

# Monsoon Journal

OCTOBER 2017  
VOL 12 ISSUE 5



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## Singapore shows the world Diversity with multi-ethnic Leadership

Muslim President, Chinese Prime Minister, Tamil Deputy Prime Minister & Indian Chief Justice



Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong



Deputy PM Tharman Shanmugaratnam



President Halimah Yacob



Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon



(Pic Courtesy: Canadian Press)

By Siva Sivapragasam

Singapore, the tiny island in South Asia which was once considered a third world nation but now of world class status, has set an example to the whole world in diversity and multi-ethnic leadership with a Muslim President, Chinese Prime Minister, Tamil Deputy Prime Minister & an Indian Chief Justice.

Singapore's new woman President is Halimah Yacob, the Prime Minister is Lee Hsien Loong, The Deputy Prime Minister is Tharman Shanmugarat-

nam and the Chief Justice is Sundarsh Menon.

The first Muslim President Halimah Yacob who became Singapore's President recently stated that she will serve "every - one regardless of race, language or religion and that she was proud to belong to a country that does not just say it is diverse, but lives out this diversity every single day". Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong remarked on the inauguration of the President "that the new President symbolizes, visibly, the country's special perseverance with the "nobler dream" of a multi-racial,

multi-religious Singapore. The Prime Minister also referred to the words of his father Mr. Lee Kwan Yew, the founder Prime Minister of Singapore, who remarked in August 1965 during the first hours of Singapore's independence, "that Singapore would not be a Malay nation, a Chinese nation nor an Indian nation. Everybody would have his place, equal, regardless of language, culture, religion."

The Prime Minister concluded his speech by saying "The majority will make extra efforts to ensure that minorities enjoy equal rights."

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Details on page 18



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# TDSB member Parthi Kandavel seeks Liberal Party nomination for Scarborough Centre in coming Ontario Provincial election



Parthi Kandavel for Scarborough Centre



Parthi Kandavel addressing the gathering



Parthi Kandavel member of TDSB with Chithra

Parthi Kandavel who is a member of the Toronto District School Board is seeking nomination from the Liberal Party for the Scarborough Centre riding in the coming Ontario provincial election.

He made a formal announcement of his candidature for the election at a media event held recently. Kandavel is a graduate from the Waterloo University in Liberal studies, Mathematics and Political Science. As a school teacher and a member of the School Board he has devoted much time and energy in the welfare of students and education along with his commitment in community work.

(Seen here are pictures taken at the Media event and the ChithraGeetham Musical event)

## You are invited to celebrate Centenary!



You are invited to a very special event on Thursday, November 16 to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Scarborough and Rouge Hospital's Centenary site!

Centenary Health Centre (as it was then known) opened on July 1, 1967 through the united effort and long-standing support of residents and local leaders. Since then, the hospital has provided outstanding care to hundreds

of thousands of patients and families.

Join us as we celebrate how our Centenary site has changed lives and helped one of Canada's most diverse communities grow.

The event will include:

- A 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary plaque unveiling
- Archival displays and historical information
- Videos featuring longtime staff, volunteers, donors, Board members,

and physicians.

Light refreshments will be available.

Date: Thursday, November 16, 2017

Time: 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Place: Centenary site, 3rd Floor cafeteria area and Dr. Bruce Johnston Conference Room

RSVP: [www.celebratingcentenary.eventbrite.ca](http://www.celebratingcentenary.eventbrite.ca)

We hope to see you there!

**38 yr old Sikh lawyer Jagmeet Singh becomes new NDP leader**

*Contd. from pg 1...*

Singh is a criminal defence lawyer who speaks fluent English, French and Punjabi. Singh's birthplace was Scarborough, a multi-ethnic neighbourhood. Singh's father was a psychiatrist.

Singh took up martial arts as a youngster, captained his high school wrestling team and won the Toronto championships in Brazilian jiu-jitsu.

He obtained a law degree from Osgoode Hall in Toronto and practised as a criminal defence lawyer. His brother, Gurattan Singh, now runs the firm.

Jagmeet Singh will become the first non-white leader of a major federal political party in Canada.

In his victory speech, Singh remarked "So from Tommy to David, Ed, Audrey, Alexa, Jack and Tom and today to all of us, we are the party that is building a better Canada. It is in us that you can see the future of our country, how great our country will be with a New Democratic government."



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# from the publisher's desk

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Markham News: City of Markham Communications - www.markham.ca

Whitby News: Town of Whitby Communications - www.whitby.ca

Waterloo News: www.tamilculturewaterloo.org

Coverage on Institutions: The Scarborough Hospital - www.tsh.to

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## Jagmeet Singh becomes first political leader of colour after final NDP Leadership Debate



**Jagmeet Singh, Andrew Scheer and Justin Trudeau**

"Canadians deserve the kind of government that only New Democrats can deliver ... that gets the job done, that keeps its promises. That's why today I'm officially launching my campaign to be the next prime minister of Canada." These were some of the sentiments uttered by Jagmeet Singh as he emerged victorious in the New Democratic Party leadership race. Outcompeting leadership rivals Niki Ashton, Guy Caron, and Charlie Angus, at 38, Singh has become both the youngest leader of the NDP and the first person of colour to lead a major political party in Canada. According to Global News, he obtained 53.8% of the vote among eligible members, with 35,266 on the first ballot.

As a graduate student in public policy at the University of Toronto, I was given the opportunity to attend the party's final leadership debates organized by Huffington Post Canada, where I witnessed the sorts of politics and issues he would bring to the voters as leader.

The audience itself was heavily comprised of young people, or millennials, who will reportedly be considered a significant voter demographic in the election in 2019. In this respect, Mr. Singh himself has seemingly cultivated an appealing image with this group of voters. From my perspective, much excitement and intrigue radiated for his candidacy among the colleagues of my graduate program, along with students from different schools such as Ryerson and York University.

The questions directed toward each candidate were complex and tough, which was enthusiastically acknowledged by a few of my program col-

leagues. They cut across a wide variety of policy areas including Indigenous issues and foreign policy. Regarding Canadian policy on Israel, Mr. Singh noted that "we cannot conflate criticism with a government's policies, a particular government's stance, with anti-Semitism, anti-Semitism is real, we need to denounce it, but we also must stand up for the human rights violations that are ongoing in Palestine."

Next, hesitated that he would increase funding to Old Age Security by abolishing tax credits from Stephen Harper's government to lift 600,000 seniors out of poverty in the country. Addressing both gender inequality and Indigenous issues simultaneously, he proposed strengthening pay equity laws, family leave policies for Indigenous women, whom make 40% less than men in Canada. On restricting freedom of religion in Quebec, with specific attention to Islam, Singh noted that Quebec is "well equipped" to handle this issue with its provincial Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Overall, Jagmeet Singh's debate performance was one of collegiality, diplomacy, decisiveness, and like-mindedness when positioning himself with his NDP leadership rivals in relation to their policy platforms and ideas for the country. This election will be made more interesting for the country given that the two other major parties, the Liberals and Conservatives, are headed by Justin Trudeau and Andrew Scheer, respectively. Along with Jagmeet Singh, they are also relatively young leaders looking to set Canada on their ideal path towards prosperity.

**Contributed by HarrishThirukumaran**

# Happy Diwali ~ Deepavali

Monsoon Journal Wishes  
all Readers, Advertisers & Well-Wishers  
a Happy Diwali - Deepavali

October 19



“Happiness is when what you think, what you say and what you do are in harmony” - Mahatma Gandhi (October 2, 1869 - January 30, 1948)

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

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# World's Leading Canadian Gold Miner Peter Munk donates Hundred Million dollars to Munk Cardiac Centre

By Siva Sivapragasam

Peter Munk and his family fled Hungary in 1944 to escape the brutalities of the Nazis and later settled down in Canada to start life from scratch. He made enough wealth but was also convinced that the "wealth should flow back to society one day". He made this a reality by donating an unprecedented amount of one hundred million dollars last month to the Peter Munk Cardiac Centre run by the University Health

Centre at the Toronto General Hospital.

The University Health Network acknowledged that this historic gift "represents the largest commitment to a Canadian hospital in our country's 150-year history and builds on Peter and Melanie's extraordinary legacy of philanthropy." Himself a heart patient, Mr. Munk and his wife, Melanie, have supported the Peter Munk Cardiac Centre for more than two decades with an amount that now stands at more



Peter Munk and wife Melanie Munk



The Peter Munk Family with other VIPs

*"My donation is my gratitude for what Canada has done for me and my family"*

ta-driven digital cardiovascular health platform that reduces costs, advances medical research, and improves the outcomes of patients with cardiac and vascular disease.

The Peter Munk Cardiac Centre (PMCC), established through the generous support of the Munks, is the premier cardiac centre in Canada. Since its opening, the Centre has saved and improved the lives of cardiac and vascular patients from around the world. Each year, over 163,000 patients receive innovative and compassionate care from multidisciplinary teams in the PMCC.

*(The writer can personally vouch for the excellent treatment and nursing care he experienced at the Peter Munk Cardiac Centre years ago after his successful by-pass surgery performed by the well-known Cardiac surgeon Dr. Cusimano).*

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## Around the World

# Tamil appointed Chief of Sri Lanka's Customs

Batticaloa Government Agent P.S.M. Charles has been appointed new Director General of Sri Lanka Customs, making her the first woman to be appointed to that position.

Charles was appointed to the position on the recommendation of Finance and Mass Media Minister Mangala Samaraweera, with the approval of the Cabinet of Ministers.

Present Director General of Customs W.A. Choolananda Perera will be appointed as Additional Secretary to the Ministry of Public Administration and Management.

Charles is a graduate of the Uni-



versity of Jaffna, and holds a double Masters in Disaster Management and Business Administration from the universities of Peradeniya and Rajarata.

## Sri Lankan parties release steering committee report on forming new constitution

The long awaited report of the all-party steering committee on formulating a new Sri Lanka Constitution was released on September 21st. The new Constitution was a key promise of Sri Lankan President Maithripala Sirisena during the 2015 elections and is primarily meant to address the grievances of minorities.

Tamil National Alliance (TNA) leader R. Sampanthan, who is also the main opposition leader, said this opportunity should not be missed and all parties must come together to bring in a new Constitution.

All political groups in Sri Lanka, including the main Tamil party, have agreed to accept the country as an indivisible state in the new Constitution, Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe said after presenting the report.

The report will be debated both within and outside Parliament before the final bill is passed through a two-third majority followed by referendum.

"The TNA has taken the unprecedented position that they would agree to the content of this interim report provided the two main political parties accept it," Mr. Wickremesinghe said.

The interim report has replaced the word 'unitary' with 'unified' but has refrained from proposing a federal status for country which Tamil political groups have been demanding.

The TNA has been pressing for a federal solution to address political aspirations of the Tamil community, claiming discrimination by the majority Sinhalese.

The federal solution is being viewed as the moderate stance as opposed to



the LTTE's separatist campaign of over three decades to create a separate Tamil state in north and east.

Mr. Wickremesinghe said the interim report was the result of the formulation of the Constitutional Assembly with the participation of all political parties in March 2016.

"This is only a draft, not a legally binding document. The final draft (constitution) would be done only after subjecting this report for public debate," Mr. Wickremesinghe said.

Sri Lanka wants to change the 1978 Constitution. The proposal to end executive Presidency has not been agreed upon by major parties and Prime minister hoped that they will soon arrive at a consensus.

The Marxist JVP, stressed the need to abolish the presidency while the Joint Opposition backing the former President Mahinda Rajapaksa said the report would dilute the island's unitary character and reduce the foremost place accorded Buddhism in previous constitutions.

(via PTI)

## Minister Strongly Condemns Attack on Rohingya Refugees in Sri Lanka

*(Text of Statement made by the Minister of Finance and Media, Hon. Mangala Samaraweera, MP., on the Rohingya Refugees in Sri Lanka)*

I would like to condemn in the strongest possible terms, the attack against Rohingya refugees – refugees who were under the care of UNHCR, on September 26th in Mount Lavinia, by a group of thugs in robes.

In fact I condemn these actions not only as the Minister in charge of Media. I am also condemning it as a Buddhist, a Buddhist who is very proud of the fact that Buddhism is a religion of non-violence and compassion.

In fact these refugees, 30 of them from Myanmar, were rescued at sea by the Sri Lanka Navy in April this year, and they were under the care of the UNHCR, waiting to be resettled elsewhere in a third country, the United States or Canada.

In fact this is not the first time Sri

Lanka has given temporary shelter to such refugees. In fact, way back in 2008, in March 2008, again the Sri Lanka Navy rescued survivors off a boat after they were found adrift in the high seas, and they were kept here until 2012, when these people were resettled in the United States of America.

Again in 2013, the Sri Lanka Navy rescued two boatloads of Rohingya survivors from a shipwreck in the eastern coast of Sri Lanka; 138 and 32 of them. They too were kept under the care of the UNHCR, until they were settled in Canada and the United States of America in 2014 and in 2015.

It is a shameful act and every right-minded citizen of this country especially Buddhists must condemn this action by this so called priests and I also urge the police to take the strongest possible action against the perpetrators of these crimes against these innocent refugees.

## Seven of Nine Accused Sentenced to Death for Gang rape and Murder of 18 Year Old Jaffna Schoolgirl

**Seven of Nine Accused Including "Swiss" Kumar Sentenced to Death for Gang rape and Murder of 18 Year Old Jaffna Schoolgirl Vidya Shivaloganathan**

Shashikumar alias Swiss Kumar.

Seven of the nine accused in SivaloganathanVidya's abduction, rape and murder, were sentenced to death by a three-judge bench of Jaffna High Court a short while ago.

Jaffna High Court Judge M. Elancheliyan while sentencing them said the first and the seventh accused should be released because of the lack of evidence against them.

The seven men found guilty were also sentenced to 30 years rigorous imprisonment and ordered to pay Rs.1 million as compensation to Vidya's family and in the event they failed to pay, the Jaffna High Court said their term of imprisonment should be extended.

18-year-old SivaloganathanVidya of Pungudutivu in Jaffna was abducted, sexually abused and murdered in May 2015.

Sri Lanka's longstanding commitment to the UN as well as the EU not to implement the death penalty will save those who had been sentenced to death on Wednesday for gang rape and murder of 18-year-old student Vidya.

Justice Ministry Secretary Padmasiri Jayamanne has stated that Sri Lanka hadn't carried out judicial executions since 1976 and was unlikely to resume the practice now.

(Compiled from News reports  
-via dbsjeyaraj.com)



# Affordable housing key for development and social equality, UN says on World Habitat Day

2 October 2017 – With 1.6 billion people living in inadequate housing, one billion of whom reside in slums and informal settlements, the United Nations is spotlighting affordable homes on today's World Habitat Day, which also marks the official start of Urban October – a month of worldwide celebrations and citizens' engagement in urban life worldwide.

"While millions of people lack suitable homes, the stock of vacant houses is gradually increasing," said Dr. Joan Clos Executive Director of the UN Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) in a message commemorating the Day under the 2017 theme 'Housing Policies: Affordable Homes.'

"Ensuring housing affordability is therefore a complex issue of strategic importance for development, social peace and equality," he added.

This year's celebrations are noteworthy as they coincide with the first anniversary of the New Urban Agenda," adopted at the UN Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development, better known as Habitat III, in Quito, Ecuador, which enshrines urbanization as an indispensable for development and a prerequisite for

prosperity and growth.

"It is thanks to this paradigm shift that urbanization and development are indivisibly linked one to another," Dr. Clos said.

An analysis of housing affordability over the last 20 years reveals that despite increasing demand, housing – including rentals – has been largely unaffordable for the majority of the world population.

"Handing over housing to the market has proved a failure in providing affordable and adequate housing for all," Dr. Clos continued.

"We all remember well that housing was at the epicentre of the eruption of the global economic crisis of 2008, instead of being at the heart of the urban policy. Today, 1.6 billion people live in inadequate housing, of which one billion live in slums and informal settlements," he underscored.

Dr. Clos emphasized that addressing the housing needs of the poorest and most vulnerable, especially women, youth and those who live in slums, must be a priority in the development agendas.

Promoting sound housing policies is also crucial for climate change, re-



**Urban October design competition.**  
Photo: UN-HABITAT/Alejandro Montes

silence, mobility and energy consumption.

Which is why, the Executive Director said: "we would like to remind on this Day the importance of locating housing at the physical – and holistic – centre of our cities.

"For housing to contribute to national socio-economic development and achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the New Urban Agenda calls for placing housing policies at the centre of national urban policies along with strategies to fight poverty, improve health and employment," he stressed.

Each year, World Habitat Day takes on a new theme to promote sustainable development policies to ensure shelter for all – often promoting one of UN-Habitat's focal areas such as inclusive housing and social services; a safe and healthy living environment, with consideration for children, youth, women, elderly and disabled; affordable and sustainable transport and energy; and job creation.

"As we strive to create cities for all, an urgent action for achieving affordable homes requires a global commitment to effective and inclusive housing policies," Dr. Clos concluded.

## Iraqi Kurds Decisively Back Independence in Referendum

September 27, 2017: BBC News reports that 92 percent of the people of northern Iraq, including Kurds and non-Kurds, favor pursuing independence for Kurdistan in a non-binding referendum. Turnout was more than 70 percent. Iraq's prime minister, urging a cancellation of results, encouraged dialogue.

Kurdish leaders say the 'Yes' vote will give them a mandate to start negotiations on secession with the central government in Baghdad and neighbouring countries," the article reports.

Iraq did not respond well to the results. The prime minister demanded control of Kurdistan's border crossings and two airports, as well as oil rev-

enues. The parliament recommended deploying troops to areas with oil held by Kurdish forces. "Kurdish Peshmerga fighters took control of Kirkuk, a multi-ethnic region claimed by the Kurds and Arab-led central government, when jihadist militants from so-called Islamic State (IS) swept across northern Iraq in 2014 and the Iraqi army collapsed."

The international community discouraged the referendum, but also a harsh response. Numerous Kurds live in Syria, Iran and Turkey and Iraq. Since 2005, Iraq's constitution has recognized the autonomous Kurdistan Regional Government.

-via YaleGlobal

## Catalan referendum: Catalonia has 'won right to statehood'

Catalan leader Carles Puigdemont says the Spanish region has won the right to statehood following a contentious referendum that was marred by violence; report from bbc.com:

Catalan leader Carles Puigdemont said the door was open to a unilateral declaration of independence after Catalan officials said voters had backed secession with a 42.3% turnout.

Spain's government has warned it could suspend Catalan autonomy.

The constitutional court banned the vote and almost 900 people were hurt as police tried to stop it going ahead.

Officers from the national police and paramilitary Civil Guard seized ballot papers and boxes at polling stations.

Spanish Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy said Catalans had been fooled into taking part in an illegal vote.

More than 2.2 million people were reported to have voted, according to Catalan authorities, out of 5.3 million registered voters. Just under 90% of those who voted backed independence, they said.

A Catalan spokesman said more than 750,000 votes could not be counted because polling stations were closed and urns were confiscated.

Given the chaotic nature of the vote, the turnout and voting figures should be taken with a pinch of salt, says the BBC's Tom Burridge in Barcelona.

## British Novelist Wins 2017 Nobel Prize for Literature

On Thursday October 5th morning, the Swedish Academy announced that Kazuo Ishiguro won the Nobel Prize for Literature for 2017. Ishiguro is a phenomenal author and visionary and being widely applauded for winning one of the most coveted prizes in literature.

Born in Nagasaki, Japan on November 8, 1954, Ishiguro is a British novelist, screenwriter and short story writer best known for the novels Never Let Me Go, the Man Booker

Prize-winning title The Remains of the Day, and his seventh and most recent book The Buried Giant. The Swedish Academy said of Ishiguro's work: "...In novels of great emotional force, [he] has uncovered the abyss beneath our illusory sense of connection with the world," later adding, "If you mix Jane Austin with Franz Kafka, you have Kazuo Ishiguro. You have to add a bit of Marcel Proust in there too."

The following is a quote from Nobelete

Kazuo Ishiguro, in his work "The remains of the Day": "What is the point of worrying oneself too much about what one could or could not have done to control the course one's life took? Surely it is enough that the likes of you and I at least try to make our small contribution count for something true and worthy. And if some of us are prepared to sacrifice much in life in order to pursue such aspirations, surely that in itself, whatever the outcome, cause for pride and contentment."





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# Ethnic Cleansing of Rohingya:

*"We cannot be afraid to call the actions of the Burmese authorities what they appear to be" -US Ambassador Nikki Haley*

**Full Text of Remarks delivered by Ambassador Nikki R. Haley, Head of US Mission at The United Nations, at Security Council briefing on September 28, 2017**

Thank you, Mr. President. Thank you, Mr. Secretary-General, for the briefing.

For over four weeks, the world has endured images from Burma we should never have to see. Much more importantly, we have seen images of acts no person should ever have to endure. We have seen terrified women and children fleeing their homes with only the clothes on their back. We've watched people drown trying to cross rivers to safety. We've seen bodies floating down rivers and villages burned to the ground. We have heard reports of men, women, and children rounded up, detained, and some brutally killed. We saw the haunting image of a young mother and father cradling the body of their infant son – a baby who died fleeing the violence in Rakhine State.

Secretary Tillerson has spoken with State Counselor Aung San Suu Kyi. I've also met with Burma's National Security Advisor during High-Level Week. We have tried to engage the Burmese

reported violence against other minority communities in Rakhine State. But what has happened since dwarfs these attacks in its disproportionate, indiscriminate violence.

We cannot be afraid to call the actions of the Burmese authorities what they appear to be: a brutal, sustained campaign to cleanse the country of an ethnic minority. And it should shame senior Burmese leaders who have sacrificed so much for an open, democratic Burma. The Burmese government claims it is battling terrorists. If this is true, let them allow media and humanitarian access to back up their claim. If terrorists are the problem, let the military explain how killing children and forcing families from their homes will make Burma any safer.

The Burmese military has ignored calls to respond to these attacks by focusing on identifying and prosecuting the perpetrators. Instead, what has taken place is a brutal assault that doesn't advance justice in Burma; it puts it further out of reach. The government's response has undermined Burma's security, stability, and its fragile democratic transition.

The government has a responsibil-



Ambassador Nikki R. Haley

tions needed now to resolve this crisis are very clear.

First, the Burmese military must respect human rights and fundamental freedoms. Those who have been accused of committing abuses should be removed from command responsibilities immediately and prosecuted for wrongdoing. And any country that is currently providing weapons to the Burmese military should suspend these activities until sufficient accountability measures are in place.

assistance will be delayed in reaching those who need it the most.

Third and finally, the government must commit to welcoming all who have been displaced to return to their original homes. We were glad to see the commitment made by the State Counselor during her State of the Union address to allow those who fled the violence to voluntarily return to their homes when it is safe to do so. We will all watch to see if the government follows through on this pledge. We call on Burmese officials to work with the Government of Bangladesh to develop a framework on returns that is agreed to by both governments and has international support.

In the meantime, we have seen the generosity of the Bangladeshi government in accepting and sheltering Burmese refugees. The United States is providing \$95 million to support urgent humanitarian needs in Burma and Bangladesh. But given the likelihood of more people fleeing across the border, plus the ongoing monsoon season and the humanitarian need already present in Bangladesh, this generosity will not be enough.

The risk that this conflict spills over to other countries in the region is real. Additional support will be needed to head off a wider conflict.

What is perhaps most frustrating about this conflict is how we should have seen it coming. The different communities in the Rakhine State have had periods of peaceful co-existence. But they have also seen periods of extreme violence, and between these outbursts, the Rohingya have suffered discrimination and been denied basic rights as citizens of Burma.

In concluding my remarks, I would like to speak directly to the Burmese people. I would like to appeal to the goodness and hope for the future that exists in the hearts of the overwhelming majority of you. So many of you have sacrificed so much for a better country. I know you're sickened by the images of violence coming from Burma and being seen around the world. But the goal of an open, democratic Burma is still possible. Hold fast to that vision. Don't give up on it. And don't be satisfied with leaders who give up on it either. Every Burmese man, woman, and child is a child of God with equal moral standing. Stay strong in this belief and you will have the future you have dreamed of – the future you deserve.

Thank you.



military at the highest levels. We've supported regional efforts to de-escalate the violence and expand humanitarian access. And still, the exodus of terrified, injured people out of Burma continues while the government refuses to acknowledge the seriousness of the situation. Now, hundreds of thousands of Rohingya refugees remain in Bangladesh, in fear of returning to their homes. And Burmese leaders must come to terms with the facts on the ground.

When we last met to consider the Burmese crisis I expressed our condemnation of the August 25 attacks against security posts. I reiterate that condemnation today. I also condemn

ity to restore the rule of law and prevent attacks by citizens in its name. And this responsibility holds regardless of what individual or group is the target of these attacks. An already dire situation has been made even worse by some of the rhetoric coming from official military channels inside Burma. Worse, this language encourages this ugly view among the Burmese people. History has shown us what happens when such views go unopposed.

The time for well-meaning, diplomatic words in this Council has passed. We must now consider action against Burmese security forces who are implicated in abuses and stoking hatred among their fellow citizens. The ac-

Second, Burmese authorities must immediately allow rapid, safe, and unhindered humanitarian access for UN agencies and other relief organizations. We have noted the government's decision to work with the International Red Cross to distribute aid. But the government has not allowed other relief organizations meaningful access to the northern Rakhine State. If the Burmese authorities are sincere about wanting those displaced to come home, why would they not want food and treatment to get to them? The government needs to work with all partners who can help to get assistance to all affected communities. Otherwise, there is a significant danger that life-saving



## Around the World

# 'We can't build strong relationships if we refuse to have conversations,' Prime Minister Trudeau says at UN

21 September 2017 – Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau took the podium at the United Nations General Assembly today with condolences for those affected by recent successive natural disasters, including the earthquakes in Mexico and hurricanes in the Caribbean, saying his country is ready to a "lend a helping hand in whatever way it can."

He spoke extensively on Canada's indigenous people, of the injustices they face and the efforts being made to improve the relationship with First Nations, calling it "righting historical wrongs." He noted how Canada is implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) on a national level to improve their lives, saying that the Goals are "as meaningful in Canada as they are everywhere else in the world."

Mr. Trudeau cited a few examples of the SDGs in action in indigenous communities, such as bringing safe and clean drinking water (SDG 6), working with them to help build and refurbish homes, making safe and sustainable places to live (SDG 11), and combatting gender-based violence and giving women and girls equal opportunities to succeed (SDG 5).

The Prime Minister noted that his country fully supports the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples "without qualification" and is work-



Prime Minister Justin Trudeau of Canada addresses the general debate of the General Assembly's seventy-second session.

UN Photo/Cia Pak

ing with Canada's indigenous leaders to correct past injustices. "Indigenous Peoples will decide how they wish to represent and organize themselves," he told the Assembly.

"We can't build strong relationships if we refuse to have conversations. We can't chart a more peaceful path if the starting point is suspicion and mistrust. And we can't build a better world unless we work together, respect our differences, protect the vulnerable, and stand up for the things that matter most," Mr. Trudeau concluded.

– UN.org

## Sri Lanka Customs Detect Rise in Smugglers Using Their "Rear Ends" To Take out Gold and Gems Through Colombo airport

Several arrests have been recently at the airport in Colombo as smugglers get caught in the act of having gold bars hidden in their rectum according to news reports.

Sri Lanka's business news portal The Economy Next reported on the incidents quoting an official on September 25th.

The report stated - "Customs authorities have stumbled on a bottomless gold mine as more smugglers resort to stuffing their bottoms with gems and precious metals. The latest discovery came on September 24th when a Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu bound passenger was found with his rectum stuffed with seven gold biscuits and six gold chains with a value of 4.5 million rupees, customs spokesman Sunil Jayaratne said.

He said officials at the Bandaranaike International noticed a trend of more and more smugglers using their rear end to try and smuggle out gems and gold and there had been at least one detection every week this year. The extraction is messy, but the value of gems and precious metals purged from rear ends amounted to 206 million rupees so far this year compared to 38 mil-

lion rupees worth of contraband extracted last year.

The high rate of detections mean it is bottoms up for customs officers who are entitled to generous rewards.

The 45-year-old Sri Lankan who was arrested on Sunday trying to smuggle gold to Coimbatore, India was fined 100,000 and his 904 gram haul of yellow gold was confiscated, Jayaratne said adding that the man was a courier.

Most couriers were paid about 25,000 rupees for the trouble of stuffing gems and jewellery up their bottoms. "I don't know why they go through such pain for 25,000 rupees," Jayaratne said.

"Our officers notice such people because of their walk and behaviour. They appear to be in pain." Sri Lanka allows passengers leaving the island to carry a reasonable quantity of personal jewellery.

It also allows imports of precious metals at a low tax. However, smuggling is usually carried out as part of money-laundering schemes or to transfer proceeds from drug sales, Jayaratne said.

High taxes on gold imports to India also encouraged smuggling from Sri Lanka."

# 'Winner-takes-all' dynamics in digital economy could widen income gap – UN report



Between 2011 and 2014, global deliveries of small packets and parcels by Posts worldwide increased by some 48 per cent. Photo: Universal Postal Union (UPU)

2 October 2017 – The benefits of digitalization to people's lives are enormous, but 'winner-takes-all' dynamics in the digital economy creates a risk of widening income inequalities, says a report released today by a United Nations entity dealing with trade, investment and development.

The report acknowledges that information and communications technologies (ICT), electronic commerce and other digital applications are helping a growing number of small businesses and entrepreneurs in developing countries to connect with global markets and open up new ways of generating income.

"Effective national and international policies are needed to make sure the gains are spread evenly across as well as within countries," said Mukhisa Kituyi, the Secretary-General of the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), which authored the Information Economy Report 2017: Digitalization, Trade and Development.

"We at UNCTAD are excited by the transformational power of digitalization, but we must recognize that the Internet is not a panacea," Mr. Kituyi stated in a press release.

The world's top four companies by market capitalization are all closely linked to the digital economy: Apple, Alphabet (Google), Microsoft and Amazon.

The digital economy is expanding fast in developing economies. China and India accounted for nearly 90 per cent of the 750 million people who went online for the first time between 2012 and 2015, according to data from the UN International Telecommunication

Union (ITU).

The report says that productivity gains from digitalization, however, may accrue mainly to already wealthy and skilled individuals. Winner-takes-all dynamics are typical in Internet platform-based economies, where network effects benefit first movers and standard setters.

In countries of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, where the digital economy has evolved the most, growing use of ICT has been accompanied by an increasing income gap between the rich and poor.

The report also states that the policy challenge depends on countries' readiness to engage in and benefit from the digital economy, with the least developed countries the least prepared. To ensure that more people and enterprises in developing countries have the capacity to participate effectively, the international community will need to expand its support.

UN Secretary-General António Guterres stressed that harnessing the power of information and communications technologies can be one of the keys to the achievement of global development goals.

At the same time, large parts of the developing world remain disconnected from the Internet, and many people lack access to high-speed broadband connectivity.

"Policymaking at the national and international levels needs to mitigate the risk that digitalization could widen existing divides and create new gaps," he said.

– UN.org

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## A MILESTONE CELEBRATION FOR THE HOPE STARTS HERE CAMPAIGN!

On Monday, September 18, Providence Healthcare Foundation celebrated a milestone achievement in the Hope Starts Here campaign, with the Official Campaign Public Launch and symbolic Knowledge Centre Groundbreaking ceremony.

To mark the official public launch of this fundraising campaign, a newly installed 40 foot wall banner was revealed outside Providence Healthcare. This banner will remain up for the duration of the campaign, publicly announcing Providence Healthcare's \$16M campaign to transform the future of care to the GTA community.



This occasion also marked the symbolic "ground breaking" of the new Knowledge Centre, which is the third and final chapter of the campaign, and brings to fruition the vision of how this investment in a most precious asset – the people – will translate into hope and healing for patients and families long into the future. Over 40 guests attended this event, including lead Knowledge Centre donors, long-time friends and partners of Providence. They were also given an exclusive sneak peek of the new space (currently under construction) with a "hard hat" tour, helping them envision the spaces that will foster innovation, growth, collaboration and learning for the staff at Providence.

Through the wonderful support of donor and friends, over \$13 million of the \$16 million goal has been achieved! The Foundation is grateful to the many loyal supporters who have empowered Providence to lead the charge in providing hope and healing for all who enter their doors, for today and tomorrow.

Groundbreaking photo with lead donors of *Hope Starts Here*. L to R:

Kevin Dougherty, Jennifer Stewart, Raj Kothari, George Macri, Mayolo Bayani, Nadim Hirji, Ross Thomas, Maggie Bruneau, Dr. Bob Howard, Dr. Peter Nord



### About the Campaign:

In 2013, Providence Healthcare Foundation accepted the challenge of the Hope Starts Here campaign – to raise \$16 million to launch a major remodel of Providence Hospital to transform the future of care. Since then, there are six transformed rehab units within the Hospital and the successful implementation of a new model of patient flow and care at Providence, is in full effect. This

transformation embraces the philosophy of "rehab, everywhere, always, one patient at a time." They also redefined palliative care in October 2016 with the grand opening of a new Palliative Care Program, providing extraordinary compassionate care for patients and families in a welcoming and home-like environment. Today, they are embarking on the final chapter of the campaign, "Investing in Our Future," through a new Knowledge

Centre which will be available 24/7 for all staff.

Should you wish to support this initiative by helping Providence Healthcare cross the finish line with the remaining \$3 million, your donations are always welcome. To donate today, please visit [CampaignForProvidence.com](http://CampaignForProvidence.com) or contact Joanne Tsang at [JTang@providence.on.ca](mailto:JTang@providence.on.ca), T 416-285-3669. Hope starts with YOU!

## PUTTING THE PETAL TO THE METAL



It's a sunny day outside in the Great Room garden of Providence Healthcare's long-term care home, the Cardinal Ambrozic Houses of Providence. Hidden under one of the cloth pergolas behind a table encased in colourful annual blooms and decorative hanging plants is the Houses' 'unofficial'

in-house gardener, Activation Assistant Nina Borgh (pictured).

"We have 22 urns around the Houses. I'm getting them ready to fill with flowers," she says while stopping to adjust some snapdragons. "I remember when my mom was staying here. The colours would always make her smile."

I would come to visit and there would be big, beautiful urns outside the Houses greeting you as you entered."

"I wanted to create a similar experience for all the people who live here now."

So with a small budget from Providence Healthcare's Environmental Services department, Nina puts her green thumb to the test. She travels to and from various stores on her way to work, seeking out the most cost-effective options that will add the most pizzazz to the Houses' balconies and gardens.

"The marigolds don't smell the best, but you plant them next to tomatoes to help with the bugs. Ferns are great because they're low maintenance. We just have to make sure they're shaded and get watered regularly."

Nina's been adding a fragrant touch of colour to the Houses for more than eight years. "I enjoy seeing the residents' light up

when they see the planters. For some of them, it brings back memories of their own gardens."

Standing by the Madonna statue she points out a mandevilla climbing vine that's a little droopy.

"It's in shock right now – I just planted it. But give it a week to adjust and some tender care and it will come back and be breathtaking."

Located at Warden and St. Clair Avenues, Providence Healthcare provides rehabilitation, palliative care, clinics to promote recovery and well-being, caregiver support, an adult day program for people with dementia and long-term care for 288 residents. All our programs and services are provided within a welcoming community of compassion, hope and healing. For more info on our programs and services as well as more patient and staff stories like Nina's, visit our website at [www.providence.on.ca](http://www.providence.on.ca).



Scarborough and Rouge Hospital



Health &amp; Care

# SRH CELEBRATES 'END OF TREATMENT BELL' DONATION FOR PAEDIATRIC CANCER CLINIC

As Canada marks Childhood Cancer Awareness Month in September, Scarborough and Rouge Hospital (SRH) has unveiled its first 'end of treatment bell' for the Paediatric Oncology Group of Ontario (POGO) satellite paediatric oncology clinic at the Centenary site. This very special bell will be rung by children when they complete their cancer treatment in the clinic.

The production and purchase of the bell was generously donated by the families of two former clinic patients as a way to thank the hospital for the lifesaving care their children received.

"I absolutely love Scarborough and Rouge Hospital," said Nicolle Georgiev, the mother of seven-year-old Sophia, who was treated for leukemia at SRH in June of 2012, and who conducted the initial outreach to organize the funding and production of the bell.

"The doctors, nurses, and other staff saved my daughter's life and I will forever hold them all in my heart. Being able to give back was a blessing. We are so excited to be able to share the bell with the many children and families who receive outstanding care in the clinic."

Rhonda Biener, mother of 12-year-old Jerzie LeDuc, who received treatment for a brain tumour between February 2016 and March 2017, adds that she imme-

diately knew she wanted to be a part of the project. "I talked to my parents and they didn't even hesitate in saying they would pay for the bell and donate it to the hospital on behalf of Jerzie," she said.

"The nurses in the clinic have become a very important part of our lives and we will be forever grateful to them for all they did and continue to do; not only for our family, but for every other family at the clinic."

In addition to Nicolle and Rhonda's efforts, a close friend of Nicolle's painted a beautiful rainbow and included a poem on the bell.

"We thank these incredible families for making such an exceptional donation to our hospital that will bring relief and hope to thousands of children for years to come," said Liz Buller, President and CEO of SRH.

The now-widespread tradition of bell-ringing for cancer patients was introduced over 20 years ago when U.S. Navy Rear Admiral Irve Le Moigne, a patient with head and neck cancer, brought a brass bell with him on his last day of treatment. In the Navy, Irve told his doctor, sailors ring a bell to mark when a job is well done. Irve recited the following poem the day he rang his bell, which continues to be written on other end of treatment bells, including the one at SRH:



*"Ring this bell  
Three times well  
Its toll to clearly say,  
My treatment's done  
This course is run  
And I am on my way!"*

As a POGO satellite, the clinic at the Centenary site provides cancer care close to home for children in Scarborough. Working in partnership with the Hospital for Sick Children (Sick-Kids), the clinic cares for between 80 and 90 patients, who come for nearly 1,000 outpatient visits and 40 inpatients stays each year.

# Province Commits To Expanding Dialysis Services in Scarborough

Scarborough and Rouge Hospital to receive grant to plan and construct new chronic kidney disease facility.

At a recent announcement Dr. Eric Hoskins, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, committed to expanding dialysis services within Scarborough and Rouge Hospital's (SRH) Chronic Kidney Disease program.

"SRH is honoured to receive this support from the Government of Ontario that will allow us to begin the planning and construction of a new community-based facility to meet the growing needs of Scarborough residents," said Liz Buller, President and CEO of SRH. "This new facility will greatly improve patient access to care and provide dialysis treatment close to home for those living with chronic kidney disease." SRH is working with our partners to build the new facility

in the Bridletowne neighbourhood of Scarborough. The Bridletowne Neighbourhood Centre (BNC) will become a leading example of integrated health promoting infrastructure in the province of Ontario. A unique partnership between the YMCA of Greater Toronto, the United Way of Toronto and York Region, and SRH, the BNC will bring together community services and health care providers to promote self-management of healthy living and disease

prevention to foster a healthy community where people can live, work, learn, and play.

"We would like to thank Minister Hoskins and MPP Soo Wong for their

ongoing commitment to making Scarborough a healthy community," said Terri McKinnon, Vice-Chair of SRH's Board of Directors.



Gathered to announce the expansion of dialysis services in Scarborough were Councillor Norm Kelly, Mayor John Tory, Minister Mitzie Hunter, Minister Eric Hoskins, MPP Soo Wong, Elizabeth Buller, SRH President and CEO, Councillor Chin Lee.



Scarborough and Rouge Hospital



Health &amp; Care

# Paediatric Program Marks 20 Years of Offering Innovative Surgical Service



**I**t's just after 7:45 in the morning on a weekday in early June and seven-year-old Maxime Li calmly enters the operating room (OR) with his mother Jessie in the Day Surgery Unit at Scarborough and Rouge Hospital's (SRH) Birchmount site for dental surgery.

After some final preparations and checks, Maxime lies down on the operating table and – with Jessie right by his side – Anaesthesiologist Dr. Malcolm Tai-Pow gently places the mask to sedate Maxime over his nose and mouth. A few moments later, Maxime is asleep and Jessie departs for the procedure to begin and to wait to see Maxime in the recovery room.

Like thousands of children and parents before them, Maxime and Jessie participated in SRH's Til I Sleep program, which allows parents to accompany their children into the OR until the child has been anaesthetized, or 'falls asleep'.

Introduced 20 years ago at the Birchmount site, SRH was the first hospital in the Greater Toronto Area to implement such an innovative program. The General site followed not long after, and the Centenary site has also offered the service for almost a year and a half.

"This program has truly been a success and one of the most important things I have ever done in my career," said SRH Anaesthesiologist Dr. Alan Tallmeister, who was instrumental in helping to launch it. "Although many physicians were skeptical in the beginning, once they saw how much the program improved our efficiency, helping to put kids asleep with virtually no tears or struggling, they came to accept and value it."

It's an observation shared by Dr. Tai-Pow.

"Til I Sleep is a very useful program, which puts the parents at ease and, in turn, makes the surgery easier for the child," he said.

"We're so fortunate to have had ongoing support from our physicians, nurses, and hospital administration," added Michele Clark-Ward, a Child Life Specialist at SRH's General site who also helped to start the program.

"And now that we've been providing the program for so long, it's just something everyone expects will happen."

"Til I Sleep is part of a larger Pre-Operative Teaching program the hospital runs to help reduce anxiety for paediatric surgery patients and familiarize children and families with the hospital environment," explained Sue Regan, a Child Life Specialist at SRH's Birchmount site.

Alexandra Frankel, a Child Life Specialist at SRH's Centenary site, added that "in the Pre-Operative Teaching program, children and their parents or caregivers meet with a Child Life Specialist one to two weeks before their surgery where they visit the Day Surgery Unit, OR, and the surgical waiting room. The Child Life Specialist is also there on the day of surgery, providing important continuity of care for both the parents and children."

SRH Surgeon Dr. Chi Tai, who conducted Maxime's dental surgery, echoes Alexandra's comments, explaining that "for children 12 and under the concept of going to a hospital can be nerve-wracking. So having this hospital tour, and giving kids a chance to come into the operating room, have a look at what's going on, be prepped with all the different modalities of monitoring equipment and noises is key to having a successful anaesthetic induction."

"Plus, surgically, when you have a happy child coming into the operating room, they usually wake up happier."

Jessie admits she was "so pleased with the entire process, which introduced me to everything. As well, being in the OR with Maxime was very important to me. My one-year-old daughter recently had surgery at another hospital to repair a hernia. The nurse came and took her into the OR and I waited and cried a lot."

"Here with this program I felt so much better. I would've stayed with Maxime for the whole procedure if I could."

## Women inspiring philanthropy in Scarborough

*Jennifer McKelvie*

The members of the Scarborough Women of Philanthropy (SWOP) are blazing trails when it comes to creating new and innovative ways to advocate for better health care in Scarborough. This collection of dynamic and driven women work tirelessly to support their hospital, help to shape the landscape of Scarborough and pave the way to a better future in local health care.

Coming from different backgrounds, cultures and walks of life, the group's mission is a model of generosity, leadership and dedication which encourages women to celebrate their contributions to the community by raising money to support their hospital. "I'm honoured to part of a circle of women who are making a difference, a change, and an impression by giving back to Scarborough" says co-founder Alisha Punjani. SWOP holds regular networking seminars for the women of the community and hosts fundraising events in support of the Scarborough and Rouge Hospital.

These dedicated women uphold the key

values of SWOP by empowering and uniting women, to work towards a common goal, experiencing the power of giving together, inspiring others to give, affecting change through philanthropy and ensuring that the voices of women are heard. Co-founder Jocelyn Bamford feels you should "Never underestimate the power of one person or the impact that women helping women can bring". Already the women of SWOP have raised more than \$130,000 for Scarborough and Rouge Hospital Foundation in their first three years at their annual signature event 'Sip, Shop & Celebrate Women'.

The 2017 Sip, Shop & Celebrate event will be held on November 9 at the beautiful newly restored Guild Inn Estate. The proceeds will be used towards digital mammography machine for Scarborough and Rouge Hospital's Birchmount site. This exciting event provides guests with the opportunity to shop for the holiday season from local vendors, bid on a wide selection of beautiful auction items, and

share a glass of wine with friends - all in support of Scarborough and Rouge Hospital.

Ticket and sponsorship information can be found at [www.sipshopcelebrate.com](http://www.sipshopcelebrate.com).

The Scarborough Women of Philanthropy presents

**Sip, Shop & Celebrate Women**

November 9, 2017

6pm-9pm • The newly renovated Guild Inn Estate  
[www.SipShopCelebrate.com](http://www.SipShopCelebrate.com)

Fun • Festivities • Shopping • hor's d'oeuvres  
Raffle Draws • Silent Auction and more!

**Tickets**

- Sip, Shop, Celebrate \$40 each
- Bring a Friend and Celebrate \$60
- Girl's Night Out: \$150  
(Includes four tickets, reserved table, & complimentary bottle of wine)

**Scarsborough's Women of Philanthropy**

are raising money for new equipment for the Scarborough and Rouge Hospital to support women's health.  
Photo courtesy of Scarborough Town Centre.

**SRH Foundation**

All proceeds from the event will go towards the purchase of a new digital mammography machine



#HumansOfScarborough



## Special Feature

# RE/MAX Community Realty Supports hospital fundraiser once again!

Businesses supporting charitable events are not only vital to their corporate social responsibility but it helps bring their staff and clients together for a similar cause. This is what one Scarborough Real Estate Brokerage has done bringing their agents together to support the Scarborough and Rouge Hospital Foundation's Canadian Tire Brave T.O. obstacle race.

RE/MAX Community's Brokerage owned by Rajeef Koneswaran and Broker of Record Logan Velumailum decided to support the Scarborough and Rouge Hospital Foundation for their inaugural Canadian Tire Brave T.O. and had such a great response from their staff that they committed to support this fundraiser once again.

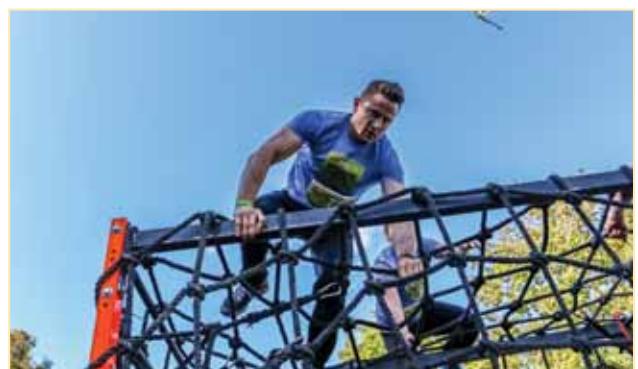
On Saturday September 30th, 2017, over 50 agents took part in the 5km obstacle race at the Morningside Park in

Scarborough under Team RE/MAX Community and engaged with participants in the Finishers Village. When asked why you chose Canadian Tire Brave T.O. to support, Logan Velumailum responded "We need to support our local community hospital and what better way than through a fun, unique event right in Scarborough! The hospital is always there for us when we need them, and it is up to us to do our part as well."

Canadian Tire Brave T.O. was inspired by the training regimens of the Toronto Police, Fire and Paramedics and allows participants to "Beat the Best" while competing with the city's finest first responders.

Photos from the Canadian Tire Brave T.O. 2017 event can be seen here.

For more information about Canadian Tire Brave T.O. please visit [www.brave.to](http://www.brave.to)





# Robbie's Rainbow and IBD

**By: Lavan Sivanathan**

I had the privilege of attending a presentation featuring Dr. Thomas Walters, co-director of Sick Kids IBD program and Kate Murray, founder of Robbie's Rainbow, a children's charity for kids suffering through IBD (Inflammatory Bowel Disease). Kate described what started her interest in founding the charity, beginning with her son Robbie.

Robbie Murray, since the summer of 2007 at the age of 5, had had a pretty challenging life for a child his age. His mother, began to notice small changes within him, he began avoiding the foods he once loved, he ate less from his plate, he cried of stomach pains, he slept longer, and he showed little interest in his little league baseball team. Trips to the doctor showed normal blood results, and months went by with Robbie getting worse. By October he was running to the washroom up to 8 times a day, he could barely walk from the kitchen table to the couch. Meal-times were nerve wracking for Kate who never knew what kind of response his body would have next.

It wasn't until later that Kate and Robbie got their answer, and he was diagnosed with Crohn's disease, a chronic disease that causes inflammation within the gastrointestinal tract, and is one of two conditions under the umbrella of Inflammatory Bowel disease (IBD). Symptoms that included fatigue, rapid weight loss, chronic diarrhea, abscesses, and within children cause a delay in growth and puberty. IBD is often confused with IBS (Irritable Bowel Syndrome) but they are not the same. Crohn's disease will be a part of someone's life until a cure is found. Crohn's causes canker like sores and inflammation in the digestive tract, that start from the gums in the mouth to the end of the digestive tract. The illness is not contagious, and not the result of a poor diet, rather a dysfunction of the immune system.

It took time to find medication for Robbie that actually worked, but once they did, his health transformed and he was clinically in remission. Early on in the journey they realized that not all medications that are used to treat IBD are best for them and that many families were financially burdened with the cost of treatment. Kate, Robbie, and a team of volunteers created Robbie's Rainbow, a children's charity that is dedicated to improving the health and quality of life for children living with Crohn's disease. They achieve their goal by providing vulnerable children with financial assistance for IBD treatments, creating education resources and programs on a variety of IBD top-



ics, specifically for children, teens and parents, as well as collaborate with patient groups to build education programs to improve and empower patients.

Some of the hurdles Kate and Robbie had to leap over was the issue with other parents and Robbie's own education. Conveying that although he has a disease, it is manageable and it is nothing to be afraid of was an important thing to explain to other parents. As was sharing the diagnosis at school, the necessity of explaining the disease to the principal and his teachers, and what Robbie would need to continue learning. Things like requesting having unrestricted access to the washroom, or having the ability to go to the

office to rest when, food or water in class if he needed it. Sick days would have to increase if he has to change his treatment, needs surgery, or if he catches another illness.

The most important thing was starting an ILP (Individualized Learning Plan) because Robbie's attendance would probably be inconsistent, it was important to have a formal accommodation put in place so he could stay as current as possible if he missed school. And starting that process began with a letter from his gastroenterologist, Dr. Thomas Walters, co-director of Sick Kids IBD program. Dr. Walters would go on to say as important advice for parents who think their child may have the symptoms of a chronic disease

"As the parent, you are the parent advocate, and that's your role. You should be an informed parents. The resource is the expert, and I don't think a parent should expect to need to be the expert. Be practical, these are my concerns, and it's your physician's job to deal with your concerns."

A medication that Robbie was on had the side effect of changing his appearance. He looked as if he had gained weight rapidly, and children tend to notice this quickly, often making hurtful jokes and comments. It was not only important to explain the disease to parents and teachers but also to the children. Robbie was asked if he was comfortable sharing crohn's with his class, and explaining just what it was. What Kate and Robbie discovered was that once the discussion took place, "this is what I have, I have to take this medication to make me feel better but it changes the way I look", there was a deeper level of understanding and compassion amongst his peers.

As Kate finished, I got to hear from Robbie as well. Robbie in 2017 is a very different person now. He is a teenager who seems fairly confident about life and has adapted to the disease that has troubled him so. The disease has affected his hobbies like skiing but he's learned not to push himself too far. Listening to him, he feels that the biggest misconceptions about IBD is people assuming that he can be fixed with just a change in diet and that he has to go to the washroom 6 to 8 times a day even now, when it's more like 2 or 3. He doesn't share his disease with everyone as that may be overwhelming but to the people who want to know why he misses class occasionally, he eases them into it. With the presentation concluded, I had a greater understanding of how difficult IBD is for people, especially for children, who just want to do something as simple as run around and play with their friends but are so challenged by the disease, and how important charities like Robbie's Rainbow and the work Sick Kids does to help these kids get better.

**Appreciation:** Thank you for the opportunity given to Monsoon Journal and our contributing writer LavanSivanathan, B. Sc. in Microbiology from McMaster University, Hamilton and candidate for Master of Science in Pharmacology(MSC) at The University of British Columbia and Argyle Public Relationships, Toronto, Ontario for organizing this event on Sept 19, 2017; the event was organized on behalf of AbbVieCanada, at a Lunch 'n' Learn event: Whiteboards and Washrooms -Managing Chronic Conditions in Kids.



## Special Feature

## WORDS OF PEACE



# Choose to Be in Peace

Prem Rawat's message is simple, clear and direct: the peace that everyone is looking for is within us. He has been bringing his message of hope and peace to millions of people around the world for many years. Living in peace, he says, doesn't have to be difficult. It's just a matter of practice.

Hailed as an ambassador of peace by many government dignitaries and highly placed officials, Mr. Rawat says that "whatever you practice you are going to get good at."

"Do you practice anger?" he asks. "Let me ask you: How long does it take you to get angry? Not very long, is it? Look at what happens in a traffic jam! Someone cuts in and everyone beeps their horns."

Mr. Rawat—who has interacted with people in more than a hundred countries over many years—says in his experience, there are people everywhere who say they are trying to build a better society.

"I say to you that if you truly want to succeed in doing that, you have to

begin with yourself," he says. "You have to begin practicing those traits that will bring you peace.

"Peace does not mean becoming like a vegetable. A lot of people think that's what peace is. 'Oh, if I get peace, then I would never go to the movies. I would never go for a picnic. I would just sit there in my house and chant, 'I am in peace, I am in peace, I am in peace.'

"That's not peace," says Mr. Rawat. "Peace is when you are whole. Peace is when you are complete. Peace is when you understand. Peace is when you have truly accomplished the basic traits of being human. It's about completeness—not emptiness, but completeness."

What that means, he says, is that peace begins with the choices you make in your life.

"Choice is your weapon against all the things that you don't want," Mr. Rawat says. "Choice is the weapon that can save you. Choice is the weapon that can bring people together. Choice is the glue that can make

people join together.

"The choices nations make will determine the destiny of those nations," he says. "This is what history teaches us. Those countries that had everything but did not choose wisely ended up being decimated. Even though they had achieved the zenith of their potential, if they did not choose wisely they ended up being decimated. And those who chose wisely have withstood the test of time."

Every day, whether we like it or not, we are faced with choices, Mr. Rawat says—so knowing what to choose makes a big difference in people's lives.

"Do you know how to choose?" he asks. "Because if you're not good at choices, what choices are you going to make? Everything depends on the choices you make. You are where you are because of the consequences of the choices you have made. If you are not happy with your life, don't blame the government. Don't blame God. Don't blame your relatives. It's the choices you made."

Knowing how to choose, Mr. Rawat says, is what makes us truly human. It's not just the coming together of oxygen, hydrogen, calcium, carbon, nitrogen and phosphorous—the elements that make up 99 percent of a human body—that makes us human, he says. These elements will go back to the earth as the body disintegrates.

"It was dust once," he says, "and it'll go back to being dust."

"What makes us human? The choices we make. Of all the choices you make, also choose clarity over doubt. Choose strength over weakness. Choose in your life. People who choose to love, to be in peace, to care, to be kind, to be gentle, to be generous, truly become all that a human being can be."

To learn more about Prem Rawat:  
1 877 707 3221 Toll free  
416 431 5000 Tamil  
[www.wopg.org](http://www.wopg.org)  
[www.tprf.org](http://www.tprf.org)  
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[www.timelesstoday.com](http://www.timelesstoday.com)



# Is Your Teen Experiencing a Challenge?

**By: Janani Srikantha**

This month, I had the privilege of interviewing Mr. Ashley Valentine, founder of Lord Simcoe Alternative Secondary, which is a school for males, between the ages of 13 and 19, who are experiencing challenges. Through his knowledge, experience, and vision, Ashley's alternative education enables students to succeed in a learning environment, catered to the individuality of the student.

**What type of challenges does your program cater to?**

My program deals with a variety of challenges, under the idea that every teenager is different, with their own unique story. Challenges include students who are facing behavioural situations, such as fighting in school, verbal conflicts with teachers and/or other students; along with those dealing with unique challenges like dyslexia, high functioning autism, ADHD, Tourette's, and chronic health conditions.

**What was your inspiration behind the school?**

In grade 9, I was having difficulty breathing and experiencing severe migraines. It was discovered at the Hos-

pital for Sick Children that there was a tumour between my cervical spine and the base of my skull. They estimated it to be the size of a tennis ball. Many doctors said there was a good chance I would not make it and I was scheduled to have surgery immediately, followed by radiation therapy.

Thankfully I survived, but my life changed after this surgery. I was suddenly faced with school challenges I had never experienced before, whether it be academically, socially or even emotionally. I found that people had lower expectations of my ability, which allowed me to see first-hand what stigmatizing can do to one's self-esteem and personal identity.

But rather than allowing it to break me, I built my resolve and developed a passion to see children and teens excel, despite any challenges they may face.

With my mother's guidance, I began by volunteering at Community Living Toronto in high school, where I worked with children and adults with varying disabilities and disorders. Following my time here, I worked with teens experiencing behavioural and/or learning challenges at the Behaviour Institute; which is run by two psychologists who



are professors at McMaster University. My formal education includes a specialized honours degree in Psychology from York University, where I completed an independent thesis on curriculum development for teens experiencing challenges.

With my experience over the years, I found there were many males who were experiencing challenges, but the current school system was unable to address them successfully. So I decided to do something about it.

**Can you tell me a few features of your school's program?**

My school uses an experiential learning approach, which runs from Monday to Friday, 9:00 – 3:15 and has a centralized theme of being an eco-school. Students obtain their Ontario Secondary School Credits (OSSD) at my program, through a ministry of education initiative that allows students to obtain their credits online. More than just obtaining credits, the program focuses on developing the human aspect of the student. This involves elements such as daily yoga and meditation, which are fantastic techniques for mental and emotional control. Students also engage in community involvement activities such as spending time at a seniors home, as well as participating in eco-projects such electric car competitions. Volunteer mentors are also a central feature of the program. Mentors are made up of community members including post-secondary students and teachers, who provide direction and assistance. Lastly, but certainly not least, students are involved in sports such as mixed martial arts and basketball.

**What are your future plans for this school?**

As a former student in the public education system of the Toronto Dis-

trict School Board (TDSB), I began this school with the intention of establishing it as an alternative school within the TDSB; for the purposes of equity, accessibility and inclusiveness. In speaking to the appropriate individuals at the TDSB, including trustee Parthi Kandavel, I have a plan in place to make this a reality.

**Do you have any last words for our reader?**

Education is an important part of the human condition and great measures should be taken to ensure that student's are educated as unique individuals. Only with this type of consideration can we discuss concepts of equity and inclusiveness.

**How can our readers contact you?**

If you would like to find out more about the school or schedule a visit, please feel free to contact me via phone or email.

Phone: (416)-722-8944

Email: lsasinfo@gmail.com

Janani Srikantha is a certified teacher who is experienced with the Ontario curriculum and the International Baccalaureate. She provides tutoring using personalized learning plans based on students' needs. She is knowledgeable on integrating technology to redefine learning that is inclusive of all students. Janani has led workshops for educators and parents on topics that address different facets of education. For more information or queries on how to help your child with learning, please email info@thinkshiftedu.com or visit Thinkshift Edu on Facebook.



Trustee  
**Parthi Kandavel**  
Ward 18, Scarborough Southwest

Dear Parents and Students,

As TDSB Trustee, I have had the opportunity to visit Ashley's home school program and was pleased to see the amazing work he has been doing. Ashley has been working with male, secondary students, who are experiencing challenges i.e. autism, anxiety, personal issues, socioeconomic, etc.

Ashley's program stems from his vast experience working with special need youths. Having started at a young age volunteering at Community Living Toronto, he has continued to work with teens experiencing challenges for over 15 years. Additionally, he completed a specialized honours degree in Psychology at York University, where he graduated in the top 5% of the program.

The curriculum being employed at the program allows students to obtain their Ontario Secondary School Credits, while learning to manage their challenges and move at their pace. The program's environment is focused on developing both the potential and pursuit of passion, in each and every student. Using concepts such as experiential learning and techniques like meditation and mindfulness, students are put on a path of self-empowerment and discovery. To help them along this path, students are paired with qualified mentors. The creativity of the space is an added element that benefits both the program and spirit of the student.

In having his program evaluated by the York University Psychology Clinic, results showed significant improvement in student skills of academics, but also in their overall happiness of learning and future possibilities. These results I believe are a testament to both the program and Ashley.

With confidence, I am in support of Ashley's home school program and his strategy in trying to establish an alternative program within the Toronto District School Board (TDSB).

Sincerely,

Parthi Kandavel  
TDSB Trustee  
Ward 18

# WALK2CARE

## Special Feature

### 1st Annual Charity Walk by Atmiya Sparsh in aid of Cancer Care Program

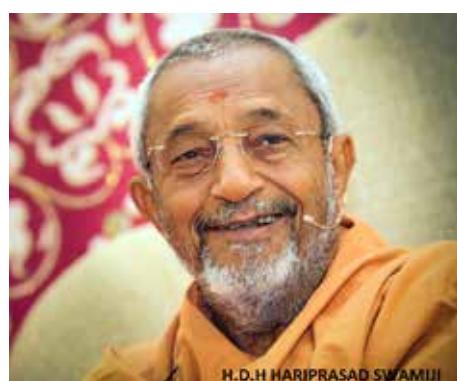


**Walk2Care** – the first annual charity walk organized by Atmiya Sparsh, partnered with Trillium Health Partners to raise funds for their Cancer Care Program. The walk was held, on an unusually hot day in September, at the newly named and facelifted Paul Coffey Park this past Saturday September 16. With over 700 participants of all ages ready to go at 9am - the event was a huge success. Sahaj Patel, a youth volunteer and running enthusiast, had the crowd all pumped up with his exciting warm up routine.

Participants were able to participate in 3 different ways, a 1 km walk, a 5 km walk and a 5 km run. It was setup so people from all ages could participate. In fact walkers ranged in age from 2 to 85 years!

The event was attended by some very distinguished guests. Steve Hoscheit, President and CEO of Trillium Health Partners, Gagan Sikand – MP Mississauga Streetsville, Nina Tangri – Provincial PC party candidate Mississauga Streetsville and Janak Shah, President of Yogi Divine Society Canada.

The dignitaries were amazed by the flawless execution of the event, and



H.D.H HARIPRASAD SWAMIJI

commented on the dedication of Atmiya Sparsh's volunteers. Atmiya Sparsh is a 100% volunteer organization whose team of volunteers conduct a wide array of outreach programs, seminars, workshops, social networking events and recreational activities as an integral part of community building and engagement activities.

Atmiya Sparsh is part of Yogi Divine Society, a trusted spiritual, social and humanitarian charitable founded and inspired by H.D.H Hariprasad Swami Maharaj. With its vast network of cen-

tres and volunteers world wide, the organization has enabled hundreds of thousands of children, youth and families to lead a happy, harmonious and purposeful life. HDH Hariprasad Swami Maharaj exemplifies 'Selfless Service unto Mankind and Devotion unto God' and Atmiyata (Spiritual Affinity with one and all). Yogi Divine Society is based in Mississauga at the Hindu Swaminarayan Mandir and Cultural Centre at 6875 Professional Court in Mississauga.

This program was organized by Atmiya Sparsh youth team with the great guidance and inspiration from Sanits

it was to travel downtown to Toronto to get treatment. The help of Atmiya Sparsh and other such organizations genuinely help in fighting this terrible sickness by raising funds for research and facilities local the community.

Funds raised will also enable an expansion of Atmiya Sparsh's outreach capabilities, social activities and support programs offered to the community. One of the other volunteers at Atmiya Sparsh explained how funds would enable them to increase the number of programs they organize such as improved training workshops for the development of employment skills,



P. Premswaroopdas Swamiji and P. Prabodhjivandas Swamiji. Janak Shah explained the reason Atmiya Sparsh wanted to help the Cancer Care Program at Trillium was because many members of Yogi Divine Society have lost loved ones to this terrible disease so helping the program was very near and dear to the community and participants. For many, it was their first time participating in such an event and was an eye opener for not only to witness how many people came out for a walk

career and team building activities to facilitate youth development, establish health clinics, host programs and camps for children that help them acquire new skills and foster higher self-esteem. He also explained that "Our goal is to raise awareness, educate the community and provide the necessary support to achieve overall health and mental well being for the entire community."

At the end of the walk participants were raving about the amount of fun



organized by a local charitable organization but the number of people that had been affected by Cancer. Steve Hoscheit, CEO of Trillium Health Partners spoke about the stressful time it can be to anyone and members of the family of someone who has been diagnosed with Cancer and how difficult

they had and how organized Atmiya Sparsh had setup the walk with volunteers and water stations regularly set up all along the path encouraging. Participants gathered took photos talking about how fun it would be next year when they bring more of their friends and family.



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**Ajay Oberoi**  
Government  
Certified Counsellor



## THIRD ANNUAL CHILDREN'S WORKSHOP CONDUCTED BY SENIOR TAMILS' CENTRE OF ONTARIO (STC) ON "SAVING ENERGY STARTS AT HOME"

Third annual Children's workshop conducted by Senior Tamils' Centre of Ontario (STC) on "Saving Energy Starts at Home" Two and a half years ago, Senior Tamils' Centre of Ontario (STC) started the "Clean Air Ambassadors" (CAA) program, with the grant received from Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF). The program educates the community on the concept of "Saving Energy Starts at Home" through, a series of educational seminars, hands on demonstrations and workshops. So far, over 4,000 members including children have participated and learnt to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions entering the atmosphere through, conserving own household consumption of natural

gas, electricity usage, water consumption, car pooling, managing waste etc.

On July 26th, 2017, the third annual Children's workshop was conducted at Sai Mandir, under the leadership of Ranees Mahalingam, M. Eng., P. Eng., FEC the CAA team lead. 167 people attended the workshop including 117 Children, ages ranging from 5 to 15 years, parents and CAA volunteers. This year's workshop focussed on "Zero waste home", "Climate change adaptation" and "Reuse". The participants were divided into 4 groups: Lower Juniors (ages 5-6), Upper Juniors (ages 7-8), Intermediate (ages 9-11) and Seniors (ages 12 and up) and offered activities to suit their own intellectual level. It incorporated several short

videos, presentations, slide shows, hands on projects, demonstrations, "Climate Bingo" game, "Carbon foot print" calculations, "Climate survivor" exercise and awards. The workshop which started at 9.30 am with the welcome address by the STC President R. Mahendran, followed by various activities by the Clean Air Ambassadors, CAA program coordinator, lunch and concluded at 3.30 pm with an awards ceremony and group photos.

**Displays and Working Models:** A demonstration comparing consumption of electricity of various bulbs: LED, CFL and incandescence using watt meter; prototype models of alternate energy sources using: wind, solar, hydro, biomass, battery and biogas.

**Hands on exercise demonstrating the concept of "Reuse":** Converting an old T-shirts into a shoulder bag; making flowers using brown (hand towel / toilet paper) rolls and creating pictures/wall hangers etc.

**Power Point Presentation Topics:** "Preserving Natural Environment -Air, Water and Land"; "Climate Change and Global Warming"; "Saving Energy Starts at Home"; "Alternate Energy Sources", "Zero Waste Home", "Cap and Trade", "Climate Change Adaptation".

**Awards:** Prizes were given to the winners of "Climate Bingo", "Carbon footprint" exercise, "Climate survivor game"; and Participation Certificates for all children.



Clean Air Ambassadors" (CAA) Project Team



Junior participants with the CAA Team



Intermediate participants with the CAA Team



Senior participants with the CAA Team

# "Intergenerational Cultural and Social Skills Exchange Workshop"

Organized by Senior Tamils' Centre of Ontario

**Senior Tamils' Centre** of Ontario (STC) under the New Horizons program for Seniors, had organized an

Interactive 5 days youth camp for children between the ages of 12 and 16 at Sathya Sai Mandir-Scarborough. The learning program was delivered through a structured class room environment from July 31st to Aug 4th 2017. The main objective of the project was achieved by engaging STC volunteers, through mentoring youth by sharing knowledge, heritage values and skills. The aim of the workshop was to implement an intergenerational learning and development of meaningful relationship

between Seniors and Youth. This workshop Funded by the Government of Canada through the New Horizons for Seniors Program

**Five different topics were covered under the workshop:**

**Tamil Heritage and Cultural values** - The Main objective of this is to teach the children the richness of the Tamil language and literature, the traditions, arts and culture of Tamils around the world and to educate them of all backgrounds about the language, traditions and history of the Tamil people.

**Arts, music & dance** - Children naturally love drama, dance and music

and it can keep them physically and emotionally tuned. It's a great media for transferring many aspects of our culture and heritage.

**Cookery & Nutrition** - Cooking for children promotes the lifetime skill of healthy cooking starting at a young age.

**Craft making** - Children love doing a variety of arts and crafts as an outlet to be creative and have some fun. But it has more benefits such as Bilateral Coordination, Fine Motor Coordination, Self-Regulation, Self-esteem booster and Bonding and fun.

**Caring elders living at home:** One of the most remarkable and enduring

human relationships in our society is between grandparents and their grandkids. The children need to learn how to care for the elders living at homes and also the bonding between the grandparents and grandkids.

The STC volunteers with their abundance of knowledge, experience, values and aspirations have promoted through this, volunteerism among STC members and further shared their unique experience, skills and values with the Youth. Activities included, Group discussions, Presentations, Hands on Experiments, Quiz and more.....



Intergenerational Cultural and Social Skills Exchange Project STC Team with Councilor Neethan Shan

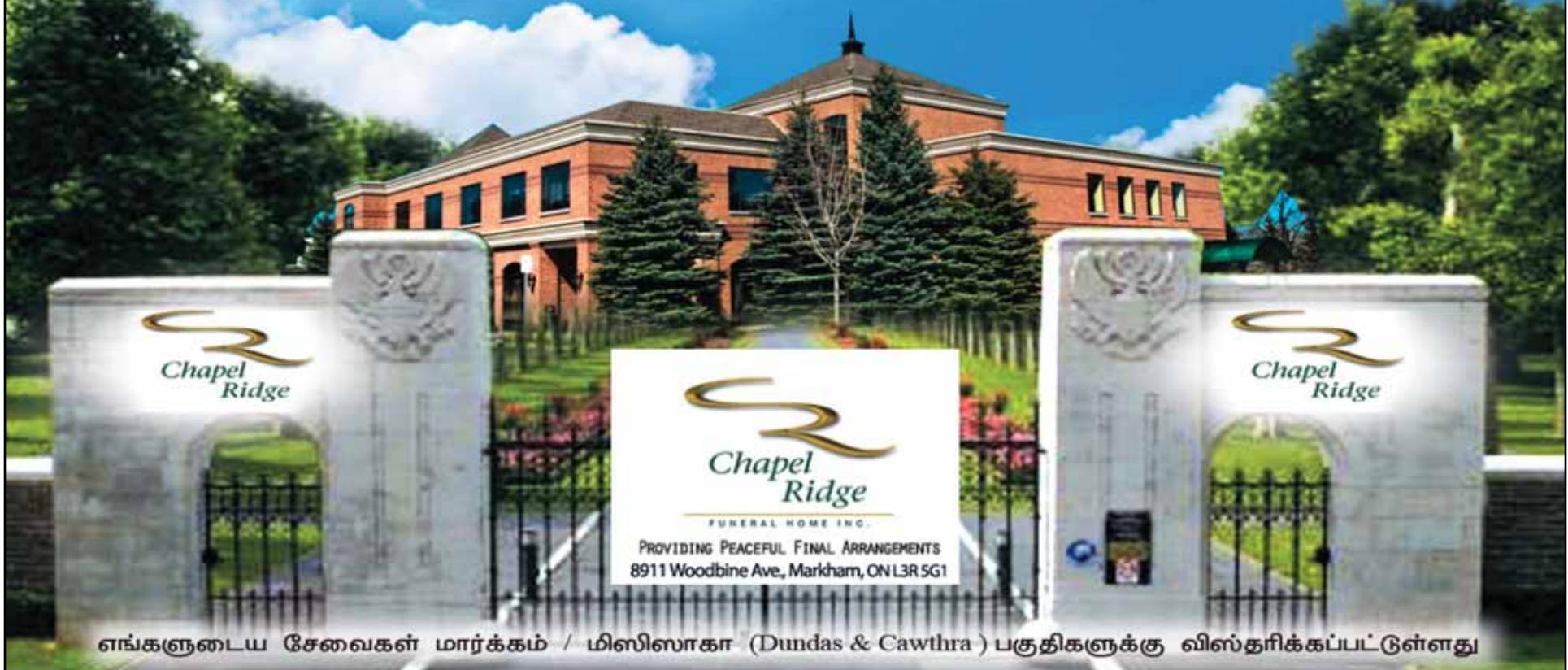


Intergenerational Cultural and Social Skills Exchange Youth participants with the STC Team



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## OBITUARY

### SHIRLEY NAVARATNARAJAH



It is with heavy hearts we announce the passing of Shirley Selvarani Navaratnarajah on Saturday September 16, 2017. Shirley is the beloved wife of Kandasamy Navaratnarajah for a wonderful 49 years, and cherished mother of Shamila, Radhika and Ganesh, loving mother-in-law of Dilan Frost, Dennis Collier and Melanie Battaglia, and devoted grandmother of Justin, Kailey, Nathan and Aydin. Born in Sri Lanka and a teacher, Shirley was dedicated to her family, her students and her community. She was beloved by many and will be missed dearly. Our heartfelt thanks and gratitude to everyone who was at the visitation, funeral and cremation services.

Your messages, flowers, thoughts and prayers have helped us during this difficult time.

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Senior Tamils Society of Peel - Opening of a new office





## Sri Lankan Arunasalam Balraj elected Toastmaster International President



Toastmaster International President Balraj Arunasalam with his Wife Saru and daughters Avisha and Mahishaa

By Siva Sivapragasam

Toastmaster Arunasalam Balraj was elected International President at the recently concluded Toastmasters International (TMI) Convention, in Vancouver, Canada. He is the first Sri Lankan, residing in Sri Lanka, and first South Asian, to lead this organisation.

A dedicated Toastmaster for 28 years, Balraj is a product of Trinity College, Kandy. He has held numerous offices from club level to International level. The roles he has served include: International Director 2011-2013, Second Vice President 2014-2015, First Vice-President 2015-2016 and President Elect 2016-2017.

Balraj is the founder/chief executive of Gemtrans Engineering Company. Born in Kandy, he was educated at Trinity College, Kandy. Balraj later earned a MBA from the Australian Institute of Business Administration. Having joined family business Gem-

ini Stores Pvt Ltd. Balraj established Gemtrans Engineering Company in 2000 diversifying operations of Gemini Stores into the manufacturing and distribution of industrial belts. An active member in the local chamber of commerce and rotary club of Colombo West, Balraj serves as President of the Iyyappan Temple management board and as Vice President of the Aarunadu Velalar Society of Sri Lanka.

"Toastmasters is a way of life," Arunasalam says. "It helped me understand the philosophy of leadership, to give and receive respect, and to be humble."

Arunasalam is married to Saru, who is now a homemaker as well as a director of the family company. His older daughter, Avisha, is a dentist, while the youngest, Mahishaa, is an engineer-cum-lawyer. Arunasalam jokingly says "Having three strong women at home is not easy for a man! I lost my voice at home ... and found it at Toastmasters!"

## Krishanthi Vignarajah of Sri Lankan origin enters race for Governor of Maryland in U.S.

By Siva Sivapragasam

Krishanthi Vignarajah who is of Sri Lankan origin and a former Obama official, is entering the race for governor of Maryland.

Krishanthi served in the Obama White House as Policy Director for First Lady Michelle Obama and at the State Department as Senior Advisor under Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and Secretary of State John Kerry. During her tenure at the White House, she led the First Lady's signature Let Girls Learn initiative.

Krishanthi was nine months old when she and her family left Sri Lanka

when the country was at the brink of a civil war and the family built a life in Maryland. A product of Maryland public schools and the daughter of Baltimore City public school teachers, Krishanthi attended Woodlawn High School. She earned degrees in molecular biology and political science at Yale College, and attended Oxford University as a Marshall Scholar and then Yale Law School.

Before the Obama Administration, Krish's career spanned law and business, having worked at McKinsey & Company, practiced law at Jenner & Block, and taught at Georgetown Uni-

## Expect 'all kinds of good changes', says wife Latha on Rajinikanth's political debut

At a social event in Chennai, Latha Rajinikanth, wife of the Tamil superstar, said only her husband could say when he would take the plunge into politics:

The wife of Tamil superstar Rajinikanth, Latha on October 3rd said her family is "eagerly" waiting to see what decision the veteran star would take on his political plunge, but asserted "all kinds of good changes can be expected" of him if he does enter politics.

Speaking to reporters on the sidelines of an event in Chennai, Latha did not make any direct responses to her husband's possible political entry and insisted he was the right person to respond to reporters' queries in this regard.

"That honour (of making the official announcement) must be given to him. It will be a decision he will be taking as an individual and we respect that as a family. We are also eagerly waiting to see what he wants to say," she said.

Rajinikanth, besides his contemporary Kamal Haasan, had recently hinted about taking the political plunge, saying the present system had "rotten".

He had also urged his fans to be ready to "be prepared for a war" when it came. These remarks were seen as him dropping hints of taking the political plunge.

Latha, involved in various social activities, including working in the field of children, said there are many shortcomings in the educational system and when a scribe asked if Rajinikanth would enter politics to set these things right, she said: "he might set many things right."

"But this (question of his entering politics) has to be asked to him," she added.

Asked what was her opinion on the issue as a "voter", she only said "people's opinion is what (is my opinion)."

Earlier, at an interaction at the event when a question was posed to her on what kinds of changes her husband would usher in if he entered politics, she said it could be "all kinds of changes".

versity. Krish and her husband Collin O'Mara, who is CEO of the National Wildlife Federation, welcomed in June a new baby girl, Alana.

When asked about her decision to enter the Governor's race, she says "I



Latha refused to make any direct comment on when her husband would join politics



Rajinikanth speaks at the inauguration of Tamil Nadu's enduring icon Sivaji Ganesan's memorial on his birth anniversary in Chennai on October 1 (PTI)



Rajinikanth and Kamal Haasan are both expected to take the political plunge (PTI)



While there are guesses that Rajinikanth is leaning towards the BJP, Kamal Haasan has said he would float his own party, Kamal Haasan seen amidst a portrait of Mahakavi Subramanya Bharathiyan

"If he enters politics, all kinds of good changes can be expected. But those things can't be said. It will be in his mind," she said.

Asked if he had made up his mind on entering politics, she said "he himself will say that". (via PTI)

am running for Governor because I am worried my daughter and all children in Maryland will not have the same opportunities that my mom gave me when she brought our family here when I was a baby girl".

## Durham Tamil Association hosts Dinner to help graduating students and potential Employers on October 12<sup>th</sup>

Durham Tamil Association will be hosting a Dinner on October 12th at the Deer Creek & Banquet Facility in Ajax. Cocktail and reception will take place before the dinner. The Dinner will be followed by keynote speeches and Awards presentation. A silent auction will be conducted during the dinner and proceeds will be donated to Rouge Valley Health System. This is the first annual Dinner for Success event aimed at helping graduating students and potential employers. DTA plans to have this event every year as part of its commitment to the youths. Those interested in attending the dinner are requested to contact 905 428 7008 for tickets and reservation. More details can be found in the website: [www.dinnerforsuccess.org](http://www.dinnerforsuccess.org).



# True Repentance



*airocross.files.wordpress*

*'Utta noi nonral, uyirkurukan cheyamai.*

*Ate thavathithkuru'*

(Kural: 261-270)



Valluvar's Views

By: JJ Atputharajah

To be able suffer pain and to refrain from inflicting it on others is the essence of true repentance. Self-inflicted pain is not really repentance or penance. Repentance is the base of virtue. It cannot be effectively done by the unrighteous. One should have genuine goodwill and honest effort to engage in purposeful repentance. Repentance is bearing up with one's share of pain and refraining from causing the pain to others. Repentance has the power to ensure destruction to the foes and blessings from friends. People who practice repentance will be rewarded in heaven for what they do in the world. Anyone who aspires to be righteous should practice repentance.

The same idea is expressed in Bagawat Gita: "The well-posed who perform their duties forsaking the fruits attain peace. The longer the gold is melted in the furnace, it loses its blemishes and shines brighter. In the same manner, men who truly repent get rid of their sins, become purer in spirit and shine brilliantly. He who has controlled his ego and mastered himself by repenting will be the object of true worship and adoration. The ultimate in the progress from love to compassion is to forget first one's ego and then one's own existence as brought out here. Those who have achieved the strength of repentance could defeat even the Lord of Death."

The Bible expresses the same idea in the Book of Proverbs: 'The righteous should never be removed but the wicked shall not inherit the earth. True wealth and poverty are the resultants of true knowledge. Those who engage in true repentance are the ones fit to be in the world and the next. The John the Baptist meant the same thing when he proclaims: "Repent and be baptized for the kingdom of God is at hand". Life is to be purified by repentance in order to lead a clean life in this world and the next.'



# THE LIGHT AT THE END OF THE TUNNEL



*C. Kamalaharan*

Laxumy left high and dry  
Since her hubby's abduction,  
Snatched in her presence and  
Whisked away in broad daylight.

Wailing and begging she went  
All over, from pillar to post  
Fell at their feet but to no avail.

Frenzied youths brandishing swords  
Threatening residents during wee hours  
Causing her kids to panic and cry  
As they clutched together sleep in fear.

Notwithstanding the looming threat  
Laxumy ventured out did odd jobs  
To eke out her income for survival  
Besides saving for a rainy day.

"Abducting a law abiding citizen  
Having no truck with militancy  
And dumping the family in poverty  
Is a serious crime" said a neighbour.

"May be an act of revenge for providing  
A vital clue against someone or being a  
Witness in a criminal case," said another.

"Nonsense! he'll never go to that extent  
Knowing the consequences," Laxumy retorted.

In a fresh bid to find the captors  
Joined the rally of affected women  
Became a vociferous campaigner  
Swayed her hubby's placard  
As she held it conspicuously high.

From morn till evening in scorching sun  
For months they aired their grievances.

But their grievances fell on deaf ears  
As none paid heed to them.

Helpless and disillusioned they wept and yearned,  
"Can we ever see our dear ones?"  
There are thousands the likes of Laxumy  
Having seen their loved ones whisked away  
And left languishing in untold misery.

"Will these ill-fated mothers ever see  
The light at the end of the tunnel,"  
Bemoaned the sympathetic onlookers.....

# Significance of Navarathry Festival

This year, a Saraswathy Pooja was conducted at RG Education Centers on September 28th, 2017 at 5:00 pm. The pooja was attended by RG Education students, parents, and staff. The religious pooja was conducted by priest, Sri Myooran Kurukkal, and the students were blessed by the priest for their future prospects in their studies. Following the pooja, students performed devotional songs, violin and Bharatanatyam. The proceedings were conducted by RG Education's Director, Mr. S. Selvaratnam, and the pooja successfully ended with a vote of thanks by Dr. S. Krishnapillai.

**N**avarathry is one of the most important annual events held throughout the world where Hindus predominate. This festival is celebrated during the month of October every year. Navarathry Festival signifies worshipping of Godmother, Paraskathy – the supreme power, to fulfilling the aspiration and desires of humans.

Goddess Paraskathy is worshipped to acquire blessings on three important things that man needs – victory, wealthy, and education. In order to get the blessings on all these energies, Navarathry is celebrated for a period of nine consecutive nights. "Navam" means 'nine' or 'supreme' and 'Rathry' means nights. So Navarathry means 'nine supreme nights'. These nine supreme nights are special for Hindus to acquire the blessings on victory, health, and education. During the first three days of the festival, Paraskathy is worshipped in the divine form of Durga to gain her blessings on victory. On the next three days, Paraskathy is worshipped as Mahalakshmy to acquire her blessings on wealth. The last three days are devoted to Mahasarawathy to win her blessings on education.

Sakthy is all powerful (omnipotent) and present everywhere (omnipresent). She has endless powers. Worshipping Sakthy in the three different divine forms during these special days will ensure her divine presence around us. Her divine act and blessings on us will awaken us, eliminate our ignorance, and tell us what is good to follow and what is bad to avoid. Goddess Saraswathy represents the creation of wisdom and intelligence. Her presence gives us the flow of love for education, knowledge, and consciousness. She is an expression of 'Ananda', which we humans all aspire for.

Honouring Saraswathy at all time requires speaking truthfully at all times. Speaking with beauty, clarity, and truth are the three factors that promote an educational pathway in the minds of people and to achieve

these factors, regular worshiping of Saraswathy is vital. This way, we will get her blessings along with the awakeness and creative expression of her divinity in our minds. The veena that Saraswathy carries with her indicates not just music, but the cosmic vibratory forces that reverberate behind time and space. So to say, she is invoked to remove ignorance from our minds and hearts, and to replace it with pure knowledge of education.

Goddess Saraswathy offers children and adults the best possible educational tools to make them perfect in their intelligence on education. Those who willingly and devotionally worship Saraswathy are sure to attain perfectness in their education with the highest achievements. Devotees who have succeeded in getting her blessings vouch that Saraswathy is always within their hearts. She directs them and looks after all their activities, because she is the supreme controller of both material and spiritual energies.

Saraswathy Pooja is a festival of learning, not as a mere memorization, but as an uncontrollable overflowing of the joy and awareness of knowledge. Honouring Saraswathy today requires that we respect and promote learning, not merely to pass tests in schools or to memorize information. We must allow our lives to learn the creative inspiration of knowledge as a whole. Remembering Saraswathy can help us renew our minds and hearts for a deeper connection to the reality of life.

During Poojah time, we must direct our minds and thoughts towards Sakthy – the Godmother – and at the same time, pronounce the devotional songs of Sakthy. These devotional songs will make our thoughts free from environmental disturbances and give us the opportunity to have a good access to God's pure love and light. Those who take part in Saraswathy Pooja festival are sure to achieve Sakthy's blessings on all aspects of health, wealth, and education.





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# HEALTH IMPACT OF LED STREET LIGHTING

## THE NEW TECHNOLOGY MAY INCREASE PUBLIC SAFETY AND QUALITY OF LIFE

**By: Uthayan Thurairajah**

**M**ajor North American cities, including Toronto, Montreal, and New York, have dropped the plans to install 4000K LED street lights in light of guidance from the American Medical Association (AMA). AMA sent shockwaves a few months ago by asserting in a report that the blue light emitted from LED Street lighting could cause sleep obstacles and adverse risks when driving.



AMA report last year recommended that blue-rich LED lighting need to be controlled to limit discomfort and disability glare on the road. The organization also warned that blue-rich LED lights might suppress melatonin production, create a negative impact on circadian rhythms, confuse the body's internal clock, prompting poor sleep quality. It can lead to more serious health concerns. Exposure to light at night has been linked to conditions like cancers, diabetes, heart disease and obesity – and while the jury is still out on how blue light can trigger these disorders, its deleterious effect on health is well established.

### Blue Light dangers

Blue light has shown to have several impacts. It is important to distinguish blue light health risk, and blue light reduces the production of melatonin during nighttime. Blue light may provide photo biological damage. The physical destruction is in the form of optical (retinal) and thermal damages (general physiological disorder). Any light source including LED that has a high blue content in the spectrum can cause sleep disruption and blue light hazard.

AMA or Lighting Research Centre (LRC) did not publish their data on the amount of destruction to our health due to overexposure of blue light content at night. We need to have full focus and alertness while driving a vehicle. There is certainly a time to be relaxed and able to sleep but not during driving.

The blue 'spike' from an electronic device as white light reduces the generation of melatonin (the sleep hormone). It has been connected to several health disorders including cancer. Apple's addition of a blue-light reduction feature into an update to its operating system is the first acknowledgment by a major manufacturer that blue light can be a health hazard.



The amount of blue light in TV screens, computer screens, mobiles, and tablets could interfere with melatonin production. We are over-stimulating our brains at a time when we get ready for a good night's sleep. Air travelers experience another kind of circadian disruption in the form of jet lag. The shift workers bathed in blue-saturated light to inhibit melatonin

production. It is better the shift worker go home and collapse into their beds until the next shift was due to begin.

### LED Luminaires

A recent Harvard publication claimed: light at night (LAN) is bad for health, and exposure to blue light emitted by electronics and energy-efficient light.<sup>1</sup> LED lighting has a sharp spike in the blue part of the spectrum. The majority of white LED lighting is the result of a conversion of pure blue light using phosphors.

Outdoor lighting including roadway lighting has been using 3000K or 4000K CCT in metal halide (MH) HID luminaries for decades with no comments or complaints other than it's easier to see in a field illuminated with 4000K than one illuminated with high-pressure sodium (HPS) lamps due to the better color rendition.

The drop of color and brightness has been a result of poorly designed outdoor LED optics that produce significantly harsher "glare zones." Old LED products used much higher CCT values such as 5000K and 6000K because earlier generation LED's provide greater light at higher CCT rates which looked terrible and very "blue." Even today's 4000K luminaires can look bad if they have poorly designed optics. 3000K luminaires will look softer to the eyes.

Nearly twenty percent of North American roadway lighting is now LED. LED's increased lifespan and their energy efficient nature are both powerful convincers to the local government looking to save money. However, the warnings are taking their toll.

### Trespass & sky glow

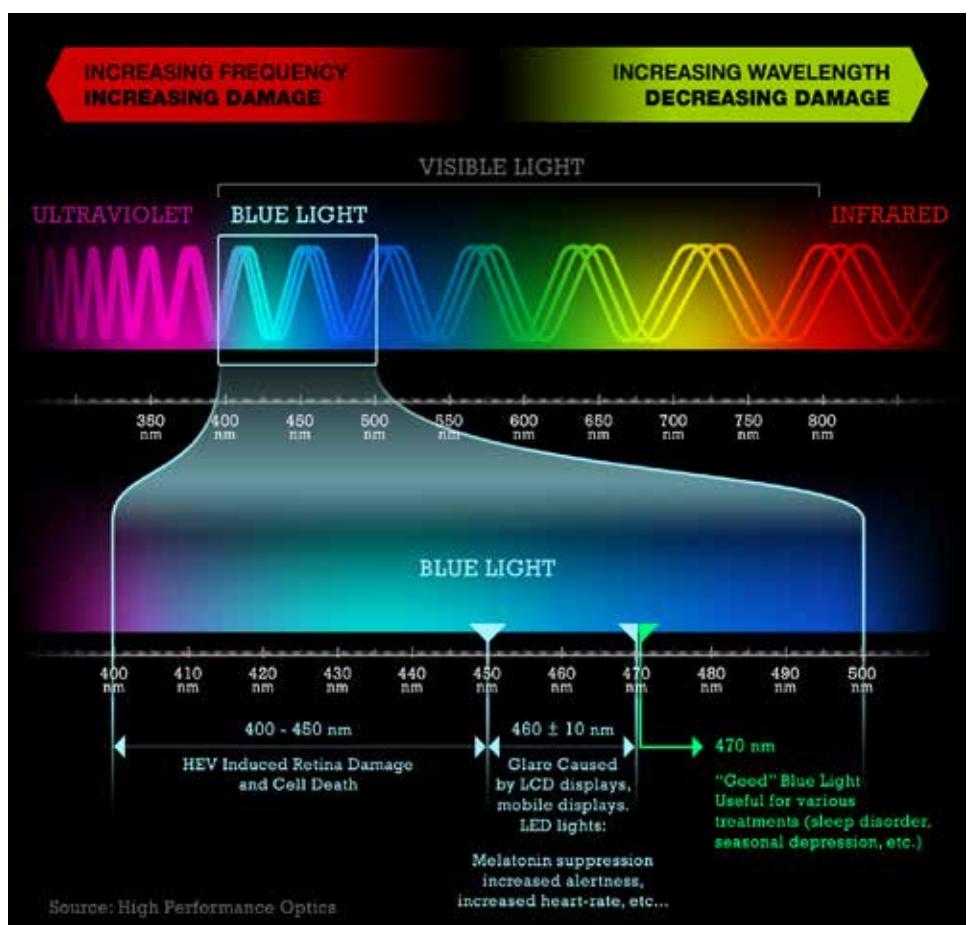
Toronto and Chicago have already decided to reduce the strength of LED streetlights to 3,000 K, and it is believed that Montreal may follow a similar route. There is a question of security, safety, and health. If you go to a park, there is a required level of brightness that you need so that you can feel secure. However, this report was a reversal of a recent Toronto Public Health report, which suggested the city use 3,000 Kelvin LED lights on the streets.

### Circadian Lighting

Circadian comes from the Latin (circa - about) and dies - day). A circadian rhythm is a recurrent pattern based on the actual progress of night and day. The example of a circadian rhythm is sleep when it's dark and be active during the day.

Most of us require illumination to function and therefore, darkness serves as the time to rest. There is a chemical response going on as well. The eye gathers light information during the day, most of which we translate into images of the external world. The rods and cones are visible photoreceptors, but recently another cell has been found within the retina called the Intrinsically Photosensitive Retinal Ganglion Cells (ipRGC). They are more sensitive to a narrow range of blue light, and it's these cells that control the ability of the body to go to sleep by producing a hormone called melatonin.

This discovery has changed our knowledge. We started to accept the super power of light and describe light as a drug or medicine. Light can control our health and welling and our circadian rhythms. It creates a whole new market of 'circadian lighting.'<sup>2</sup> Some lighting systems have been installed in schools, workplaces, and care homes. The light intensity and color temperature change during the day to provide benefits to occupants.



### Lighting for People

It is a good idea to provide lighting that is cold in appearance and at higher levels during the daytime, but shifts to warm and lower illumination in the evening. The convinced nature of blue-enriched light is to provide higher lighting levels in workplaces to improve alertness. Unnecessary use of tablets and computer screens in the night will delay sleepiness.

in blue light - depending on latitude and elevation it ranges from 6000K to 8000K CCT - while LED street lighting has very less blue light content of daylight.

### Summary

Our circadian rhythm is correctly synchronized with the natural environment. The obvious solution is to spend that time in a brightly-lit environment, especially sitting on a park bench, walking or cycling



**CAUTION : White or Blue LEDs can permanently damage your eyes, even when you do not feel pain**

Have warm, low-level illumination at home in the evening and refrain from using blue-enriched screens during that time. The circadian lighting, where the color and intensity of light varies throughout the day to match our natural rhythms. It can be controlled by wireless where LEDs capable of shifting their white light from cool to warm depending on the time of day.

We have exposed much greater blue light from interior fixtures than any outdoor installation. Ambient daylight has rich

to work, fresh air or sitting next to a window with a decent view. There is any number of ways of improving our lives.

Artificial exterior lighting above 4000K has been in existence for close to over 100 years. Natural light above 4000K has been around for 4.5 billion years. All light is alerting including warm white light. Warm white can be alerting but avoids suppressing nocturnal melatonin. All available research reveals that darkness (no light at all) is the most optimal conditions for maintaining the healing response.



**Uthayan Thurairajah**, PhD, RSE, LC, P.Eng., is a Senior Engineer at WSP|MM Group with over twenty years of experience in Electrical Engineering and Lighting field, and he also holds a Lecturer position in the Department of Communication and Design at Ryerson University. Uthayan is a member of several Canadian and international professional association including Professional Engineers Ontario (PEO), Academy of Integrative Health and Medicine (AIHM) and Association for Prevention Teaching and Research (APTR). He has worked on multi-disciplinary lighting and electrical projects for the Ministry of Transportation, several Towns, Municipalities, Regions and others. He carries out research on the subject of light and lighting and taken part in several projects. He also has extensive research experience in the value of lighting design in the mental, emotional, and social well-being of a person. He is a frequent presenter and author on lighting design & health. He is passionate about integrating science and health into the lighting design.



## MANAGING YOUR MONEY

# Uncomplicate your will

When it comes to our finances, we often complicate matters more than they need to be. This is usually inadvertent – we have an intention to make something easy and clear-cut, but end up making it more complicated because we didn't seek the right advice, or thought we knew more than we really did.

Wills are no different – they can be as straightforward or complicated as we want them to be. But in situations where there are multiple beneficiaries or unique circumstances, getting the right advice at the beginning is key to reducing headaches down the road.

A Will is the foundation of any estate plan. It designates how your estate should be distributed according to your documented wishes. If you die without a will (i.e. intestate), provincial legislation will determine how your estate is distributed amongst your heirs, which may not be consistent with your intentions. Suitable arrangements for minor children and other dependents could be made in a Will and in particular guardians could be named for them. Having a properly drafted will minimizes delays, costs and the complexities of passing on your estate. It reduces taxes to the extent possible, in some cases by creating Testamentary trusts for beneficiaries who are in higher tax brackets.

It is not absolutely necessary to have a lawyer prepare your Will, but it is highly recommended. You should also create a Living Will and a Power of Attorney that designates person(s) of your choice to make financial and health related decisions on your behalf should you become



too ill to do so on your own. Generally speaking the purchase of Will kits and Power of Attorney kits at various retail stores or online is NOT recommended, as it is easy to make mistakes. A holograph Will is one prepared by you in your own handwriting and signed by you without witnesses. Such a Will can raise many problems and should be avoided except in an emergency. The bottom line: When it comes to Wills, professional advice is well worth the cost.

The complicated nature of a will often arises due to the structure of the person's family, as opposed to the makeup of their assets. For example, in a situation where there is a second marriage or a blended family, an individual may want to leave a portion of their estate to children from their first marriage, and another portion to their new spouse.

Other examples include certain beneficiaries residing in a different jurisdiction that contain different tax regulations. Or a beneficiary has a disability and receives social assistance – receiving a lump-sum of money could cut them off

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from that assistance, so depending upon which province they live in, structuring the will so the inheritance is received in a trust (specifically a Henson trust) can ensure the money is protected while still receiving government benefits.

A lot of people make their wills more complicated than they need to be, but in general, a lack of proper planning ahead of time can make things more difficult.

Things can get tricky when you designate certain assets to specific beneficiaries. Asset values can differ from one another, they can change over time, and their after-tax value may be less than what's expected – all which complicates matters when it becomes clear that one beneficiary will receive more than the other, even if that wasn't the original intention (for example, when dividing an estate between children). Updating your will and clearly defining equal distribution can help mitigate these situations.

The correct way to create a will is to start from scratch. Avoid pre-prepared will kits. It's not that the wording in

those kits is incorrect, but rather they don't fully prepare people for what they may or may not need. This can result in a situation that becomes more complicated. Therefore, the assistance of a well-qualified lawyer – specifically one who has their Trust & Estate Practitioner (TEP) designation – in drafting your will can help to ensure your situation is being handled properly.

It's also important to plan your finances outside of your will. Work with your professional advisor to understand what the value of your estate actually is – in particular its after-income-tax value – to help you determine how to divide the estate equitably in your will.

*Disclaimer:*

*This report specifically written and published as a general source of information only, and is not intended as a solicitation for mortgage or to buy/sell specific investments or insurance, nor is it intended to provide investment advice. For more information on this topic, please contact me.*

# BANKRUPTCY AFTER DIVORCE

The break-up of a marriage or common-law relationship has certain financial ramifications for both parties, including the splitting of assets and the creation of equalization payments (support).

However, both can be financially draining on one partner (and sometimes both) and could lead to bankruptcy.

So, what happens if one of the "exes" does file for bankruptcy as a result of financial hardship following the breakdown of the relationship?

Bankruptcy basically results in the liquidation of property (houses, cars, RRSPs, etc.) in order to pay off a portion of the outstanding debt (mortgages, loans, credit cards, taxes owing, etc.).

In the event of a bankruptcy following a divorce, the equalization payment also becomes an outstanding debt and the spouse being "supported" will have to settle for a reduced payment according to the bankruptcy payment agreement. However, spousal support does get preferred status in the bankruptcy's payment distribution schedule, meaning it takes priority over other creditors such as credit cards and the amount outstanding is still payable after the claimant is

discharged from bankruptcy.

So, in a nutshell, say John is supposed to pay Jane \$1,000 a month for support and owes her \$15,000 in back support. The trustee rules that over the course of his bankruptcy, John will pay back the \$12,000 owed in the year prior to bankruptcy in addition to a percentage on the outstanding \$3,000, and when he is discharged from bankruptcy, John still has to pay Jane the outstanding balance on the \$15,000. Say John pays Jane \$13,500 over the course of his bankruptcy; he still owes her \$1,500 after he is discharged from bankruptcy. These are just examples for easy calculations and not indicative of actual payment schedules.

Now, the family home throws a wrench into the bankruptcy works. Under Canada's Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act ("BIA"), the trustee liquidates the claimant's assets to settle debts, but he can't very well do that if the spouse with custody over the children is still living in the family home.



There are two solutions: force the sale of the family home in order for the bankruptcy claimant to realize his/her share of the asset's value, or facilitate the sale of the claimant's share in the home to the spouse receiving equalization payments. There are difficulties with either solution.

In the case of the former, provincial law may prevent the sale of the home due to the resultant financial hardship created for the child(ren)'s guardian, disruption of the child's life, the availability of suitable alternative housing in the area of residence, the employability of the sup-

ported spouse (especially if he/she is required to stay at home to care for dependents), and even because of the history of the spouse and children in the family home.

Although preferable and perhaps an easier avenue toward asset liquidation, attempting to facilitate a sale between ex-spouses is dependent on the spouse taking possession of the house being able to secure suitable financing to purchase it. Again, that depends on the employability and financial stability of the spouse.

Either way, bankruptcy does make a difficult time more difficult for both parties in the separation but in the end, the bankrupt individual has a fresh start financially, and the supported spouse receives regular support payments (as opposed to the deadbeat's "not at all").

In case if you want any help regarding debts call 416 650 5400 or visit [www.gtacredit.com](http://www.gtacredit.com) and also refer to this issue at Page 23.



# Even unintended misrepresentation has serious consequences in visa applications

Priya sponsored her parents in 2010 for permanent residence in Canada under the Family Class Parental Sponsorship program. Six years later, Priya received a letter from Canada Immigration indicating that she has met the requirements as a sponsor and her application would be transferred to the local visa office for further processing. Despite being happy to know that she qualified as a sponsor, Priya was aware that the application process would take several more years to complete and for her parents to arrive in Canada as permanent residents. Therefore, she filed a parental super visa application just recently so that her parents could visit her before their permanent resident applications are finalized.

Priya thought she did a good job preparing the application packages. She sent the forms to her parents to ensure that the information was accurate and complete before filing them.

A few weeks later she received a fairness letter from the Canadian High Commission indicating that her parents have failed to disclose a previous refusal to Germany. Having family all over the world, Priya's parents have travelled to many countries in the past. They had applied for visas and most often received them. However, there was just the one time that their visa application was refused from the German Embassy as they had inadvertently omitted to provide the invitation letter from the relative living there.



When the parents re-applied with the invitation letter, they received the visa and later travelled to Germany. This incident happened over 10 years ago. When Priya filled out the application forms for a visit to Canada for her parents, she did not remember to include the past refusal to Germany. When her parents reviewed the forms, they too did not remember the fact that there was a visa refusal to Germany albeit not recent.

Priya and her parents responded to the fairness letter indicating it was an honest mistake and that she and her parents had completely forgotten about the refusal to Germany. She went on

to explain that there was no intention to mislead the government and the German refusal should have little significance since the parents eventually received the visa. Yet, the High Commission proceeded to refuse the super visa application based on misrepresentation.

The refusal was under Section 40 of Canada's Immigration and Refugee Protection Act which states that a permanent resident or a foreign national is inadmissible for misrepresentation, among other things:

(a) for directly or indirectly misrepresenting or withholding material facts relating to a relevant matter that in-

duces or could induce an error in the administration of the Act;

The unfortunate reality of a Section 40 refusal is that the applicant remains to be inadmissible for a period of 5 years from the date of the decision, unless the matter is judicially reviewed.

Therefore, it is not only the super visa application that is refused for Priya's parents, the Section 40 refusal has a direct and a negative impact on their permanent resident application as the parents now come under the 5-year inadmissibility period.

Therefore the importance of carefully preparing the application packages cannot be emphasized enough to avoid being in situations similar to that of Priya's. There is a thin line between intentional and unintentional misrepresentation. As such, proving one's innocence, once the misrepresentation happens is somewhat difficult. Even the case law available appears to mostly support the government's position.

**Shani**

**Hanwella**

Registered Canadian Immigration Consultant

Former Visa Officer, Canadian High Commission,

Colombo, Sri Lanka

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## Career Advice for New Graduates

By Vithu Ganesanathan

Energy Engineer-in-Training at 3M Canada Company, Brockville, Ontario

Find your passion:

When passion drives your daily work activities, work honestly feels effortless. I can attest to this. You will lose track of time and become lost in the minutiae of your craft. As your thoughts flood with creative ideas and strategies, you will have a hard time sleeping. Yet, you'll wake up feeling refreshed.

I'm fortunate to wake up every day with this drive. It's the result of a few things: my day-to-day activities, the support I receive from my team, and a manager that understands your interests and needs. I've put in the time and remained persistent to develop this supporting environment. It didn't happen overnight.

In certain industries, there's an oversupply of graduates in today's market. Thus, a college/undergraduate

degree is no longer sufficient to remain competitive. Many students graduate with co-op experiences that are specific to their field. Others have already developed strong networks within the industry.

I was there at one point – the reoccurring feeling of being helpless and lost. Most days were spent re-writing my resume/covering letter for job applications, practicing mock interviews, and seeking tips from friends who've already secured jobs. From that experience, I realized universities do an extremely poor job of preparing students for the real world. I've been to multiple resume/interview workshops offered at school and wrote 100's of job applications. Guidance counselors do their best but their "cookie-cutter" approach to applying for jobs doesn't help you stand out within an eager group of new grads.

If you're blindly applying to anything that you are qualified to do – stop! Take a moment and step back. Evalu-

ate yourself. Figure out what skills you have that is unique. What can you do better than most people in your field? This is where things get interesting.

I tried this activity and realized my strengths are of the creative type. I'm intrigued by how the human mind engages with shapes, colour and patterns. At an early age, I was fascinated by our ability to communicate through images. In my years before university, I spent hours at a time drawing, experimenting with Photoshop, and creating miniature models. I would get lost in these activities and not realize 7-8 hours go by.

Although I work in an engineering group where this type of thinking isn't often used, I've figured out how I can harness this interest to add value to my team. I use this creative mindset to develop project ideas, communication strategy, and high-level thinking.

These are 3 things I'd encourage you to do right now to help you find your passion:

1. Join the organization that all the top experts in your field are part of.

2. Seek multiple mentors (emphasis on multiple).

3. Understand what you are good at and build off this.

Feel free to reach out to me if you have any questions. I know how tough the job market can be for new graduates and I'm happy to help.

On LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/vithuganesanathan>



VithuGanesanathan



# An Open Letter to All Members of Parliament and Minister of Finance

September 20, 2017

Dear Members of Parliament and Minister of Finance,

Re: Tax Changes for Private Business Proposals

I am a CPA practicing in Ontario, and live in Scarborough Agincourt riding. I'm writing concerning the July 18, 2017 tax proposals for private business and business owners.

I have now had the opportunity to study the proposals in detail, and to attend a seminar which illustrated the implications of the proposals.

I am very concerned that these proposals are wrong conceptually in many aspects, and will bring harm to the Canadian economy. These proposals need to be reconsidered. A meaningful process of consultation needs to begin.

More specifically, I have the following concerns about the proposals but please note that this is NOT based on political parties such as the Liberals or Conservatives but based on policies only:

1. It was stated that nobody will be affected who makes under \$73,000. Examples I have seen do not support this claim. It was explained to me that a dividend received by an individual who fails the "reasonableness test" will be taxed at the top tax rate, regardless of that person's income or the family's income. Accordingly, it seems obvious to me that the proposals apply, regardless of a family's level of income. So, the \$73,000 threshold seems to be without justification. I am also concerned that this will affect many of my clients, some in a drastic way, increasing their tax liability very significantly and very disproportionately to the rest of the population.

2. I have gone through the examples provided by Department of Finance's document ("tax planning using private corporations") and identified that these rules create double taxation (please refer pages 44 and 46 of the document). The same amount or the same value is taxed twice. Under the proposals, a total tax of 72% can occur when the value in a corporation is passed down to the heirs and the amount is withdrawn. Other examples show that the tax rate could reach as high as 90%. I believe that double taxation is wrong, and that the top personal tax rate is already very high. There is no reason why a person should have to pay a rate of tax of more than the top personal tax rate, whether it is directly or indirectly, and regardless of the circumstances.

3. One of the most troubling aspects of the proposals is that they create a significant bias in favour of selling a business to an outside party rather than passing the business onto family members. I have seen an example where the tax on selling the business to family members is 45%,

whereas if sold to an unrelated person, the tax would instead be around 27%. In addition, because the capital gains exemption can be claimed in the latter case, this creates an even bigger bias. In fact, due to the capital gains exemption, the tax could in fact be close to 0% on a sale to an unrelated person.

4. I am concerned about the complexity of these proposals which seems unwarranted especially when targeted at small business. As per Department of Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada, 70% of the employees are employed by small businesses and they are the engine of the Canadian Economy. The rules for private business and business owners are already unduly complicated, and I know this because I deal with these matters on a daily basis.

5. I am concerned about the uncertainty which will result from applying a "reasonableness test" to the taxation of dividends received by private business owners. This will require me to exercise judgment as to reasonableness of overall compensation for large numbers of my clients. This will involve great difficulty, a large amount of time and effort and hence a commensurate cost. There will be considerable uncertainty. It can be anticipated that the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA), charged with administering these proposals, will struggle with the same difficulties. The cost of compliance will be significant, for taxpayers, professional advisors, and CRA alike.

It is foreseeable that there will be large areas of disagreement, and this may result in unprecedented litigation, on top of a tax system which is already severely backlogged at the appeals level. Taxpayers have a right to a level of certainty in their tax affairs, particularly when making a bona fide attempt to comply with all relevant tax rules.

6. I am concerned about the underlying philosophy of comparing a business owner to an employee, on the basis that the tax treatment should be roughly the same. This seems to be fundamental to the proposals, in that both groups should be treated equally.

However, their circumstances are not the same, and there are numerous economic and tax benefits which an employee can obtain which a business owner does not. The tax treatment of stock options is one example of very different tax treatment.

Unemployment insurance and the rights to severance are examples of fiscal inequality.

Instead, I believe that the tax system should treat taxpayers appropriate to their circumstances, in a way which is fair and balanced. It is clear to me that this does not necessarily mean that all

taxpayers should be treated equally.

7. I am concerned that the government is promoting these proposals as furthering "fairness" to the so-called middle class, which is a term which has never been defined. If it were defined, it would be clear that these proposals will affect large numbers of the so-called middle class, and not just the very wealthiest of Canadian taxpayers. More fundamentally, I believe that the government should appropriately represent the legitimate interests of all Canadians, regardless of the level of income or wealth. These proposals unfairly target a specific segment of Canadians.

8. I am concerned that the proposals have been portrayed as being necessary to close so-called loopholes. I take offence to the suggestion that large numbers of private business owners are exploiting loopholes. Whatever advantages private business owners derive from the current rules of the Canadian tax system are a result of deliberate government policies and policy choices which have evolved over decades. It has been said that tax incentives are there to be used, provided their use complies with the requirements of the tax system. If tax changes are needed, so be it. However, to portray these as loopholes, when they are legal, and created by government policy in the first place, is wrong and insulting.

9. I am concerned that if tax changes of this magnitude, which are hardly "small tweaks", are to be introduced, they should be introduced gradually and only after they have been fully studied. The 75 day consultation period, which began in the heart of the summer, is completely inadequate for changes of this magnitude. Many of the proposals contain an effective date of July 18, 2017, the date that the proposals were announced. There is very little in the way of transitional rules to eliminate retroactive application. Even more importantly, like all responsible Canadian families, business owners plan their financial expenditures and financial arrangements over many years.

I understand from various studies that taxation is the largest expenditure of Canadian families already. To dramatically increase this level of taxation with, in some cases, retroactive effect, and in other aspects from 2018 onwards, is irresponsible.

10. I am also concerned that the rules inappropriately target certain businesses more severely in terms of how the reasonableness test is applied. For example, businesses which primarily earn rental income from real property or royalty income, do not allow any account to be taken for the labour and effort of the business owners. This is unfair, and violates the proposition behind the rules that tax-



payers should be treated equally.

11. I am also concerned that taxpayers who are unrelated, who collectively own a business are treated differently to family members in equal circumstances. Indeed, a person who invests in a private corporation through a private equity fund would seem to gain an advantage over a family member in equivalent circumstances, and this difference is not adequately answered by applying a reasonableness test. In addition the rules apply to persons who are related but live in different households. For example, they apply to two brothers who own a corporation together, even though they do not split their income. This does not seem fair to me.

12. Business families have only a limited capacity to pay income tax, particularly in the case of smaller private businesses. The resources of these families are limited. If these families have to pay significantly more in income tax, as would be the case under the proposals, this will not come without other economic effects, whether it be a downsizing of the business, lower disposable income to spend, or a delay in plans to expand the business including deferring of investment or hiring decisions.

For the reasons given above, it is my view that these proposals need to be rethought in many aspects, and should be deferred for further study, with involvement from all interested parties, in an open and transparent way. The consultation period should be extended, and the rules should be deferred for at least two years. Changes should be implemented gradually with appropriate transitional rules.

Yours very truly,

**Emil Alphonsus, CA, CPA, CGA**

**Emil Alphonsus has more than 20 years of experience in public accounting. He gained this valuable experience from small to large accounting firms; PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) - Singapore, Fruitman Kates LLP, Fuller Landau LLP and Deloitte. He has been in practice since 2008 with Alphonsus & Associates P.C.**





## Monsoon Kitchen



### GENIE SISTERS SAMAYAL SANTHAI

Welcome to our recipe corner! We sisters will entice you with recipes that we have fallen in love with and teach you a little Tamil along the way, as all the ingredients will have their Tamil names. Both of us love to cook and we have developed very different styles. Niranjini has a very refined palate and cooks more contemporary world cuisine with an Asian touch. Rajini is a seasoned homemaker who loves making traditional dishes for her friends and family. Follow us on Instagram: @ninja eats food and @tamil\_food

*Eat more, learn more!*

Sisters Niranjini Thirunesan and Rajini Nathan are both food enthusiasts from England.

Niranjini, who lives in London, has a degree in Human Biology and is a trained chef. She makes it her business to know everything about what she eats, from nutritional value to source producers. Follow her food obsession on Instagram @ninja eats food.

Rajini, lives in Toronto and has a background in psychology. Her speciality is in Tamil food from around the world, catch up on her meal ideas on Instagram @tamil\_food.

### PUMPKIN SAMBHAR

When October approaches, suddenly all the houses adorn themselves with fall leaves and pumpkins. What about the food? There's only so much pumpkin spice latte and pumpkin pie a person can take – but no one can resist our version of a pumpkin sambhar.

#### Ingredients:

- 2 cups red split lentils
- 3 garlic cloves, smashed
- Pinch of curry leaves
- Salt (to taste)
- Handful of small onions, leave whole and peeled
- $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp turmeric
- $\frac{1}{4}$  tsp fenugreek seeds
- $\frac{1}{4}$  tsp mustard seeds
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cumin seeds
- Pinch of asafoetida
- 2 tbsp sambhar powder, adjust to taste
- 1 tomato, chopped
- $\frac{1}{4}$  of a small pumpkin, cubed
- 1 small stick of cinnamon
- 2 tbsp gingelly oil
- $\frac{1}{4}$  tsp Kashmiri chilli powder (optional)

#### Method:

In a pan, add the gingelly oil followed by cinnamon. Let that fry for a minute, then add the cubed pumpkin, salt and Kashmiri chilli powder (if using). Let this cook, whilst gently stirring it until pumpkin is cooked all the way through. If it sticks to the pan, add a little bit of water to loosen it up around the sides.

Simultaneously, wash the lentils and add enough water to cook (typically 1:2 ratio lentils:water). Add the garlic, turmeric, fenugreek seeds and salt to the lentils and let it cook. Once the pumpkin and lentils are cooked, set the pumpkin to one side. To the cooked lentils, add the chopped tomato, sambhar



powder and let it cook for another 10 minutes. Add water if it is too dry and check for salt. Add the cooked pumpkin to the sambhar mix and gently fold. Temper the curry leaves, mustard seeds, cumin seeds, small onions and asafoetida in a little more gingelly oil and add to sambhar. Mix well and enjoy hot!

Try making this recipe this month and do hashtag #monsoonjournal on Instagram and send us your pics, comments and feedback. Spread the love (and recipe)!

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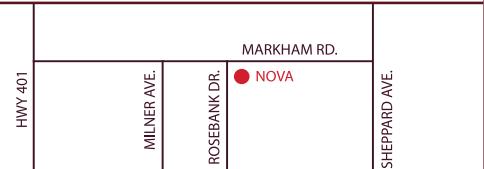
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**SHANI HANWELLA**

Registered Canadian Immigration Consultant/CEO,  
Former Visa Officer, Canadian High Commission,  
Colombo, Sri Lanka

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# Rising Scholars of Canada

*"ignite your passion"*

Congratulations to the winners of the 3rd Annual Speech Competition  
Organized by Aparna B. Srikanthan

## Primary:

### 1st Place



Diya Deepak  
"Importance of Hardwork"

### 2nd Place



Mayuresan Thayanathan  
"Happiness"

### 3rd Place



Kevin John  
"Global Warming"

## Junior:

### 1st Place



Lucksana Sivakumar  
"Immigrant Difficulties"

### 2nd Place



Sahari Sivakumaran  
"Gender Equality"

### 3rd Place



Nirja Sadurmurugan  
"Dream Big"

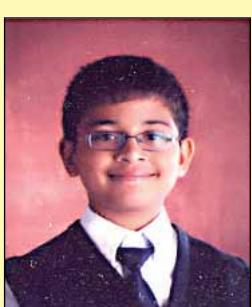
## Intermediate:

### 1st Place



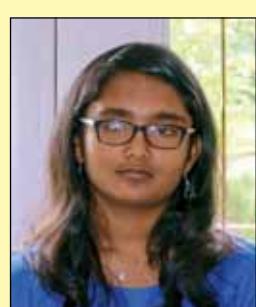
Thamirah Thiruchselvam  
"Body Image"

### 2nd Place



Sreesa Virinchi  
"Minimalism"

### 3rd Place



Vibooshitha Thusyanthan  
"Education System"

## High School:

### 1st Place



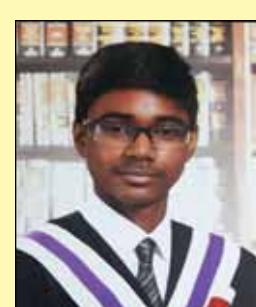
Rieyanna Rajendran  
"Canada"

### 2nd Place



Linojah Mahendran  
"Importance of Education"

### 3rd Place



Abishake Sivakumar  
"Global Issues"



Panel of judges



Winners of 2017 Speech Competition



Master of Ceremonies



Aparna B. Srikanthan, Director of RSC



Councillor Shan Congratulating Ms. Srikanthan



Councillor Neethan Shan, Chief Guest of Honour

**This Community Event was Sponsored by WEFCI**

For more information about RSC'S Debate Team and other Free Community Events

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# Community Watch Pictorial

Photo Courtesy: Charles Deva &amp; Selfie Moment of Event



CTCC Quarterly Meeting – Vice President Shalini Sathyam addressing the members



CTCC Quarterly Meeting – Saravana Bhavan owner Ganesan Sugumar &amp; Director Jeykanthan



CTCC Quarterly Meeting – President Ajith Sabaratnam &amp; Director Vilosan Sivatharman



CTCC Business Forum – Panelists at the Forum: Emil Alphonsus, CA, CPA, CGA, Alphonsus &amp; Associates Chartered Accountants, Elliot Hughes, Deputy Director - Tax Policy, Office of the Minister of Finance, Lorena Boda, CPA, CA, CPA (Illinois), MTax, Manager - Domestic Corporate Tax, Grant Thornton LLP



CTCC Business Forum – Chartered Accountant Emil Alphonsus addressing the guests



Chithrageetham – South Indian Playback singer Chithra singing at the Musical Event raising funds for Autism



Santhiyaragam Villa Karuna Event – Villa Karuna CEO Indrani Nagenthiram &amp; Charles Deva, Editor "Tamil Mirror"



Santhiyaragam – Chief Guest Mr. Muthulingam lighting the traditional oil lamp



Marutham Event – Sivan Ilango lighting the oil lamp

## Navaratri 2017 in Toronto

Lakshmi & Shan have been celebrating Navaratri Pooja for the past 20 yrs. It is one of the traditions continued with devotion, dedication and love. Lukshmi says that Navaratri festival is close to her heart. Picture taken recently at Lakshmi Pooja with their daughter Vyshnavi with the Kolu display at their Scarborough Home.





# CTHA helps build a Community Centre at Pavatkodichchenai, Sri Lanka East

By: Shana Thuray

Friday, September 15, 2017: Pavatkodichchenai is a small remote village in the Mannunai District, Batticaloa. As my husband and I were heading out to check out the building project, we noticed how the paved roads slowly turned into the gravel roads and then into mud roads.

On the way there were many paddy fields, and as we grew closer to Pavatkodichchenai building site, there were many wild vegetations and trees, along with many birds adding music to the air. Villagers looked on curious to see strangers in jeans and sunglasses. Soon we stopped at the preschool, a one room building with a damaged roof and a toilet with no door or water.

Inside the building, there was more life, beautiful pictures were drawn on the wall, and the teacher seemed to have some good ideas posted around the class. Hanging on one side of the wall was a place for homemade school cloth bags, each had a child's photograph; a fantastic idea to help student identify their bags. I suggested also adding their names, so they could start to recognize their name and automatically memorize the spelling and the letter formations. The students were learning numbers, and the teacher had well illustrated and spelled out the numbers on a whiteboard, which was donated to their school.

It was a good environment; however, there were a very low number of children at the school. There was supposed to be 37 children present but only 9 were at the school that day. The teacher said because it was a Friday, a few parents don't bring their child but instead go to the temple. The teacher also expressed many children have a difficult time getting to the school because it is a long walk from their homes. At the most the teacher expressed that only 20 children will be present every day. There is a short



cut, but it's not safe because sometimes wild elephants come into the village. I believe that parents still are not aware of importance of education. This has to change.

Keeping all these various factors in mind, the members of CTHA along with the aid of Helping Hands, an organization in Batticaloa, have chosen a more convenient location to build the community centre. The location is close to a government school and closer for the villagers to walk their children to school. It would also be easier to drop the children along with siblings, or for the preschool students to walk along with other school children to come to the preschool location.

We are hoping that this relocation of the preschool would allow for a higher attendance rate. Also, the other facilities like the medical & sports facility would add more support for the villagers in progressing their life.

## Shana Thuray

Shana Thuray, having completed her B.A. in Social Development Studies from University of Waterloo and M.A. in Child Study and Education from University of Toronto, also completed many international assignments; and her last appointment was a Teaching position at Sai School in Toronto.

She is currently in Batticaloa, Sri Lanka, volunteering for one year from Aug 2017 with Canadian Tamils' Humanitarian Association and working with children in the district.





# BILL 148 OFFERS HOPE TO EMPLOYEES

## Ontario Poised to Strengthen Law to Protect Temporary or Contract Workers

By Uthayan Thurairajah

Ontario Labour Minister Honorable Kevin Flynn says the provincial government will make changes to encourage companies to hire people full-time. Temporary work growth is 'alarming,' and changes are coming. Minister is promising changes to legislation that will help companies "to return to the day when they hired people full time."

A Toronto Star investigation is showing how temporary agencies have boomed across the province, giving workers no job security and little training. Kristin Rushowy is Star's Queen's Park bureau reporter wrote in her article titled "Temp work growth is 'alarming' and changes are coming, says Ontario labor minister" on September 11, 2017.

### TEMPORARY WORKERS

Temporary agencies have increased by 20 percent. Lower costs and reduce responsibilities for employees are the reason for companies hire temporary workers. Companies also avoid full liability and cut their insurance premiums at the workers' compensation board.

The Ontario government's Bill 148 has passed first reading labels some concerns about temporary work, including scheduling, pay, and unionization. One area left unaddressed by the intended legislation is the fact that if a temporary worker is injured on a workplace, their agency is liable to the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board but not the workplace where they were injured. It is one of the biggest incentives for companies to use temporary help agencies.

The equal pay provision eliminates different payment for doing the same work. Research commissioned by the Ontario government found that temp workers are vulnerable and among the most "precariously employed of all workers."

NDP Leader Andrea Horwath said, "Making sure that every worker in the province is paid the same." Vic Fedeli, Ontario PC finance critic, said, "There are full-time opportunities available and that you can work in a safe environment." Temp agencies are going to exist in a different way than to utilize low wages as a way to incent employers to use their services.

### TORONTO STAR INVESTIGATION

The Star's investigative reporter Brendan Kennedy and Sara Mojtehedzadeh went undercover and published an investigation report. Minister said the Star's investigation "was a clear indication that there's a problem out there that needs to be solved." The



**Minister  
Hon. Kevin Flynn**



**Kristin Rushowy  
- Star's Reporter**



**Brendan Kennedy  
- Star's Reporter**



**Sara Mojtehedzadeh  
- Star's Reporter**



**Kim Frost  
- Director of HR-UK**

ultimate goal is to "take any financial incentive to use a temporary help agency unless it's a legitimate need." The government is trying to make it equal for somebody to hire either through an agency or as a full-time employee.

### HOPE TO CONTRACT FACULTY

The Ontario is considering changes to the province's labor & employment laws that will enhance working situations of Ontario workers. The changes are an important step forward but need to be strengthened to address the unstable work faced by Ontario's temporary or contract workers including faculty.

The expectation of the people that the universities are good employers and role models in the communities. Universities have been hiring an increased number of professors on temporary contracts, with low pay, no work security, and insufficient benefits. A survey indicates that the contract faculty has doubled at Ontario universities since 2000.

Ontario's publicly funded universities must be better employers. With some small changes, Bill 148 can ensure contract faculty receives equal pay for equal work, better job security, and fairer scheduling. Improving the treatment of contract faculty will improve the student learning experience.

It is not about giving satisfying jobs and equity. It is about investing in the future of universities by assuring all professors are encouraged so students can continue to receive a high-quality learning. With further changes to the Bill 148, the government has a unique opportunity to improve the lives of millions of workers in Ontario.

### CONTRACT FACULTY CHALLENGES

Young students and their parents plan the big move to one of Ontario's universities. They worry about budgeting for books and packing up bedrooms to make residents feel a bit more like home. What they don't worry about is who will be delivering the courses, or

how those faculties are being treated. They don't worry because they expect that universities are good employers and that their professors are fairly compensated for providing the high-quality education that is the primary mission of any university.

What they don't know is that precariously-employed contract faculty is teaching about half of the students. The contract professors are paid significantly less than their full-time colleagues for teaching the same courses. Many of whom paid on a "per course" basis, and most of whom are hired through a series of discontinuous contracts. Contract faculty earns only a fraction of what their tenured colleagues do for teaching the same classes with the same level of quality and service that we have come to expect from our universities.

Unequal pay isn't the only challenge contract faculty face. After years – sometimes even decades – of employment at the same university, most contract professors still lack basic job security and are required to re-apply for their jobs every four months. When they are given a contract, it is often at the last minute and can be canceled even after they have started teaching a class.

Ontario universities have come to rely on this highly qualified educators to maintain programs while keeping their costs as low as possible. The use of this type of employment allows universities to cut costs from their budgets and deny many faculty access to pensions or benefits.

### BILL 148 NEEDS IMPROVEMENT

Bill 148 will do little to address the inequities that exist in our universities if they are continued to be allowed to exploit precariously employed contract

professors. Bill 148 includes loophole language that will enable our universities to continue to pay one group of educators far less than their colleagues for doing the same work. It also does nothing to limit the use of discontinuous and sequential contracts, ensuring that most contract faculty in Ontario will still have to reapply for their jobs every four months.

Our MPPs need to know that the exploitation of these highly-educated and highly-qualified individuals must come to an end. With the right changes, Bill 148 can bring fairness to contract faculty and better jobs to thousands of workers across Ontario.

### BULLYING & HARASSMENT

Kim Frost, chair universities HR association (UK), indicated that no-one should hurt in silence and many kinds of help available from employee helplines to clear policies on unacceptable behavior. He says: "all universities take bullying very seriously and have policies on dignity at work or bullying."

Each university needs to adopt a zero-tolerance policy to bullying and harassment, ensuring that they have appropriate methods in place to deal with it when it does occur and support those who are bullied or harassed. Universities are first, and foremost learning communities and the principal function of education is to humanize society.

Bill 148 and the issue of Fairness speaks to all contract faculty on matters of uncertain work, wages, equity, and dignity. Universities to continue to avoid paying their contract and part-time employees equally. The author expectation is to provide additional protections for contract faculty. You may want to contact your MPPs and let them know this issues are important to us.

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Sri Lanka's Supreme Court headed by Chief Justice Priyasath Dep delivered a politically historical judgement dispelling the doubts and paranoia of some Sinhalese extremist politicians and few Buddhist Clergy surrounding the concept of a federal form of government in Sri Lanka as advocated by the Tamil National Alliance who have abandoned the demand of a separate state of Tamil Eelam which was mandated by the Tamil voters in 1977 elections by endorsing the Tamil Liberation Front's Vaddukoddai Resolution of 1976.

A private citizen Chandrasoma petitioned the Supreme Court in 2014 calling for a declaration under Article 157 A [4] of the Constitution, alleging that Ilankai Thamil Arasu Kachi [ITAK] is a political party which has its "aims and 'objects' the establishment of a separate state within the territory of

[2] Federation and confederation differ on various matters.

Confederation denotes a permanent alliance between fully sovereign and independent states, yielding to the Centre authority a controlling power for a few limited purposes, such as External and Diplomatic Relations. Central government acts upon the States and not on citizens.

In a Federal Form of Government the allied states form a Union [eg. USA] with quasi sovereignty with respect to administration of their purely local concerns, with Central Government possessing both external and internal sovereignty, with Central Power erected into a true National government, and National Affairs directed and its effects felt not by the separate states deliberating as ones, but by the people of all, in their collective capacity "as citizens of the Nation."

as a people and as a national and our entitlement to our right to determine our destiny to ensure self-government in the Tamil speaking North-East of the country within a united and undivided Sri Lanka."

The petitioner alleged that "self-determination involves attaining an independent state or reciprocally, if the people asserting self-determination freely choose to remain as part of another state, they retain the right to secede at their will, because the only reliable way for a people to fully control their political status, as well as their economic, social and cultural development is in an independent state. Therefore the right to secede is an integral component of the right to self-determination."

The right to secession based on self-determination and International Law arises in the following circumstances

of Justice [Judge Canbada Trindao] laid down two dimensions of the right of self-determination – one Internal and the other External as developed by Contemporary International Law.

[a] Internal refers to the right of every people to be free from any foreign domination.

The external self-determination refers to the right of every people to choose their destiny in accordance with their own will, if necessary – in case of systematic oppression and subjugation against their own government.

Thus the International Law is as now developed and evolved to legitimise the right of self-determination of people who are subject to unequal and discriminating treatment from their own government. Hence this right is fully applicable and exercisable by the Tamils who have been at the receiving end since Independence in 1948 from

# SRI LANKA'S SUPREME COURT DISPELS THE DOUBTS AND HOLDS FEDERATION IS NOT SEPARATION

Sri Lanka. ITAK's objective is to establish political, economic and cultural liberation of Tamil speaking people by forming a autonomous Tamil government and autonomous Muslim government as part of united Sri Lanka in accordance with the principle of self-determination stating that "there will be a full guarantee in regards to religion, language rights and fundamental rights for the minorities residing in the states which will be connected."

The petitioner contended that the ITAK and its members have violated the provisions of Article 5 of Sixth Amendment to the constitution and violating the declaration issued under Article 4 of Sixth Amendment, all provisions falling under Article 157A of the Constitution. The Sixth Amendment in brief prohibits any person, organization or party promoting a separate state in Sri Lanka.

It is relevant to view the article below written by the writer

## Sri Lanka's Sixth Amendment: a Violation of UN Charter

<https://www.colombotelegraph.com/index.php/sri-lankas-sixth-amendment-a-violation-of-un-charter/>

The petitioner's main contention is that the ITAK when considering its "aims and 'objectives', it is only seeking a 'confederation' form of government which connotes the unity of two separate states, instead of a 'federal form of Government."

The court unanimously among other matters made the following decisions;

[1] "Samasti" [Federal Form] does not mean Confederation. "Samasti" and "Inaippatchi" [United] means the same concept.

It is to be noted that the Black's Law Dictionary 6th Edition [P-611] defines Federal Form of Government as follows:

"The system of government administered in a nation formed by the Union or Confederation of several Independent States."

Former Chief Justice Sarvananda, defined "Federalism as merely a distribution of sovereign powers between the units and the Centre" unlike in a Unitary State where sovereignty is undivided."

The essential qualities of a unitary state are:-

- [a] The supremacy of the Central Parliament
- [b] Absence of a subsidiary sovereign bodies
- [c] Powers of the Central Government are unrestricted
- [d] Subsidiary bodies that may exist can be abolished at the discretion of the Centre.

It is to be noted that the ITAK in its Affidavit dated 16-09-2014 has stated under oath that "it is axiomatic that neither the ITAK nor the TNA can be said to have as its aims and/or objects the establishment of a separate state within the territory of Sri Lanka".

The Election Manifesto of TNA in 2013 and in 2015 under the heading "Tamil people and the present constitutional arrangements" mentions its position as follows:

"We are as a people are thus concerned about our historical habitats, our collective rights that accrue to us

By: Thambu Kanagasabai, LLM [Lond.] FCII

Former Lecturer in Law, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka.  
President: Tamil Canadian Elders for Human Rights Organization



as stated by the Canadian Supreme Court in the case

"SECESSION OF QUEBEC PROVINCE IN 1998"

[i] Where a "people" is governed as a part of colonial empire.

[ii] Where a "people" is subject to alien subjugation, domination or exploitation.

[iii] Where a "people" is denied any meaningful exercise of its rights of self-determination within the state of which it forms part.

[iv] In other circumstances, people, are expected to achieve self-determination within the framework of their existing state.

The Kosovo Advisory opinion – 2010 delivered by the International Court

the British.

The Judge concluded that "In the current evolution of International law, International practice [of states and of International organizations] provides support for the exercise of self-determination by people under permanent adversity or systematic repression, beyond the traditional confines of the historical process of de-colonization. Contemporary International Law is no longer insensitive to patterns of systematic oppression and subjugation"

The following remarks of the Sri Lanka's Supreme Court are confusing and appear to be blurring the distinction between a Unitary form of Government and Federal form of Government.

It says:-



"In a unitary state if more powers are given to the units, it could be considered as a Federal State. Similarly in a Federal state if the centre is powerful and the power is concentrated in the centre it could be considered as a unitary state"

#### Oxford Dictionary Defines:

"Federal form of government as a system of government in which power is divided between a central government and several regional ones"

"Unitary form of Government as a system of government in which the powers of the separate constituent parts are vested in a central body"

The essential features of a federal state as defined and accepted according to norms of International Law and practice is the existence of several independent states with quasi sovereignty over pure local affairs and concerns, with centre possessing the external and internal sovereignty.

On the contrary, in a unitary state the center may devolve some powers to units, but with its powers unrestricted, it has even the powers to abolish those units at any time at its discretion.

According to Sri Lankan Constitution, the Government has the powers to abolish the Provincial Councils even if they possess wider devolved powers from the centre. Hence it could not be considered as a Federal State as commented by the Supreme Court as in a unitary state there is no sharing of sovereignty with the centre.

The Tamil National Alliance in its manifesto is calling for a Federal form of Government under a united Sri Lanka and not under a unitary Sri Lanka. What is called for is a Federal form with shared sovereignty over various local concerns and affairs/and functioning as a semi-autonomous unit within a united and undivided Sri Lanka, thus ruling out a separate sovereign and fully independent state. United denotes 'joining together for a common purpose'. This implies a union with the centre for prescribed purposes like external matters Example:- Defence, Security, Railways, and Custom etc.

All in all the demand for a federal state within a united and undivided Sri Lanka is justifiable and practicable as found in USA, Switzerland and Australia.

Another matter which was discussed by the Supreme Court was the right of Self-determination as laid down in the UN Covenants in 1966, International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and International covenant on Economic, Social and cultural Rights under Article 1, which states as follows:-

"All people have the right of self-determination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their eco-

nomic, social and cultural developments."

Though the first respondent emphasized the right of self-determination for the people [Tamil people] inside the country for their benefit, the court has not discussed this right and its applicability for Tamils, though the Contemporary International practice and law clearly allows this right for the Tamils on the grounds of discrimination, subjugation and systematic policy and agenda of marginalisation and commission of war crimes, crimes against humanity amounting to GENOCIDE as exposed by several UN Rapporteurs who visited Sri Lanka after the war in 2009.

Refer this article by the writer which explains in detail the legal aspects and legitimacy for self-determination:

#### Historical, Political & Legal Justification of Tamils' Right to Self-Determination

<https://www.colombotelegraph.com/index.php/historical-political-legal-justification-of-tamils-right-to-self-determination/>

It has to be stated that the ITAK is not advocating for Federal form of Government by devolving more powers to the provinces within one framework of a unitary state, but only within a united and undivided Sri Lanka.

A Federal system of Government functions with different characteristics and it cannot function under a unitary Government where the centre is vested with full sovereignty and controls over a unit or units like the Provincial councils. They are defined, accepted and practised as entirely two different systems of Government. The Supreme Court appears to have omitted to pinpoint the ITAK's demand for a Federal Form within a united Sri Lanka. Instead it has substituted the word 'unitary' which is at variance with the scope and definition of a united Sri Lanka.

However, the court has clearly stated that Federation does not imply the formation of a separate state, fully sovereign, independent and free from any control by the centre and Federation neither implies separation or secession.

However, It is to be noted that the court in the concluding paragraph has stated clearly that "It is established that the ITAK supports or advocates the establishment of a federal state within the united Sri Lanka" which is contradicting the preceding statement that "ITAK's advocating for a federalist form of government by devolving more powers within a unitary government". Obviously this does not constitute a federal form of government as each stands uniquely with characteristics and functions of their own as defined and practised according to accepted International

Laws and norms.

It therefore lies on TNA's shoulders to carry forward their agitation for a federal form of government as pledged in their manifesto while enlightening the public particularly the people and politicians in the south, citing this judgement to dispel the doubts and mistaken beliefs and suspicions prevailing in the south who have been fed to believe that federalism will lead to separation.

TNA also has the added burden and responsibility to agitate for the right of self-determination allowed in the UN Covenant of 1966 Article 1. This right exists for the Tamils who qualify as a 'People' as mentioned in the said Article.

It is to be noted that the Bandaranayaka-Chelvanayagam Pact of 1967 and Indo-Ceylon Accord of 1987 have recognised the historical habitat of Tamils as "people in the Northern and Eastern Provinces,

It thus falls on the shoulders of TNA to discharge their responsibilities and stand firm in the fulfilment of their commitments as mentioned in their election manifesto. Any shirking or compromising the pledges for concessions instead of rights, will only pave the way for the extinction of Tamils through assimilation, and TNA recording its political blunder in history as betrayers of trust and killing the aspiration of Tamils;

For the sake of clarity, a short definition of the following terms is as follows:-

#### UNITARY FORM OF GOVERNMENT

A system of Government in which the powers of the separate constituent parts are vested in a central body.

#### FEDERAL FORM OF GOVERNMENT;

A system of Government in which powers is divided between a central Government and several regional ones possessing quasi -sovereignty.

#### CONFEDERATION:

A union of alliance of countries, peoples, states fully sovereign and independent.

#### UNITED;

Joining politically as separate units:

In the light of this politically significant judgement which is impacting all the communities in Sri Lanka, the Sri Lankan Government must not miss this rare and final opportunity to adopt a Federal System of Government and once and for all settle the ethnic problems and march towards building a peaceful and prosperous united Sri Lanka.

**Failing to do so will only keep the communal fire burning and later exploding while paving way for international interventions and even resorting to external self-determination leading to secession at a future time.**

## For want of love, the beard is gone



Hai! You tall bearded Jonny,  
Your beard looks so funny.  
Tell us, why absurd; thy beard?  
So that your opinion is heard.  
The secret of my long journey;  
Is in search of darling Bunney.  
She is slim, tall and fair  
And was in our home, there.

We were in want of money  
Make life as sweet as honey.  
Now the sweet damsel missing  
The time we should be soothing.  
Am hurt, worried and broken hearted  
To hear all wild talks, flabbergasted.  
O! God, find me my darling  
Without her I will not be living.

That's why I neglected my beard,  
Which I nursed, brushed and cared.  
My friends say; it was enticing  
Even she said it is charming.  
My love is lost, my life is gone,  
I think, I should not have born.  
That's why my beard looks funny  
All because of my loving Bunny.

- Kingsley



## THE HINDU TEMPLE SOCIETY OF CANADA

### Richmond Hill Ganesha Temple

BY: **KIDAMBI RAJ,**  
MEMBER, BOARD OF TRUSTEES

# PERUMAL BRAHMOTSAVAM

Sep. 04 – Sep. 13, 2017

The Annual Brahmotsavam festival for Lord Srinivasa, started on Tuesday August 16th with an elaborate Homam and religious rituals to bring good health and prosperity to all the devotees and the community at large. Next day, the Kodi Ettram (raising the flag of the Deity), marking the main beginning of the festival took place.

There were special Nava Kalasa (nine vessels) Abhishekham, Yaga Puja, Vasantham Mandapa Puja followed by procession of the Utsava idol (miniature idol) of the Deity with exquisite and beautiful decoration and seated on a different Vahana and

taken around inside the temple to the accompaniment of traditional Nadaswaram and Mirdangam music for the remaining days of the festival.

The most eagerly awaited event to the devotees, the Thaere (chariot) festival took place on Wednesday, August 24th with a very large crowd of devotees. For the Thaere festival, after doing full puja to the utsava idol inside, it is brought out and placed on the Thaere. Then hundreds of devotees pulled Thaere around the temple in a clock-wise direction, with stops at all eight direction for Aarathi. This event

is something that everyone should see for themselves to see how dedicated and committed devotees in several hundreds take turns and pull the thaere around the temple. The other equally well anticipated and attended event is the "Poongavana Utsavam and Thiru kalyanam" which is always sponsored by all the volunteers who had spent enormous amount of their time from a week before the start of the festival to make it a grand success.

*Seen here are few pictures of this festival.*



## THE HINDU TEMPLE SOCIETY OF CANADA

Richmond Hill Ganesha Temple

## NAVARATRI, SARASWATI PUJA &amp; VIJAYADASAMI

Sep. 20 – Sep. 29, 2017

BY: KIDAMBI RAJ, MEMBER, BOARD OF TRUSTEES

## ABOUT NAVARATRI

According to some Hindu, Navaratri falls four times a year. Of these, the *Sharada* (Autumn) Navaratri near autumn equinox (September–October) is the most celebrated, and the *Vasantha* (Spring) Navaratri near spring equinox (March–April) is next most significant to the culture of Indian subcontinent. In all cases, Navaratri falls in the bright half of the Hindu luni-solar months. The celebrations vary by region, leaving much to the creativity and preferences of the Hindu.

The other two Navaratri are minor and observed regionally or by individuals: 1. *Magha Navaratri*: in Magha (January–February), winter season. The fifth day of this festival is often independently observed as Vasantha Panchami, the official start of spring in the Hindu tradition wherein goddess Saraswathi is revered through arts, music, writing, kite flying. In some regions, the Hindu god of love, Kama is revered.

2. *Ashada Navaratri*: in Ashada (June–July), start of the monsoon season.

Goddess Durga is worshipped under nine different names for the nine days of Navaratri. Every day, She assumes a new character, a new look and a new duty. The Navaratri festival is celebrated in September – October.

## First Day of Navaratri

The first form of Goddess Durga is called *Shailputri*. She is considered the daughter of the Himalayas She is a form of Shakti, the Consort of Lord Shiva.

## Second Day of Navaratri

The second form of Goddess Durga is worshipped as *Brahmacharini*. Her name is a derivative of the word 'Brahma', which means 'Tapa' or penance. She is also a form of Uma or Parvati, a form of Mata Shakti.

## Third Day of Navaratri

On the third day the Goddess is worshipped as *Chandrakanta*. She is a symbolic representation of beauty and bravery.

## Fourth Day of Navaratri

On the fourth day, the Goddess is worshipped as *Kushmunda*. It is believed that Kushmunda is the creator of the entire universe and She has created the entire Universe by her laughter.

## Fifth Day of Navaratri

On the fifth day, the form of Goddess is called *Skanda Mata*. She is called so because she is here represented as the mother of Skanda or Karthik, the chief warrior of the God's army.

## Sixth day of Navaratri

On the sixth day, the Goddess is worshipped as *Kaatyayani*. Seated on Her vehicle, Lion, Kaatyayani has three eyes and four hands.

## Seventh day of Navaratri

On the seventh day, the Goddess is worshipped as *Kalaratri*. As the name suggests, is as black as dark night. She has four hands, she is meant to make the devotees fearless.

## Eighth day of Navaratri

On the eighth day, the Goddess is worshipped as *Maha Gauri*. She is considered to be extremely beautiful, white like snow and accessorized with white coloured ornaments. She represents calmness and exhibits wisdom.

## Ninth day of Navaratri

On the ninth day, Goddess Durga is worshipped as *Siddhidatri*. It is believed that she consists of all the eight siddhis. She lives on a Lotus and is worshipped by all the Rishis, Siddhas, Sadhakas and Yogis.

## GODDESSES OF NAVARATRI

The saying behind '*Behind every successful man there is a woman*' is very true. It is the feminine energy that is behind every creation as well as destruction. The feminine sustains the universe. Dattatreya Siva Baba says that by tuning into the creative energies during Navaratri, one can prosper and be happy.



Goddess Saraswathi

Goddess Durga

Goddess Lakshmi

The Goddesses of Navaratri will bless you with health, wealth and prosperity on worshipping them with faith and devotion. Of the nine days, three days are dedicated to each of the Goddesses, helping to tap into specific, vibrant and creative life energy prevalent on those days.

- First 3 days are dedicated to **Goddess Durga**. She helps to annihilate fear and enemies from your life. She helps to dispel darkness and relives you from the clutches of negative forces.

- Next 3 days are dedicated to **Goddess Lakshmi**. She symbolizes wealth and She will bestow you with material abundance and prosperity.

- Last 3 days are dedicated to **Goddess Saraswathi**. She blesses you with knowledge and the power of thinking. This true knowledge not only helps you in your academic pursuits; but also presents to you the true purpose of human life and how to move your consciousness from form-based existence to the infinite formless.

## What's the Significance of Navaratri?

During Navaratri, we invoke the energy aspect of God in the form of the universal mother, commonly referred to as *Durga*, which literally means the remover of miseries of life. She is also referred to as *Devi* (goddess) or *Shakti* (energy or power). It is this energy, which helps God to proceed with the work of creation, preservation and destruction. In other words, you can say that God is motionless, absolutely changeless, and the Divine Mother Durga, does everything. Truly speaking, our worship of Shakti re-confirms the scientific theory that energy is imperishable. It cannot be created or destroyed. It is always there.

## Why Worship the Mother Goddess?

This energy is only a form of the Divine Mother, who is the mother of all, and all of us are Her children. "Why mother; why not father?" you may ask. It is said that God's glory, His cosmic energy, His greatness and supremacy can best be depicted as the motherhood aspect of God. Just as a child finds all these qualities in his or her mother, similarly, all of us look upon God as mother. In fact, Hinduism is the only religion in the world, which gives so much importance to the mother aspect of God because we believe that mother is the creative aspect of the absolute.

## Why the two special times a Year?

Every year the beginning of summer and the beginning of winter are two very important junctures of climatic change and solar influence. These two junctions have been chosen as the sacred opportunities for the worship of the divine power because:

1. We believe that it is the *divine power* that provides energy for the earth to move around the sun, causing the changes in the outer nature and that this divine power must be thanked for maintaining the correct balance of the universe.

puja, everyone takes the books, musical instruments etc. placed on the puja the previous day and read at least a page or two and play the musical instruments for a brief time. This day is also called as *Ayuda Puja* in Tamil Nadu, India and Sri Lanka. Almost all mechanic shops, heavy industries etc. celebrate this day. Also on this day, the 10th day, one of the dolls kept in *Kolu* is symbolically put to sleep to mark the end of the year's Navaratri *Kolu*.

Vijaya Dasami is considered a very auspicious day for starting their formal education for young kids. These are taken and back and used after puja on the Vijaya Dasami day. Children are happy since they are not expected to study on Saraswathi puja day. In all these places, this day is celebrated as *Vidya arambham* (Beginning of learning) also known as *Ezuthiniruthu or Initiation* of writing where children between two and three years old are formally initiated before they are admitted to nursery schools. The children are made to write for the first time on the rice spread in a plate with their index finger, guided by an elder member of the family or by a teacher.

## Legends

## Victory of Lord Raama over Raavana:

As per Hindu religion, on this day in the Treat Yuga, King Raama, the seventh avatar of Lord Vishnu, killed Raavana who had abducted Raama's wife Sitaa to his kingdom of Lanka. Raama, his brother Lakshmana and their follower Hanumaan and his army fought a great battle to rescue Sitaa.

Raama had performed *Chandi Homam* and invoked the blessings of Goddess Durgaa, who blessed Raama with secret knowledge of the way to kill Raavana. On the *Asvina* or *Iyppasi Sukla Dashami*, Raama defeated Raavana and rescued Sitaa. Thus it is termed as *Vijaya Dashami*. Based on the epic Raamaayanaa, Raama, Sitaa and Lakshmanaa returned to Ayodhya on the 30<sup>th</sup> day of *Asvina* or *Iyppasi* (19-20 days after Vijaya Dashami). To mark the return of Lord Raama, in the evening, the residents of Ayodhya lit their city with millions of earthen lamps (*Diyas* or *Deepas*). Since then, this day is celebrated in India as *Deepawali* or *Diwali*.

## Victory of Goddess Durga over Mahishaasura:

Some of the demons (Asuras), were very powerful and ambitious and continually tried to defeat the Devas and Gods and capture Heaven. One Asura, named Mahishasura grew very powerful and created havoc on earth. Under his leadership, the Asuras defeated the Devas. The world was crushed under Mahishasura's tyranny, the Devas joined their energies in to Shakti, a single mass of incandescent energy to kill Mahishasura.

A very powerful band of lightning emerged from the mouths of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva and a young beautiful female virgin with ten hands appeared. All the Gods gave their special weapons to her. This Shakti coalesced to form the Goddess Durga. Riding on a lion, who assisted her, Durga fought Mahishasura. The battle raged for nine days and ten nights. Finally on the tenth day of Asvina or Iyppasi Shukla paksha, Mahishasura was defeated and killed by Durga. Hence Dasha-Hara is also known as Navaratri or Durgotsavam and is a celebration of Durga's victory. Durga, as Consort of Lord Shiva, represents two forms of female energy – one mild and protective and the other fierce and destructive.



Community Watch



BY THULASI MUTTULINGAM

## 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](http://www.facebook.com/pages/Humans-of-Northern-Sri-Lanka) "Like" the page at: [www.facebook.com/pages/Humans-of-Northern-Sri-Lanka](http://www.facebook.com/pages/Humans-of-Northern-Sri-Lanka)



Like

## When two worlds collide

In Sri Lanka, we have always valued older age, whilst in the new global order, youthfulness is worshipped.

In Jaffna even now, it is customary to never address older people by their name alone. Hence the 'uncle', 'aunty', 'akka', 'anna' culture. But there are different hierarchies apart from age operating that also collide here; caste, employment designation, education.

It is not uncommon to have the office janitor or caretaker call you akka or anna, even if they are older than us. This leads to a strange nexus. Some people take offence at being called akka or anna by an older person - because that would indicate they themselves are older than they actually are. It's a fairly new problem where they are now conscious of their age too.

Yet they also take offence at not being addressed in honorific terms. They get round this in office settings (the social settings are still struggling to settle on acceptable terminology) by demanding to be addressed as 'Sir' or 'Madam'.

This accepted office protocol again clashes with international NGOs where management from Western Countries are not impressed with hierarchical honorifics and demand that everyone from the Country Director to the Caretaker address each other by name and treat each other as equals.

While I was working in an INGO, my neighbourhood was very interested to know how I was addressed at work. "Such and such relatives / friends of ours are also working at INGOs and getting addressed as 'Sir' and 'Madam' by fellow staffers there. What do they call you at work?"

Given that those were INGOs I highly doubt anyone was getting called Sir or Madam, even if based in Jaffna. And I was not about to lie about myself to join the mainstream. 'Oh, I am just addressed by my own name' I said.

"Oh, You must not be holding an important post in your office then. You should work harder and aspire better."

more was over a gorgeous baby boy I adored. I am not the kind to usually go 'Goo goo ga ga' at babies but this cutie pie was an exception. My sister and I used to kiss his hands and feet and exclaim over how perfect he was. One day, he fell out of a high chair when his parents weren't paying attention to him and hurt himself. They came over to tell us it was all our fault, because - yeah - our evil eyes all over again.

After years of having a policy of never complimenting anybody no matter what, I am only now slowly learning to compliment people again. Specifically those I trust enough not to be superstitious idiots.

It's still an uphill task though. People are likely to take offence at your not complimenting their new clothes or their new grandchild - yet it's a precarious path to take :)

## When two worlds collide III

As a fairly confident young adult who landed in Jaffna circa 2002, my world was turned upside down by different cultural norms that I had no idea were so mainstream, even though I am Jaffna Tamil myself.

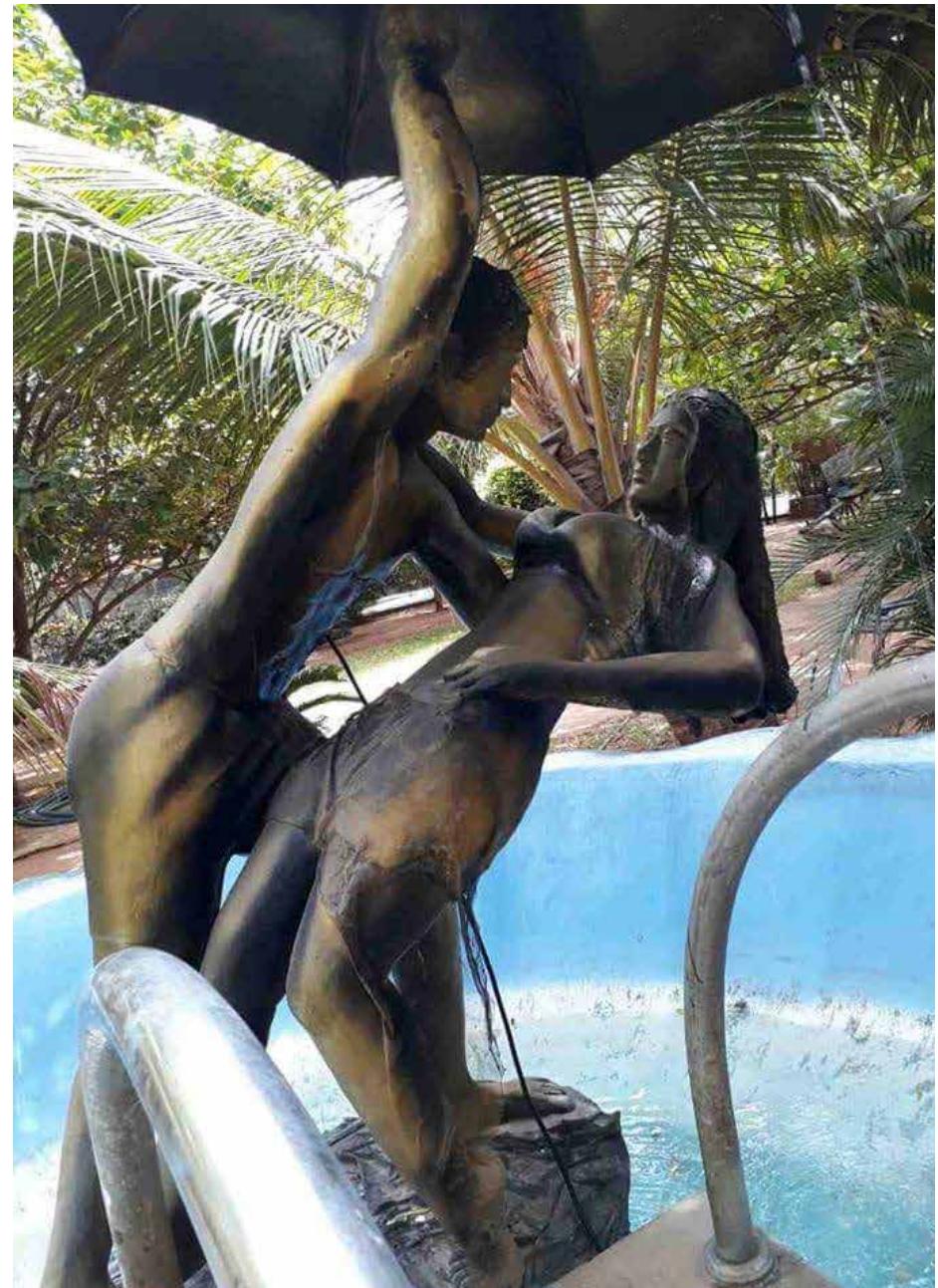
Part of these were gender expectations I would have thought died out in the middle ages.

I used to hold my head up and walk till I ran into the typical Jaffna male in their own habitat. Even if I was walking on the road minding my own business, if I happened to make eye contact with any man, they would leer lasciviously. Even worse were those whose faces twisted in disgust, as they snarled, "You slut, how dare you look into our eyes." They were unable to handle a woman with her head up, eyes direct.

I quickly learned that having my eyes downcast at a 45 degree angle had multiple uses; it conformed to cultural norms so I was not singled out any more than the other women as an overconfident slut. I didn't have to see their lasciviousness directed my way either. Since quite a few of them were prone to groping, it also enabled one to see and react quickly when a male hand made its way towards one's own body. As a bonus point, it helped to avoid potholes and other troublesome stuff on the ground.

I wasn't a conscious feminist then. I was just barely 21 and learning to adapt in a hostile environment. Over time, moving about with my neck bent and eyes downcast became the norm for me.

I was in America, summer of 2012,



Sculpture of lovers at a Jaffna hotel. I don't know if their clothing and posture is culturally appropriate or not, but the umbrella sure is.



## When two worlds collide II

A common problem I face in this part of the world; whether to compliment people on something I admire about them or not?

Why?

Well, everyone loves compliments, that's a global phenomenon. But over here there's the concept of the \*Evil Eye\*

Two events gave me a paranoia about complimenting people in my adolescent years.

In the first event, a stupid woman ASKED me what I thought of her new dress, so I complimented her effusively on it. I actually didn't think much of it but ... well ... she was ASKING for a compliment...

She went and burned it with her iron the next day by putting it on too hot a setting. Yeah, I know - totally my fault.

I had to hear for days after how I had cast my evil eye over her precious dress. The other event that affected me even

before I first felt this was actually a problem. I am a product of my culture. I am not used to seeing cleavages. Everywhere I went in America though, women were wearing low cut tops for the summer and I felt myself directly gazing into cleavages all the time. I was irritated, before I realized - the main problem was my own downcast gaze, which gave me an eyeful of other people's torsos instead of their faces. I had to consciously raise my eyes to overcome the problem - and every time I did, was horrified to see an offended woman glaring back at me. They thought I was deliberately checking out their boobs #sigh

Ever since that experience in 2012, I have been trying to overcome the habit of having downcast eyes. It is still difficult and something I struggle with. Sometimes I catch myself looking downward, then consciously look up - yet unable to hold eye contact for long, I look down or away again. It makes people I am talking to uncomfortable and me feel gauche.

Why am I writing this to share with the world? Because I think it is important. Everyday, in so many ways, we women living in strongholds of the

patriarchy have our basic confidence in ourselves and our ability to interact with the outside world stripped from us in various ways, both insidious and explicit. Many people, especially men have no clue what these lived experiences can be like. I am just doing my part here to dispel some of that blindness.

## The story of the nai kutti visari (dog crazy woman):

The ongoing discussion on my post about abandoned puppies and mother dog, two posts below, got me thinking of a strange tale my mother often told us. The story of the dog crazy lady who lived as a beggar.

Later, while I boarded at a hostel in Colombo, I came to know that this was a common tale other girls from this area of Jaffna also heard growing up. The nai

kutti visari used to be famous in some of these parts but she is long dead now.

If any of you know any specific details about her, please do post here.

She was apparently a 'mad woman' who begged for a living and had a pack of dogs and puppies living with her on the streets, going about begging with her as she went from house to house. Whenever she saw abandoned puppies or dogs, she would add them to her pack. She draped her sari in such a way that there were various folds hanging hammock-like off her waist, to hold the puppies in, as she walked tirelessly over many miles.

Upon being given food to eat, she would offer it to the dogs first before eating herself. This was the evidence of her madness.

People were horrified by her. She was the bogeywoman mothers used to bring their children up with:

"If you don't study, you'll end up like the nai kutti visari."

"If you pet puppies too much, you'll end up like the nai kutti visari."

"If you behave arrogantly / talk back to others, you will end up like the nai kutti visari."

Women are always blamed for how they end up and this case was no different. There was a tale accompanying this strange, wonderfully compassionate lady, to explain why she ended up the way she did.

She apparently came from a well off household and was beautiful and accomplished in her youth. When it came time for her marriage to be arranged, her parents arranged a match for her which she did not like.

"What? Am I to marry this man? I would rather marry a dog," she had supposedly fumed in front of the prospective groom.

He got angry and got a black magician to cast a hex upon her in revenge - which is why she turned mad about dogs to the extent she did, was abandoned by her family due to the stigma of her mental illness, and so had to live as a beggar.

This is based on a true story even though the legends around her are spurious.

Such a lady really lived, and walked the streets of Jaffna some 50 years ago. Who she was or what became of her I do not know. If she had lived now, I would have loved to take her in :)

## Just came home in a 3-wheel taxi driven by a woman:

She was full of witty anecdotes on how Jaffna treats her as a woman taxi driver and how she deals with it.

One of the more serious things she said to me: "Just yesterday one man passing by as I stood by my taxi stand, sarcastically pointed me out to his companions and said I had been let loose to graze (a derogatory phrase in Tamil likening independent women to cattle let loose).

I immediately yelled out to him, whom he thought owned me and where had I grazed that infringed upon him in any way?

He was startled to have me addressing him directly. He had not expected it.

I asked her if it was a regular problem having to deal with men like that?

"Oh well, there are protective, kind men out there too. While I was yelling at that man, another who had witnessed the whole thing rushed at him threatening to hit him for insulting me thus. I had to pull him back and say that I did not want it to descend to physical violence before he relented.

Violence is not the answer but he did mean well on my account.

I just wanted to point out that if there are men who would heap abuses upon us, then there are also men who rush to our defence. Both exist."

## Today I want to talk about that four letter word ... that DIRTY word in Jaffna:

No it is not the F word.

It's what they call the L word.

Dare I spell it? It's L-O-V-E

It might seem hilarious in some circles but in the circles I move in, the concept of romance between young couples is a huge taboo.

I have observed and been disgusted for a long time, by how people speak about those in a romantic relationship. There is nothing respectful about it. Some incredibly offensive verbiage comes into usage.

And as one might expect, it is the woman in the relationship who draws most of the censure.

The boy is a stud.

The girl is a slut.

Nothing new there.

Growing up in this community hearing this offensive language continuously, I became so averse to drawing it upon myself I wouldn't even look at boys in my teenage years or even in my twenties.

There are a few of us who took this route, and now that we are on this side of secured spinsterhood, roll our eyes at subscribing to such folly - but that's another story.

Many choose to have relationships (nothing wrong with that), then perhaps to draw attention off themselves and their own dealings, make a lot of noise about others' morals.

I have been having a bird's eye view of community dealings for a long time now. If there is one thing I have learned, it is that those making the most noise about so called morals are the ones trying to drown out the rattling skeletons in their own cupboards.

People who have had extra marital

affairs all their life sneer about how a girl smiling at a boy is "a disgrace to our culture. Chik."

This kind of rank hypocrisy one would think would have become stale by now but it hasn't. If anything it keeps re-perpetuating into the next generation. Those who went behind their parents backs to hang out in abandoned houses in Jaffna - because you can't openly hang out at the ice-cream parlour - now threaten their teenage kids if they so much as look at the opposite sex. Some of them caution their friends and family not to tell said couples' own kids that their amma and appa had a 'love marriage'. That would never do.

When I landed in Jaffna, relatives teased my sister and I for our parents' love marriage. They did so because my father refused to pretend it was anything else to us (my mother probably would have liked to) - so we already knew. Only thing was some of these relatives our parents' age had had love marriages too. When they and their kids teased us, I once unwittingly said, "But didn't you have a love marriage too?"

It brought a swift negation and a private stern warning to my parents not to be free with such information with us. Their own children did not know and were never to know.

I know women - who even after the taboo romance ends acceptably - i.e. in marriage sanctioned by the parents - maintain it was not a consensual relationship. Unbelievable as it might seem, it is considered more acceptable to claim it was non-consensual coercion. Since stigma does not stick on the males, the narrative is then shifted to place all the blame of the relationship upon them.

These narratives usually come from the women whose romantic proclivities played out in so public a manner that the entire community knows and so cannot be easily hidden. It would have required both the man and woman involved in the relationship to be unusually headstrong to withstand the censure as they continued through the relationship; but once she is married, the woman feels the need to vindicate herself.

Consensual romance is deemed inappropriate on her behalf. But she can say he 'threatened' her in various ways, either to harm her family or to kill himself, which was why she gave in, like the demure, innocent, blushing bride she is.

Another popular tack is to say he gave her a spiked 'love potion' that made her behave in a way that was not herself.

I kid you not! I have heard grown grey-haired women use this excuse repeatedly.

"Oh I used to be such a demure, obedient daughter. Then this fellow started stalking me, and then he must have put something in my food or drink because then I violated all social norms and was not myself till I married him."

One of my friends whom I met in her twenties had been told this story all her life by her mother and believed it too. She very seriously said "My father apparently somehow hexed my mother into falling in love with him because she never would have otherwise." No there was nothing wrong with the father. He was a good looking gentleman with a professional job who provided for his family well. There was nothing to be ashamed of in marrying him - except for the social stigma of

having fallen in love with him before.

Because you know - if you are a truly good woman - you would have married a complete stranger arranged by your parents to marry - and then lie back and think of Eelam.

Photo caption: Sculpture of lovers at a Jaffna hotel. I don't know if their clothing and posture is culturally appropriate or not, but the umbrella sure is.

**SANGAT**



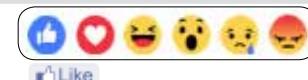
A South Asian Feminist network

**Sangat**

Sangat - the South Asian Feminist Network I am proud to be a part of.

I learned a lot about the Whys and Wherefores of how patriarchy came to be, and to rule our regions through their networking feminist course curated by Kamla Bhasin.

I am a better informed and more self-aware feminist thereby. May our tribe increase





# Community Watch

# Miracle Family Care (MFC) sails its fifth annual gift box drive to Sri Lanka

MFC was birthed after the Tsunami and since then it has been helping the victims who have been affected by the floods, war and natural disasters around the globe.

As Christmas is fast approaching, MFC volunteers worked tirelessly for the past few weeks in getting the gift boxes ready for the orphans and for the kids in low income families in Sri Lanka. Our members, their friends and relatives joined hands together with us in completing this consignment of 169 cartons through Trico Maritime Shipping Company. This is our fifth annual drive and we shipped 1,433 gift boxes and bags to kids, widows, widowers

Along with the items mentioned above, stuffed animals, shoes, materials for the sewing centre, food items for orphanages, layette sets for pregnant ladies, craft materials for children with disabilities, crutches, wheel chair, walkers, and canes were also shipped.

MFC also will feed the hungry through the "Kids Against Hunger" initiative which was launched last year. We prepared 2,222 nutritional rice pack bags to feed 13,333 meals for kids in Sri Lanka. This year, 50% was distributed to feed the Single mother's project in Nunavut and the balance 50% is being shipped to Sri Lanka.

We are proud to say that "PVH



and pregnant ladies. Each year, the numbers have been steadily increasing. Our donors' generous gifts are an investment in the well-being of some of Sri Lanka's most vulnerable people who might otherwise be overlooked. In North America, we may receive a lot of presents but there are thousands of children in Sri Lanka who have never received gifts. This is an opportunity God has given to us to bless someone and bring joy during this Christmas season.

MFC also, collected sarees, shal-wars, kids clothes, shirts, pants, etc. in excellent condition, sorted and prepared individual packages for widows. These will be distributed along with monetary funding to widows in different regions in Sri Lanka.

Canada”, “Sew on Fire Ministries,” “Kids Against Hunger Canada” and the Tamil Fest donors together with our MFC donors helped us to complete this consignment. We want to thank all of them for their continuous support.

We also encourage the community to come along side of us and be a part of this great program. If you are interested in helping, please kindly contact us at [atsherina@miraclefamily.org](mailto:atsherina@miraclefamily.org) or visit us at [www.mfcare.net](http://www.mfcare.net).

# Festival of Tamil Theatre - Arts

Review by: Kumar Punithavel

On 1st of October 2017, a grand festival of Tamil theatre-arts was held at Flato Markham Theatre under the title, 'Arangadal'. The show was organized by the management of the much acclaimed monthly Tamil news paper ThaiVeedu which is in its 15 year of operation. The news paper itself is distributed free for the readers. The organizers had taken much effort to have a flawless entertainment in two shows first at 1.30 P.M and the second at 6.30 P.M with full house.

In recognition of 'World Sight Day 2017' which falls on 12th of October, the organizers had invited Organization of Canadian Tamils with Disabilities (OCTD) to give musical entertainment. The four vocalists were Jothy Prabakaran, Vijitha Somasundaram, Srikamalan Pathmanathan and Vijitharan Kailayankirinathan who were visually impaired. The effect of the songs on the audience was captivating which could be felt from the ovation at the end of the performance. Thank you OCTD.

This was followed a dance recital titled "Engengukaninum Sakthiada" literally meaning wherever you turn it is Sakthi. Goddess Sakthi is the personification of energy and power. The dance emulated the blend of womanhood in all activities be it love, divinity, arts and caring etc. The dance was performed in Bharatha Natyam style. The dance was produced and choreographed by none other than veteran dancer Ms. Kartiga Parthiban. A big applause for the young lasses, who performed the dance 'Engengu Kaninum Sakthiada' which kept the audience mesmerized.

The third was a play titled 'Yaritta thee', meaning 'Who kindle the fire'. The play was depicting the class struggle that has been happening for ages. The struggle is continuing endlessly. The powerful ruling class is always trying to oppress the weak, and the oppressed rebelling forever. The play produced and directed by Mr. Ponniah Vivekanandan, and the three actors were A. Kandasamy, Kandasamy Kangatharan and Janakan Sivagnanam. The play carried the message till there is oppression there will be rebellion in the humanity.

The last event was a folk dance drama, based on the history of the benevolent Tamil king Paari lived two thousand years ago. His fame travelled to faraway lands. The story weaved around the jealousy ridden three emperors of the Tamil land (Chera, Chola, Pandiya Emperors) cunningly attacked king Paari and killed him. The drama was presented in authentic traditional style. I overheard someone mentioning, "Long ago what we watched seated on the paddy field dykes, under the petromax lighting, we are watching at Flato Theatre in Markham with sophisticated back stage lighting and grand sound system". Yes the performance brought back nostalgic memories to many in the audience. The dance drama was produced by Selvam Arulanantham, based on the original script by Johnson Rajkumar. Choreography was done by Regi Manuelpillai.

Thank you 'ThaiVeedu' for the lovely evening of Festival of Tamil Theatre-arts, which was enjoyed by the large turnout of spectators.



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Just in time for Diwali, CIBC is once again exclusively offering Canadians limited edition unique festive Gold and Silver coins to commemorate this year's celebration. CIBC is the only bank in Canada to offer these unique Diwali coins.

This year, CIBC is offering two exclusive coin designs: Diwali Lakshmi and Diwali Khanda. The Diwali Lakshmi coins are unique as they have Lord Ganesh and Goddess Lakshmi on one side and Om on the other side. CIBC offers this design in both a 1oz 99.99% pure (24 karat) Gold coin, and a 1oz 99.99% pure Silver coin; the 1oz silver coin is priced at \$54.95.

In addition to the Diwali Lakshmi coin, CIBC's Diwali Khanda coins are designed with the Khanda on one side and the IK Onkar on the other side. This design is available in a 10g 99.99% (24 karat) pure Gold coin, and a

1oz 99.99% pure Silver coin. The silver Diwali Khanda coin is \$59.99.

All of the Diwali coins are packaged in a beautiful black box with an attractive red cover in celebration of Diwali. In addition to our medallions, enjoy CIBC's competitive pricing on gold and silver bullion bars and coins. All of our products are of the highest industry standard; pure gold (24-karat) and pure silver at 99.99%. They are a gift to give during the Diwali season; great for family and friends of all ages. In addition to being a thoughtful gift, the coins can be a timely investment option. Over the past 10 years gold has provided positive returns.

Precious Metals purchases are tax exempt in Ontario, and therefore, HST is not payable on the purchase of any CIBC Gold and Silver coins.

Diwali and bullion products are avail-

able to order at any CIBC Banking Centre or online at [cibc.com/preciousmetals](#) for free and secure delivery to your home or to your closest CIBC Banking Centre. Place your order by October 11th so that you can receive the coins by October 19th (Diwali)\*.

This year, CIBC is gifting one lucky client with a 1 oz Gold Diwali coin\*\*. Any precious metals purchase made between October 1st to October 31st will automatically enter a client into the contest.

We have also stocked select Banking Centres with a limited supply to offer you the ability to pick up your medallion when you purchase it. Please call the banking centre in advance to ensure availability.

The coins are highly popular, and we have sold out in previous years! Coins are only available while supplies last.

Thank you and Happy Diwali!



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