converse in different languages, but humanity within us should be protected," the President remarked. Northern Province Governor H.M.G.S. Palihakkara, Resettlement Minister D.M. Swaminathan, Parliamentarians Mavai Senadhirajah, S. Sumanthiran, Douglas Devananda, Provincial Councillors Angajan Ramanathan and Dharmalingam Siddahrthan were also present at the meeting.

Meanwhile, it is learnt that a special committee for national reconciliation under the auspices of the President has also been appointed. The committee consisting of leading members of all communities includes lawyer Kandiah Neelakandan who is the President of the All Ceylon Hindu Federation. Other prominent members are Sali Jayawardene, Javed Yusuf, Prof. Savithri Goonesekere, Dr. Ram Manickalingam, Rienzie Arsekularatne and Priyanthi Fernando.

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Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe feels that former President Mahinda Rajapakse will not stage a political comeback

There has been much speculation in recent weeks that former President Rajapakse will stage a political comeback by contesting the coming general elections. Some constituent parties of the previous Government and a group of SLFPers want Rajapakse to be the Prime Ministerial candidate in the forthcoming general elections, to be held probably in three months time.

But in an interview with the New York Times, Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe feels that Rajapakse will not stage a comeback stating that he knows Rajapakse well. Rajapakse too has not made any positive comments so far about his return to politics.

Among other matters touched by the Prime Minister in the interview were Sri Lanka's foreign relations, re-

turning land in the North taken over by the army from civilians and the release of political prisoners

In his interview, Mr. Wickremesinghe stated that he had managed to help reset relations with the United States, India and China and pledged to return relations with the West to a far happier state.

"When I was Prime Minister last, we had good relations with the United States, India and China. The Rajapaksa regime destroyed that. They fought with the West. They fell out with India. And they thought that China would be their saviour," he told the New York Times journalist.

He has also mentioned in the interview that a final list of political prisoners is being prepared and it should be ready by March. There have been some



Former President Mahinda Rajapakse



Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe

able extent of land in stages.

Mr. C. V. Wigneswaran, Chief Minister of the Northern Province feels that Prime Minister Wickremesinghe is reluctant on the release of prisoners now because he did not want to anger the Sinhalese majority before par-

liamentary elections scheduled in three months time. Mr. Wigneswaran feels that dozens who are widely known to be held for political reasons could be released immediately.

(Input from New York Times)

Jetstar Asia and SriLankan Airlines launch new codeshare

Colombo February 17, 2015: SriLankan Airlines customers will soon enjoy greater access to cities throughout South East Asia and Australia as part of a new codeshare agreement with Jetstar Asia.

From 5 April 2015, SriLankan customers will be able to travel on codeshare services operated by Jetstar Asia on seven routes from Jetstar Asia's hub in Singapore. The cities of Darwin, Phnom Penh and Phuket will be new destinations to SriLankan's customers. The other destinations to be included are Bangkok, Ho Chi Minh City, Kuala Lumpur and Perth.

SriLankan passengers will benefit from the convenience of a single ticket itinerary that includes SriLankan's baggage allowance. Passengers will enjoy a seamless transfer at Singapore's Changi airport, with baggage being through checked and onward boarding passes being received at the initial departure point. SriLankan Airlines CEO Mr Chandrasena considers the new codeshare agreement as a means for enhanced tourism between the Sub continent and Asia Pacific regions.

"We consider this a tremendous opportunity for Sri Lankans who can enjoy greater connectivity from Colombo via its gateway in Singapore to fascinating new destinations of the South East and cities in Australia. Passengers from those destinations too will now have seamless travel options taking advantage of SriLankan Airlines' daily services from Singapore to our Colombo hub.

Additionally, our customers will be able to connect with our daily frequencies to India, Pakistan and the Maldives further boosting tourism between

the two regions.

"With Australia being home to a large Sri Lankan expatriate community, the services to Perth and Darwin with Jetstar Asia will provide them greater connectivity and convenience when travelling to Sri Lanka to visit families and friends back home," said Mr Chandrasena.

SriLankan Airlines is one of the largest South Asia carriers and the expanded cooperation will provide passengers attractive itineraries as well as enhance Jetstar's regional footprint, said Jetstar Asia CEO Mr Barathan Pasupathi.

"SriLankan Airlines' customers will have access to Jetstar Asia's extensive network in Southeast Asia and Australia, while transferring enjoying Singapore Changi's world-class facilities" said Mr Pasupathi.

Mr Lim Ching Kiat, Changi Airport Group's Senior Vice President of Market Development, said, "Changi Airport welcomes this development between SriLankan Airlines and Jetstar Asia as not only would it promote greater people flow between South Asia and Southeast Asia/Australia via Changi, but also grow both airlines' businesses in Singapore".

SriLankan Airlines currently operates up to three daily services to Singapore.

SriLankan Airlines has interlined with all airlines in the Jetstar Group since June 2014.

The Jetstar Group will now have five codeshare partners on selected routes - Qantas Airways, Emirates, Japan Airlines, American Airlines and SriLankan Airlines.

New investigation launched on Sunday Leader former Editor Lasantha Wickrematunge's murder

By Siva Sivapragasam

Police Media spokesman SSP Ajith Rohana speaking at a media briefing confirmed that a new police investigation has been launched into the brutal murder of former Sunday Leader Lasantha Wickrematunge. He announced that the investigation has been handed over to the CID by the Police.

Meanwhile he had also stated that one of the suspects arrested during the previous investigation had died in prison while the other has been released on bail.

It has been over six years since Lasantha was murdered. During a remembrance vigil held this year Lasantha's brother held this year Lasantha's brother Lal Wickrematunge called upon the newly elected government to hold a fresh investigation into his murder.

Lasantha Manilal Wickrematunge (5 April 1958 - 8 January 2009) was a high-profile Sri Lankan anti-government Journalist, Politician and Human Rights Activist who was assassinated in January 2009.

Wickrematunge was the founder of The Sunday Leader and Leader Publications alongside his brother and was known for taking "governments of all hues to task", was a "virulent critic of the Mahinda Rajapaksa government", and had been "locked in a legal battle with the president's brother, defence secretary Gotabaya Rajapaksa, who was spearheading the battle against the LTTE rebels.

Wickrematunge assassination caused a national frenzy being the country's most influential media personnel and one of the biggest political figures and raised questions about

A police CID new investigation has been launched into the murder of Sunday Leader founder/former editor Lasantha Wickrematunge

freedom of expression in the country. Wickrematunge murder was widely condemned across the world. The Daily Mirror called it the



"biggest blow" to media freedom in Sri Lanka and the Editors Guild held the government responsible for the killing as it has failed to stop attacks against media personnel. The government also expressed shock at the killing, pledging to do everything in its power to catch his killers.

Wickrematunge had been on Amnesty International's endangered list since 1998, when anti-tank shells were fired on his house. Despite intense media pressure, no one has been arrested as of January 2014, and Sri Lankan media speculate that the murder investigation may "end up as a cover-up", and that safeguards for an independent media appears bleak.

In an editorial Wickrematunge had written shortly before his death, and that was published posthumously, he stated, "When finally I am killed, it will be the government that kills me."

(Input: Wikipedia)



Around the World

Narendra Modi Government's first budget presented with enhanced public spending on infra structure to stimulate growth in the economy

"The world is predicting that it is India's chance to fly", says Finance Minister Arun Jaitley



Arun Jaitley, Finance Minister with Prime Minister Narendra Modi

By Siva Sivapragasam

"The credibility of the Indian economy has been re-established. The world is predicting that it's India's chance to fly. As the PM has mentioned many times — we are a round-the-clock, round-the-year government," Finance Minister Jaitley proudly remarked last Saturday as he presented the Narendra Modi Government's first Budget in the Lok Sabha last Saturday.

A staggering seventy thousand crore rupee investment has been allocated in the Union Budget for public spending on India's infrastructure to stimulate growth in the Indian economy.

A proposal for a 5 per cent cut in corporate tax, abolition of wealth tax and its replacement of an additional 2 per cent surcharge on the tax collected from the super-rich with incomes in excess of Rs. 1 crore, are some of the tax proposals introduced in the budget.

Presenting the Modi government's first full-year budget in Parliament, Union Finance Minister Arun Jaitley said the corporate tax was proposed to be lowered from 30 per cent to 25 per cent over the next four years and would go hand in hand with a rollback in sops and exemptions companies enjoyed.

Mr. Jaitley left untouched personal income tax rates for 2015-16, but gifted

the middle class with a higher limit for deduction of Rs. 25,000 on health insurance premium against the existing Rs. 15,000. The limit will go up from Rs. 20,000 to Rs 30,000 for senior citizens. The proposals, said Mr. Jaitley, would not only promote health care but also enhance the savings rate in the economy. The budget also raised excise duty and service tax rates, pushing up retail prices of several goods and services.

Locally manufactured mobile handsets, tablets, microwave ovens and packaged fruits are likely to be cheaper on reductions proposed in various duties and taxes. Mr. Jaitley proposed a 25 per cent hike in the duty on cigarettes, cigars and cheroots. The key construction industry input, cement, too is likely to become costlier. The service tax plus education cess is proposed to be hiked from 12.36 per cent to 14 per cent which is likely to increase costs of air travel, eating out and beauty services.

Commenting on the 2015 Budget, former finance Minister in the Congress regime Harward educated Palaniappan Chidambaram has stated that the Modi government's first full Budget "Just pleases the corporates and the income - tax payers. The budget has failed the fiscal test, the test of equity, and the test of rising inequality."



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Regional cardiac program at Rouge offers life-saving procedure for people with chronic heart conditions New procedure offers relief, better quality of life

Heart patients in Scarborough and Durham with chronically blocked blood vessels now have the option of receiving treatment closer to home at Rouge Valley Centenary (RVC) hospital campus in Scarborough.

The Central East Regional Cardiac Care Centre, based at RVC, is now offering a new chronic total occlusion (CTO) angioplasty procedure. Patients with CTO have blockages in their hearts that they could have been living with for months or even years. They might be suffering from chest pain or shortness of breath during physical activities despite medications prescribed by their cardiologist.

Robert Keene, 63, of Oshawa, was one of those patients. He could tell something was wrong. He felt different, uncomfortable, and was slowing down. "I had shortness of breath, a dull ache when exerting myself, and a very low energy level," he says. "I thought I had indigestion, and it was very bad in the evenings," he adds. Keene did not know that he had a CTO — in his case, a complete blockage in his heart's right artery.

Dr. Chris Li is an interventional cardiologist with the regional cardiac care program for Scarborough-Durham. "Someone with a CTO can have a 100 per cent blockage in his or her heart but not have a heart attack," he explains. "Unlike a heart attack caused by a sudden complete blockage of a major coronary blood vessel, these blockages develop slowly. When this happens over time, sometimes the heart does its own bypass and builds up collateral arteries to get blood flow around the blockage. However, these vessels aren't big enough to keep an adequate supply of oxygen to the heart during exercise causing some patients' lifestyles to be very limited by these symptoms."

This inadequate supply of oxygen was causing Keene's symptoms. His initial tests indicated the need for a percutaneous coronary intervention (PCI) — an angioplasty procedure that clears blockages in blood vessels in the heart, often using a stent. However, even after two PCIs, the artery still could not be unblocked. Fortunately, the new CTO service was available at Rouge Valley's regional cardiac care center. The life-changing procedure was performed on him by Dr. Li and RVHS cardiologist Dr. Ram Vijayaraghavan the following week.

"Dr. Li and Dr. Vijay were wonderful," says Keene. "They talked to me the whole way through the procedure as I watched on the screen. They answered any questions I had right away. And, they were successful in removing the blockage," he says.

The CTO angioplasty procedure

As home to the Central East Regional

Cardiac Care Centre for Scarborough and Durham region, Rouge Valley's Centenary hospital campus is depended upon for its PCI service that treats 1,500 patients a year. Starting in February 2014, the regional cardiac centre began offering the new CTO angioplasty procedure so that even more patients can be treated. Now Rouge Valley is one of a few centres in Ontario with a dedicated CTO program for regularly performing this extremely specialized procedure.

"With a normal angioplasty, we take a soft metal wire and feed it through a soft clot or blockage in an artery," explains Dr. Vijayaraghavan. "Then, we would use this wire like a monorail and run a balloon and stent equipment along it so that we can clear the blockage. With a CTO, the artery has been 100 per cent blocked for a long time, so we cannot use traditional angioplasty wire methods to clear it. In some cases a creative approach of passing the angioplasty wire through the collateral vessels to the 'back door' of the blockage, called a 'retrograde approach,' is used. It is like opening a blocked tunnel from both ends. Extreme care has to be taken not to damage these very fine vessels," he explains.

It is not surprising that procedure times in a CTO case are usually two-three times longer than in a regular PCI. The ability to perform CTO procedures requires intense time and technical commitment from physicians and staff, including extensive training and highly-specialized equipment. At Rouge Valley's regional cardiac care centre, CTO angioplasty procedures are performed jointly by Dr. Li and Dr. Vijayaraghavan, who have done the necessary training.

"Because the CTO procedure is much more technically demanding, it brings up the technical standard of the entire catheterization lab, where angioplasties are performed. So we are better at doing non-CTO cases of angioplasty, as we can apply CTO techniques and skills to these cases. We expose our lab to highly complex cases now every two weeks or so," explains Dr. Vijayaraghavan.

The new CTO angioplasty procedure builds on the regional cardiac centre's elective PCI service, and the regional fast-track emergency cardiac care program that looks to treat Scarborough and Durham patients having a heart attack, in the community or at one of the partnering regional hospitals, within a 90-minute window.

"CTO expands the spectrum of care that we offer," says Dr. Li. "Our emergency cardiac program saves many lives, beyond a doubt. Now, the CTO service is life-changing for our patients. We can help these sick people who are stable, yet suffering, to improve their quality of life."

Rouge Valley announces new CEO Andrée Robichaud

Rouge Valley Health System's Board of Directors is delighted to announce that Andrée Robichaud will be joining the organization in June as the new president and chief executive officer (CEO).

"Andrée brings an exceptional record of leadership and experience to our hospital, including a good understanding of the current health system challenges and opportunities," says Joan Wideman, chair of Rouge Valley Health System (RVHS) Board of Directors.

About Andrée Robichaud

Andrée Robichaud has been the president and CEO of the Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre since 2010, and acting CEO of the Thunder Bay Regional Research Institute since November 2014.

Previously, she was the president and CEO of the Vitalité Santé Region Health Authority, one of two health corporations in New Brunswick. She chaired the Conference of Federal Provincial Deputy Ministers Advisory Committee on Health Delivery and Health Human Resources. She was a board member on the Atlantic Cancer Research Institute and is currently a board member of the Ontario Hospital Association. She has also been a key participant nationally and provincially in the Santé en Français initiative to improve the health status of Francophones and to increase the number of Francophone healthcare professionals. In 2013, she was appointed to the Medical Council of Canada.

Robichaud is a graduate of the Université de Moncton, where she earned a bachelor and a master's degree in public administration.

Wideman says, "This is an exciting and challenging time for healthcare in Ontario. Rouge Valley Health System is a leader in bringing about positive change in the healthcare experience. We welcome Andrée to our Rouge Val-



Andrée Robichaud

ley team and we look forward to working with her on key initiatives: our new strategic plan; growth of services to meet future community needs; and working with our healthcare partners to make the care experience seamless for patients."

Robichaud says, "I look forward to working with the board, physicians, midwives, staff, patients and the community as we form our plans and implement actions to constantly improve patient care in Scarborough and Durham."

Previous CEO thanked by RVHS Board

Rik Ganderton, who announced his retirement plans about a year ago, had stayed on as interim CEO during the search.

Wideman says, "During his eight years as CEO, Rik led the organization into financial stability and through transformational changes benefitting patient care. We are grateful that he will remain with us until the transition period is complete."

Wideman adds, "The RVHS Board of Directors believes that Ms. Robichaud will build on these achievements and help us forge a new chapter of excellent patient care with our staff, physicians, midwives and volunteers." She adds, "I thank our RVHS Board of Directors executive search committee for their diligent work in selecting our new CEO from a large field of highly-qualified candidates across the country."

This was certainly the case with Mr. Keene, who noticed an amazing difference, even right after the procedure. "My energy levels have come back to what was normal for me," he says. "I had been slowing down for quite a few months, but now I'm back to gardening and I walk every day. It has changed my lifestyle dramatically."

To get an assessment

If you are interested in getting assessed at the Central East Regional Cardiac Care Centre as a candidate for the CTO program, ask your cardiologist to make a referral by calling the cardiac care network coordinator at 416-284-8131 ext. 5139.

About the Central East Regional Cardiac Care Program

Rouge Valley Health System is home to the Central East Regional Cardiac Care Program - Scarborough-Durham. With a highly qualified and experienced team of more than 20 cardiologists and

more than 100 healthcare professionals, the regional program is integrated with the community to ensure excellent, timely care. Each year, more than 6,000 patients are seen by the program for a wide range of cardiac care services, including life-saving emergency and elective interventions to unblock blood vessels in the heart; advanced cardiac imaging to get a better view of what's happening with a patient's heart; pacemaker and implantable cardioverter defibrillators (ICDs) and electrophysiology procedures to manage and treat arrhythmias (irregular heartbeats); and cardiovascular rehabilitation and education to help patients achieve an optimal heart healthy lifestyle. As the designated cardiac care centre for the regional program, Rouge Valley delivers care in partnership with The Scarborough Hospital, Lakeridge Health, and the Central East Local Health Integration Network.



Tamil Canadian Jessica Judes selected as first runner up in Super Singer Junior Finals

Donates her entire winnings to orphanages

By Raymond Rajabalan

The grand finale of the fourth season of the Airtel Super Singer Junior show - the search for the melodious voice of Tamil Nadu was held in Thangavelu Engineering College, Chennai on Friday Feb.20th in the presence of a packed audience .It was in fact a great show with all its pomp and pageantry.

While 10-year old Spoorthi Santosh Rao won the Super Singer title, Canadian born Jessica was a close second. In addition to her great performance, the fact that Jessica received the highest number of votes from Tamils around the world was an important factor in elevating her to be the first runner up.

Jessica Judes, the only international contestant among the six finalists dressed in immaculate white and a matching bright red dress gave a brilliant performance that stunned the audience and was selected as the first runner up and awarded a prize of one kilogram of gold. What was more amazing was that her father immediately announced that Jessica had decided to apportion the proceeds from her prize between two orphanages one in India and another in

Sri Lanka. Many news agencies in Toronto as well as in Chennai have already given great prominence to her magnanimous gesture.

During the finale when Jessica sang a fusion of three songs portraying the agony of Tamils in SriLanka, even veteran singers could not contain their feelings. Tears rolled down the cheeks of the famed playback singer Malgudi Subha while the popular anchor Divyadharshini was visibly choking with emotion. The well experienced playback singer Manickavinayagam who originally sang the soul touching song "Vidai kodu engal naade" as well as the famous film star Dhanush were overcome by feelings and they both hesitated for a few seconds before making their comments about the stellar performance of Jessica. In fact Dhanush praising Jessica for very effectively expressing the pain and sufferings of Tamils in Sri Lanka said that he was at a loss of words to describe her flawless performance.

An year ago, while participating in the audition in front of the panel of judges that included the famous musician and playback singer T.L. Maharajan, Jessica spoke about her great passion for music and mentioned



Jessicca after winning the first runner up Prize



that she was interested in music since the tender age of four. Continuing to introduce herself she said". It is not important as to how far one travels to achieve their dreams but what is more important is how much effort one puts in to reach those dreams". Her self confidence was evident when she emphasized that when she practices , she repeats each line of the song until she feels her singing is as close to the original as possible. She ended her introduction by stating that she firmly believes that her singing will give her great exposure and her deep passion for singing will carry her a great distance.

More than once Jessica has publicly acknowledged that the dedication of her devoted parents have contributed so much her great success. In fact only a few will know that her mother had quit her job to be with

Jessica for the past one year while her dad had travelled many times to Chennai to provide ongoing support for Jessica.

Jessica Jude has already become a household name all over the world among Tamils and her excellent performances has ensured her a bright future. Though in the past many other Tamil Canadian kids have done very well in musical competitions in Chennai, it is the first time a Tamil Canadian teen has been so successful. This will certainly be an inspiration for the so many young kids around the world who are anxiously waiting to prove their talents.

Jessica had already won the hearts of thousands of Tamils all over the world and with her very successful performance in the finals of Super Singer has made a mark for herself. There is no doubt that she has a successful musical career ahead of her.

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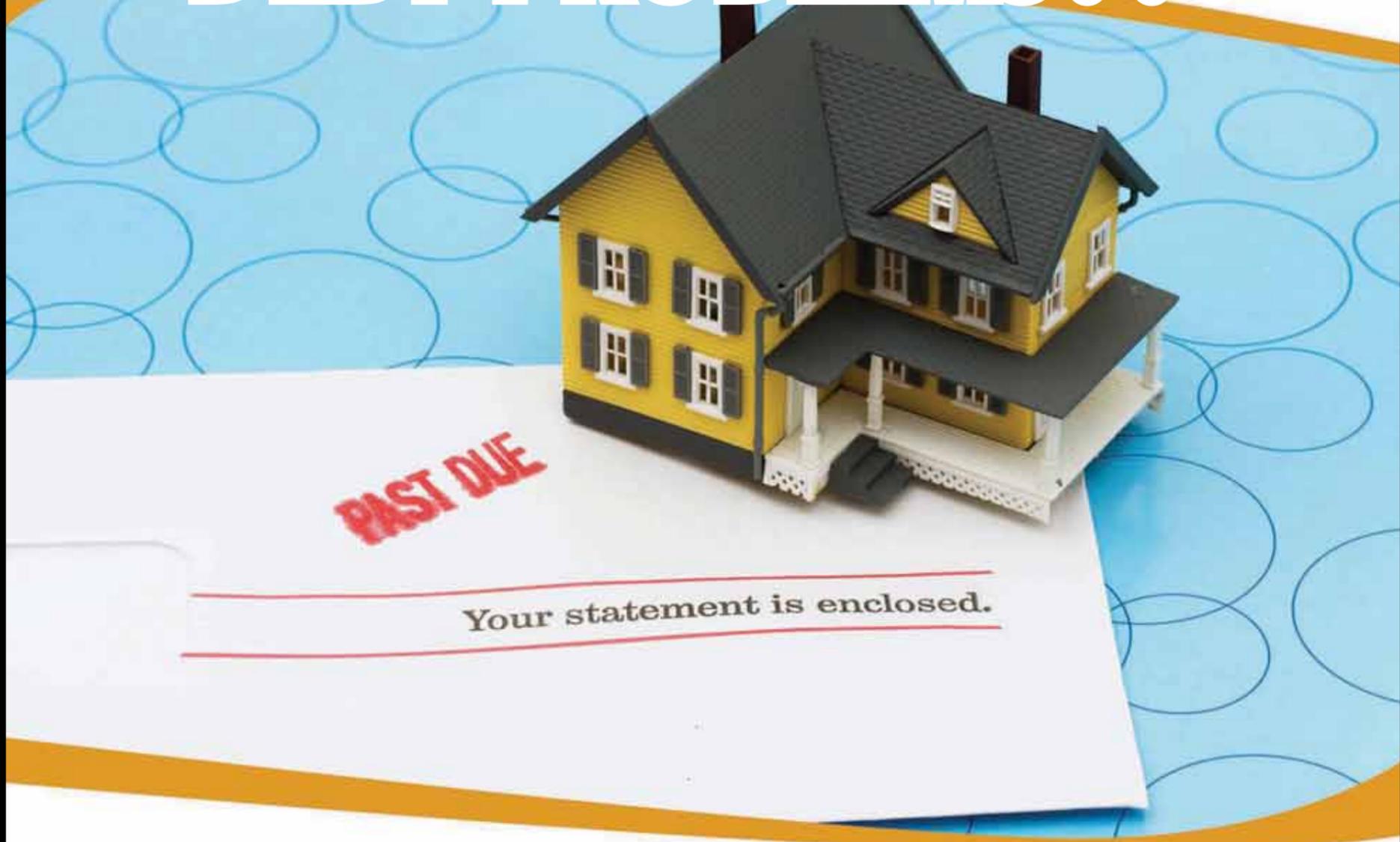
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A Life Changing Diagnosis: *Retinitis Pigmentosa*



By: Jeavana
Sritharan,
BHSc, MHSc,
PhD Student

Those who have ever met Shaini Saravanamuthu would say she is a fun loving and bubbly young individual who always looks for the wonderful things in life. But this past month, Shaini revealed a personal story of her own to express why she is the person she is today.

On February 19th, 2011, Shaini's life was changed forever. At the age of 21 at the time, she went in for her routine eye appointment with her optometrist. She learns that her vision had not changed much based on the routine tests but her optometrist concludes the appointment with one final vision field test. With a simple test of the optometrist moving his pen from the side of her face to directly in front of her face, the optometrist becomes alarmed as Shaini fails to see the pen until it is directly in front of her face. Her optometrist continues to do some final testing and he confirms what Shaini never expected to hear. He tells her that she has a rare genetic eye disease known as Retinitis Pigmentosa.

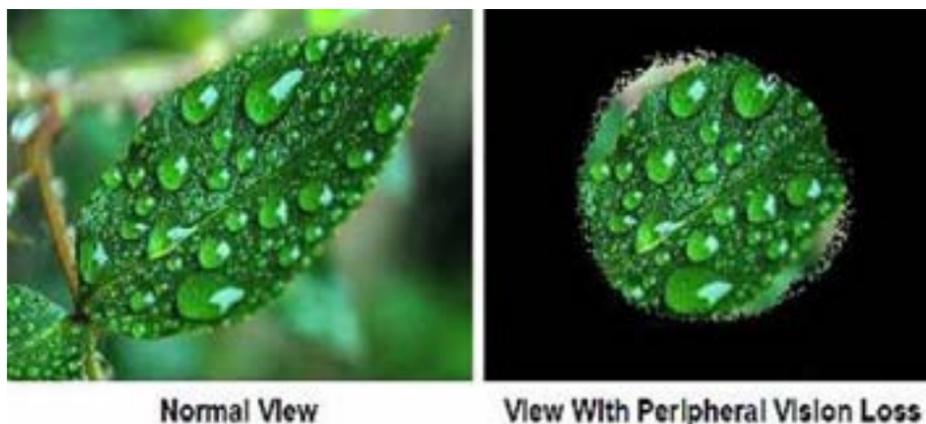
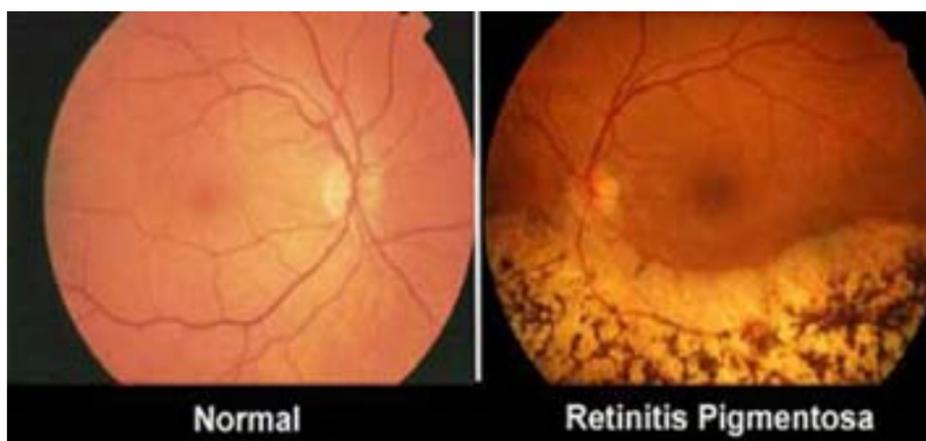
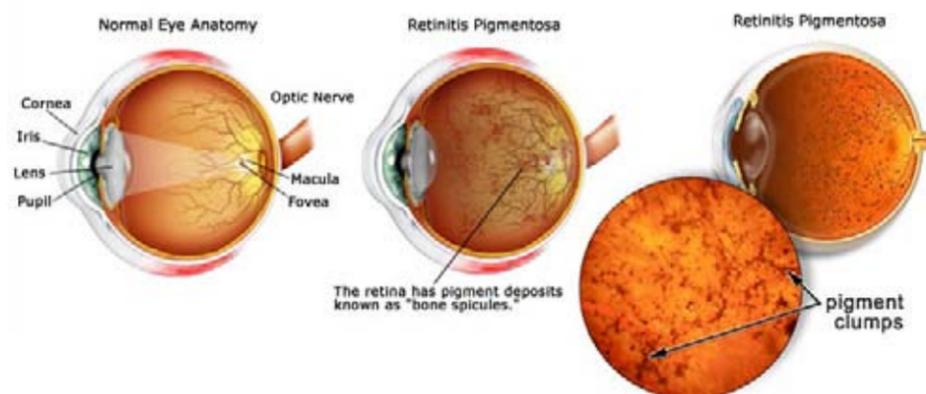
What exactly is Retinitis Pigmentosa?

Retinitis Pigmentosa (RP) is an inherited degenerative eye disease that impairs vision and can lead to blindness. Symptoms can appear from infancy or present themselves later in life. The condition is caused by photoreceptor abnormalities or retinal pigment epithelium abnormalities.

Photoreceptors – the classic photoreceptor cells are known as rods and cones and both are necessary for our visual system for sight. Photoreceptors convert light into signals to stimulate biological processes. The rod photoreceptors are usually affected first which leads to the loss of night vision. The cone photoreceptors are affected in later stages of the condition so the loss of daytime vision takes a longer period of time.

Retinal Pigment Epithelium – this is the pigmented cell layer of the retina that helps maintain retinal visual cells and it is essential for several important functions including light absorption.

Individuals affected by retinitis pigmentosa may experience problems with



dark to light and light to dark adaptation and night blindness. This is due to the destruction of light receptors from the center outward, outside inward, or in patches that reduce light detection.

As best described by Shaini, "to help you understand what I see, imagine driving into a tunnel where you can only see straight down the middle, and nothing on either side. This is where we get the term - tunnel vision."

Major Signs and Symptoms

- Night blindness
- Tunnel vision – no peripheral vision
- Peripheral vision – no central vision
- Blurred vision
- Poor colour separation
- Severe tiredness
- Improper adjustment from dark to light or light to dark
- Trouble driving at night
- No improvement with visual aids

Genetic Component

Multiple genes that are mutated can cause retinitis pigmentosa and this

member the incidents she had where she thought she was just being clumsy. She realized her struggles with her vision growing up were all painting a picture of something much greater – leading to her diagnosis.

Following the news, Shaini was so incredibly discouraged and she was finding it difficult to come to terms with it. But Shaini was not about to let this prevent her from living life to the fullest. She continued to do what she loved to do – from dancing to traveling to beginning her own start up called 'Cakes & Shines' where she followed her passion for baking and cake decorating. She picked herself right back up and realized that with a timeline she would do everything she aspired to do.

Shaini continued to follow her passionate work but what she could not embrace was that her condition was hidden from others. She would often make excuses for her poor eye sight so others would not know of her condition. This is often the case especially with such prominent stigma surrounding health conditions or disabilities. But Shaini realized it was time for others to know because this condition changed her life. In her words "I don't think I would be the person I am today if it weren't for RP".

Her advice is to not let a disability or a condition define your entire life. You need to work around the element and find what works for you and what you are truly passionate about. Four years later, Shaini has grown so much and learned so much about the world and more importantly, about herself. She hopes one day there will be treatment options for this condition but until then she is living life to the fullest and is grateful for what she has.

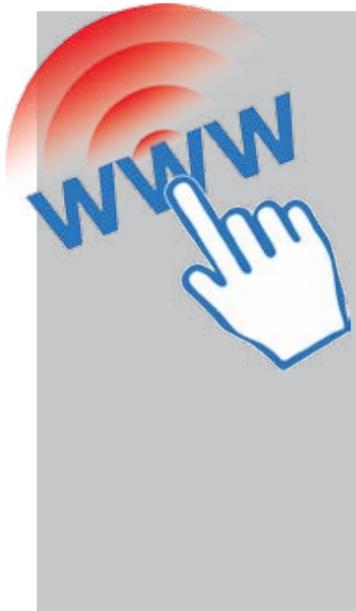
Shaini and others alike hope that one day evidence based treatments will be available. Even though there are no current effective treatments available, studies are currently being done on retinal transplants, gene therapy, stem cells, drug therapies and other possible treatments.

Jeavana Sritharan is a PhD Student in Medical Science at the University of Toronto. She is currently working with Cancer Care Ontario with the Occupational Cancer Research Centre and she is the Co-Founder of the webpage, Health Perspectives. Contact email: info@healthperspectives.ca

For Shaini, everything started to make sense. She could go back and re-



THE SCARBOROUGH HOSPITAL FOUNDATION LAUNCHES NEW WEBSITE



The Scarborough Hospital Foundation (TSHF) is pleased to announce a new look for its website: www.tshfoundation.ca, which features enhanced content, user-friendly navigation and a simplified process for online donations.

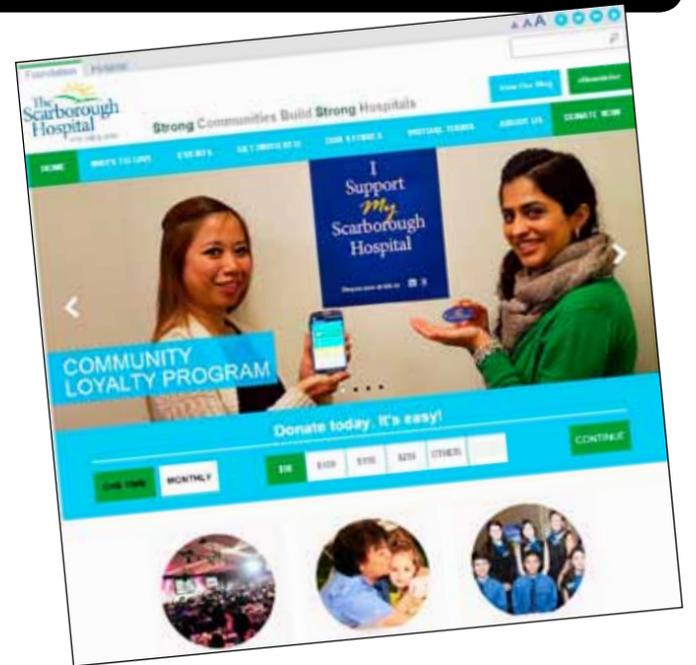
The new website has many new features that were designed to:

- Be more donor friendly, simplifying the process of online donations
- Better inform the community and donors about the Foundation and how it supports the hospital
- Provide detailed information about its various fundraising programs and initiatives
- Support user-friendly

navigation, making it easier to find information, such as upcoming events, ways to give and how to get involved

“We are excited to present this new online face for the Foundation,” says Michael Mazza, President and CEO, TSHF. “This website provides so many enhanced features that meet the needs of our donors and community, ensuring that they have easy access to online donations and timely information.”

“On behalf of the Foundation, I would like to thank all stakeholders for their input regarding this project, and we invite and encourage staff, physicians, volunteers, donors and community members to visit the new website.”



Join Us at a Global Community Resource Centre Workshop

Come with questions. Leave with knowledge. That's the promise of The Scarborough Hospital's Global Community Resource Centre, the only place of its kind among hospitals in the Greater Toronto Area.

Located on the Ground Floor of the General campus, the Global Community Resource Centre offers patients, visitors, staff and the community access to free, multilingual health and community information.

Fourteen community agencies in

Scarborough are partners with the Global Community Resource Centre. These community agencies help to deliver workshops on a wide range



of topics twice a month, and staff a “Community Desk”, which provides information and referrals, on a rotating basis.

Workshops are held every second and fourth Wednesday of the month from noon to 1 p.m. They are free and no advanced registration is required.

UPCOMING GLOBAL COMMUNITY RESOURCE CENTRE WORKSHOPS

Wednesday, March 11, 2015

- ♥ Topic: An Overview of Goodwill's

Employment Programs

♥ Presenter: Jacqueline Smith, Employment Placement Specialist, Goodwill Employment Services

Wednesday, March 25, 2015

- ♥ Topic: Staying Mentally Sharp
- ♥ Presenters: Debbie Daly, Nurse Practitioner, and Laura Sullivan, Occupational Therapist, The Scarborough Hospital Geriatric Assessment and Intervention Network (GAIN) Clinic.

OUR STRENGTH: OUR INTEGRATED TEAM

Our health care system continues to undergo significant change here in Ontario. From growing and aging communities, to new technologies and medical advances, to highly informed and engaged consumers, no doubt there are some high expectations and challenges before us.

Health Minister, Dr. Eric Hoskins, recently announced the next phase of Ontario's Action Plan for Health Care, called Patients First. The document outlines the strategic priorities for the province for improving the health care system performance, integration and sustainability. In order to achieve these goals, fundamental shifts are underway in how health care providers are funded.

The province has essentially flatlined hospital funding over the past three years (i.e., no funding increases to cover inflationary costs), and this funding freeze will continue for the foreseeable future. These dollars are being reallocated to enhance community-based services, like home care. Furthermore, a new patient-based funding approach for hospitals elevates our accountability to deliver accessible and quality care.

The Scarborough Hospital (TSH), like all hospitals across Ontario, has felt the effects of this transformation. As we prepare for continued change, the best approach is to define, plan and design our own future. On that note, last summer TSH took a vital step as we began the process to renew our strategic and clinical directions plan, known as Forward Together: Building a Healthier Scarborough.

This planning process has been led by a series of guiding principles:



By Robert Biron

✓ Collaborate and Engage:

We believe that collaboration and meaningful engagement will lead us to better solutions for our patients.

✓ **Innovate and Learn:** We believe we can leverage the collective wisdom and creativity of our team, our community, and others to develop innovative solutions that meet or exceed our patients' expectations.

✓ **Network and Partner:** We believe together with our partners and patients we must co-design and provide coordinated care across the whole patient journey.

✓ **Strengthen and Sustain:** We believe our primary responsibility is to

deliver better value and care outcomes for our patients through sustainable change.

But no matter what the outcome of our planning process, certain things about TSH will not change. We call these our “non-negotiables”. These commitments include:

✓ Both hospital sites will continue to have Emergency Departments operating 24/7 year-round.

✓ Both hospital campuses (the General and the Birchmount) will continue to play an essential role in our hospital system, and remain relevant and viable.

✓ TSH will remain a two-site hospital working as one integrated health care team.

We must pursue innovative ways to continue to provide accessible and integrated services to our community, while at the same time, ensuring that our hospitals are sustainable for future generations.

There is no doubt that how TSH organizes and delivers its services and programs will change in the future. In doing so, we will continue to leverage our two-site model as a key asset and integrate our programs, services and teams.

We know that this approach is achievable, simply because TSH has a strong track record in this regard. Over the years, programs and services have been consolidated to either hospital site; for example, inpatient and outpatient mental health, palliative care, eye surgery, and renal dialysis to name a few.

Another good example is our emergency physicians who have organized themselves as one group that supports both emergency departments.

More recently, in October, TSH and the University of Toronto announced the creation of the new Centre for Integrative Medicine that is sited at the Birchmount campus. And the Maternal Newborn and Child Care team is revitalizing the program through an integrated approach, enhancing services for both hospital sites.

It is clear that both hospital campuses have benefited from this integrated approach – giving each a unique set of programs and role, while maintaining core services for both sites. More importantly, our community and patients have gained better access and quality care.

TSH DESIGNATED PERITONEAL DIALYSIS CENTRE OF PRACTICE

The Scarborough Hospital (TSH) has been designated a Peritoneal Dialysis Centre of Practice (PD COP) by the Ontario Renal Network (ORN); becoming just one of two referral centres in the Central East Local Health Integration Network (Central East LHIN) for patients to receive timely PD catheter insertion in order to start home peritoneal dialysis.

"We are exceptionally proud to be selected as a Peritoneal Dialysis Centre of Practice," said Ethel Doyle, Patient Care Director, Nephrology, Diabetes Education, Cardiology, Ambulatory Respiratory and Family Medicine Teaching Unit at TSH.

"TSH prides itself on providing rapid, comprehensive, interdisciplinary care to all of our dialysis patients, including pre-operative education and consultation, as well as having a designated surgeon for peritoneal dialysis catheterizations who specializes in less invasive laparoscopic peritoneal dialysis catheter insertions. As a Peritoneal Dialysis Centre of Practice, patients and family members will know they are receiving the very best care from a highly specialized health

care team."

PD is a daily treatment in which a special dialysis fluid bathes the space in the abdomen and removes toxins, excess water and wastes from the body. The PD catheter is a plastic flexible tube that is placed into the peritoneal cavity in the abdomen by a surgeon and allows PD to be carried out. It is a life-saving treatment that patients can carry out themselves, or with the help of family members or community providers.

"Designating Peritoneal Dialysis Centres of Practice delivers on the strategic priorities for action we have outlined in the Ontario Renal Plan, including improving access for dialysis patients and improving the uptake of independent dialysis," said Rebecca Harvey, Vice President, ORN.

"With one of the largest Regional Nephrology programs in North America and one of the largest home dialysis and Chronic Kidney Disease programs in the province, TSH was a natural choice to become a Peritoneal Dialysis Centre of Practice for the Central East LHIN."

TSH's Nephrology and Dialysis program is one of 26 Regional Chronic

Kidney Disease (CKD) programs in Ontario and one of three Regional

Michael's Hospital for transplantation and strong community partnerships,



CKD programs within the Central East LHIN. The program has a 53 hemodialysis station main unit at TSH's General campus and three hemodialysis satellite sites. The program also has linkages with St.

which provide care and support to Nephrology patients within Scarborough.

THE SCARBOROUGH HOSPITAL'S GENERAL CAMPUS WELCOMES ITS FIRST CHILD BY WATER BIRTH

Following on the heels of The Scarborough Hospital's (TSH) first water birth at the Birchmount campus last December, the hospital's Family Maternity Centre (FMC) at the General campus excitedly welcomed its first baby born by water birth on January 9.

Charles Gregory Prata was born at 12:55 p.m. to proud parents Mark and Lorraine Prata.

"During the birth of my eldest son Mason – who was also delivered at The Scarborough Hospital – the nurses recommended I rest in a warm jetted tub to ease my contractions," said Lorraine.

"The calm environment and soothing feeling encouraged me to consider a water birth during this pregnancy."

When Lorraine arrived at the General campus FMC in labour, she learned she was already significantly dilated and that there would be no time for an epidural to aid with pain relief. Supported by midwives Cara Begg-Reid and Claudette Leduc from

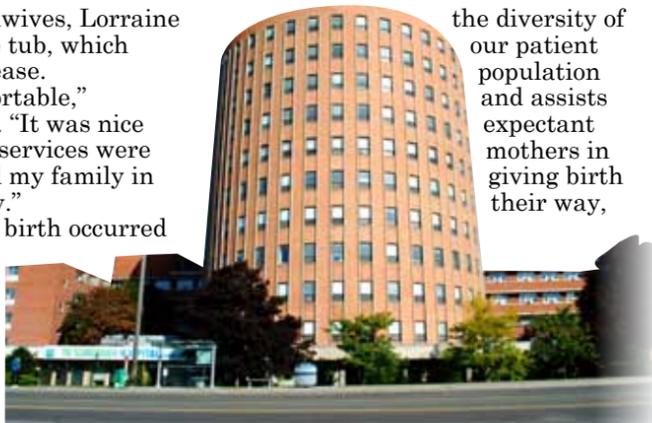
Sages-Femmes Midwives, Lorraine was helped into the tub, which quickly put her at ease.

"I was very comfortable," remarked Lorraine. "It was nice to know that these services were available to me and my family in our own community."

TSH's first water birth occurred exactly a month before on December 9 at TSH's Birchmount campus, when Scarborough resident Diana Jallim gave birth

to her daughter and second child Savannah. Savannah was delivered by midwives from Diversity Midwives, who have been providing care for women at TSH for over 12 years and were instrumental in introducing water births to TSH.

"Offering water births is an important part of how TSH respects



the diversity of our patient population and assists expectant mothers in giving birth their way,

according to their preferences, customs and beliefs," said Dr. Georgina Wilcock, Co-Medical Director, Maternal Newborn and Child Care program at TSH.

"In addition to the introduction of water births and the expansion of our midwifery team, TSH has also been recruiting additional obstetricians to our Maternal Newborn and Child Care program."

"We are excited to see interprofessional collaboration at work at The Scarborough Hospital," said Dr. Nathan Roth, Co-Medical Director, Maternal Newborn and Child Care program at TSH.

"This collaborative care model allows for interprofessional excellence between our midwives, physicians, nurses and support staff. It's all part of our commitment to provide the very best care close to home."

Expectant parents at TSH also have access to a wide variety of other services, including pre-natal tours and classes, an early pregnancy assessment clinic, a breastfeeding clinic, and an umbilical cord partnership with Inception Lifebank Cord Blood Program.

Though Lorraine is unsure at this time whether she and husband Mark will be expanding their family of four anytime soon, she "highly recommends" The Scarborough Hospital's Maternal Newborn and Child Care program.

Call for Annual Members 2015-2016

Are you concerned about issues that impact your community? Are you interested in helping The Scarborough Hospital become a stronger organization to meet the health care needs of residents now and into the future?

If so, you may be interested in becoming an Annual Member of The Scarborough Hospital Corporation. Annual Members play an important oversight role in the governance structure of The Scarborough Hospital.

Annual Members of the Corporation are admitted by resolution of the Board and consist of individuals who meet the eligibility requirements contained in the Hospital By-Law and who pay the annual membership fee of \$20. Membership is for one year, and those

individuals whose completed application is received on or before March 26, 2015 will be eligible to vote at the next Annual Meeting of the Members to be held on June 23, 2015, at 7 p.m. at The Scarborough Hospital, Birchmount campus, 3030 Birchmount Road in the Col. Irene Stickland Education Centre.

Current Annual Members interested in voting at the Annual Meeting of the Members on June 23, 2015, must renew their memberships on or before March 26, 2015.

Copies of the Membership Application form can be downloaded from the hospital's website (www.tsh.to) or obtained in person from:

- ✓ Administration, The Scarborough Hospital, General campus, 3050 Lawrence Avenue East, or
- ✓ Administration, The Scarborough Hospital, Birchmount campus, 3030 Birchmount Road

Please return your completed application and provide your \$20 membership fee in the form of a cheque by March 26, 2015 to:

THE SCARBOROUGH HOSPITAL
c/o Yvonne Ragnitz, Office of the CEO
3030 Birchmount Road,
Scarborough, Ontario M1W 3W3
Telephone: (416) 495-2406
E-Mail: yragnitz@tsh.to

The Beat Goes On

Providence Healthcare’s long-term care home, the Cardinal Ambrozic Houses of Providence, has been piloting two music-related programs. Read on to find out how music and technology are, literally, instrumental in better long-term care.

Rays of sunshine beam softly into the Houses of Providence Nature Room where eight residents have their own light notes to play. It’s 3:30 p.m. and voices join together singing the chorus of “I’ll Be There For You,” serving as both an agreement and hope to offer one another. This isn’t the only song they’ve sung together today or the only occasion when they’ve committed to meet. At the Java Music Club, themed discussion and songs are weekly itineraries for those experiencing loneliness, social isolation and depression – conditions often seen in residents in long-term care homes – in order to unwrap the healing that comes from hearing and sharing each other’s stories. The Java Music Club concept is a mutual support group activity program developed by researchers in the Gerontology

to be our assistant today?,” she asks. When Helen volunteers, she strums the chimes to begin the first part of the program and is asked to select a theme to discuss. Glancing at the list from the Java curriculum binder, she smiles and chooses autumn. “I love autumn and the changing colours,” Helen says. Each person is given a chance to share their thoughts on this chosen topic, and when Helen is finished, she passes an Aboriginal talking stick to the next person she’d like to hear from, Gerry. “We used to play outside by the chestnut trees in fall,” he remembers aloud. Looking upward as though to see the memory play out, Gerry continues to talk about his outdoor childhood games and the bit of horseplay with his friends. We’re laughing together as he animates the tricks he played, and it is for these happy moments of sharing that the residents look forward to meeting at Java. Gerry hands the Ab-



“What we’ve learned in the Java Music Club pilot is that we have to build trust. The results will not happen overnight but over time. Staff need to realize: don’t give up. It’s going to take time to see developments and hear comments like the one we heard from a resident from the pilot, ‘I’m committed to this club.’”

- Cindy Martin, Houses of Providence Activation and Programs Manager, on how to best embrace a Java Music Club across an organization.

THE JAVA MUSIC CLUB (OPENING SONG)

**A little music keeps me feeling good
A little coffee like I knew I could
A great big hug and I’m okay
I can make it through this day.
A little singing would be right on time
A little loving and I’m feeling fine
Sunshine through my window pane
And I can make it through this day.**

**Here’s the kind of people I like
Ones that are kind and treat me right
And that’s why I think I love
Our little Java Music Club, oh yeah
Our little Java Music Club.**

Department at Simon Fraser University.

Earlier, residents arrive in the Houses’ Nature Room and Debra McGraw, a Houses’ Activation Assistant and the Java Music Club initiator, calls the program into session with an upbeat jazz song. “Who would like

original talking stick over to Dave, who shares that winter is his favourite season because of ice hockey. Dave is a bit quieter and may not be as talkative as others in the room. Detecting this, Debra asks if he’d like to select a song from the autumn-themed song list provided in the Java curriculum. While Dave

may not use words to express his thoughts, he is able to participate by choosing a song, which we all sing along to with the provided lyrics.

What’s different about the Java Music Club from other social programs? “It’s about being together. No one else can really share what it’s like to live in a long-term care environment other than the people who live here. So, Java Music Club is an opportunity for residents to get together and discuss a variety of themes,” explains Debra, who was first interested in the program when the Java Music Club founder KristineTheurer

presented at Providence Hospital years ago.

“They know what to expect from the time together, as a sort of social ritual,” adds Debra. “Residents are not merely attending, they are participating.” This is seen in the way residents lead each part of the activity, from initiating a discussion theme to asking who they’d like to hear from next to choosing a song to sing or read together,

“Sometimes with large group programs, they can appreciate it, but this time, their voice is actually heard,” says Debra, who’s also involved in regular recreational activities. “It’s very empowering when they have the floor; everybody is there listening to them, which residents don’t get very often. Residents have the opportunity to talk about where they’ve been and what they’ve seen.”

interested in the program when the Java Music Club founder KristineTheurer

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WORDS OF PEACE

What Awaits Within

"PEACE COMES FROM WITHIN.
DO NOT SEEK IT WITHOUT."

BUDDHA

"In our quest to be fulfilled in this life," says Prem Rawat, "we may not recognize the quest itself. We recognize solutions that people have offered, but we neglect to understand what we are hungry for. What is your truest hunger? What makes you truly happy?"

Recognized in many countries as an ambassador of peace, Mr. Rawat circles the globe continually with a message about finding answers to those questions. The heart calls out to be fulfilled, to be at peace, to be content, he says, but neither that hunger nor its fulfillment can be put into words. It must be experienced.

"It's not about words," he says. "Even though I have to use words to convey what I feel, what I really want

to convey cannot be conveyed in words. It's not about philosophies, ideas or arguments.

"Yet that's what people get caught up in. Whatever I say can be argued one way or the other way. If I say, 'You need peace,' one person can argue, 'That's not true,' and another person can argue, 'It is true.' The argument can go on and on.

"Arguments don't go anywhere. What we know is what counts. In the desert, when you are thirsty, a picture of water is not going to help. It's the water that you have in a bottle that is going to quench your thirst."

Mr. Rawat asks those who come to listen to him to consider some very basic questions: What do you know about

yourself? Who are you? What does it mean to be alive?

"The questions I ask are not superficial," he says. "I'm talking about your core, about what it is that, even if you were to lose everything else, could still make you happy. That's perhaps the most challenging question: What makes you truly, truly happy? Is your deepest desire for some thing, or is it a desire for something within you?"

Looking for things that we think will make us happy is a frustrating search, Mr. Rawat says, because the happiness we are looking for is not in that new car or a better job or another person. It's something that we need to feel within ourselves. So it makes sense to look for the feeling where it is.

"Here, within, is the home of contentment," he says. "Within you is the home of peace, the home of true love, the home of joy. This is the home of enlightenment, the home of perfection. This is where reality resides."

If all of this really waits within, some people ask, then why do people get bored?

"Fulfillment is not an accident," Mr. Rawat says. "Joy is not an accident. Peace is not an accident, in the same way that the blooming of flowers in the desert is not an accident. Over thousands of years, those flowers have

evolved to lie dormant and wait for the rain. They wait, and they wait, and they wait.

"We wait for an airplane at the airport, and if it's a half-hour late, we get frustrated. People are already impatient. 'When is it coming? Why is it late?' If we go to a movie theater and the film doesn't start on time, it's, 'What happened? What happened?'"

"Those little seeds in the desert wait for a year—and sometimes, if there's no rain, they wait for yet another year. Not five minutes; a year. Then, when it rains, they're ready. The question is, are you ready? Because it is going to rain.

"Only when we begin to know ourselves do we realize that the treasures we seek on the outside are the treasures that are within us; that the compassion we seek from others is the compassion that's already within us; that the generosity that we need in our lives is the generosity that is already within us. To experience that inner realm—that's why you are here."

To learn more about Prem Rawat,
1 877 707 3221 Toll Free
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Special Feature

BHA-RA-TA

Here's an excerpt from the book. Sadhguru and Kiran Bedi explore the science behind Bharat, India's original name, and look at how the culture in this nation was carefully crafted for ultimate wellbeing.

Kiran Bedi: Why do we call our country Mataram, not Patram? Why is it "motherland," not "fatherland," or both?

Sadhguru: Because though essentially a nation is the people, the boundaries and the definition of a nation come from a land. We have always seen land or earth as a mother, because if we sow a seed, life grows. Almost everywhere in the world, except in certain very martial cultures, a nation has always been seen as a woman or a mother, because in a certain sense, a nation is defined by an aspect of geography.

Kiran Bedi: Is that the only reason? When did it begin?

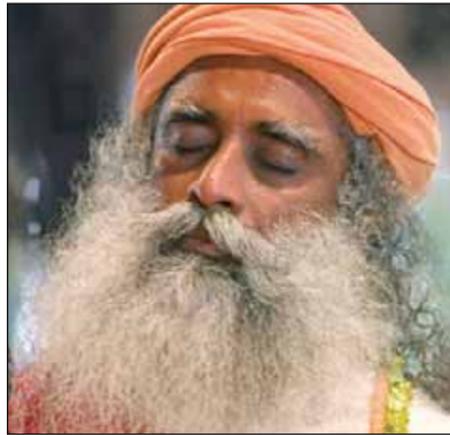
Sadhguru: I would say it began with this nation because this is the oldest nation on the planet. It defies today's concept of a nation. Modern nations are made based on language, religion, race, ethnicity, maybe ideology – essentially, it is the sameness of people that makes a nation. But in this nation, which we have known as Bharatvarsh for thousands of years – we have never defined ourselves by sameness. If you drive 50 kilometers, people look different, wear different clothes, eat differently, speak different languages – everything is different.

We are different people, but we are fine together. That is the nature of this country. That is what has to be encouraged.

When the Europeans came here, they did not understand how this could be one nation if there is nothing binding it. But for over thousands of years, within this subcontinent and also in the remaining part of the known world of those days, people referred to this as one nation, though at some points, we were over 200 political entities. What is it that makes this nation? This is something that the leadership and the people of this country must really look at. It is not language. It is not religion. It is not race. Nationhood predates all religion. When there was no religion, this nation was. We called the land between Himalayas and the Indu Sarovar (Indian Ocean) Hindustan only as a geographical description – not to represent a particular religion.

This is not a religious identity – this is a geographical and cultural identity. What kept us together longer than any other nation on the planet is that essentially, we have always been a land of seekers – seekers of truth and liberation. In this seeking, we found oneness. When we look for sameness, we try to become a land of believers. This seeking is not something that we invented. It is the nature of human intelligence to want to know, realize, and liberate itself.

This nation was based on this foundation that we are seekers. As a seeker, you are not aligned to a particular thing on the



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

outside but to the life process within you, and that never goes wrong. No matter how badly you contaminate human beings with belief systems and brainwash them, once their survival is taken care of, they always want to know the nature of their existence and of everything around them. Whether you call it science, spiritual process, inquiry, or quest, essentially, human intelligence wants to transcend its present limitations, wants to liberate itself from the fetters in which we exist right now. We built our nation on this longing, this seeking. Our nationhood cannot be destroyed as long as we keep this seeking alive. If we do not try to transform ourselves towards sameness, we will always be one.

Why "Bharat" matters

Kiran Bedi: Earlier, it was known as Bharat?

Sadhguru: Yes. Bharat comes from bha – ra – ta. Bhava means sensation. Seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, and touching are different types of sensations. Your whole experience of life is sensory right now. Or in other words, sensations are the basis of your experience. Bha means sensation, out of which emotion arises. Ra means raga or the tune. The tune is not yours – existence has already set it. Now you have to find the rhythm, which is the tala. If you find the right rhythm, you are a fantastic human being. If you miss the rhythm, you get crushed by the process of life.

We called this nation Bha-ra-ta, and one of the great kings of the past was Bharata. People say the country is named after him, but actually, he was named after the country. There are so many Bharats and Bharatis in this country – they are named after this nation. King Bharata had nine sons, but when the time to hand over the empire came, he gave it to Bhumanyu, who was the son of the sage Bharadwaj. This boy grew up in the forest. When he came to the court one day, the king looked at him and said, "This boy must become the king – not my sons." People were shocked because the emperor's sons, nine of them, were waiting in a queue – probably fighting with each other over who would become the king. People argued, "Who is he? He has grown up in the forest." Bharata said, "I see an enormous intelligence in his eyes and a raging fire in his heart. He is able-bodied and stable. He should be the king." This was the first demonstration of democracy in this nation, thousands of years ago. I hope we follow



this example today.

Kiran Bedi: I have a question. If we had continued to call India "Bharata," would a woman have felt more secure than in India today? You know what is happening with women, particularly in the rural and weaker sections of society.

Sadhguru: It is not that the name will do everything, but the name has to inspire passion for the nation. Right now, they only have hormonal passions – there is no passion for the nation. That is why these things are happening to women.

A nation is important because you expand the scope of your passion, involvement, and concern beyond your own likes and dislikes. "Why can't we think about the whole world?"

As a spiritual being, I am not a nationalistic person. I would like to look at every human being and every creature on the planet in the same way – that is how I am. But a nation is the largest piece of humanity that you are able to be committed to right now. When you are committed to this nation and its wellbeing, if not to 7.2 billion people, at least you are committed to 1.2 billion people, which is a great step forward from being committed to your own personal wellbeing.

What makes Bharat a nation

Kiran Bedi: I think in the last ten days (refers to the recent change of government with Narendra Modi as the Prime Minister of India), Hindi has returned much more. We might hear "bharatvasi" (one who lives in Bharat) and "bharatiya" (of or relating to Bharat) much more.

Sadhguru: You are leaving us out – we are from the South.

Kiran Bedi: You learn a little bit of Hindi then.

Sadhguru: No, we won't.

Kiran Bedi: Why?

Sadhguru: Because it is not the sameness that holds us together. We are different people, but we are fine together. That is the nature of this country. That is what has to be encouraged. Don't try to teach everyone Hindi. Don't try to teach everyone Tamil. I speak Tamil – you speak Hindi. You eat paratha – I eat idli. I think this is the best thing – you think that is the best thing. Still we have no issues. In the same family, five people can worship five different gods in the same room – no problem.

Kiran Bedi: What is needed to build a successful nation?

Sadhguru: A nation will be successful only when people's aspirations are kept alive. They must see that their life is a possibility. If people lose their aspiration, it is a finished nation. It is important to nurture an aspiration and create the possibility within one's lifespan. We also need to make

people's aspirations into the nation's aspirations, and the nation's aspirations into people's aspirations.

For example, we have been trading with the rest of the world for over ten thousand years. In Syria and many parts of Arabia, there are stories of Indian traders. Aleppo City, which was one of the most beautiful cities, was at one time built on taxes paid by Indian traders. In Lebanon, there is a temple in Baalbek which is over 4,000 years old. Children in Lebanon schools study that Indian labor, elephants, sculptors and yogis constructed this. It is a massive temple. Some of the foundation stones weigh three hundred tons. Sculptures of lotus flowers are hanging from the ceiling. Obviously, there are no lotuses in Lebanon; it was sculptured by Indians. Every Lebanese child knows this. Has any Indian child heard about it?

Over a thousand years ago, Tamil kings went to Cambodia and built Angkor Wat and Angkor Thom. If you see the work that has been done there, you will feel proud of being human. The Angkor Wat is the largest religious building on the planet. Does any Tamil child in Tamil Nadu up to twelfth standard read a line about it in his textbook?

When you don't feel pride, how do you build a nation? If you are not proud of who you are, why the hell should you stay here? Right now, if Western countries open up their visa policy, eighty percent of Indians will swim across the ocean and go away. That means you are holding them back by force – it is a prison. People should want to be here, but everybody wants to go away and we are holding them. That is not the way to run a nation.

Bharat or India?

Kiran Bedi: Did we make a mistake in converting our name from Bharat to India?

Sadhguru: A serious mistake. Whenever somebody occupies a nation, the first thing they will do is change your name. This is the technology of dominance; this is the technology of enslaving. If you look at African-American history, when the African people were brought to America, the first thing they did was took their African name away and gave them some silly name. That is what has been done to us – Thiruvananthapuram is "Trivandrum."

Chennai is "Madras." Like this – "India." What does it mean? It does not mean anything. If I give you a meaningless name, you will become a meaningless, stupid person in front of me because I have a meaningful name. I have a tradition, I have a culture – you have nothing. So in that context, we have become "India."

To be continued in the next issue...



A thoughtful gift for your children

On Jack's first birthday, her grandparents gave him a very special gift – a Critical Illness (CI) insurance policy with \$25,000 benefit. Jack's parents were amazed when they found out the features and benefits of this juvenile CI policy.

This CI has included 26 covered illnesses with full benefit payout. Plus 5 covered childhood illnesses such as cerebral palsy, congenital heart disease, cystic fibrosis, muscular dystrophy and type 1 diabetes. These are with full benefit payout as well.

One of the best features is the automatic 75% of the returnable premium amount at the later of age 25 or the 15th policy anniversary. That means when Jack turns 25, he will receive this amount if there is no claim on this policy. He could use this money as a down payment for a car or a residence or even further studies!

Another option Jack can choose is to keep this lifetime policy as he won't get any better rate as

per his current age for the same amount of benefit. It can also serve to protect his savings from any impact of a critical illness in his life.

When Jack reaches age 18, he may even apply to convert this CI to a Long Term Care insurance.

Moreover, he has unlimited access to the Best Doctors services if there is any suspicious medical concern.

All in all, the grandparents only pay \$17.73 per month!

If you would like to know more about the Critical Illness for children, for yourself or any insurance and investment needs, please contact Anita Lo at 416-799-8008.

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HUMANS OF NORTHERN SRI LANKA



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

www.facebook.com/pages/Humans-of-Northern-Sri-Lanka “The adage, “everybody has a story to tell” is especially true of Northern Sri Lanka! Cut off for several decades from the South, the people of the North have many unique characteristics and issues that hardly get press coverage! Here, inspired by Humans of New York, is a small attempt to redress this - dedicated to all lovers of Sri Lanka, including Northern Sri Lanka!” Here are few recent pictorials that featured in Humans of Northern Sri Lanka:

BY THULASI MUTTULINGAM

“We received training on sewing items with leather and other hardy materials to make durable goods: School bags, hand bags, bicycle seats etc. In our individual villages we could not get an income with it so a group of us got together and rented this place by the main road. People see us at our sewing machines and drop in to ask if we are sewing clothes They are startled to see and hear of what we actually do.” (at Poonahari)



Like

“I am 23 and divorced. People might judge me for it but they have not been in my shoes. Gaining the divorce took a lot of effort but I finally managed it, because I wanted to be free. I used to be a very sheltered child. I didn't know much of the world. So when this glamorous salon owner who set up shop in our village, started following me around and begging me to marry him, I thought he might be sincere. He even cut my name on his arm to show the depth of his devotion. I thought he would look after me well, but the marriage soon turned into a nightmare.”



Like

“Once, this area of Kokkulai in Mullaitivu was famous for its coconut groves, Now, except for a few odd trees here and there, most are gone - demolished during the war. They were used by both the Army and the LTTE to make bunkers. We have slowly been replacing the trees over the past few years, but its going to be a long process. Most of those trees were several decades old.”



Like

“They say my husband had a seizure while crossing a pond on a plank and fell in. We were shocked because he had never had a history of epilepsy. By the time they managed to fish him out he was dead. Our daughter was three and I was eight months pregnant with our son at that time. They are both in their teens now. I am very proud of the fact I brought them up single-handedly and kept them regularly schooling despite all my difficulties.”



I married when I was 20 and was widowed at 25. I barely knew the world outside my house, but after that I had to come out to earn. Over time, I learned to fish and to farm. During the recent drought, all our crops dried up except for this bountiful drumstick tree, which has never failed me. I love this tree.”

Like (Photo courtesy: Victor Antony)

What are the problems you see on the ground as a counselor in Kilinochchi?



I work with fisher communities - the fishermen of these parts work hard under a lot of heat and against heavy winds. They are thus continuously stressed, angry, aggressive people.”

What kind of community solution do they have to combat the stress?



“Alcohol.”

Don't they sing songs to forget the pains of work anymore? Fishermen's folk songs are among the most innovative and powerful folk music of rural communities; they are known to be effective stress busters?

“That system has all but died out now. Now they sing cinema songs at the tavern, not folk songs while fishing. The system of fishing has changed you see. Before, several men went fishing together and so they would sing. Now there are only two-three persons per small plastic boat.

Singing amba (fisherfolk songs) is increasingly seen as something known only to older fishermen now - and they are dying out. Within the last year, I know of four such older fishermen who died. With them is dying this art.”

Which case among your counseling work affected you the most?

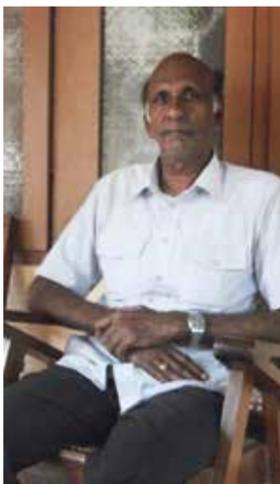
“A case of child abuse. A young girl who was abused by her own uncle and had arrested development mentally and emotionally due to it. It took a lot of work on my part to unearth the source of her trauma. One has to be careful discussing these issues though. The local media have no sense of ethics. The minute they get wind of a case like this, they sensationalize the story and name the victims along with their full details so that everyone knows who and where they are. In another case where the child's name was published along with her village and family details, I called up the correspondent and invited him to come see the damage he had done to the girl's psyche. He hung up the phone on me.”

Like

“It's good that trains are running to the North again. I prefer the scenic routes that the train takes, as opposed to the bus.”

Our history with trains is a long one. As a small boy, I used to travel by steam coaches - they chugged on with billowing steam and liberally smeared the passengers with soot. You needed to get a good wash once you got down.

Our grandparents' generation used to tell us tales of how they first viewed the train when it appeared in their midst circa 1905. Apparently they hid behind palmyrah groves and watched in marvel, because they were afraid one of the coaches might break loose and come after them. When an automobile first appeared in their midst soon after, some people had run away screaming, 'Our fears have come true. One of the coaches from that steam monster has broken loose and is going helter-skelter!'



Like

“An NGO worker traveling in a heavily wooded, isolated area of Mannar. Most of the villages she has to visit lie in far-flung rural settlements, sometimes in newly deforested areas with wild animals still about. Elephants, leopards and snakes are part of her regular sightings but the most worrisome she says is Man. “I try not to think of all the things that could go wrong as I make my daily circuits. Thinking too much incapacitates you.” Aren't you afraid at all? “I once rode these areas when they were rife with both the LTTE and the Army ambushing each other. These paths were filled with claymore mines then. In the midst of that, I still went to work. This is nothing.”

Like



“I was 16, he was 23 when we married. I ran off with him so my family cut off all contact with me. Because I missed my mother, he felt sorry and spoiled and pampered me as much as he could. I would pretend not to be able to sleep at night because then he would stroke my head and sing my favourite movie star, MGR’s songs as lullabies.

In April 2009, he was hit by a shell and died in front of my eyes. The shell ricocheted off him and hit my son and daughter, killing them too. My son was still in his white uniform, having just written his O’Level exam, in the IDP camp we were in.

I was left with three young children of my own plus my daughter’s even younger three children.

I am called ‘mother’ by all six now. Having to provide for them keeps me busy throughout the day, but at nights, the memories come flooding back. I lay awake now with insomnia, remembering the time I once pretended insomnia in order to gain my husband’s affectionate attention; that’s when it hits that he is not there anymore to take care of my needs and I start crying.”

Like



“The LTTE forcibly conscripted my daughter, while she was at school. They sent a sealed coffin some months later and told us not to open it, that it wasn’t her body inside as they couldn’t retrieve the body; they just wanted us to have the opportunity to give her her last rites.

I went to pieces. I still have nightmares wondering if she is still alive and what she is doing. There was something rolling around in that coffin, probably a banana trunk. I didn’t want a banana trunk. I want my child back.”



Like

There are reports of communal tensions between Muslims and Tamils?

“Not in this village, there isn’t. We always had a good relationship even prior to 1990 (the forced exodus of the Muslims by the LTTE) and we enjoy good relations with them even after we came back. We saw how the Tamil people cried when we left. They were not involved in the decision to expel us from the North and so we bear them no ill will for it. The LTTE took our money and jewelry but our property were left alone by the Tamil people here. They did farm our agricultural lands when we were gone, but when we came back after 20 years, they vacated it and gave it back voluntarily. They were very careful not to usurp anything of ours and we are grateful for that.”

Like



“This area of keerimalai has been sacred to Hindus for generations. It was however taken over in 1990 as a High Security Zone after we became displaced during the war.

People come here for healing baths in the therapeutic spring waters and to dissolve the ashes of their departed in the nearby estuary.

Pilgrims recently again gained access to certain key areas but many other sacred areas continue to be in the High Security Zone occupied by the Army and Navy.

This place literally means mongoose-hill and traces its history to a mongoose faced saint who worshiped at a hill nearby. My family owned a famous Krishna temple on that hill. Both the hill and our properties are still denied access to us.

We are hopeful the new president will enable us to get our properties back.”

Like



“I am an agricultural labourer. Since agriculture was hit by the floods recently, I don’t have work now. We make sure our baby has only the best we can give her in terms of nutrition, but sometimes we don’t eat enough ourselves.

I built this hut myself with materials I bought for Rs, 25000. We are scheduled to receive the housing sponsored by the Indian government soon and I am wondering if I should take it. Many of the people who received the housing are in severe debt now and that worries me. Where would I go for the money?”

Like



Like us on Facebook



Ground water polluted in Jaffna, Sri Lanka North - drinking water, a scarce commodity

Sri Lankan newspaper sundayobserver.lk gives an account regarding the situation of scarcity in the country's North surrounding the precious natural resource that is often taken for granted – water:

by Naalir Jamaldeen

Pure drinking water is the main problem faced by the people in the Jaffna district. They depend on ground water. Water sources here are polluted with the use of chemicals including fertiliser for agricultural purposes and mixing of oil with ground water, Jaffna district GA, S. Arumainayaham told the Sunday Observer.

Most of the people depend on ground water for drinking and agriculture. Contamination has caused a severe impact in the lives of the people. New arrangements are crucial to solve the problems of the people who are affected by the contamination of water. People in the district have been made aware of the harm caused by contaminated water for drinking.

Programs to supply pure drinking water have been inaugurated in the affected areas. Nearly 7,000 families in the Thellipalai and Uduvil Divisional Secretariat Divisions have been affected with the contamination of water.

There is a fear that this number would increase if a solution was not found immediately. The relevant authorities should solve this problem. Testing the wells in the affected areas has begun by the Water Supply and drainage Board. At the initial stage drinking water is supplied to people in the affected areas. The relevant Divisional secretariat offices are also help-

ing for this program.

A special Task force consisting of members from Provincial councils, Pradeshiya Sabhas and the Central Government has been set up by the Jaffna District Secretariat to find a solution to this problem.

The Jaffna district achieved tremendous development after 2010 Arumainayaham said. "Unemployment among the youth in the district is the next problem which should be addressed by the Government. There are over 30,000 unemployed youth in the Jaffna district. Over 3,000 graduates in the district have already been given employment. We have conducted job fairs in the concluded recent past. We have given employment to 2,000 youth in the district last year and the year prior to last year", the GA said.

"We plan to set up industrial parks to address the unemployment problem among the youth in the district, Achchuveli Industrial zone development works are progressing. Once the project is over 2,000 youth in the district will receive employment", he said.

"We also have requested at investors who are to invest in the Jaffna district to pay attention on tourism and garment industry which would generate large number of employment opportunities to youth in the district.

We are conducting surveys on these concepts. We hope that way will arise



A women collects water from a partly dried-up well

to bring these industries to Jaffna district in the future", Arumainayaham said.

"When a country is free of bribery and corruption, it will achieve the peak of development and sustainable development can also be ensured. I welcome the good governance policy of the new Government.

I believe the Government will take necessary steps to eliminate bribery and corruption from the country. When there is good governance there will be no room for corruption and bribery", he said.

A large number of people in the Jaffna district depend on agriculture specially paddy cultivation and fruit production. A large number of paddy and fruit cultivators were affected by the drought and rains. They lost even the means to get the seeds. They should be given assistance to begin cultivation. If

they were given raw materials or financial assistance the agriculture and fisheries sector will bloom while improving the economy of large number of people depending on this industry, he said.

Due to the recent drought the fruit producers were also affected. Fruit producers will develop the industry if the Government gives subsidies or assistance to start cultivation. Chavakachcheri Divisional secretariat Division is famous for paddy cultivation.

Valigamam is famous for fruit production, Uduvil for potato cultivation. Potato cultivation is conducted in a major scale in Urumbirai area. We have sent the harvest season list to the relevant Ministries.

And the same list has been sent even to the Sathosa. We have to purchase the production of farmers through Sathosa and Multi Purpose Cooperative Societies.

Rally and protest march held in Sri Lanka North urging UN Action

University and school students, teachers, clergy and general public attended a march in Jaffna, Sri Lanka North on February 24th urging UN action regarding the war ended in May 2009.

The attendees rejected any domestic inquiry conducted by the Sri Lankan state and called for an independent international investigation. They called on the UN Human Rights Council to release the report looking into mass atrocities committed, The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) Investigation on Sri Lanka (OISL) report this month in March as previously announced.

UN Human Rights High Commissioner HC Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein in early February had assured of his "personal, absolute and unshakable commitment" that the report will be out only by September this year.



Rally in Jaffna- February 24, 2015-Pic courtesy: twitter.com/Hamsanan

Diplomatic circles opined that the peaceful conclusion of the rally and people attending in thousands indicated a positive feature of the new government and President Maithri-

pala Sirisena. Earlier in 2012, a rally by University of Jaffna students was violently broken up by Sri Lankan security forces during the time when President Mahinda Rajapaksa was in

office.

Several protests and awareness campaigns are also ongoing in Sri Lanka north and East by Families of missing persons.



THE GRASS IS ALWAYS GREEN ON THE OTHER SIDE

By: C. Kamalaharan

Senthil had an intense urge
To fly abroad and merge
With the western lifestyle
To enhance his profile

The sights of his peers richly attired
Arriving with foreign goods acquired
Had been a source of inspiration
For his great expectation

Unable to find a legal way
He chose the only risky way
To set off as a refugee
Paying exorbitant fee

But the situation turned grim
When naval patrol nabbed him
And kept him in custody
To lead a life of tragedy

The meal served was frugal
Mostly the monotonous gruel
His health and vitality deteriorated
Leaving him thoroughly frustrated

On release was inducted in a firm
Under a boss so strict and firm
Whose stern actions were unbearable
And life again became miserable

His body severely battered
And hope completely shattered
Yet for him his family mattered
And so he continued undeterred

He thought of taking a lighter job
To avoid the daily snub
But can he recover all the cost
That's what worried him most

Unable to endure anymore
He finally decided to forgo
All the unsettled commitments
And return without achievements

Life in his native land
Now seemed mirthful and grand
And so he arrived there with much hope
To seek a job with plenty of scope



The grass that appeared green on the other side
Now appeared green on his side
A reality perceived by him from either side
As a caution to those seeking the other side





Safety campaign seeks to relieve stigma about dementia and expands to four additional multilingual communities in Ontario

The Alzheimer Society of Ontario, in partnership with the Government of Ontario, is expanding the award-winning Finding Your Way™ program by reaching out to Arabic, Tagalog, Tamil and Urdu communities. The multicultural safety awareness initiative for people with dementia who may go missing or become lost is now available in 12 languages, helping society as a whole better understand some of the behaviours associated with the disease and in turn providing tools to deal with the risk of going missing.

“This unique program breaks the stigma attached to the disease,” insists David Harvey, Chief Public Policy and Program Initiatives Officer at the Alzheimer Society of Ontario. “Dementia affects people regardless of race, religion or class. We need to find ways to support people from as many different cultures as possible.”

According to the 2011 Census, more than 106,000 Ontarians speak Arabic, 128,965 speak Urdu, 85,045 Tamil and 69,605 Tagalog. Members of these communities are among the 200,000 Ontarians who have dementia today. The Finding Your Way program has received over \$2 million in funding from the Government of Ontario and now offers resources to communities across the province in 12 languages: English, French, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, Cantonese, Mandarin, Punjabi, Arabic, Tagalog, Tamil and Urdu. Communities have benefited greatly from the multilingual, multimedia awareness safety campaign.

Statistics show that three out of five people with dementia go missing at some point, often without warning. There is greater risk of injury, even death, for those missing for more than 24 hours. Having a plan in place and knowing how to respond should a missing incident occur can help save a life.

Unfortunately, mental illnesses and neurological diseases such as dementia may be misunderstood in many ethnic

communities. The lack of awareness about dementia increases the risks of missing incidents amongst people with dementia. The Alzheimer Society of Ontario recognizes the need to educate and promote awareness of dementia to Ontario’s various multicultural communities.

Uma Suresh of Pickering was virtually unaware about the resources available to her and her family when her mother-in-law was diagnosed with dementia. “I’m an active Tamil community worker, but I didn’t know much about dementia or the services and resources available to those who have it. If I, as a community worker, didn’t know about it, think about other people. My mother-in-law’s behavioral changes shocked me and I was not prepared for it. She would always run outside thinking she is in a different time and different place. We were afraid for her safety. Having access to Alzheimer Society’s Finding Your Way program in Tamil will help caregivers cope and prepare for the many challenges of being a caregiver,” says Uma.

“We’ve all heard news items about missing reports of people with dementia. People may not know where to seek help or what to do to offer assistance,” says Chris Dennis, Interim CEO of Alzheimer Society of Ontario. “We commend the Ontario Government for recognizing the need to support people living with dementia from a culturally and linguistically diverse background, and we are thankful for their help in providing socially inclusive programs and services, such as Finding Your Way™.”

“There are nearly 200,000 Ontarians currently living with dementia and many do not speak English or French,” says Mario Sergio, Minister Responsible for Seniors Affairs. “With the expansion of the Finding Your Way program we are reaching more people, and providing important information to protect those with this disease. Through Ontario’s Action Plan for Seniors we continue to work with older adults, their families,



Chris Dennis, interim CEO of Alzheimer Society of Ontario (picture first right), Mario Sergio, Minister Responsible for Seniors (third from left) and Inspector David Saunders of the Toronto Police (left) presented appreciation plaques to Uma Suresh (second from right), caregiver from the Tamil community, Rosita Dela Cruz (third from right), caregiver from the Filipino community and Dr Amer Burhan (second from left), Arabic community spokesperson for their contribution to ASO’s Finding Your Way awareness campaign, launched today. The program has expanded into four additional languages including Arabic, Tagalog, Tamil and Urdu. More information is available on www.FindingYourWayOntario.ca.

caregivers and law enforcement to improve the safety and security of seniors across the province.”

Finding Your Way™ website includes information to help families create personalized safety plans and tips for the community on how to help someone with dementia who may be lost. Various public service announcements and caregiver video stories are also developed in various languages. To learn more about Finding Your Way™, visit www.FindingYourWayOntario.ca or contact your local Alzheimer Society at www.AlzheimerOntario.ca.

About the Alzheimer Society of Ontario

The Alzheimer Society of Ontario is the province’s leading health charity committed to helping people with Alzheimer’s and other dementias. With a network of 34 Societies across Ontario, they offer Help for Today through their programs and services for people living with dementia and Hope for Tomorrow...® by funding research to find the cause and the cure. For more information about Alzheimer Society of Ontario, visit <http://www.alzheimer.ca/en/on>

NEWCOMER WINS A ‘WELCOME TO REMEMBER’ \$5,000 WELCOME PACK CASH PRIZE



Snigdha was all smiles as she held up the \$5000 check, which announced that she was the winner of the WelcomePack year-end jackpot. A newcomer who came to Canada with her family in January 2014, Snigdha is truly enjoying her life in her new country. “In Canada, everyone has been really helpful, regardless of their background and where they are from,” she says with a smile.

WelcomePack Canada, along with over 40 leading Canadian brands is a newcomer program, welcoming new Canadian immigrants like Snigdha. It helps them settle, fostering a sense of belonging to the Canadian

way of life. The company has already given out over 28,000 gifts packs to new immigrants across the GTA through a network of over 60 distribution partners.

“I really appreciate what the WelcomePack program does for newcomers. We found the products and the information to be very useful. I am grateful, and really appreciate the services which I received from the settlement agency too,” says Snigdha.

About the WelcomePack Program

WelcomePack is a unique and innovative program that was launched in September 2013. It provides a free welcome gift box to new immigrants. The gift box is replete with products and gifts from over 40 leading Canadian brands. Also included in the WelcomePack gift box is a colorful and informative magazine that provides helpful settlement information as well as introduces the leading Canadian brands to them. Redeemable special offer coupons are included in the magazine. Throughout the year, WelcomePack Canada provides helpful information and valuable offers through its bi-monthly email communication.

If you have arrived on or after Sep 1, 2011, pick up your WelcomePack gift box today! For more information, visit www.welcomepackcanada.com

LITTLE WORDS OF LOVE

LITTLE DROPS OF RAIN,
BRING IN HEAVY FLOOD,
SIMPLE WORDS JOINED TOGETHER
MAKE THE LANGUAGE WE SPEAK.

THUS FROM A LITTLE SEED
AS SMALL AS IT CAN BE,
BRING OUT MIGHTY TREES
THAT GROW IN OUR WOODS.

A SLOPPY WORD IGNITES ANIMOSITY,
A CALLOUS WORD RUINS VIABILITY;
A PROPITIOUS WORD SOOTHES ANXIETY,
A LOVING WORD BRINGS SANITY.

LITTLE WORDS OF KINDNESS
AND PLEASING WORDS OF LOVE
CAN MOVE HARD MOUNTAIN
OF HATRED FROM OUR MINDS.

THUS ANGER, ENMITY ‘N HATRED,
WILL VANISH FROM OUR MINDS,
SO, THE WORLD WILL BE A PARADISE
FOR PEOPLE TO LIVE IN PEACE.

- KINGSLEY



DR. DHUN NORIA, TSH'S CHIEF OF LABORATORY MEDICINE, RECEIVES ORDER OF ONTARIO



Dr. Dhun Noria, Chief of Laboratory Medicine and Medical Director of Laboratories at The Scarborough Hospital, was presented with the Order of Ontario by the Lieutenant Governor of Ontario, The Honourable Elizabeth Dowdeswell, at an investiture ceremony on Feb 3, 2015.

The Scarborough Hospital (TSH) is pleased to announce that Dr. Dhun Noria, TSH's Chief of Laboratory Medicine and Medical Director of Laboratories, was presented with the Order of Ontario by the Lieutenant Governor of Ontario, The Honourable

Elizabeth Dowdeswell, at an investiture ceremony yesterday.

The Order of Ontario is the province's highest official honour. It recognizes any current or former long-time resident of Ontario who has demonstrated a high level of individual excellence and achievement in any field benefitting the people of Ontario or anywhere in the world.

Dr. Noria was recognized with this prestigious honour due to her unwavering commitment and steadfast dedication to TSH, Scarborough and the Ontario medical community.

"I am humbled to be honoured as a recipient of the Order of Ontario," said Dr. Noria. "I have been blessed to have had so many opportunities to serve communities right here at home and internationally. It is in my blood; it is my passion. The Order of Ontario is a prestigious recognition; however, it is the relationships that I have with individuals and with the community that I cherish the most."

Dr. Noria has built a career on an unwavering commitment to excellence in health care with significant impact on Ontario's health care system. Throughout her more than 30 years with TSH, Dr. Noria has provided guidance on many significant initiatives. As a member of the core planning team for the amalgamation of Scarborough General and Grace Hospitals in 1999, she advocated for the community, and ensured transparency

and quality throughout the process. She also founded and chaired the Shared Hospital Laboratory – a joint partnership with TSH, North York General Hospital and Toronto East General Hospital that was lauded by former Health Minister David Caplan as a, "trophy to the residents of Scarborough and East York." In addition, she has been a member of both the hospital and TSH Foundation (TSHF) Board of Directors.

Her passion and involvement extends into the community through many active and supportive roles. As a champion for the delivery of high-quality patient care across the health care system, she is currently a Trustee of the University Health Network (Toronto General Hospital, Princess Margaret Hospital, Toronto Western Hospital and Toronto Rehab Institute) and the Chair of the Quality Committee of the Board for the University Health Network.

Dr. Noria also serves on the Toronto Police Services Board, has been a member of the Board of Governors for the Yee Hong Centre for Geriatric Care since 1996 and served as Chair of the Metro Toronto District Health Council where she steered the successful restructuring of 44 hospitals during the amalgamation of the City of Toronto.

Her remarkable body of work and commitment to the community has been honoured locally and internationally for many years. In 2014, she received the Lifetime Achievement Award from

TSHF at the Scarborough World Gala. She has also received the Ontario Medical Association Presidential Award for Outstanding Services by a Physician to the Community and the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Award, both in 2012. She was also inducted into the Scarborough Walk of Fame in 2011 and has been named as a Local Toronto Hero by the Canadian Multicultural Council.

Dr. Noria is also a successful business person who owns and operates several medical-related businesses. In 2004, she was named Business Woman of the Year by the Indo-Canada Chamber of Commerce. Outside of the health care sector, Dr. Noria's many causes include the Zoroastrian Society of Ontario, which recognizes her and her husband for their many community initiatives in the United States and India.

Dr. Noria's passion for and dedication to enhancing health care has motivated her to participate in many philanthropic activities, including contributions to TSH designated to the Women's Clinic to support the early diagnosis and treatment of breast cancer – an issue close to her heart.

As a two time breast cancer survivor, Dr. Noria understands that life can be short and hopes to help as many people as she can, and has no intention of slowing down anytime soon. She admits, "There is so much to do that will keep me busy and active. I can't imagine myself ever retiring and going into the sunset."

THE PRINCESS MARGARET CANCER FOUNDATION'S #NOHAIRSELFIE CAMPAIGN GROWS BEYOND EXPECTATIONS

February 4 was World Cancer Day, and The Princess Margaret Cancer Foundation's #NoHairSelfie digital fundraising campaign trended on social media in an effort to show support for patients worldwide who are undergoing cancer treatment. Thousands of people joined the movement by actually shaving their heads, or virtually "shaving" with the free app, and posting their selfie on social media using the #NoHairSelfie hashtag.

"The response to the #NoHairSelfie has gone beyond our expectations; from downloads of the app, to the number of participants, to the amount of money pledged, and with the ultimate goal of raising funds for critical cancer research," says Paul Alofs, President and CEO, The PMCF.

"The phrase of the day is: 'shave, share and donate'," says Alofs.

Early highlights of the campaign included:

- More than 50,000 downloads of the #NoHairSelfie app
- Named best new app by Apple
- Close to 15,000 #NoHairSelfies already posted in the online gallery
- Top fundraisers Canadian philanthropist Gary Slaight and Vice Chair of Deloitte Harley Mintz, have together raised over \$1million
- Volunteer barbers include both Toronto Mayor John Tory and The Wealthy Barber David Chilton
- Hair-ticipants include: Ray Civello, Founder of Civello Salon and President of Aveda Canada, Castro Liu, Councillor, Ward 3, Richmond Hill, 12-year old Scarborough-native Jamie Anderson, and participants from all across Canada, the United States, and Mongolia

The #NoHairSelfie campaign has been well-received and supported by the South Asian community. Among



Madura Siva before and after hair shave treatment.

the participants, Madura Siva, who has luscious long hair, chose to go for an actual shave to support the movement. When asked why she was participating in the campaign she said, "I'm shaving my head so that I can send an important message to society, and more importantly to my two-year-old daughter that the definition of beauty should not revolve around physical beauty such as hair, but should more importantly focus on values of empathy, compassion, and generosity. I'm fundraising for cancer research in hopes that cancer patients can continue to enjoy their simple pleasures and live full and meaningful lives. I'd like to dedicate this shave to all the loving patients I have shared wonderful memories with."

She goes on to state, "There is a strong association between hair and beauty in the South Asian community. Negative stigmas surrounding diseases such as cancer and its associated hair loss

prevent members of the South Asian community from speaking openly and publicly about their diagnosis. This is mainly due to the fear of public dishonor and humiliation. Failing to speak about the disease can be a serious crutch that prevents early detection and access to crucial resources such as dietary information and psychosocial resources, that can help patients manage and fight their cancer. We need to break out of our shells and start talking more about cancer and its implications in our lives. Let's work together to raise awareness in the community."

Many of the participants – or 'hair-ticipants' – in the #NoHairSelfie campaign endured their own cancer journey or have gone through it with a loved one; this fundraiser gave people the opportunity to demonstrate their support for the thousands of Canadians undergoing cancer treatment, many of whom lose their hair as a side effect of

treatment.

Dawn Murphy, a cancer survivor who has raised more than \$8,000, saw firsthand how people wanted to support her both during her treatment and current fundraising efforts. "One of the most visible and devastating side effects of my cancer treatment was the loss of my hair," she said. "The #NoHairSelfie campaign gave my friends, family and colleagues the opportunity to show their solidarity for those of us still on our treatment journey or in remission."

More than 40% of all Canadians will be diagnosed with cancer in their lifetime, and 1 in 4 is expected to die from the disease.

The #NoHairSelfie campaign brings together cancer patients, survivors and those who love them for one common goal: to Conquer Cancer In Our Lifetime.

For more information,

visit www.NoHairSelfie.com

FREE HEALTHCARE IS A NECESSITY IN OUR SOCIETY

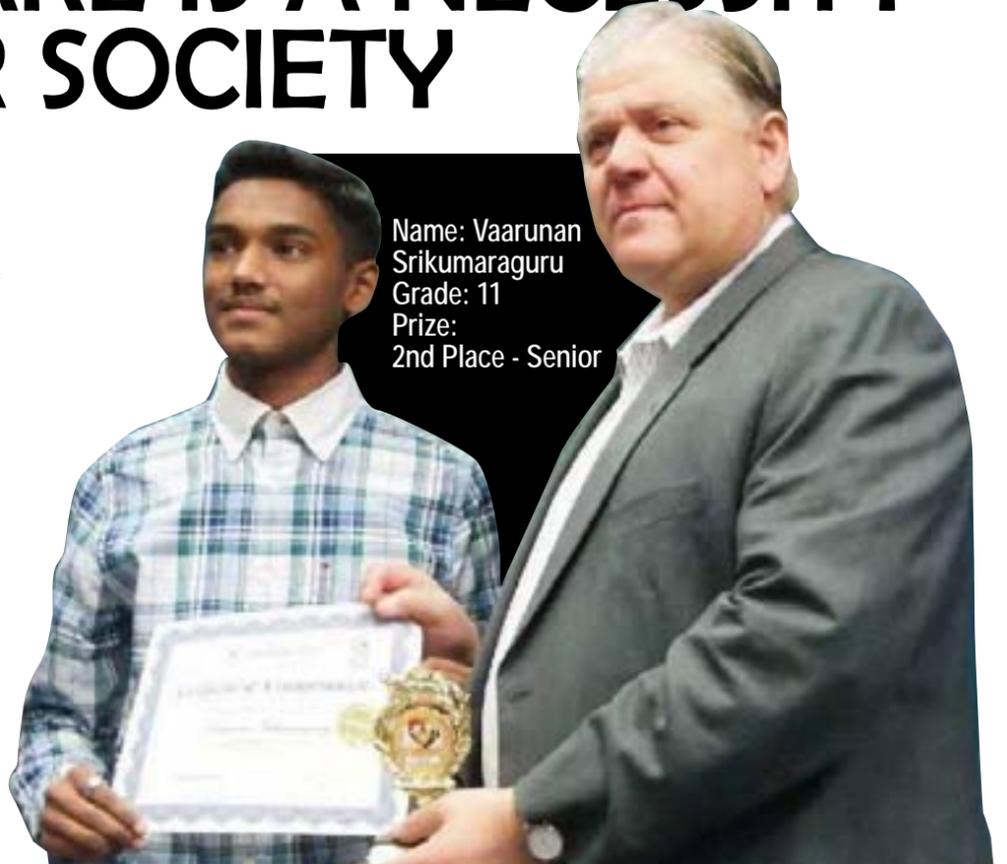
A very controversial debate that has been discussed in every country is free healthcare. Some believe that with free healthcare, the benefits it provides will lead to a better society. On the other hand however, free health care may also prove fatal for certain citizens in that specific community. I believe that providing free health care has a more positive, beneficial effect on society than negative. Free healthcare should therefore be provided in all countries.

To outline the positive factors of providing free healthcare, many benefit from this free system. It will have a major impact on those who are unable to afford health care. Many who cannot afford to have the basic medical check-ups done are those who usually contract infectious diseases and have very bad lifestyles. If these people continue to receive no medical attention, it would have a very serious effect on society. The diseases they contract and the illness they develop can easily be transferred to others in the community. A big and recent example of this is the Ebola outbreak in Western Africa. Ebola originated in 1971 when a poor man in Africa, who was living under horrible conditions contracted it. If that society had free healthcare, the current outbreak would have been

prevented. Although diseases can be passed on even with proper medical attention, the chances are much smaller. In fact, Canadians who have free healthcare, have a 3 percent longer life expectancy than their neighbours. The point is, if universal healthcare was provided to every citizen, there would be a smaller chance in the spread of infectious diseases and infections.

Looking at free healthcare in the world's perspective, countries that provide this service are better off than countries that do not. Many countries that don't provide this system are third- world countries. Although these countries are poor, free healthcare should be one of its higher priorities. Most infectious diseases originate from third world states and start spreading outwards. If the diseases were prevented, then there would be no spread of diseases, heavily reducing the panic it could cause around the world. The biggest solution to the prevention of diseases is healthcare. Providing these countries with at least the basic medical needs with no charge would lead to a safer world.

Another reason why we should have universal healthcare is to eliminate private sectors that provide medical treatment.



Name: Vaarunan Srikumaraguru
Grade: 11
Prize: 2nd Place - Senior

Privatized companies do not benefit the government and is also not subsidized/funded by the government. This leads to very expensive treatments that are barely affordable by the average person. The elimination of the private sector and its cost would allow citizens to get the necessary medical attention they need without paying big, unnecessary bills.

Although free healthcare will benefit the society, it also has its drawbacks. A major con to this is doctors – both specialized and regular – will not be performing at their best. There is no incentive for doctors to do their best because they are working on a fixed salary. Doctors are not considered as surgeons, specialist or any other specific occupations, but regular doctors in the eyes of the government. All doctors have a fixed salary based on the hours they work and with no change in salary based on the job they perform. The incentive is gone for them to acquire more knowledge and to enhance their skills. The opportunity cost in this situation is heavy. If free healthcare is provided to everyone, the quality of the job would not be amazing, but if no free healthcare was provided, the quality of the job would be better in comparison.

With free healthcare, there would be a lot of errors in the system. The fact that this luxury is provided for free would lead to certain people abusing the system. Hospitals in general have long lined for patients to be checked, and some of these patients only have the sniffles or something very minor. By making health care free, more people will begin to take advantage of it and the line ups will increase. This is very negative because there will be people that have severe diseases or other problems that require immediate medical attention, but are restricted by the long line-up caused by those in line for minor problems.

For free healthcare to be provided, there will usually be an increase in the tax rates. The problem with this is the citizens who do not use free medical treatment will not benefit from this increase in tax

rates. A suggestion would be to start using this system regularly, but the problem with long lines comes up again. An increased tax rate would also affect the poor. Paying these increased rates would be difficult and can lead to more external problems. Another party that is affected by the

Second in a series of award winning articles presented for the RG Education Centres' essay competition by students and delivered at their annual celebrations held during year end, 2014.

increased tax rates are the wealthy with high incomes. The tax imposed would be on Ad-Velrom tax, which is dependent on one's incomes. The wealthy would be contributing a greater percentage than the rest. They would then be paying a portion of everyone's healthcare, including their own, rather than paying a lower rate for themselves only.

This topic is really a debate on what's ethically right or what provides more profit. Looking at the large scope of things, privatized healthcare with no subsidized funding from the government is more profitable for the society. It allows for more economic development and growth, benefiting the economy and its citizens. It also leads to better quality in treatment, for the most part. On the ethical side of things, however, more people are worst off in terms of health with no healthcare. Many people can be heavily affected by various diseases and infections and can spread it if no free healthcare is provided. Both sides of this argument have valid points. I personally believe that the ethical way is the right way. More people benefit from free healthcare than those who profit from privatized healthcare. Therefore, free healthcare should be a necessity provided to all.



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Few tax tips you may want to consider during this tax season



Compiled by

Ari A. Ariaran, CPA, CGA

1. Reduce taxable income with a Registered Retirement Savings Plan (RRSP). RRSPs can be eligible for a tax deduction in the amount of the annual contribution. Up to 18% of earned income to a maximum of \$24,270 can be added in 2014. The deadline for contributions that can be claimed as a 2014 RRSP deduction is Sunday, March 1, 2015. As March 1 falls on a Sunday, this deadline will automatically be extended until Monday, March 2.

2. Weigh the benefits of withdrawing from an RRSP to purchase a first time home. Individuals may withdraw up to \$25,000 from their RRSP. Withdrawn amounts are repayable in equal annual sums over 15 years.

3. Capitalize on family if you are a small business owner: Hire family members for legitimate work opportunities and write off the costs of their salaries.

4. Income splitting. If you earn more than your spouse you could reduce your family's combined tax bill by paying your spouse's expenses, freeing up money that can then be used for investment purposes.

5. Child care costs are deduction from income on the personal tax return. Reduction of income would save tax at the taxpayer's marginal tax rate. In most cases, child care expenses for an eligible child must be claimed by the parent with the lower net income for tax purposes.

6. Take advantage of all eligible credits. The Public Transit Pass Credit; and both the Children's Fitness and Arts Credits are all ones sometimes forgotten.

7. Compile all Tuition Fee and Education Credits. If you don't need these deductions you can transfer up to \$5,000 (indexed at \$6,686 in Ontario in 2014) to parents who would welcome your generosity.

8. Maximize charitable donations credits. Consider combining both donations if they total more than \$200. Any unclaimed donations made by you or your spouse in the year or previous five years can be claimed.

9. Claim your medical expenses on the tax return of the spouse with lower net income. You should claim the total medical expenses for both you and your spouse or common-law partner on one tax return. You can claim the medical expenses on either spouse's tax return. If both spouses have taxable income, it is usually better to claim the medical expenses on the return with the lower net income. If you are a business owner, consider setting up a private health services plan to have your business pay your family medical expenses.

Build wealth with a Tax-Free Savings Account (TFSA). TFSAs allow you to make up to a \$5,500 annual contribution. Income earned in the TFSA is non-taxable, so maximize the amount of tax free growth.

Carrying debt too far

Much is written about the increased levels of debt being carried by Canadians these days, but very little is addressed about that level of indebtedness being carried over into our retirement years. And that's troublesome because if you are struggling with debt in your working years, how will you be faring when your income may be fixed?

That's one of the reasons you see many seniors still working. Don't notice them? Think Walmart greeters, or the ladies at the LCBO outlet doing product sampling. It is estimated that you need about 70% of what you make right now in order to live out your life comfortably

retire (meaning you have less to spend on servicing your debt).

There may also be escalating health care costs with little or no relief from private health care insurance, the loss of a spouse (leading to the loss of a secondary income source), and mortgages that aren't paid off, often due to adult children requesting help with their own debt.

Another factor in seniors' debt is diminished mental and physical fitness. It doesn't necessarily affect everyone, but that won't stop others from trying to take advantage of it. Roof maintenance or snow removal contractors, for example, may take advantage of seniors' inability



after retirement, but the government will basically offer up less than today's minimum wage yearly earnings. Unless you're currently living on a minimum wage salary, you won't get enough.

One of the factors leading to carrying indebtedness into our retirement years is the realization that the Canadian Pension Plan (CPP) and Old Age Security (OAS) benefits were not enough to pay out to a retiring workforce which was living longer than in past years. As a result, the government started taking more of our earnings to sack away for retiring workers (including you, when it comes time). The good news is that it also started charging an equal amount to your employer, in effect doubling your contribution (though your payment at retirement may not be double what it would have been had it been only you contributing), but that still won't likely be enough.

So as a double whammy, you have less disposable income while you're working (leading to increasing debt in order to purchase some of the things you want, but may not necessarily need) and less pension income coming in when you

to perform manual work for themselves by financing expensive contracts for few services (or in some cases, no services).

And that diminished mental capacity may also play harder on our human hope of striking it rich for a quick fix to our monetary woes, causing some seniors to spend more money at casinos or bingo halls.

As we've often detailed here, the fix happens while you're earning money, not when you're scrambling to make ends meet. So, to prevent carrying a debt load when you're retired, concentrate on trying to eliminate debt today, while sacking more money away to insure a higher income in your retirement years.

And look for changes in spending habits, which could signify your retired parents or friends may be dealing with financial difficulties — increase in credit card use, for example, or in the frequency of trips to the casino — and suggest ways to reduce expenses, such as less-expensive accommodations or reductions in services such as cable.

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MANAGING YOUR MONEY

Changes to CPP & OAS:

David Joseph, M.A.(Economics), CFP®, CLU

These days, 'retirement' means many things – from ceasing employment to working part-time or even starting your own business -- and the CPP changes are intended to provide more financial flexibility depending on the retirement 'path' you choose. They are also meant to encourage Canadians to work longer before starting to draw a government pension.

People can choose to take CPP early at age 60. But there's a catch—a 0.5% reduction in the pension payout for each month before age 65. That translates into a retirement benefit that's 30% less at age 60 than it would be if you waited until 65. The early-bird reduction will continue to rise until 2016, when it hits 0.6% per month, or a maximum 36% reduction for those start receiving the CPP payment at age 60 rather than waiting until they reach 65. Similarly, those who wait after the age of 65 to start collecting CPP will get a bigger increase in their CPP benefits.

A person should apply for OAS 6 months before they turn 65. Starting in 2023, the age of eligibility for the OAS and GIS will increase from 65 to 67. This change will affect people born on April 1, 1958 or later. As of July 2013, you can defer your OAS for up to 60 months. If you delay, your monthly OAS will increase by 0.6% for every month you delay receiving, up to a maximum of 36% at age 70. If you choose to defer, you will not be eligible for GIS and your spouse will not be eligible for the allowance.

Taking your CPP pension before age 65 makes sense when:

Your life expectancy is below the average of age 80 - 85.

You have an illness that does not qualify for CPP disability.

You have little or no other income.

You are permanently unemployed.

Delaying your CPP pension beyond age 65 makes sense when:

Your health is good.

Your life expectancy is above average.

You have a reasonable income and/or intend to continue working after 65.

The work cessation rule has been eliminated. Before the changes you had to be at least 60 years of age and not working for at least two months in order to collect CPP. Now, starting at age 60, you can continue working and still receive CPP benefits. Under the old rules, once you began collecting CPP you never again had to contribute to the plan. Now, however, if you are under 65 and working while receiving a CPP pension, you (and your employer) will have to continue making CPP contributions (that will in-



crease your CPP benefits beginning in 2013). If you are 65 - 70 and work while receiving CPP benefits, you have the choice of continuing to make CPP contributions (that will increase your CPP benefits beginning in 2013) or not.

Pension income splitting could mean tax savings

There's a federal tax provision that seniors should know about because it could mean tax savings. If you are eligible, you can 'split' up to 50% of eligible pension income with a spouse or common-law partner for tax purposes in order to create overall tax savings for you and your partner.

It's called pension income splitting and here's an example of how it works:

* A Manitoba couple who are both over age 65 share \$15,000 of Canada Pension Plan (CPP) benefits. Each receives the maximum Old Age Security (OAS) benefit and one spouse has an annual registered pension of \$50,000. The registered pension recipient allocates \$25,000 of their pension income to the other spouse creating a family tax savings through pension income splitting of \$2,638.

* To be eligible for pension income splitting, the income must qualify for the federal pension income credit.

* For those age 65 and over, income eligible for the Pension Income Tax Credit includes periodic payments from a pension plan (Canadian or foreign), investments held in a Registered Retirement Income Fund (RRIF) or Life Income Fund (LIF) payments, annuity payments under a Registered Retirement Savings Plan (RRSP) or Deferred Profit Sharing Plan (DPSP), and the interest portion of payments under a non-registered annuity.

* For those who have not reached age 65, eligible income for this credit includes periodic payments from a (Canadian or foreign) pension plan, RRSP/RRIF and annuity payments made to a spouse as a

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consequence of the death of the owner of the account.

* OAS, CPP/QPP (Quebec Pension Plan) payments and Guaranteed Income Security (GIS) payments do not qualify.

* Splitting pension income can result in a reduction in the OAS clawback for the higher-earning spouse. The 2014 OAS clawback applies to net income between \$71,592 and \$116,103.

* There is no actual payment of pension income from one spouse to another – the allocation is simply shown on the tax form.

* The allocation can be changed each year.

* The allocation can affect income-tested credits such as the age credit, the spousal credit and the medical expense credit.

* A couple who has not used income splitting in a prior year can apply for

pension income splitting for the previous three years.

* Spouses are jointly responsible for total taxes owing.

A recent survey from Investors Group finds a stunning one-third of respondents believe the Canada Pension Plan (CPP) will be their primary source of income. It is important to recognize CPP and OAS are retirement supplements-not retirement plan in themselves, and need to be combined with other savings including company pension, RRSPs and TFSAs.

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Canadian Dollar Soiled in Crude Oil: Impact on Economy and Markets

Arun Senathirajah
MBA (Banking Mgmt)

The Canadian Dollar Tumbled below the 80% mark

In third week of January 2015, the loonie (Canadian Dollar) hit a low point of 79.80 cents (U.S.), its lowest point over the past year, having been as high as 80.71. It closed at 79.87 cents (U.S.), down about 0.75 of a cent, its lowest level in nearly six years. The loonie fell 0.69 of a cent to 78.61 cents US, its lowest level since the mid of March 2009, as gross domestic product in November declined 0.2%, worse than the flat showing that economists had expected. The Canadian dollar has had another tough week, down almost two cents amid sliding prices for oil, copper and gold. The currency has lost about 7 1/2 cents in January 2015. The Canadian dollar is nearing the 80 U.S. cent threshold as Goldman Sachs cut its short-term outlook for the currency. Bond traders are signaling the potential for further Bank of Canada rate cuts. Last week, for example, the Bank of Canada announced a surprise cut in its benchmark interest rate, sending the loonie plunging as it cited the uncertainty of the oil market. Economists believe the Bank of Canada may well cut rates again, which, of course, would further weigh on the loonie. And when the Fed hikes, that's even more pressure. CIBC World Markets chief economist Avery Shenfeld, for one, said another cut by the Bank of Canada is likely, and "markets may then guess about a third." He projected the currency will slide to 77 cents, above other calls for a 75-cent dollar and way above the 71 cents seen by Goldman Sachs Group Inc. for 2017.

Bank of Canada's Interest Rate Cut

The overnight interest rate is the rate at which major financial institutions borrow and lend one-day funds among themselves. The Bank of Canada sets this key target rate. This rate would influence other interest rates such as those for consumer loans and mortgages. They can also affect the exchange rate of the Canadian dollar. Lower oil prices prompt the Bank of Canada to loosen monetary policy. The Bank of Canada does not like to surprise the markets and usually signals changes to its benchmark interest rate well in advance. But on January 21st, 2015 markets were shocked by the bank's decision to drop the target for the overnight rate from 1% to just 0.75%. Stephen Poloz, the central bank's governor, said that it was moving swiftly to counteract the negative

economic impact of lower oil prices on Canada, the world's fifth largest crude producer. Business investment and consumer confidence have dropped in the Group of Seven's largest oil exporter as crude prices plummet toward \$40 a barrel from more than \$100 last year. Lowering the rate was unexpected at the time when new increase was imminent. 'We decided that it was appropriate to take out some insurance against that downside risk in the form of a lower interest rate profile,' Bank of Canada governor Stephen Poloz said after the rate announcement.

Cuts to Canada's Interest Rates Sends Loonie Plunging

The Bank of Canada shocked the financial world Wednesday -21 January, 2015 by cutting interest rates for the first time in more than four years, sending the loonie plunging. The Canadian dollar closed at 81.07 cents U.S. on Tuesday, the lowest level since April 2009, after the central bank lowered its key rate to 0.75 per cent from 1 per cent. The 2.3-per-cent drop in the dollar's value is the biggest since September 2011. Markets had expected the bank to leave the rate unchanged, as it has since September 2010. Bank of Canada governor Stephen Poloz called the cut "insurance" against the risks that the plummeting price of oil poses to inflation and financial stability. "Business investment in the energy-producing sector will decline," the bank said in a statement. "Canada's weaker terms of trade will have an adverse impact on incomes and wealth, reducing domestic demand growth." The price of oil has fallen by 55 per cent since last June, and investments in oil and gas are expected to drop by about 30 per cent this year. Some economists have suggested that more interest rate cuts could be on the way — perhaps as early as March. The first quarter is expected to be sluggish.

The Markets and Economy

The Toronto stock market surged in the wake of the rate cut, marking a jump of 251.98 points to 14,560.42 on the S&P/TSX composite index. Canadian equities managed to advance while U.S. stocks faltered, with the S&P/TSX composite index rising 36.05 points, or 0.24 per cent, at 14,833.88, in part due to a rise in gold miners and energy stocks. The weaker loonie relative to the greenback will help cushion the blow of falling commodity prices for companies in the natural resources sector, and may help firms boost their sales to the United States. However, National Bank senior economist Krishen Rangasamy notes that the good times for Canadian equities may be



short-lived, as the "Great White Short" trade is now back in vogue. "Unlike the past couple of years when those shorting Canada did so based on a hunch that there was an 'imminent' housing collapse (which never really materialized), the current case against Canada is arguably more compelling after the commodity price collapse," he wrote. The energy sector dropped 4.85 per cent.

Lower interest rates may encourage heavily indebted Canadian consumers to borrow even more, pushing up the ratio of household debt to disposable income, which is already at a record high. The Bank of Canada has also said that Canada's housing market is already over-valued by as much as 30%; encouraging homeowners to borrow even more does not seem prudent. The central bank hopes that if it can cushion the fall in income and employment brought on by low oil prices, which it sees as a threat to financial stability, it will buy enough time for Canadian firms outside the energy industry with some prospects. The Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers, an industry group, says capital investment in western Canada, where most of the country's oil and gas is produced, will fall by a third this year. Lower mortgage rates and other lending rate would be beneficial to boost the economy. The

prospect of increased business investment and commercial activity from lower rates prompted a sharp rally on the Toronto stock Exchange. The S&P/TSX composite index jumped to 252 points to 14,560.42. Statistics Canada reduced its estimate of job creation last year by about a third, to 121,300 jobs from 185,700 with the unemployment rate at 6.7 per cent. The latest jobs report also now shows a 11,300 job loss in December, compared with the initially reported loss of 4,300.

Threat to Canadian Economy

As the U.S. has ended its bond-buying program, the European Central Bank is expanding its stimulus plan. The ECB announced last week it would spend €60-billion (\$68-billion) a month starting in March on purchases of debt to ward off the threat of deflation in the euro area. The Canadian dollar reached the weakest level in almost six years after the data showed the economy shrank in November, bolstering speculation the central bank will cut interest rates again. The currency headed for a 10th weekly decline, the longest losing stretch since 2000, as the government reported gross domestic product declined 0.2% from October. The Bank of Canada unexpectedly lowered borrowing costs last week for the first time since 2009, saying the move was meant to provide insurance as the slump in crude oil, the nation's biggest export, weighed on the economy. "It really looks like the economy is slowing," Bipan Rai, director of foreign-exchange strategy at CIBC World Markets Inc., said by phone from Toronto. "It has implications for whether or not the bank will ease again in March, and right now I'm seeing a greater-than 60% probability we could see that."

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“Thamilar Thahaval” - 24th Anniversary issue & Award Event

The 24th Anniversary function of “Thamilar Thahaval” publication took place on February 22 at the Council Chamber, City Hall, Toronto.

The event was a celebration of information of 24 years of excellence. A colorful publication of “Thamilar Thahaval” containing rich and informative content was released on this special occasion. The Annual contains interesting and informative articles on a variety of topics useful to the community. The contents are bi-lingual (Tamil & English) and the contents are designed to be a reservoir of information for further academic study.

This year’s publication has been dedicated to the memory of Late Mr. Kanagasabapathy, former Principal of Mahajana College, Tellipalai.

Among this year’s Award winners

is Dr. Muttulingam Sanjayan, scientist, TV Host and an advocate of Nature. Doctor Sanjayan is the Executive Vice-President and Senior Scientist at Conservation International - a non-profit organization that works in over 27 countries around the world. He received the 2015 Lifetime Achievement Award.

The Tamil community in Toronto has been providing continued support and encouragement to “Thamilar Thahaval”. The Award winners who have been honoured are persons who have made valuable contributions in different fields. The Editor-in-Chief of Tamils’ Information is Mr. Thiru S. Thiruchelvam, a person with several years of media experience.

(Seen here re some pictures taken at the event)



Manuel Jesudasan, Barrister & Solicitor



Thiru S. Thiruchelvam, The Editor-in-Chief, Tamils’ Information



Dr. Sanjayan Muttulingam - Lifetime Achievement Award (Senior Scientist from California) receiving his award from Minister Glen Murray.



Chandran Rasalingam, iNFORCELIFe President - receiving an Achievement Award from Minister Glen Murray



All 9 award recipients with Glen Murray (Ontario Minister of Environment and Climate Change) and Pam McConnell (A Deputy Mayor of Toronto)



24th anniversary issue of the Tamils’ Information was dedicated to Late Mr. P. Kanagasabapathy, in recognizing his outstanding services to the community. The First copy of the anniversary issue was handed over to Manimoli and Manivili, the daughters of Late Mr. P. Kanagasabapathy by Mrs. Kanageswary Nadarajah.

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Tamil Worlds Initiative, Historical and Cultural Studies and UTSC Centre for Ethnography

RESETTLING ACCOUNTS: Caste and the Sri Lankan Civil War

By Sharika Thiranagama
(Stanford University)

Until the 1970s the caste system of northern Sri Lanka, commonly thought to be more binding than elsewhere on the island, dominated perceptions of Jaffna. After the 1980s, Jaffna was primarily viewed through the prism of war, militancy and violence. Did caste hierarchies go away during the war? Did the large-scale militant recruitment from all castes by LTTE transform the caste system? This paper will explore the ways in which caste conflict has become a dominant fault-line in the social life of post-war Jaffna, and argue that the last years of the civil war re-cast both notions of suffering and debates about caste in contemporary Jaffna. Further, the movement of people out of Jaffna was determined in subtle ways by caste and has come to influence expressions of **Tamilness** abroad, even for those who belong to the supposedly "caste-blind" diaspora.

Sharika Thiranagama is Assistant Professor of Anthropology, Stanford University.

She is the author of *In My Mother's House: Civil War in Sri Lanka* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011).

She has researched and written extensively on war and displacement in Sri Lanka.

Monday, March 16 | 6-8pm | Doors will open at 5:45 | UTSC Council Chambers AA 160

Light refreshments will be served

A public talk sponsored by: _____
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The Centre for Ethnography, and the Office of the Dean at UTSC.

For further information contact: tamilworlds.initiative.utsc@gmail.com

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BRIDGETIAN CARNIVAL

FEBRUARY 7, 2015

The 25th Anniversary Bridgetian Carnival was held on Saturday, February 7, 2015, at the Toscana Ballroom, Hilton Garden Inn, Vaughan. Hosted by the executive committee of the St. Bridget's Convent Past Pupils Association, Ontario, led by President Shiranee Aruldason to celebrate the Association's 25th anniversary, it was a resounding success. In keeping with the Bridgetians' motto, the Executive Committee of the SBC PPA and their families banded together to "gently and firmly" put on yet another successful event. The committee selected the services of the well-known Event Planner, Bremani MUSAFAER of Bimera Events to co-ordinate the event which she did to perfection.

Guests were treated to fine, gourmet cocktails and appetizers as they stepped in, with warm soup shooters, to mouth-watering pastries crafted by the famous Pelican Caterers. The free

martini bar during cocktail hour added style and elegance to the evening. Served by a bevy of gracious servers, to music by a rhythmic steel band, the cocktail party was top notch.

When the ballroom doors opened, guests were awestruck to see the beautiful ballroom, with tall centre pieces rising up from each table, topped with hundreds of white feathers. Along with a beautifully designed stage complete with soft, muted lighting, the entire ballroom was picture-perfect. Thanks to Bremini's hand-picked choices for table décor, place settings, and menu cards, it was a wonderland of colour and style.

The event began with two excellent MC's, John and Shereena Aruldason, taking charge, and conducting the event flawlessly to the end. The SBC PPA organising committee, along with Bremini MUSAFAER and her crew, attended to every little

detail. The dance began with the colourful Brazilian Samba dancers who performed superbly and vowed the guests with their moves and interactive dancing. The much-loved band, The Skylines, were on hand to provide excellent music, along with master DJ CMF, who played fabulous tunes to keep the guests on the floor.

Another highlight of the evening was a photo booth for the enjoyment of all guests, which provided a lovely souvenir to take home. Many had lots of fun posing with their friends and loved ones, in fancy dress if preferred.

After a wonderful dinner and dessert, guests were treated at midnight, to a dazzling array of desserts, cakes, sweets, and fruits in elegant fashion.

Everyone danced the night away and took home sweet memories of the Bridgetian Carnival of 2015.



ST. BRIDGETS PPA ONTARIO EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:

- President: *Shiranee Aruldason*
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- Committee Member: *Viji Anthony*





By Rex Clementine

“Sanga’s is a case of making most of limited talent. His youthful exuberance for training has been contagious with many young players seeking to follow him” – Rex Clementine writes from Wellington, New Zealand in Sri Lanka’s popular daily – The Island:

In any city where cricket is played and Sri Lankans live, Kumar Sangakkara is a popular man. So is he in the New Zealand capital of Wellington where he has left an indelible mark.

Sanga has thrilled the Wellingtonians with some classy knocks. Wellington has two cricket grounds. The scenic Basin Reserve hosts Test Matches while the modern Wespac Stadium conducts the limited over games.

Sanga’s unbeaten 156 at the Basin



games. Those days, Sangakkara would do all the hard work and perish before finishing it off. His game has evolved. Not only does he finish games off now, but does them with finesse.

During the 212 run stand with Lahiru Thirimanne, a new Sri Lankan record for the second wicket improving on the 210 run stand in the previous game between Sanga and Tillekeratne Dilshan, his experience counted.

Sanga consolidated earlier on. As the Required Run Rate touched 7.8, the Batting Power Play was taken in 34th over and 54 runs were scored in the five overs. That brought the required Run Rate to 6.0. From there on without taking any further risks, he just waited till the bowlers to make mistakes and punished.

the single off the last ball and retain the strike. The plan was for Sanga to dominate the Power Play overs and Thirimanne faced only nine of the 30 deliveries during that period. England failed to read Sri Lanka’s tactics.

A pity that Sanga’s cherished career is coming to an end. Most Sri Lankans would want him to continue for a couple of more years. In the last three years, he’s not only been Sri Lanka’s greatest batsman but the world’s best too. Last year he was the highest run getter in both forms of the game while this year he has maintained an average of 84 in ODIs and his 589 runs are only behind T.M. Dilshan’s 626.

Sanga recently told a confidant that he needs to spend more time with his family and despite high fitness levels

Time to Acknowledge Reality that Kumar Sangakkara has been Sri Lanka’s Finest Batsman



Reserve against an attack that had Bond, Martin and Vettori set up a huge win in 2007 and many thought that knock was hard to match. Then he produced another master class early this year with a sublime double hundred where he gave all batsmen a lesson on how to bat with the tail.

Wellington is a mountainous city prone for earthquakes. There was no earthquake on Sunday, but England were shaken and shattered following Sanga’s brilliant onslaught. Sunday’s (March 1) knock was Sanga’s last in Wellington. He put up a super show and Wellington gave him a fitting farewell.

The knock will be remembered for many years to come as the star batsman hardly put a foot wrong and knew exactly what to be done to push Sri Lanka’s forward march in the competition.

England’s bowling was below par, but their total of 309 gave them the cushion to be offbeat and pile up the pressure on the Sri Lankans. But Sangakkara cashed in seizing on the opportunity and put the game beyond England’s reach with a perfectly calculated run chase.

During Sri Lanka’s tour of South Africa in 2011, we noted that Mahela Jayawardene had an edge over Sangakkara due to his ability to finish off



“Bike for Life” is campaign initiated by Sanga to donate bicycles to the school children in Sri Lanka North-pic courtesy of Sportskeeda

Sanga’s 23rd century came off just 70 balls, his fastest in ODIs. At times he gave Chris Woakes the charge and lofted him over the head. On other occasions, he just stood firm and cut it firmly past either side of the point fielder.

Here’s another interesting stat. Thirimanne just scored five runs during the Batting Power Play while Sanga scored 49 runs! It was more than clever batting. Barring just one over, on all other four occasions during Batting Power Play, Sanga would take

and terrific form he will make way to the younger generation of Sri Lankans.

Sanga’s is a case of making most of limited talent. His youthful exuberance for training has been contagious with many young players seeking to follow him.

A nation loves country’s first heroes. Cricket and Sri Lanka are no exception. Despite Sanga’s statistical brilliance, we put Aravinda de Silva ahead of him as the country’s finest batsman. Perhaps, time has come to move on from emotions and acknowledge the reality.

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Obituaries - Mar 2015

RAJENDRAN - ANGU

Beloved wife of Krish Rajendran (DMS Holdings Ltd), loving mother of Vishnu, Vinayak and Vikram, mother-in-law of Vidya, daughter of Ranjini Murugan and the late AVM Murugan, sister of Karthik, Lata and of the late Raji, daughter-in-law of Parameshwari and the late S. Krishnaswamy.

RASATHURAI S.

Retired Post Master, Sri Lanka. Beloved husband of late Rajapoopathy; beloved father of Suresh (Boston), Romesh (Toronto), Dhiresh (Oslo) and late Naresh; father-in-law of Anpuchelvi, Thanusha, Soundary and Shamini; grandfather of Suvithan, Vithuli, Dhushica, Kishan, Kirthiga, Gajanan, Gobigan and Aysha.

BASTIAMPILLAI

Beloved wife of Nicholas J. Jeyarajah (Retd. Asst. Director, Sri Lanka Customs), loving sister of the late Pax Bastiampillai, the late Perinpam Bastiampillai and the late Rosemalar Canagaratnam, fond sister-in-law of the late John Canagaratnam, the late Margaret Bastiampillai, the late Ariamalar Bastiampillai, Ariamalar Antonypillai (Australia), Nicholas Rajanayagam (Australia) and Rasamalar Ferdinand (Canada).

SATHASIVAM - SHANTHA KUMAR

Beloved wife of the late Dr. Sathasivam, loving mother of Sanjana, much loved mother-in-law of Anushka (Anu), loving sister of Sharmini & Mohan (UK), sister-in-law of Sooriyakumar and Indra (UK), precious grandmother of Shivaan and Ananya.

PONNAMPALAM - DOROTHY PEARL

Beloved wife of the late Rajaratnam Ponnampalam, precious loving mother of the late Sonna, Girlie (Canada), late Navam, Bala (Canada), Jeeve (USA) & Yogan (Canada), grandmother to Dinesh (USA), Suresh (Canada), Virosini (Sri Lanka), Devika (Anita (Canada), Christopher (Canada) & Clifford (Canada), great grandmother of Methma, Thikshana, Kawshi, Stephanie, Vitni, Anaka, Elijah, Caleb & Naomi, sister of Rosemary & late Kate, Eva, Beryl, John, Silvia, Clarice, mother-in-law of Jean, Raji & Wimal.

VETHANAYAGAM - MARK

(Ex - Hilton)

loving husband of Orinda (Ex - Hilton Staff), father of Andrew (St. Benedicts College Kotahena) & Andrea (Holy Family Convent Bambalapitiya).

KANDIAH ARULAMPALAM

(Retired Customs Officer)

and beloved husband of Ratnaranee (Ranee), father of Balinee Mahendiran, father-in-law of T. Mahendiran, grandfather of Kajavathanan (Vathanan)

Obituary

Thambiah Ratnasabapathy



Born: 31.12.1930
Pass on: 09.02.2015

His legacy of living life to the fullest, being present in the moment, not dwelling in the past or the unknown future, will live on through many of the lives he has touched along the way

A BSc undergraduate, Chartered Accountant by Profession, formerly Chief Accountant and Finance Manager of Ceylon Ceramics Corporation for 19 years, later moving to Zambia to take up various Finance Executive roles.

He was fondly known as 'Ratna', 'Chief', 'Ratty' and 'Ratnam' to his close family and friends.

Beloved husband of Maheswary (daughter of Illaiyathambi & Kanagamma), loving son of Thambiah & Valliyammai, affectionate brother of Padmanathan and brother-in-law of law of Padmawathy, beloved father of Wimalendra, Surendra and Jeevendra, loving father-in-law of Vibeesh, Tharshini and Kannama and adored grandfather of Saisha, Shreya, Priyanka, Aariana, Sahaana and Maayan.

Visitation and Funeral service was held on Saturday, Feb 14th & Sunday, Feb 15th & Cremated thereafter at Elgin Mills Cemetery, Crematorium and Visitation Centre, 1591 Elgin Mills Road East, Richmond Hill, ON L4S 1M9

The family wishes to thank all those who attended the viewing and funeral, sent wreaths and messages of condolences.

For further details, please contact:
Suren +1 416 258 5297 / Jeevan +1 416 457 5896

Christy Selvarajah

"Avid champion of the Pentecostal faith"

Christy Selvarajah avid champion of the Pentecostal faith breathed his last on the 25th of February. He was a fervent believer of the Pentecostal faith and let three of his children join the ministry as full time servants of the Lord and now they are working in USA (Irene), Canada (Shawn) and Switzerland (Roshan). In those days we used to sing a devotional song which ran like this: 'I have Pentecost in my soul glory be to God, I have Pentecost in my soul; the spirit has come, has come to abide, there is Pentecost in my soul!'

Christy lived a life that was true to the sentiments expressed in these lines. He never failed to read the bible and pray daily in addition to attending church services. He also believed in faith healing and lived up to the very end of his eighty-three years of existence in this earthly abode. His funeral service was held at the Grace Pentecostal Church at Mississauga, where a large number of friends and relatives were present to celebrate his exemplary religious life. He was so lucky to have his life celebrated in the newly built church, designed by Gehan Sinnathamby, a former engineer from Sri Lanka and currently the pastor at this church. Christy earlier served as a postmaster in Sri Lanka and he migrated to Canada in 1993.

While working in Jaffna, he was kidnapped by the militants and kept in custody for four days for refusing to accede to their request. However, he was released when they realised the vitality of his faith in God. While in Toronto he served at the Toronto East Christian school as a teacher of Maths and showed his dedication to look after the educational and spiritual welfare of his students. Whenever he had an opportunity, he distributed bible tracts throughout the by-ways and highways of Toronto. He was very much attached to his family. Though impaired by old age, he travelled to the U.K to visit his brothers Jeevaraj and Jeevachandran and his sons in the U.K.

God blessed him with seven children and his grand children joined together and gave tributes and sang songs to celebrate the significance and worthiness of his glorious life.



Mr. Gnanasubramaniam Buwanendran

(Buwan)

Mr. Gnanasubramaniam Buwanendran (Buwan), formerly of Araly North, Vaddukoattai, and thereafter lived at 50 Tuxedo Court, Scarborough, ON Canada., passed away on Sunday, March 1, 2015 after brief illness.

He was the beloved husband of late Mangayarkarasi (Lakshmi) and loving father of Uthayanan, Rohini, Sritharan, Gnanendran and Srisatkuru.

Respected father-in-law of Satha, Bahirathan, Royce, Manoja and Lakshi. Affectionate grand father of Reuben, Laavanya, Sharmilie, Sahaana and Brenan. He was the second son of late Gnanasubramaniam and late Rasamani of Araly North.

Loving brother of late Mahendran, late Jegatheeswary, Nageswary (Toronto), late Kumareswary and late Yuhendran.

Brother-in-law of Paba Mahendran (Australia), Vivekanandan (U.K), late Sribaleswaran and Kamalamanohari Yuhendran (Toronto).

He was an old student of Jaffna College, Vaddukoattai and former staff at Colombo General Hospital X-Ray Division. Later at Sulaimans & Moolai hospitals.

Visitation: Wednesday, March 4, 2015 between 5:00 pm and 9:00 pm at Highland Funeral Home 3280 Sheppard Avenue E, Scarborough ON, M1T 3K3 (at Warden and Sheppard).

Final Kiriya on Thursday, March 5, 2015 between 10:00 am and 12:00 noon at above funeral home

Cremation: Thereafter at Riverside Crematorium, 1567 Royal York Road (at Lawrence).





In Memorium



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In Memorium



**Mrs. Vallinayaki
Velumailum**

Born: 10 October 1927
Demise: 29 January 2011

From Family Members
of Velumailum

In Memorium



**Mrs. Annapackiyam
Santhirasegaram**

Born: 14 June 1934
Demise: 19 February 2011

From Family Members
of Santhirasegaram

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Special Feature

S. Raymond Rajabalan

St. Patrick's Day, is the feast day which annually celebrates Saint Patrick (386-493), the patron saint of Ireland, on March 17. It is the national holiday in the Republic of Ireland; the overseas territory of Motserat (a caribbean island) and the Canadian province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Celebration overview

Saint Patrick's Day is celebrated worldwide by Irish people and increasingly by many of non-Irish descent. Celebrations are generally themed around

Patrick was quite successful at winning converts, a fact that upset the Celtic Druids. Patrick was arrested several times but always escaped. He traveled throughout Ireland, establishing monasteries across the country. He also set up schools and churches that would aid him in his conversion of the Irish to Christianity. His mission in Ireland lasted 30 years. After that time, Patrick retired to County Down. He died on March 17 in AD 461. The day has been commemorated as St. Patrick's Day ever since.

day, St. Patrick's Day has evolved into more of a secular holiday.

One traditional icon of the day is the shamrock. This stems from a more bona fide Irish tale that tells how Patrick used the three-leafed shamrock to explain the Trinity. He used it in his sermons to represent how the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit could all exist as separate elements of the same entity. His followers adopted the custom of wearing a shamrock on his feast day.

The St. Patrick's Day custom came

showcase Ireland and its culture.

The first Saint Patrick's Festival was held on March 17, 1996. In 1997, it became a three-day event, and by 2000 was a four-day event. By 2006, the festival was five days long.

The Flag of the Republic of Ireland Many Irish people still wear a bunch of shamrock on their lapels or caps on this day or green, white, and orange badges (after the colors of the Irish flag).

And although Saint Patrick's Day has the colour green as their theme,

Saint Patrick's Day

all things green and Irish; both Christians and non-Christians celebrate the secular version of the holiday by wearing green, eating Irish food, imbibing Irish drink, and attending parades.

The St. Patrick's day parade was first held in New York City on 17 March 1766 when Irish soldiers marched through the city. Ireland's cities all hold their own parades and festivals. Other large parades include those held in a number of cities in America. In Canada a large and colourful parade is held annually in Toronto and Montreal. Large parades also take place throughout Europe the Americas, Australia and Asia.

As well as being a celebration of Irish culture, Saint Patrick's Day is a Christian festival celebrated in the Catholic Church, the Church of Ireland (among other churches in the Anglican Communion) and some other denominations.

History

The person who was to become St. Patrick, the patron saint of Ireland, was born in Wales about AD 385. His given name was Maewyn, and he almost didn't get the job of Bishop of Ireland because he lacked the required scholarship.

At the age of 16, Patrick, who was still a pagan, was sold into slavery by a group of Irish marauders who raided his village. During his captivity, he became closer to God. He escaped from slavery after six years and went to Gaul where he studied in the monastery under St. Germain, bishop of Auxerre for 12 years. During his training he became aware that his calling was to convert the pagans to Christianity.

His wishes were to return to Ireland and to convert the native pagans to Christianity. His superiors instead appointed St. Palladius. But two years later, Palladius was transferred to Scotland. Patrick, having adopted that Christian name earlier, was then appointed as second bishop to Ireland.



Much Irish folklore surrounds St. Patrick's Day. Not much of it is substantiated. Some of this lore includes the belief that Patrick raised people from the dead. He also is said to have given a sermon from a hilltop that drove all the snakes from Ireland. Of course, no snakes were ever native to Ireland, and some people think this is a metaphor for the conversion of the pagans. Though originally a Catholic holy

to America in 1737: That year St. Patrick's Day was publicly celebrated in Boston. Today, people celebrate the day with parades, wearing of the green, and drinking beer. One reason St. Patrick's Day might have become so popular is that it takes place just a few days before the first day of spring.

It was only in the mid-1990s that the Irish government began a campaign to use Saint Patrick's Day to



one little known fact is that it was once blue that was the colour of this day.

The biggest celebrations on the island of Ireland outside Dublin are in Downpatrick, Northern Ireland, where Saint Patrick was buried following his death on March 17, 493. The day is celebrated by the Church of Ireland as a Christian festival.

Saint Patrick's Day parades in Ireland date from the late 19th century, originating in the growing sense of Irish nationalism (The first parade did not begin in Ireland but in the United States)

In Canada

The longest-running Saint Patrick's Day parade in Canada occurs each year in Montreal. The parades have been held in continuity since 1824; however, St. Patrick's Day itself has been celebrated in Montreal as far back as 1759 by the Irish soldiers of the Montreal Garrison, following the British conquest of New France.

St. Patrick's day parade in Toronto took place on Sunday, March 1 and police Chief Bill Blair will be honoured as this year's Grand Marshall, the parade organizers announced recently.

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When: Sunday, May 29, 2015

Time: 10:00am - 4:00 pm

Where: Ontario Power Generation 1675 Montgomery Park Rd, South Pickering, ON L1W 3C7

REGISTER BY SATURDAY, MARCH 20, 2015

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DURHAM TAMIL ASSOCIATION VOLUNTEERED 9TH ANNUAL WORLD RELIGION DAY

The 9th Annual World Religion Day was celebrated by Durham Multi Faith World Religion Day Committee in collaboration with The Region of Durham & Durham District School Board on Sunday January 18th at the Regional Municipality of Durham Head Quarters in Whitby. It was a celebration of Unity in Diversity emphasizing the vibrancy, richness and wondrous diversity of Faith, Cultures and Ethnicity that call Durham Region their home. Many different faith groups including Baha'i, Taoism, Christianity, Hindu, Jewish, Islamic, Zoroastrian, First Nations and Unitarian Universalist took part in this event to show oneness. Durham Tamil Association was proud to be part of this event and TEAM DTA Youth volunteered setting up the community booths, helping the performers, serving snacks to guests and tear down.

Donald Iqbokwe in his speech explained the vision and commitment of Durham Region to embrace each other with respect, unity, harmony, love and peace in our region and celebrate the sense of oneness despite the diverse communities of our region.

As a region upholding the value of true democracy and freedom, Durham exemplifies these beliefs and strengthens our joint resolve to continue the pursuit of our goal of increasing cross-cultural understanding through inter-faith and community dialogue.



Reg Chair Roger Anderson, Mayor of Pickering Dave Ryan, Mayor of Clarington Adrian Foster, Councillor Lorne Coe, Councillor David Pickles, TEAM DTA Youth, Board Directors Norin Francis, Yoka Selvan & Uma Suresh



Diversity & Immigration Program Manager at Durham Region Audrey Andrews with TEAM DTA Youth, Uma Suresh & Board Director Norin Francis



MPP Joe Dickson, Dan Carter & Councillor Renrick Ashby with TEAM DTA Youth, Uma Suresh & Board Director Norin Francis



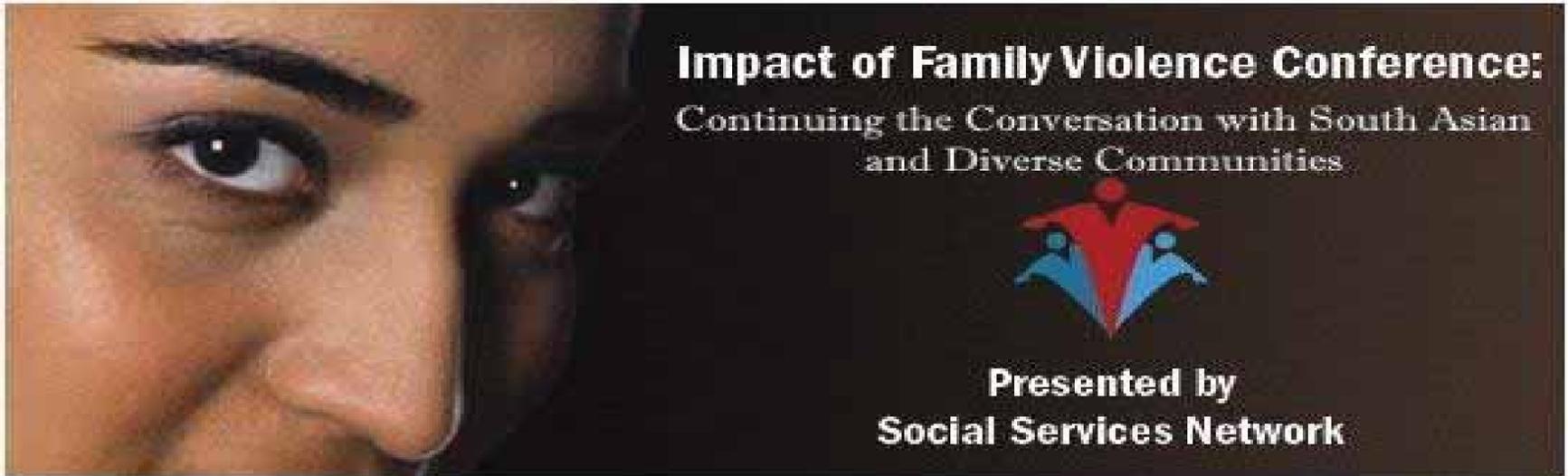
President of Congress of Black Women of Canada for Oshawa Whity Cordelia MacIntosh, Director of DDSB Martyn Beckett with TEAM DTA Youth, Uma Suresh & Board Director Norin Francis



TEAM DTA Youth & Uma Suresh with Sgt Keith Richards and Sgt Pam Devine



TEAM DTA Youth Volunteers & Performers with organizers



Conference 2015 represents the culmination of work resulting from the past four annual conferences. The goal of the conference initiative was to develop community development strategies for addressing family violence in the South Asian communities and now expanded to include other diverse communities with collectivist cultures. As in previous years, this year's conference will offer a unique opportunity to network with survivors of gender violence, practitioners from key sectors, senior policy-makers and executives, as well as federal and provincial funders supporting violence prevention and intervention programs in diverse communities. Come join the conversation on access to justice, services to children and youth, elder abuse, forced marriages, so called "honor based violence", sexual violence, the role of men and boys in ending violence against women, the legal system and current immigration policy framework and promising practice models for working with diverse communities.

Come join the conversation on access to justice, services to children and youth, elder abuse, forced marriages, so called "honor based violence", sexual violence, the role of men and boys in ending violence against women, the legal system and current immigration policy framework and promising practice models for working with diverse communities.

TOGETHER WE WILL WORK TOWARDS COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY TO ADDRESS FAMILY VIOLENCE!

DATE: May 13 and 14, 2015 - 8:30am-4:30pm

HIGHLIGHTS:

Keynote Addresses:

Dr. Hannana Siddiqui, Southall Black Sisters. UK

Dr. Rupaleem Bhuyan, Assistant Professor, Factor-Inwentash Faculty of Social Work, U of T

Interactive Discussion Forum – with Funders, Policy Makers, Survivors and Civil Society

Musical Performances – Stand Up Comedy and Inspirational Spoken Word Performances

WHERE: University of Ottawa - 75 Laurier Avenue East, Ottawa ON K1N 6N5, Canada

Registration for 2 days: \$220 Early bird fee – April 15th

\$250 Regular registration after April 15th

\$175 Non-Profit Rate

For group rate of 3 or more Contact Meccana Ali 905-554-9033 extension 223)

How to REGISTER & INFORMATION about accommodations please visit us at:

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AJAX PUBLIC LIBRARY HOST TAMIL READING CIRCLE

The Institution of Academic and Fine Arts of Durham and the Ajax Public Library have come together to form a wonderful partnership. This partnership benefits the children of the Tamil community by providing them with their own reading circle. This is the first time something like this has been done in the Durham region and this would not have been possible without the Ajax Public Library. The program was launched on May 2014. It has been very successful. The Ajax Public Library has played an integral role in the development of this program so I would like to sincerely thank them for all their help and support.

The reading circle takes place once every month at the McLean Community Center. The main thing that this collaboration wants to achieve is to develop the young minds of children as well as further teaching them their own heritage language and culture. This is a very constructive activity as Cindy Kimber, the Coordinator of Branch Services has stated "Bringing their cultural and language expertise, combined with their experience working with children, the group helps children gain fluency with their heritage language." Every month the reading circle focuses on a different topic and its importance. At the reading circle a well-qualified Tamil teacher reads a story in Tamil to the children. The story then gets translated to English in order to achieve full understanding. At that point the children each get an opportunity to tell a story in Tamil. This is very useful and valuable as it can help increase the fluency of their mother tongue. The children are always very enthusiastic for every class. From sharing stories to creating crafts, children yoga, dance and music, the children fully enjoy themselves in working with one another and making new friends. Every month consists of different theme and activities. The parents of these children are extremely content that the institution and library are taking the initiative to enable children to learn Tamil in a fun and friendly environment. As a youth volunteers at the reading circle I am pleased to see the community accommodating the necessities to help grow and teach children their own heritage language. If something like this existed during my childhood many children and I would have benefitted greatly as we would have gained more language and cultural expertise.

Some of the highlights of the program are: in November the reading circle focused on Remembrance Day. The children were taught the importance of Remembrance Day by reminding them the sacrifices that our brave soldiers made for us. We discussed in Tamil the similar themes of honoring our soldiers in Canada as well as in our homeland. With the help of youth volunteers, children made Remembrance Day posters to enter a poster contest conducted by the Royal Canadian Legion. December was a memorable session; many children shared stories in Tamil and made variety of Christmas cards from recycled card to give it to their loved ones. One of the highlights of the December session was that children were able to write a letter to Santa in Tamil. Santa also wrote a letter back in Tamil for those children acknowledging their wishes. January was another celebration with stories and songs. Children decorated Pongal pot which was displayed on the walls throughout the library.

The children are always excited to come to all of our reading circles. If you want your children to enjoy a fun Tamil learning experience you can bring them to the monthly reading sessions. I believe everyone should take advantage of this wonderful opportunity to enhance their Tamil learning experience. The Tamil Reading Circle takes place 2nd Saturday of each month from 1-3 PM. The future reading circle dates are listed below. It's a free program everyone is welcome and take advantage of this wonderful opportunity. I hope to see you there.

Date and time of next Tamil Reading Circle at the Ajax Public Library McLean's Branch

Mar 14, 2015	1-3 PM
Apr 11, 2015	1-3 PM
May 9, 2015	1-3 PM
June 13, 2015	1-3 PM

By: Vnojan Balendra
Youth Volunteer



Some of the children and their parents



Shahila teacher telling a story



Young children listening to a stories



Ashana writing Tamil letter on a T-Shirt



Children meditating



Children's work



Lanka teacher talking about values



Student telling a story



When sports hotties meet Bollywood beauties

Though Bollywood actresses have often been romantically involved with their co-stars, some of them have found their partners from non-film backgrounds. With ICC World Cup being favourite, Indian newspaper tribuneindia.com puts this in its "star track" compilation:

Anushka Sharma: Cupid's arrow reportedly struck her while she was filming for a shampoo ad with cricketer Virat Kohli.

Geeta Basra: After her initial stint with Bollywood, Geeta Basra seems to have found comfort with Harbhajan Singh and the two have been going strong for a while now.

Taapsee Pannu: She is seeing Danish badminton player Mathias Boe. The two apparently met during the Indian Badminton League last year. Taapsee, who was seen in the latest film Baby, received a lot of appreciation in the industry.

Shruti Hassan: The blue-eyed actress is dating Suresh Raina and both have been seen in various events coupling around. Other actress who have dated sportsmen.

Lara Dutta: She is married to Mahesh Bhupatti.

Neha Dhupia: She dated Ritwik



Sharmila Tagore, She belonged to one of the most elite families of Bengal and tied the knot with the erstwhile royal Nawab of Pataudi on 27 December 1969, a marriage of cricket and cinema.

Bhattacharya, squash player.

Sangeeta Bijlani: She was married to former Indian captain Mohammad Azharuddin

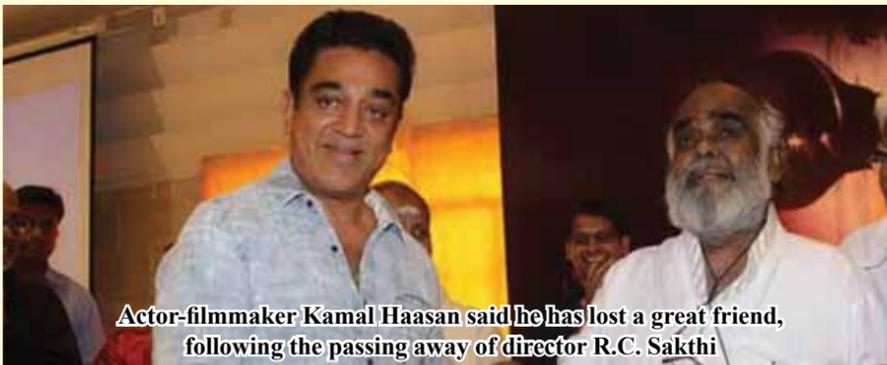
Mahima Chowdary: The actress dated Leander Paes in her hey days.

Neena Gupta: She briefly had an affair with cricketer Vivian Richard.

Isha Sharvani: She dated Zaheer Khan for a brief time.

Sharmilla Tagore: She got married to Nawab Pataudi (Mansoor Ali Khan or Mansur Ali Khan sometimes M. A. K. Pataudi, nicknamed Tiger Pataudi) who served as the captain of Indian cricket team in the 70s'.

Popular Tamil Film Director R.C. Sakthi (75) Passes Away



Actor-filmmaker Kamal Haasan said he has lost a great friend, following the passing away of director R.C. Sakthi

Popular Tamil director R.C. Sakthi, who launched Kamal Haasan in a lead role, breathed his last at a private hospital in Chennai on 23 February, 2015. He was 75, The Hindu Newspaper reported:

According to a source close to the director's family, "Director Sakthi passed away at SRM hospital due to old age—related ailments,"

Sakthi started his career as a theatre artist. He floated a theatre troupe with his friends and went on to act in a few plays before moving to cinema.

He started his career as an assistant to theatre artist Subbhu Arumugam, and worked with him on several plays.

At the behest of dance master Thangappan, he joined the 1970

Tamil film "Annai Velankani" as an assistant director.

Two years later, he launched actor—filmmaker Kamal Haasan as a hero in his Tamil directorial debut "Unarchigal", a controversial film about sexually transmitted diseases.

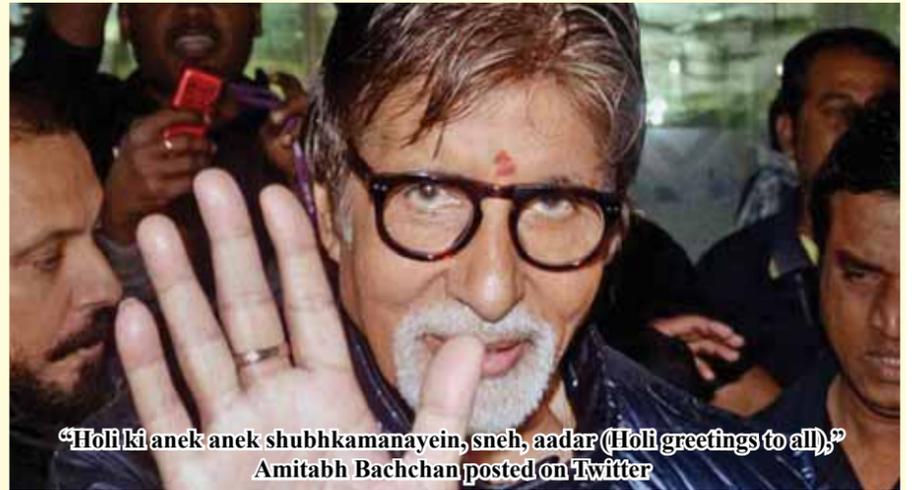
He went on to direct some critically—acclaimed films such as "Manidharil Ithanai Nirangala", "Dharma Yuddham" and "Amma Pillai".

His last directorial venture was in 1993 – the Tamil film "Pathini Penna" – which fetched him two State awards for best film and best dialogue writer.

In over a decade—long career, he had directed 17 films.

Sakthi is survived by two daughters and a son. His last rites were performed in Chennai.

Bollywood stars wish Happy Holi



"Holi ki anek anek shubhkamanayein, sneh, aadar (Holi greetings to all)," Amitabh Bachchan posted on Twitter

Bollywood celebrities led by mega-star Amitabh Bachchan and melody queen Lata Mangeshkar took to twitter to wish fans a happy and colourful Holi, on Friday, March 6.

"Holi ki anek anek shubhkamanayein, sneh, aadar (Holi greetings to all)," Bachchan posted.

"Namaskar. I wish you all a very happy holi. I hope that all your grief, sadness and worries depart from your life and may your life be filled with the the colours of joy. I pray to God that all your wishes come true," Mangeshkar tweeted.

Priyanka Chopra, who is currently in the US preparing for her upcoming stint on US TV series 'Quantico', said she is missing home.

"Something about #Holi .. The smell of the gujiya with fresh ghee at home... Rangolis, pichkaris, colours!!! I miss home today.. Miss the city," the actress tweeted.

Boman Irani tweeted, "Happy Holi to one and all!"

Actress Esha Gupta asked her fans to save water this Holi, saying, "Holi is a celebration of good over evil and love, save water, there isn't enough for some to even drink, have a colourful Holi."

"Holi coming up! How I love all the festivals of India! We Indians don't waste time in mourning for life.. Celebrate thank God and enjoy life," actress Raveena Tandon said. – PTI

A R Rahman ventures into script-writing, film production

Academy Award-winning music composer A R Rahman is now donning a different hat and is working on his own screenplay.

Rahman was in New York City for the world premiere of *Jai Ho* on February 25, a documentary about his life and career that was screened at the Museum of the Moving Image before a packed theatre.

The musician said the idea of film producing and script-writing came to him as he wanted to challenge himself by moving beyond the realm of music and trying something new.

Rahman, who has composed music for over 100 Hindi and Tamil films as well as for Hollywood projects, said there is a repetition in the way songs are composed for Indian movies. He said every movie ends up having a few melodious numbers and an item song.

"How much can you do that? You have done it all, so for me to force myself to challenge myself, I thought let me build my own platform to challenge myself. So this idea of film producing and script-writing came about," he said, adding that the casting for his first film has already begun. He, however, did not give further details of the movie.



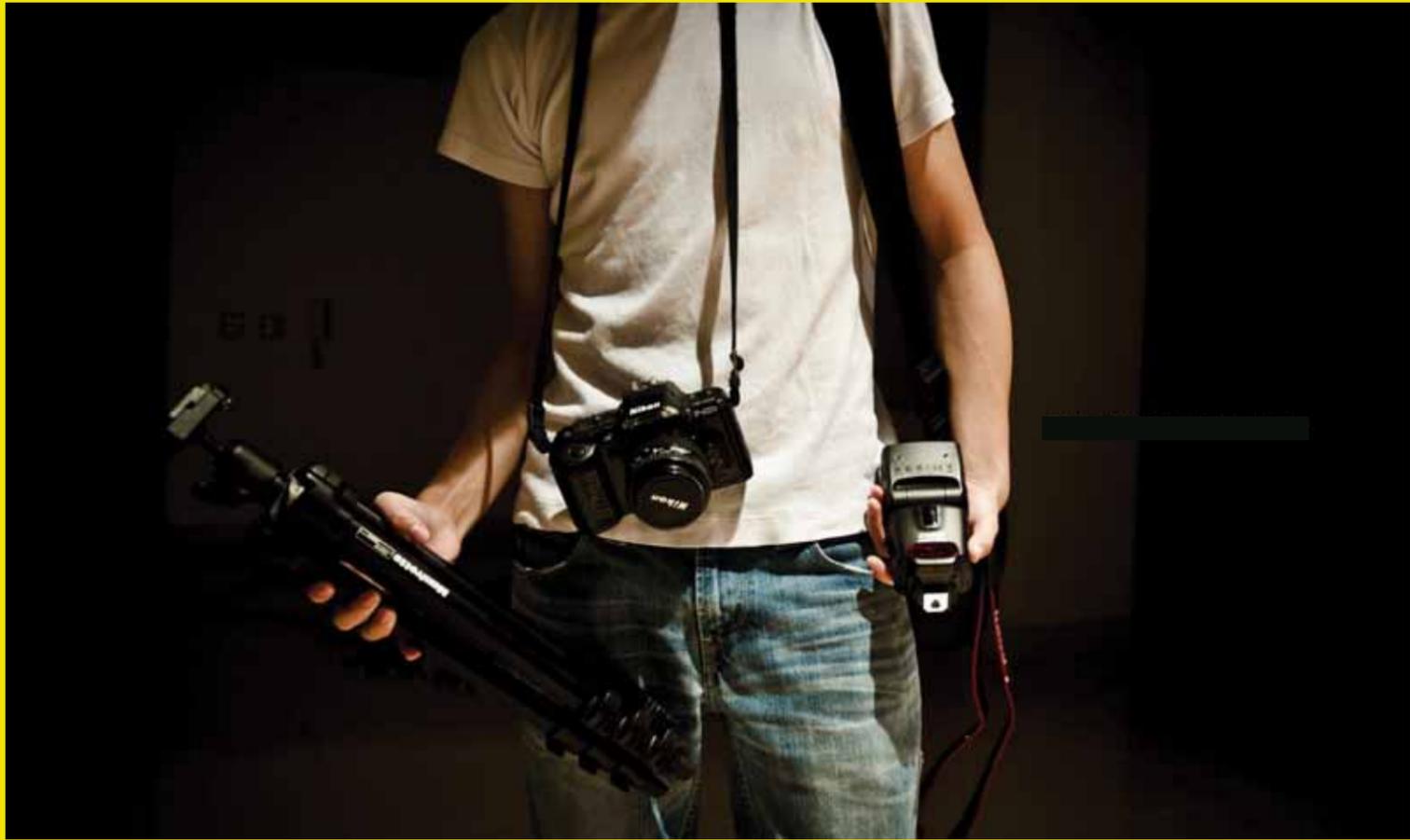
A.R. Rahman

He added that when he was working on the British musical *Bombay Dreams*, he was asked by its composer Andrew Lloyd Webber if he had some story ideas. Rahman replied that he was a music composer and did not have any story ideas of his own.

"But one day I thought, why not?" he said, adding that when he observed people from various cultures he would wonder what their story would be and that is what got him interested in script-writing.

Rahman, 48, best known in the US for his Academy Award, Golden Globe and Grammy-winning score for Danny Boyle's *Slumdog Millionaire*, however, ruled out trying directing, saying since he is an "introvert" he does not see himself as a director.

– PTI



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Are you interested to meet people and cover cultural and social events.

The ideal candidate will gain experience working in a fast-paced newsroom, including internships.

Requirements include: the ability to meet deadlines; being adept at time management; well-versed in AP style for cutlines; proficient with DSLR camera and Photoshop; have a journalistic and creative eye; excellent people skills; know how to work in a team setting.

The photojournalist will produce and process images primarily for the editorial department, including its website and multimedia platforms, plus special sections and advertisements.

Assignments will include photos to accompany stories, wild art, and photo essays.

Monsoon Journal supplies one Canon camera body and one versatile lens. Mostly based in GTA and Schedule includes flexible hours including weekends. Must have a reliable vehicle.

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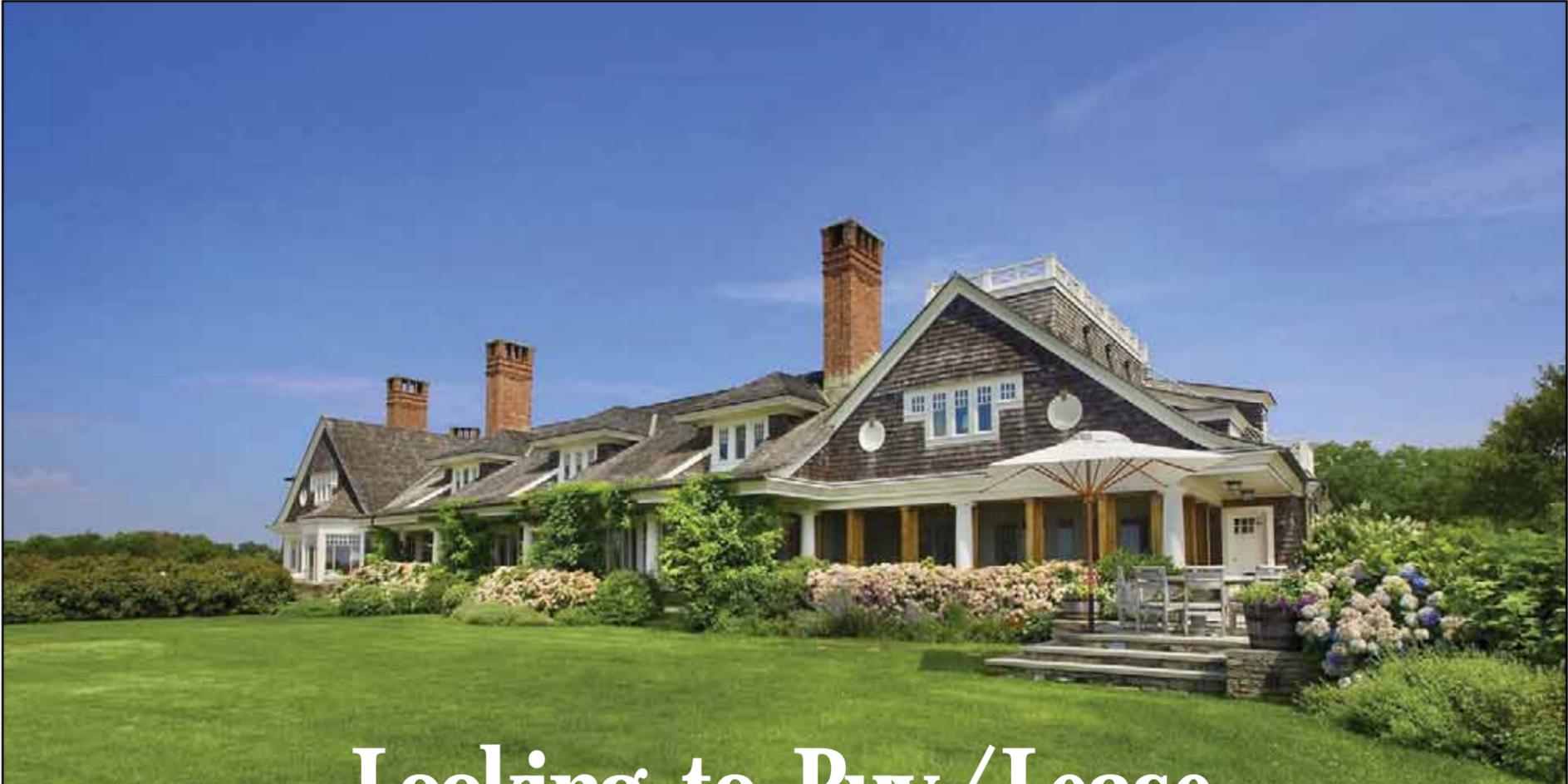


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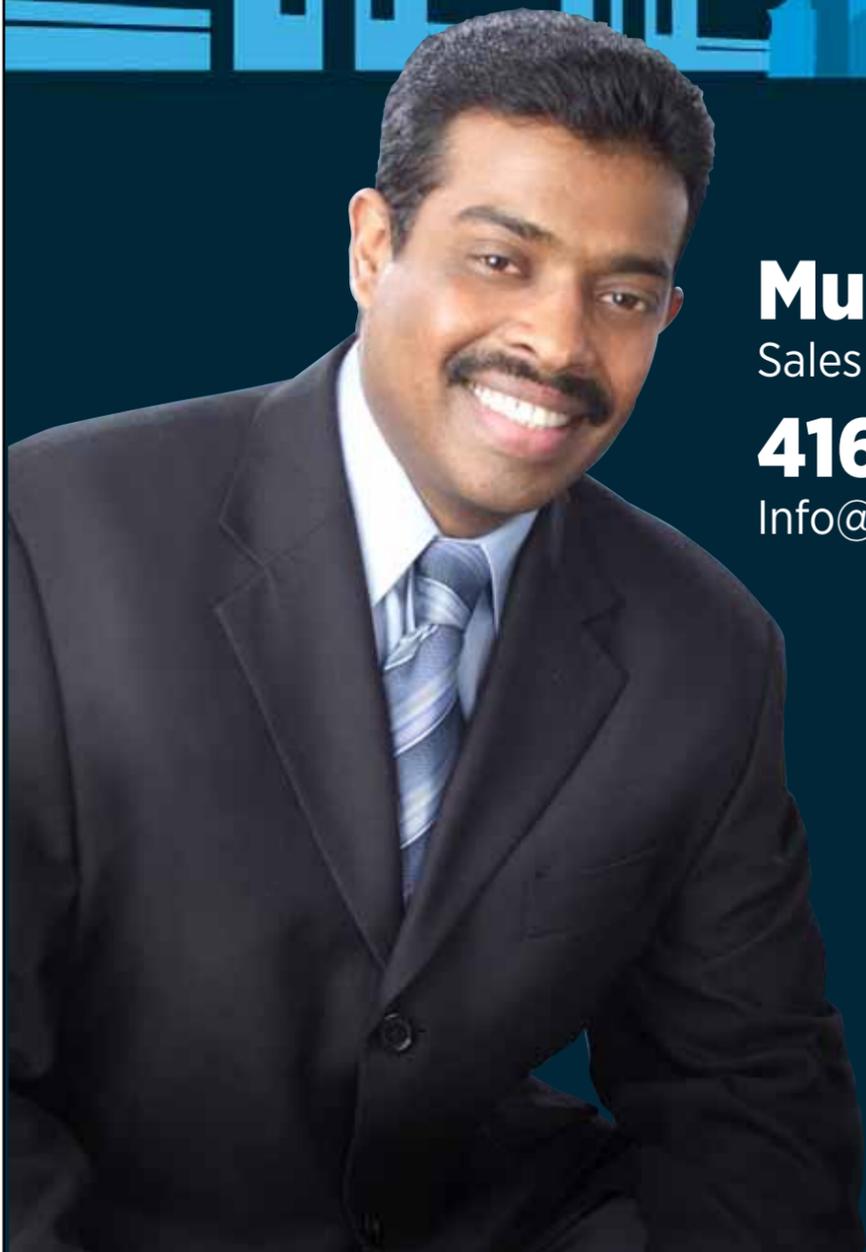
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DURHAM TAMIL ASSOCIATION'S MEET & MOVIE

TEAM DTA Youth organized a Meet & Movie for kids and youth on Sunday 22nd February 2015. This was organized in the Pickering Nuclear Information Centre from 3 pm till 8.30 pm. Popcorn, Cookies, Timbits, Juice, Cupcakes and Chips added fun to the movie night. Both movies were followed by the Youth meeting, in which extensive planning was made for all the upcoming programs of 2015.



DTA children enjoying Movie Night



A Meet Up with Hon.Min Tracy Mac Charles in CTC



DTA President Josh Suresh with Dignitaries during DCCC's Chinese New Year Celebrations - 15 Feb 2015



DTA President Josh Suresh,Uma Suresh, Senduran & Sumathy of CanTYD,Prashanth of CTPA with Hon.Minister Tracy MacCharles, Miles Hopper & Cassandra Cruciano



DTA's Norin Francis,Uma Suresh,Josh Suresh,Kanga Siva & Thayalan Gobalpillai with Hon.Kathleen Wynne,Premier of Ontario-25 Jan



Hon.MPP Tracy MacCharles with DTA's President Josh Suresh,Uma Suresh & Tamil Heritage Month Event organizers - 25 Jan 2015



TEAM DTA Youth during Movie & Meet on 22 Feb 2015



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Interested to meet people and cover social events.

Motivated to gain professional experience by working in a fast-paced newsroom environment, including internships.

Requirements include: the ability to meet deadlines; communication skills; being adept at time management; proficient with DSLR camera and Photoshop; have a journalistic and creative eye; excellent people skills; know how to work in a team setting.

The photojournalist will produce and process images primarily for the editorial department, including its website and multimedia platforms, plus special sections and advertisements.

Assignments will include photos to accompany stories, wild art, and photo essays.

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January 30, 2015, 8:58 PM

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1 day ago

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Canada will continue to encourage progress in devolution of power, accountability and reconciliation in Sri Lanka



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January 30, 2015, 8:47 AM

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By: Uthayan Thuraiarajah Lighting is closely related to human emotion. According to the global health research statistics from World...

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CANADA NEWS



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Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynne hosted a reception to Celebrate



Canadian Political Leaders Confident on the Charm of Thai Pongal Ushering Positive Change in Sri Lanka

by Harish Thirukumaran On January 17, 2015, the Canadian Tamil Congress (CTC) held its 8th annual...



Thai Pongal & Tamil Heritage Month

Thai Pongal January 14, 2015 A PERSONAL MESSAGE FROM THE PREMIER On behalf of the Government...

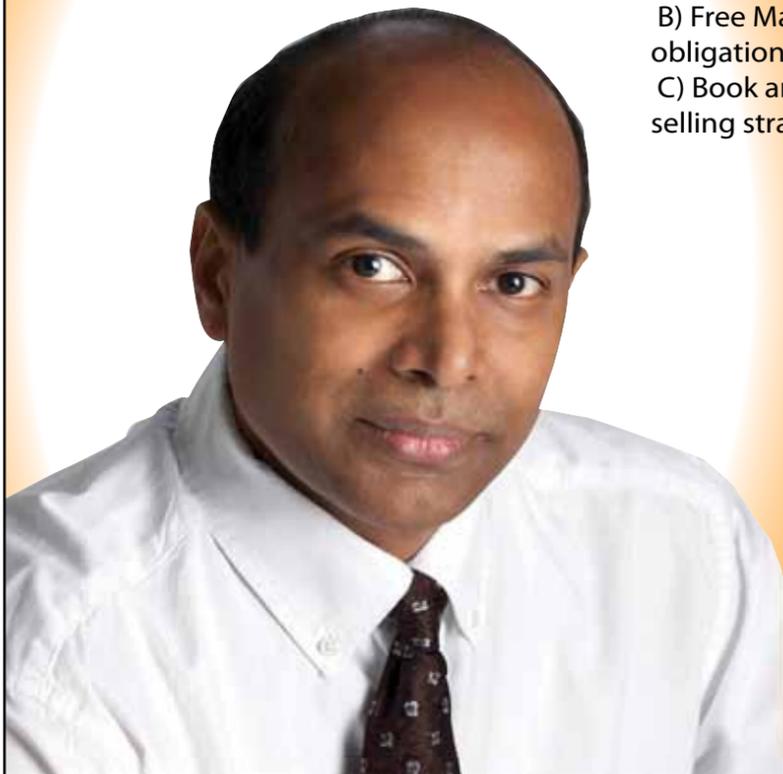
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