

# Monsoon Journal

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## Bringing the Golden Temple experience to the Greater Toronto Area and Canada with the IN5 Experium: Golden Temple

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By Harrish Thirukumaran

“It’s a mixed reality experience on Sikhi and the Sikh religion, but also a fantastic story about Canada.” remarked Bobby Sahni about the IN5 Experium, while moderating a press conference with the producers to launch this exhibit on April 15, 2019. The IN5 Experium is a hi-tech, state-of-the-art projection technology, the exhibit is a one-of-a-kind immersive experience. The Golden Temple experience not only recreates a virtual tour of the Golden Temple, it also explores Sikh history, philosophy and way of life.

Canada is a natural place to launch this exciting, unique International tour, and the GTA is the perfect location, with its vibrant South Asian communities and multicultural mosaic. IN5 Experium: The Golden Temple is being brought to North America by PDA HaB Media, a division of Trade Fairs Pvt Ltd. — one of the foremost names in India and internationally, in the trade, exhibition and conference industry, spanning finance, airports, maritime, woodworking, health, fitness and beauty industries.

The launch event was held at Bramalea City Centre Mall in Brampton Ontario, which will be the location of the exhibit for both Sikhs and non-Sikhs to visit in order to learn deeply about the Sikhi religion and culture. It is an opportunity to bring the experience of visiting the Golden Temple in India within Canada itself.

The IN5 team, Pradeep Devaiah, the Chairman of PDA Trade Fairs Pvt. Ltd and Manikantan CEO of IN5 Experium were joined by Harinder Singh, the Co-Founder of the Sikh Research Institute and Punjab Digital Library, Inni Kaur, the CEO of SikhRI.

Contd on page 24 and 25 ...

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## Canadian Tamil Business community's entrepreneur skills showcased at CTCC Awards Gala

By Siva Sivapragasam

Most of them came to a country where both the culture & climate were different. They were uprooted from their country of origin due to the unsettled conditions and the absence of a level playing field. Over the years their hardwork & skills paved the way to climb-up the ladder of success in their chosen fields.

Contd. on page 23...



President Santha Panchalingam delivers the Presidential speech



Keynote-Speaker Roy Ratnavel delivering his speech

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# Cambridge Toyota plant secures luxury SUV line

**Starting in 2022, the Lexus NX gas and hybrid will be produced at Fountain Street facility**

CAMBRIDGE — The Toyota Cambridge plant will soon be home to another line of luxury Lexus SUVs thanks to federal and provincial funding announced last year.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, Deputy Ontario Premier Christine Elliott, and a host of local mayors and dignitaries were at the Fountain Street facility Monday afternoon to announce the plant had secured the right to make the company's Lexus NX gas and hybrid compact SUVs starting in 2022.

The news came almost a year after the federal government partnered with the province — at the time led by Kathleen Wynne and the Liberals — to each invest \$110 million in the company as part of an overall investment of \$1.4 billion by Toyota.

"The announcement that we're able to make today is because of investments we made a year ago," said Trudeau. That investment helped Toyota "think optimistically about how it can continue to produce world-class ve-



hicles ... right here in Canada."

As much of the automotive sector in the province continues to struggle with news of the General Motors plant in Oshawa shutting down in December and the Fiat Chrysler plant in Windsor cutting shifts and up to 1,500 workers in September, Trudeau said public money will always be part of the auto sector in Ontario as long as companies continue to look toward innovation and the future of the automobile, not maintaining the status quo.

"I think the question Canadians have about public money invested in any industry is are we investing in the future of the industry, or are we investing in keeping things the way they were?" he said.

Toyota used the government funds to upgrade the north plant in Cambridge and the west plant in Woodstock to aid in the production of the next generation of RAV4 crossover vehicles, including hybrids, as well as research and development over the next decade. The new RAV4 was unveiled in a ceremony at the Cambridge north plant last month.

In addition to the RAV4, the plant in Cambridge also produces the Lexus RX 350 and Lexus RX 450h hybrid vehicle. It will now also build the Lexus NX and NX hybrid for the entire North American market.

"These upgrades gave us the flexibility to build multiple types of Toyota and Lexus vehicles within our opera-

tion ... (and) allow us to change swiftly and smoothly," said Toyota Motor Manufacturing Canada president Fred Wolf.

Elliott said the province is here to support the thousands of men and women who work in the auto sector, and repeated the government mantra that Ontario is "open for business" while also thanking Toyota for its confidence in the province.

Tony LaMantia, president and CEO of the Waterloo Economic Development Corp., said Toyota is a major employer and manufacturer in the region, and is actively involved in the local startup ecosystem.

"We need profitable companies, and another Lexus model and hybrid model here is something that is going to anchor this facility for the next generation," he said. "This is really good news."

The investment is expected to create 450 new jobs at the company as well as 1,000 new co-op placements, and support the already more than 8,000 Toyota jobs in Cambridge and Woodstock.

[jjackson@therecord.com](mailto:jjackson@therecord.com)

Twitter: @JamesDEJ

[jjackson@therecord.com](mailto:jjackson@therecord.com)

# Prime Minister of Canada announces closer collaboration with Japan

Ottawa, Ontario - April 28, 2019

The Prime Minister of Canada, Justin Trudeau, met with the Prime Minister of Japan, Shinzo Abe, to set the foundation for an even closer Canada-Japan relationship.

During their meeting, the two leaders re-affirmed their commitment to strengthen the strategic partnership between Canada and Japan, and agreed to strengthen strategic dialogues between the two countries.

The two leaders also discussed the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP), which is already creating good, middle class jobs and new opportunities for businesses in Canada and Japan. There has been a significant increase in demand for Canadian products since the CPTPP came into force.



For example, some Canadian beef products exported to Japan have increased nearly threefold.

Building on this momentum, the two leaders finalized two memorandums. The first Memorandum of Cooperation, between Invest in Canada and the Japan External Trade Organization, will make it easier for Canadian and Japa-

nese companies to work in partnership, and will drive investment in both our countries. The second Memorandum of Understanding, between the National Research Council of Canada and the Advanced Telecommunications Research Institute International of Japan, will support joint research and development in fields like robotics and telecommunications.

The two leaders also discussed their shared vision for maintaining a free and open Indo-Pacific region based on the rule of law — something Canada and Japan will continue to advance through a range of initiatives. Prime Minister Trudeau announced that Canada will continue periodic deployments, over a two-year period, of Canadian Armed Forces aircraft, ships, and personnel under Operation NEON — a

multinational surveillance initiative to counter North Korea's maritime sanctions evasion.

Prime Minister Trudeau and Prime Minister Abe also discussed the threat to peace and security posed by North Korea's weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missile programs. Prime Minister Trudeau announced that Canada has provided a grant of \$2 million to the International Atomic Energy Agency to enhance the Agency's readiness to verify denuclearization activities in North Korea.

Finally, Prime Minister Trudeau and Prime Minister Abe discussed the upcoming G20 Summit in Osaka, and emphasized that G20 countries need to work closely together to address the world's most pressing challenges.

-pm.gc.ca

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# from the publisher's desk

## PUBLISHING TEAM

Managing Editor & Publisher: Logan Velumailum, B. Sc. - editor4mj@gmail.com  
 Editorial & Marketing Consultant: Siva Sivapragasam - tsivapragasam31@gmail.com  
 Executive Editorial Board: Tashvir Narine - tashvir.narine@gmail.com  
 Krishni Narine - krishni31@gmail.com  
 K. Thirukumar

Graphics & Layout Design: Santosh Kumar - kasantosh@gmail.com  
 Graphic Support: Suren Rasadurai

Photo Journalists: Gname B. Gnanendran - digitalgnane@yahoo.ca, Rudy Ruthran - rudy@ruthran.com

Health & Care: Ayktah Grover - www.aurawellness.ca, Dr. Amal Siva, Jeavana Sritharan, Andrea Shanmugarajah, Dr. S. Sivanesan, Dr. Nuwan Fonseka, Dr. Shiyam Loganathan, Dr. Harshini Sriskanda

Special Feature: Raymond Rajabalan, J.J. Atputharajah, Sri Krishnan Subramaniam, Senthil Senthivel, C. Kamalaharan, Dr. A. Gobikrishna, Sivanesan Sinniah, Kumar Punithavel, Nate Velumailum, Janani Srikantha, Jennifer Dilipkumar, Harrish Thirukumar

Business & Finance: Arun Senathirajah - asenathi@hotmail.com  
 David Joseph - David.joseph@investorsgroup.com

Education: RG Education Centers - www.rgeducation.com

Durham News: Durham Tamil Association - www.durhamtamils.com

Tamil Cultural & Academic Society of Durham - www.tamilsociety.ca

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

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

Waterloo News: www.tamilculturewaterloo.org

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 Providence Health Care Foundation - www.providence.on.ca/foundation

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# 2019 International Day of Families: The Role of the Family in Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation

by Harrish Thirukumar

On May 15th, 2019, the world will come together to commemorate International Day of Families. According to the United Nations, although families all over the world have transformed greatly over the past decades in terms of their structure and as a result of global trends and demographic changes, the United Nations still recognizes the family as the basic unit of society.

Merriam Webster defines a family as the basic unit in society traditionally consisting of two parents rearing their children and any of various social units differing from but regarded as equivalent to the traditional family. The annual observance of the International Day of Families reflects the importance the international community attaches to families and their role in development.

It provides an opportunity to promote awareness of issues relating to families and to increase knowledge of the social, economic and demographic processes affecting them. It has inspired a series of awareness-raising events, including national family days. In many countries, this day is an opportunity to highlight different areas of interest and importance to families. Activities include workshops and conferences, radio and television programmes, newspaper articles and cultural programmes highlighting relevant themes.

The theme for 2018 is to explore the role of families and family policies in advancing Sustainable Development Goal 16 in terms of promoting peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development. Goal 16 stresses that the threats of international homicide, violence against children, human trafficking and sexual violence are important to address to promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development. They pave the way for the provision of access to justice for all and for building effective, accountable institutions at all levels.

While homicide and trafficking cases have seen significant progress over the past decade, there are still thousands of people at greater risk of intentional murder within Latin America, Sub-Saharan

Africa and around Asia. Children's rights violations through aggression and sexual violence continue to plague many countries around the world, especially as under-reporting and lack of data aggravate the problem.

To tackle these challenges and build more peaceful, inclusive societies, there needs to be more efficient and transparent regulations put in place and comprehensive, realistic government budgets. One of the first steps towards protecting individual rights is the implementation of worldwide birth registration and the creation of more independent national human rights institutions around the world.

The theme for 2019 is "Families and Climate Action: Focus on SDG13." Major SDG13 targets for this year's observance include:

SDG 13 target 13.3: Improve education, awareness-raising and human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning

SDG 13 target 13.2: integrate climate change measures into national policies, strategies and planning

The panel discussion will highlight: inter-generational approach to sustainability Sustainable development education & practice Sustainable family farming from an indigenous perspective

'Greening the blue' and other good practices at the United Nations and beyond

The observance is organized by the Division for Inclusive Social Development of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the Global Communications Civil Society.

The event is open to the public and targets civil society, Permanent Missions, academics and practitioners. Special passes will be secured for those without a valid UN ID by the UN Global Communications Civil Society. More information on registration will follow.

Whether it be your workplace, school, place of worship or another community space, find out how you and your family can influence strategies towards climate change mitigation and adaptation.

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## Mother's Day

May 12, 2019

Monsoon Journal Wishes Readers, Advertisers and Well-Wishers a Happy Mother's Day



## Canada Historical Milestones:



May 20, 1980

A referendum is held in Quebec on a proposal for sovereignty-association. Residents vote 59% against the proposal, 41% in favour.

## Tribute



Monsoon Journal Solemnly remembers and tribute to the Mullivaikal victims: May 2019 10th Anniversary Memorial

"Life without love, is no life at all" - Leonardo da Vinci (15 April 1452 - 2 May 1519) Italian polymath

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

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## Statement by the Prime Minister on the terrorist attacks in Sri Lanka

Ottawa, Ontario - April 21, 2019

The Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau, today issued the following statement on the terrorist attacks in Sri Lanka:

“I was shocked and saddened to hear of the devastating terrorist attacks in Sri Lanka, which have claimed the lives of more than two hundred people and injured many hundreds more. On behalf of the Government of Canada and all Canadians, I offer my heartfelt condolences to all those who have lost loved ones and my hope for a full recovery to those injured.

“Canada strongly condemns these heinous attacks on hotels and Christians at prayer in churches. Places of worship are sacred, where all should feel safe and secure. No one should be targeted because of their faith.

“For millions of people around the world, Easter is a time to reflect on Jesus’ message of compassion and kindness—a time to come together with friends and family. We cannot let attacks like these weaken the hope we share.

“To the people of Sri Lanka and



other communities affected by today’s attacks: Canada stands with you. We will continue to work with you and other international partners to combat terrorism and violent extremism and to promote greater peace and stability around the world.

“To date, we have no reports of any Canadian citizens being affected. Due to the current situation, our High Commission in Colombo will be closed on April 22. However, Canadians in need of emergency consular assistance should contact [sos@international.gc.ca](mailto:sos@international.gc.ca) or call +1 613 996 8885.”

[pm.gc.ca](http://pm.gc.ca)

## Toyota’s new commitment to strengthen Canada’s automotive sector



Cambridge, Ontario - April 29, 2019

For over 100 years, Canada’s auto sector has been an engine of economic growth, driving innovation and creating good, well-paying jobs for the middle class.

The Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau, today welcomed Toyota Motor Corporation’s decision to bring production of its Lexus NX and state-of-the-art NX hybrid to its Cambridge plant.

This new mandate reaffirms the company’s long-term commitment to Canada with a significant investment worth hundreds of millions of dollars. In addition to \$1.4 billion invested in May 2018, it will make the plant Toyota’s North American production hub

for these sport utility vehicles (SUVs) starting in 2022.

Toyota’s investments will support more than 8,000 jobs and 1,000 co-op placements in Southwestern Ontario. The company is committed to its earlier investment of \$200 million over ten years to support research and development in Canada.

The Government of Canada is taking action so that Canada can continue to succeed in the global marketplace. By promoting Canadian industry and talent on the world stage, we are growing the economy and creating better opportunities for Canadian workers and businesses.

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## Statement by the Prime Minister on Orthodox Easter

Ottawa, Ontario - April 28, 2019

The Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau, today issued the following statement on Orthodox Easter:

"Today, we join people of the Eastern Orthodox, Oriental Orthodox, and Eastern Catholic faith in Canada and around the world to mark Easter, also known as Pascha.

"The holiest day of the year for Orthodox Christians, Easter is a time of hope and new beginnings, as families and loved ones gather to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

"This joyful occasion is a time to celebrate the triumph of light over darkness. It's a chance to give thanks for the many blessings we enjoy in life, and to show compassion to those in need.

"I encourage all Canadians to reflect on the important contributions that Canadians of Orthodox Christian faith make to our country. Each day, Orthodox Christians from coast to coast to coast help build a better Canada.

"On behalf of our family, Sophie and I wish a happy Easter to all those celebrating today." [pm.gc.ca](http://pm.gc.ca)

## Tree planting event held in remembrance of Mullivaikal

A tree planting event took place on May 5th from 1 PM to 5 PM at Point Rouge Trail Park, 203 Staines Road, Scarborough.

Gary Anandasangaree, member of Parliament for Scarborough-Rouge Park announcing of this event on his official social media pages stated:

"Giving life in memory of life.

Today our community honours the victims of the #Mullivaikal Genocide in #ScarbTO - Rouge Park.

Each tree planted will help mark the strength, perseverance and resilience of our community."

via: @gary\_srp

## Remembering Ontario Police Officers Who Lost Their Lives



May 5, 2019: Today, Premier Doug Ford delivered the following statement to police officers and their families at the 20th annual Ontario Police Memorial Ceremony of Remembrance:

"Today, we pay tribute to 266 heroic police officers who lost their lives in the line of duty. I have the greatest respect for Ontario's finest. And I am heartbroken for the lives lost while protecting our communities and working to keep Ontario safe. My deepest personal condolences to all of you — the families, friends and colleagues of the fallen.

"We owe a debt to these officers that

we can never repay. But we vow to do everything we can to support their colleagues and friends who continue on, every day. Your continued service is truly a tribute to the fallen.

"Our government will always stand with the brave and selfless men and women who put their lives at risk every day for the safety and protection of the people of Ontario. To those that we have tragically lost, please know we will never forget your service and your sacrifice."

- [ontario.ca](http://ontario.ca)

## Prime Minister opens process to select the next justice of the Supreme Court of Canada

Ottawa, Ontario - April 18, 2019

The Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau, today opened the process to select the next justice of the Supreme Court of Canada who will fill the vacancy created by the upcoming retirement of Justice Clément Gascon.

Under the approach launched in 2016, an independent and non-partisan advisory board will identify suitable candidates who are jurists of the highest caliber, functionally bilingual, and representative of the diversity of our country. Former Prime Minister Kim Campbell will again chair the advisory board, and additional members will be announced shortly.

Justice Gascon was appointed to the Supreme Court of Canada from the



Quebec Court of Appeal. Under the requirements of the Supreme Court Act, the process is open only to qualified applicants trained in civil law and from Quebec.

-[pm.gc.ca](http://pm.gc.ca)

## IMF cuts global growth outlook, but predicts pick up later in 2019



April 9: Economic Development

The outlook for global growth is at its lowest since the financial crisis, but expected to pick up in the second half of 2019, the International Monetary Fund reported on Tuesday, so long as "policy missteps that could harm economic activity" are avoided.

The IMF is forecasting a 3.3 per cent global expansion in 2019, and 3.6 per cent growth for the following year, according to the annual World Economic Outlook. The uptick in growth is expected to be fueled by monetary policy accommodations in major economies.

The organization also noted an improved outlook for United States-China trade tensions, and greater accommodations from the US Federal Reserve.

Expectations were different this time last year, when the IMF saw accelerated economic growth in almost

all regions and predicted a 3.9 per cent expansion in 2019.

Gita Gopinath, Economic Counselor and Director of the Research Department at the Fund said it was a "delicate moment" in terms of the global economy.

In a blog post, she noted that the softer outlook reflects negative revisions for several major economies, including Australia, Canada, the Eurozone, Latin America, the United States, and the United Kingdom.

Global growth in 2020 is projected to rebound, as stressed developing economies like Argentina and Turkey, improve. Beyond 2020, the IMF predicts strong growth, led by China and India.

The growth in advanced economies, however, is expected to slow as the impact of US fiscal stimulus fades.

- [UN.org](http://UN.org)



# Libya: UN mobilized to support thousands uprooted by Tripoli clashes, renews call for humanitarian truce

30 April 2019

Since fighting broke out on the edge of Libya's capital, Tripoli, earlier this month, over 42,000 people have been displaced and thousands are believed trapped in the city's southern outskirts. As UN humanitarian teams work around the clock to provide life-saving assistance, human rights chief Michelle Bachelet stressed on Tuesday the urgent need for an immediate ceasefire, and humanitarian corridor for civilians.

"The escalation of attacks in residential areas, including the use of artillery, rockets and airstrikes is deeply worrying. Thousands of children, women and men's lives are at risk," Ms. Bachelet said, calling on all parties to fully respect international human rights and humanitarian law.

"I remind all parties to the conflict that the use of explosive weapons with indiscriminate effects, in densely populated areas is a violation of international humanitarian and human rights

law," she stated.

In her statement released on Tuesday, human rights High Commissioner Bachelet also expressed serious concerns about the safety of around 3,350 migrants and refugees, still held in detention centres near the conflict areas. "Migrants should be released from detention centres as a matter of urgency, and should have access to the same humanitarian protection as all civilians, including access to collective shelters or other safe places," she stressed.

The UN refugee agency (UNHCR) echoed her call for a "temporary humanitarian truce to allow for the provision of emergency services and the safe and voluntary passage of civilians out of conflict-affected areas".

Fighting broke out in Tripoli at the beginning of April, when General Khalifa Haftar, commander of the self-styled Libyan National Army, began a military campaign to take Tripoli from fighters loyal to the UN-recognized Government. By the second week of



the month, casualties were in the hundreds, and the number of displaced, in the thousands.

To date, the UN has recorded close to 350 people killed, including 22 civilians, and over 1,650 wounded, including 74 civilians. Ms. Bachelet noted that the actual number of civilians killed or injured "is likely to be higher".

"The hospitals are overwhelmed with injured people requiring surgery," said Dr. Hussein Hassan, Health Emergencies Team leader for the World Health Organization in Libya. "WHO's emergency medical teams are helping them save lives," he explained, adding that the "EMTs work into the wee hours to handle complicated surgical cases."

"Some specialists, like the vascular surgeon, are travelling from one place to another to cover two hospitals," he added. In just over a week, WHO's three medical teams have performed 144 major surgeries and 104 minor surgeries in a little more than a week.

As conflict intensifies, the UN is lacking funding to carry out critical interventions. Along with other humanitarian partners, it launched a common flash appeal for US\$ 10.2 million to assist about 100,000 people specifically affected by the surge in violence around Tripoli.

- news.un.org

## Senior UN official strongly condemns Southern California synagogue attack

April 28, 2019 - The top official for the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC) has strongly condemned the attack Saturday on a synagogue in Southern California, denouncing the deadly incident as a hate crime targeting Sabbath worshippers on the last day of Passover.

According to news reports, on Saturday, a gunman armed with a semi-automatic rifle entered a synagogue in Poway, California, some 40 kilometres north of San Diego, yelling anti-Semitic slurs, and opened fire. The attack left one woman dead, the rabbi and two others wounded.

This incident comes in the wake of a series of attacks against mosques,

synagogues and other places of worship in the past months, including the Easter Sunday suicide bombings targeting churches in Sri Lanka that killed more than 250 people. Last month, dozens of worshippers were gunned down at two mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand. In a statement, UNAOC High Representative Miguel Moratinos reiterated that such cowardly attacks are not confined to one religion, country or ethnicity. Mr. Moratinos also stressed that this spate of violence against houses of worship targeting innocent and peaceful citizens "should not obstruct our efforts to combat hatred, anti-Semitism, Islamophobia and all forms of discrimination."



He vowed to continue to work on developing his Plan of Action for safeguarding religious sites to guarantee that worshippers can observe their rituals in a spirit of peace and compassion.

On behalf of UNAOC, the High Representative expressed his deepest condolences to the family of the victim and wishes those who were injured a speedy recovery.

The United Nations Alliance of

Civilizations was established in 2005, as the political initiative of former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, and co-sponsored by the Governments of Spain and Turkey. A High-Level Group of experts was formed to explore the roots of polarization between societies and cultures, and to recommend a practical programme of action to address the issue.

- news.un.org

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BY THULASI MUTTULINGAM

## HUMANS OF NORTHERN SRI LANKA

"Humans of Northern Sri Lanka" is a Facebook Community page by Thulasi Muttulingam, a journalist based in the North of 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)

# ISIS & SIRISENA - A MATCH MADE IN HEAVEN - - - SORRY HELL

Our erstwhile Prime Minister has just dropped a bombshell (at the time of writing this). He has said that he and the State apparatus knew many men (and women?) who had joined ISIS had returned to the country – but there are no laws in place to do anything about them – so they didn't.

This is in the context of ex-LTTE cadres here still being unable to so much as sneeze without the CID knowing about it. This is a State that clearly has experience tracking and curbing sophisticated terror elements, and controlling and monitoring them well after they have been defanged and de-clawed. The excuse that they were 'not prepared' for ISIS doesn't wash therefor.

They knew the danger, had been warned by other intelligence services of the danger multiple times, had even been warned by the terrorists' own wider community multiple times – yet had not cared to heed the warnings. And that's the crux of the matter which is so unforgivable.

What comes through loud and clear in the subsequent days of the attacks is that our Statesmen patently didn't care – and in the wake of the Easter attacks, we the public are left grappling as to why. Why did our elected Statesmen, our Ministers and MPs, our Opposition leaders, our public officials in strategic positions to ensure our safety and security – all so collectively and callously disregard our safety despite being tipped off about the impending attacks multiple times? They took care to beef up their own security, took care to warn each other not to go to churches but didn't warn the rest of us. Didn't bother to track or arrest the terrorists despite being given even their names and addresses by foreign intelligence services who appear to have cared far more about our lives than our own statesmen. Do we, the common people thanks to whom they rule over us, mean so little to them?

Several funerals in the country in recent days rent the air with the cries of raging mourners demanding answers from the president – answers he did not give other than a wishy washy excuse that he himself had no idea and was kept uninformed. Such an excuse, pathetic, self-serving and patently lying only adds fuel to our flames of collective grief and rage. To add insult to injury, he took a full two days after the attacks to come up with even this pathetic insult of a statement – leaving the country to grapple alone in our shock and grief in the meantime. We as an entire country have lost faith in the statesmen currently governing us now. Yet who can we turn to? What are our alternatives?

### Calls for Hitler

It is a Sri Lankan malaise that every time something like this happens – not that we've ever had anything on this scale to deal with before despite our recent civil war – yet every time things go badly wrong, the masses yearn for a 'strongman' politician to exterminate with impunity undesirable elements in our midst so that we can return to 'peace'. People are calling for such leaders to lead us again, because they have lost faith in the current government. Such 'peace' – usually just an absence of active war, is hard-won and comes at great personal cost to freedoms in the public sphere as we know all too well from our recent history – yet some of us now yearn for that 'lesser evil' of losing certain personal freedoms if it will mean greater efficiency in ensuring the country's security. The problem with such strongman politicians though is that they can be equally if not even more ruthless than the terrorists we seek protection against. Their mode of governance is usually via a terrorist rogue state. We know the fallout of what happened when such rogue states acted to quell first the JVP, then the LTTE. The casualties of their strongman tactics were not only the JVP and the LTTE and the casualties hereafter will not only be ISIS if we try to bring in a Hitler inspired ruthless strongman to power.

I really don't know why so many people imagine such displays of ruthlessness and impunity in Statesmen to be ideal – it is not. To those of you who say you don't care about the collateral damage so long as there is 'peace' – please do check your privilege. You would not say so if the collateral damage were to be your sons and daughters. Do not make the mistake of thinking you are many places removed from the likes of Richard de Zoysa or Wasim Thajudeen.

It is not only the minorities who will bear the brunt of



St Anthony's Church - pic via: FB

this – although we certainly will bear it disproportionately more. Elected officials being given the mandate to act like der Fuhrer will eventually impact the majority community too, not just the minorities.

### Bad Governance

I do understand the frustrations of dealing with our enragingly inept current statesmen however, and the need to do away with them.

We voted in a so called yahapalanaya government in good faith, many of us. Turns out it was a narakapalanaya. Time to send them home – sacking the IGP and the Defence Minister is not enough – they ought to know that our inept President and equally inept Prime Minister. We've had enough of their narakapalanaya.

Yet it is to be noted – if I as a journalist am writing this now, it is because they did open up press freedom in the country. And that is precisely what worries me. If we send them home because they are clearly inept, will we then see them replaced with something far worse?; a local mustachioed version of Hitler having a fleet of white vans zooming around the country again to take us out, those who hold statesmen accountable to the people? Right now we are holding such statesmen accountable to us without fear for our lives. Will that disappear in the near future, because we are so rightly dissatisfied with what we have now? Do we have any viable alternatives? Why oh why does Sri Lanka have this dearth of Statesmen and women who are good at their job of governing, and will hold themselves accountable to the people without killing us for holding them accountable? Be careful fellow Sri Lankans. We are between a rock and a hard place currently. In the upcoming elections, we need to see who could do better by us and not worse. Our lives hang in the balance.

### ISIS Menace

At least with the LTTE, it was only Sri Lanka (mostly) that had to deal with the terror. In the case of ISIS, it's a world-wide phenomenon and many other countries have already been grappling with them for years. It's not like our State lacked either their own resources or help from other countries and their many resources to deal with the menace

– yet our State chose to blindly look the other way, repeatedly, even after catching the terrorists with explosives just earlier this year. What does it take to shake them out of their complacency? This is stupefyingly incomprehensible. Even after the Muslim community repeatedly warned about ISIS affiliated individuals in their midst; even after such ISIS affiliated individuals had clashes with the wider Muslim community which led even to bloodshed in 2017; even after the State itself arrested some of these terrorists for defacing Buddha statues in Mawanela and stumbled upon explosive caches; even after knowing scores of men and women had joined ISIS and then returned; even after Indian Intelligence services warned of an impending attack 2 weeks before, a day before, and even hours before the impending Easter attacks – they chose to not pay heed to the danger to the common people. What do you call such negligence from the State other than criminal negligence?

Let's do away with the trope of Nero fiddling as Rome burned. Centuries after the fact, Sirisena sleeping with warnings of the impending attacks under his pillow even as explosives to multi-bomb Sri Lanka was being manufactured in local factories has eclipsed Emperor Nero in his nihilism. Move over world. We now have the most callous Statesman to eclipse all other callous Statesmen. Beat that if you can.

I am heartbroken. We all are. When we the common people sport misdemeanors of any kind – thieving, robbing, murders – we have the State to police us and (we trust) to deliver us justice. Yet when it is the State apparatus itself that has failed us, who is going to police it and deliver us justice? Hundreds of people in Sri Lanka have died due to our Statesmen's criminal negligence. Calls for their resignation is not enough, although I don't see those in the topmost posts having either the shame or the decency to own up to their faults or to resign. They all have our blood on their collective hands due to their criminal negligence – will they ever face the apparatus of justice for what they did to us due to their callous disregard for our lives?

We have the draconian PTA, CTA and now emergency regulations in place to frighten ordinary law abiding citizens – but not arrest or at least surveil returned ISIS terrorists apparently. So said our Prime Minister.

Between the evil of the so called Islamic State and the stupidity of our own Sri Lankan State, we the common Sri Lankans have to grapple for our lives. God help us all.



St Anthony's Church - pic via: FB





# 'The green economy is the future,' UN chief says in Beijing, urging climate solutions that strengthen economies, protect the environment

April 27, 2019 - Winning the race against climate change to keep our planet livable and on a healthy trajectory requires action rooted in sustainable solutions aligned with the Paris Agreement and the UN-driven 2030 Agenda for sustainable development, Secretary-General António Guterres said on Saturday.

"To put it simply, we need green development. We need sustainable development. And we need it now," the UN chief told world leaders in Beijing, discussing ways to boost green development as part of a conference on China's Belt and Road Initiative.

Painting a sobering picture of the challenges ahead – for the planet and the broader effort to secure improved human well-being while reducing environmental risks – Mr. Guterres recalled that the last four years were the hottest on record and that natural disasters have wreaked havoc in nearly every region of the globe.

"No country or community is immune. And, as we know, the poor and vulnerable are the first to suffer, and the worst hit," said Mr. Guterres, warning that the climate crisis threatens decades of progress and jeopardizes all our plans for inclusive, sustainable development.

"And the clock is ticking. Science has clearly told us that we have only 12 years for this transformation, if we want to limit temperature rise to 1.5 degrees Celsius and avoid the worst impacts of climate change."

Yet the race to head off a climate catastrophe and ensure a safe and secure planet for all can be won, he said, with global action rooted in solutions that are sustainable and aligned with the landmark Paris accord and the UN 2030 Agenda.

To help generate ambition and to

showcase practical, feasible and ambitious solutions to meet globally agreed goals, Mr. Guterres is convening a Climate Action Summit in New York on 23 September.

"I am calling on leaders to come with concrete, realistic plans to enhance their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) by 2020," he said, referring to efforts by each country under the Paris Agreement to reduce national emissions and adapt faster to the impacts of climate change.

The Secretary-General said these plans must show how greenhouse gas emissions can be reduced by 45 per cent over the next decade and how the world can get to net zero emissions globally by 2050 through strong mitigation and adaptation measures.

"It is why I have been asking leaders around the world to adopt carbon pricing that reflects the true cost of emissions, end subsidies on fossil fuels, and stop construction of new coal plants beyond 2020," he explained, noting that he is also counting on leaders to make sure their plans include women as key decision-makers and address the disproportionate impacts many women experience from climate change.

In all this, Chinese leadership will continue to be crucial, said Mr. Guterres, stressing that new renewable energy jobs in China now outnumber those created in the oil and gas industries. China also played a pivotal role in building bridges and securing an agreement at last December's UN Climate Conference in Katowice – and will host next year's second Global Sustainable Transport Conference.

The Belt and Road Initiative, with its huge volume of investment, said, Mr. Guterres, is an opportunity to propel the world into a green future and help countries transition to low-carbon,

clean-energy pathways with new infrastructure that is sustainable and equitable.

"The momentum for transformational change is growing," said the Secretary-General, stressing that the "green economy is the future," and more governments, cities and businesses than ever understand that climate solutions strengthen economies and protect the environment at the same time.

New technologies are delivering energy at a lower cost than the fossil-fuel-driven economy, he continued, and solar and onshore wind are now the cheapest sources of new power, in virtually all major economies.

[news.un.org](http://news.un.org)



Love, is a strong link, it comes from God,  
So everyone who loves has been born of God.  
Whoever does not love, doesn't know God,  
God is love, He sent His only son to the world.

Love is patient, never fails and it is kind:  
Love doesn't envy, but loves even foes.  
Love hates evil, but loves truthful minds,  
It always trusts and hopes even under force.

Prophecies; however great will cease,  
Tongues; however forceful will be stilled,  
Knowledge greater it can be, will perish,  
But faith hope and Love our hearts be filled.

So, brothers and sisters let us love each one  
God created from the mere dust.  
That is what is expected from the Holy One  
Who will lead us to eternal rest.

*Kingsley*

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# A world first: Women at the helm of every UN Regional Commission



UN Photo/Eskinder Debebe: Secretary-General António Guterres (3rd left) is flanked by Executive Secretaries of the Regional Commissions (left to right): Rola Dashti, Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA); Alicia Bárcena, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC); Armida Alisjahbana, Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), Olga Algayerová, Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE); Vera Songwe, UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA).

Although United Nations Regional Commissions have been in existence for more than 70 years, for the first time ever, each one is currently headed by a woman designated by Secretary-General António Guterres. This accomplishment underscores that, since the day he took office, the UN chief has been determined to achieve gender parity by 2030 as part of the Agenda for Sustainable Development.

UN News spoke to some of these women leaders, about the steps being taken to make Sustainable Development Goal 5 (SDG 5), on women's empowerment, a reality.

## Latin America and the Caribbean: Alicia Bárcena

Alicia Bárcena, Executive Secretary for the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, known as ECLAC, detailed some of the battles her region faces, such as slow economic growth, high debt, a deterioration in quality employment and increased poverty.

She sees these "long-term challenges" as threats to gender equality, such as "gender gaps in labor markets, the overload of women's unpaid work, their limited access to credit and productive assets, and women lacking their own income".

At the same time, incorporating technological change "raises new questions about its disruptive effects on societies and especially on gender equality". Ms. Bárcena pointed out that although their political participation across the region has risen steadily over the past few decades, women only hold 30 per cent of seats in the region's parliaments, which is far below the parity-based target.

"There is an urgent need to remove the key barriers hindering women's participation in order to generate the conditions for the full exercise of women's citizenship and autonomy in decision-making", she stated. "To do so, it is important to achieve parity in the distribution of power, resources and time".

Proudly, she said that under her leadership, ECLAC has achieved gender balance among in senior management, adding "and I am now progres-

sively pushing forward for achieving a similar balance at other levels".

## Europe: Olga Algayerová

Olga Algayerová, Executive Secretary for the Economic Commission for Europe, called UNECE, told UN News that by appointing women as UN Regional Commission heads, the Secretary-General is making "a clear call" to ensure that gender parity is "a reality in our regional organizations".

"In the UNECE region, the political and economic landscape now looks far more balanced than it did some decades ago", she asserted.

Ms. Algayerová explained that as a women leader, she is especially sensitive to women's situations and needs. And as such, she can be more persistent in searching for gender-responsive solutions and broad-based decisions "in consultations with women's groups" and others.

"I am often approached by women of different ages from civil societies, academia and governments, and I listen to their concerns", she said.

"Gender equality and the empowerment of women has always been very dear to my heart", she continued. "In all my previous positions which I have held both in my country, Slovakia, and abroad, I have been a strong advocate for gender equality".

According to the ECE chief, meeting SDG5 means: ending all forms of violence and discrimination against women and girls; valuing unpaid care and domestic work; and ensuring decent work for all.

"It is a gigantic task, requiring urgent action and pooling all resources to eliminate the root causes of gender inequalities", she argued. To address this, Ms. Algayerová flagged the need to measure inequalities and provide data to identify what drives gender gaps and why imbalances persist in all spheres of life at country, regional and community levels.

"Only policies based on empirical evidences can be effective instruments to tackle the multifaceted forms of gender inequalities" she concluded.

## Armida Alisjahbana: Asia and the Pacific

For her part, Armida Alisjahbana, Executive Secretary of the Economic

and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, or ESCAP, told UN News that while "significant progress" has been made in her region, economic and social inequalities persist.

"Growing disparities in income and wealth disproportionately affect women, especially those in vulnerable situations", she said, pointing out that "for every 10 men who are in employment, there are only six women working".

What's more, she lamented, "women are overrepresented in low-paying jobs, with little social protection provisions" and "have less access than men to financial services and productive assets, including land, capital, and information technologies".

On the political front, Ms. Alisjahbana said that women's representation in Asia and the Pacific continues to be low in comparison with other regions of the world.

"As of 2018, the proportion of seats held by women in the national parliaments is 18 per cent, while the global average is 24 per cent", she stated.

"Addressing such gaps is not only a matter of attaining fundamental rights for women, but also critical to the inclusive economic growth and sustainable development of the region as a whole" Ms. Alisjahbana stressed.

## Western Asia: Rola Dashti

Rola Dashti, Executive Secretary of Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), shared with UN News her view that leadership is "not a privilege" but a "responsibility with accountability".

Woman or man, an "all-weather leader" must work "in a responsible, efficient and effective manner to achieve the desirable goals", she believes.

Ms. Dashti expressed pride in that she could be "a good example" of women's ability to "carry out substantive tasks and achieve the mission assigned".

Against the backdrop of an Arab region embroiled in conflicts, war, displacement and grave economic and environment crises, the ESCWA chief said this situation aggravates the already "complicated task" of meeting SDG5.

She painted a picture of the existing problems facing women, "such as

domestic and sexual violence; unemployment; and discrimination in public office" and recommended, "within the few years remaining until 2030", as "the best course of action", to "identify common priority areas" across Arab countries to help implement responses at the regional level that would "benefit all".

She assured that ESCWA places women's issues "at the forefront of its work" and underlined that "despite gender stereotypes and cultural barriers", the aspirations of women and girls "are attainable" with "self-recognition, confidence and perseverance".

"To every woman and girl, she concluded by saying: "Your horizon is your dream!"

## Vera Songwe: Africa

Being a woman leader in Africa is a "daily battle of assertion", said Vera Songwe, the head of the Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), who also noted that the challenges of being a woman leader in the region are no different than anywhere else because "patriarchy is common."

Ms. Songwe told UN News that the continent is seeing more and more competent women in leadership – in places such as Ethiopia, Rwanda, the Seychelles and South Africa – but that women still face obstacles, such as age-old false perceptions about women.

"We must continue to lift more women up and speak for them," Ms. Songwe said by email from Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Working in the Economic Commission allows Ms. Songwe to work on one of her passions – empowering women economically. With the backing of traditional partners – such as the African Bank, the African Development Bank and the Regional Economic Communities – UNECA supports the African Women's Leadership Fund, which aims to give greater opportunities to women entrepreneurs.

She also spoke about the need to hire more women into the workforce and to mentor their process.

"It is a challenging task but we believe achievable and we continue to work towards this end," said Ms. Songwe.

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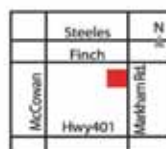


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# Some 300,000 Venezuelan children in Colombia need humanitarian assistance; UNICEF looks to boost response funding

April 29, 2019 - Without increased support, the health, education and well-being of at least 327,000 children from Venezuela living as migrants and refugees in Colombia will be in jeopardy, the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) warned on Monday.

"At a time when anti-migrant sentiment is growing worldwide, Colombia has generously kept its doors open to its neighbors from Venezuela," said Paloma Escudero, UNICEF Director of Communication who has just finished a four-day visit to Cúcuta, on the Colombian side of the border with Venezuela.

The economic and political situation in Venezuela has caused an estimated 3.7 million Venezuelans to leave their homes for Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and other countries in the region.

Some 1.2 million of them are in Colombia, often living in vulnerable host communities with already overstretched resources, said UNICEF.

"As more families make the painful decision to leave their homes in Venezuela every day, it is time for the international community to step up its support and help meet their basic needs," Ms. Escudero said, adding: "We cannot let that generosity wear thin."

At the Simon Bolivar Bridge between Colombia and Venezuela, Ms. Escudero spoke to families making the trek every day to seek medical care, take their children to school, and bring food and other essential items to their families back home.

"I met a mother who has epilepsy and is eight months pregnant. She needed to come to Colombia to get her prenatal checkups and protect her health and the health of her baby," she said. "For most families, the decision to leave is only a measure of last resort."

Colombia also offers free education to migrant children from Venezuela. UNICEF says that more than 130,000 Venezuelan children are enrolled in schools across Colombia today, up from 30,000 in November last year. Nearly 10,000 of these students are in the border town of Cúcuta and close to 3,000 of them commute from Venezuela every day to go to school.

"I saw hundreds of students cross into Cúcuta at the crack of dawn, in pouring rain, to go to school. Such dedication to learning by parents and students alike is a lesson in commitment, perseverance and determination for all of us," Ms. Escudero said.



UNICEF is working closely with other humanitarian agencies, national and local authorities, non-governmental organizations and communities in Colombia to provide migrant children, as well as children in host communities with health, nutrition, education and protection.

The agency is looking to boost its current response budget from \$5.7 million to \$29 million in the coming year to:

- Help vaccinate more than 30,000 children;

- Provide water, sanitation and hygiene services in schools for 13,000 children;

- Provide 40,000 children with formal and informal learning opportunities;

- Reach 15,000 nursing mothers with micronutrients; and

- Reach 90,000 children and adolescents with actions to prevent and address violence, abuse and exploitation, including gender-based violence and the prevention of child recruitment.

- [news.un.org](http://news.un.org)

## U.S. Cooperation to Enhance Safety in Sri Lanka

Press release by Embassy of the United States of America

April 27, Colombo: The United States Government continues to assist Sri Lankan authorities in the aftermath of the horrific attacks that occurred in the country on Easter Sunday. At the request of the Sri Lankan Government, U.S. experts are already working closely with their Sri Lankan partners on fulfilling short term, specific objectives related to the recent attacks and to bringing the perpetrators to justice. This cooperation does not indicate a larger, long term presence of US security teams in the country.

As Sri Lanka looks to the future and to implementing changes in security and communications procedures to prevent future atrocities, the United States stands ready to assist with lessons learned from our own past tragedies and through our ongoing cooperation with local authorities.

In realizing and applying improved safety mechanisms to protect Sri Lanka's citizens from new threats, it is imperative that the Sri Lanka Government do so in ways that also protect rule of law and that do not infringe upon the human rights of individuals or groups, or limit their ability to worship, communicate and to live together in peace.



**U.S. Ambassador Alaina Teplitz**

U.S. Ambassador Alaina Teplitz stated in her call for unity on April 25, "These terrible attacks are the work of a few individuals and not of an entire community. Sri Lankans of all backgrounds and faiths have come together to condemn these atrocities. Unity is the most powerful answer to terrorism."

Ambassador Teplitz further underscored that "while we work together to bring the perpetrators of these heinous crimes to justice, we must remain vigilant in defending the democratic ideals that form the pillars of a strong society. And we must do so without destroying communities of peaceful, innocent people who share the faith of the attackers, but not their warped ideology. We must always respect the wonderful diversity of Sri Lanka and fortify the culture of unity that the country needs to thrive." **via: usembassy.gov**

## Minister of Foreign Affairs marks World Press Freedom Day



May 3, 2019 - Ottawa, Ontario - Global Affairs Canada:

The Honourable Chrystia Freeland, Minister of Foreign Affairs, today issued the following statement:

"On World Press Freedom Day, we reflect on the important role of a free press in defending human rights, inclusion and diversity; in holding the powerful to account; in demanding transparency from governments; and in protecting the rule of law and strengthening democracy.

"Today, freedom of the press is under great threat. Last year, 54 members of the media were killed around the world and another 250 were imprisoned just for doing their jobs. The four deadliest recorded years for journalists occurred within the last 10 years.

"The abhorrent murder of Saudi

Arabian columnist Jamal Khashoggi, the illegal detention of Ukrainian writer and filmmaker Oleg Sentsov by Russia, the harassment and intimidation of Philippine journalist and activist Maria Ressa, and the imprisonment of Wa Lone and Kyaw Soe Oo in Myanmar are but a few examples of this worrying global trend.

"Canada condemns anyone who in any way intimidates and harasses journalists working in defence of the truth, and we will seize every opportunity to speak up and defend press freedom.

"In July, Canada will co-host the Global Conference for Media Freedom, alongside the United Kingdom, as we work to further advance the cause of a free and independent media."

- [canada.ca](http://canada.ca)



# UNIONS COME TOGETHER IN SUPPORT OF SHN

Like many of his members at Carpenters Local 27, President Mike Yorke was born and raised in Scarborough, and has a desire to see it prosper for future generations. And thanks to the work of the team at Scarborough Health Network Foundation, he is now doing his part to make that happen.

Over the past year, the Foundation has built a strong relationship with Mike, who then identified Claudio Mazzotta, Vice President of Drywallers Local 675, as they have a shared belief that improving health care in Scarborough is one of the strongest ways for their respective unions to show their commitment to the community. As a demonstration of this joint commitment, the unions have pledged a combined \$150,000 in support for the new Medical Imaging and Vascular Centre at SHN's General hospital.

"It's all about giving back to the community," shared Yorke about the recent gift. "We are committed to equity and social justice, not just in our own union, not just in the communities in which our members live and work, but throughout



Canada and internationally as well. This gift in support of Scarborough's patients is a demonstration of this commitment, and, together with the Drywallers and SHN, a step forward in building the future of health care for our

community." The new Medical Imaging Centre will be a state-of-the-art, fully accessible, 36,000 sq. ft. space that will allow patients greater, more efficient access to all diagnostic imaging services within a single location. This includes

suites for CT scans, nuclear medicine, breast imaging, MRI and ultrasound, as well as a centralized registration area. Overall, the new Centre will increase capacity, reduce wait times, modernize technology, enhance continuity of care,

and provide a more accessible and comfortable setting for patients, families, staff, and physicians.

Learn more about giving back to this and other important projects at [SHNFoundation.ca](http://SHNFoundation.ca).



# Scarborough Health Network celebrates National Volunteer Week

Volunteers are at the heart of Scarborough's hospitals. During National Volunteer Week in April, the team at Scarborough Health Network celebrated the hundreds of generous people who choose to use their time and talents to support their community hospital.

In the past year, SHN volunteers gave more than one hundred thousand hours to support patients and families in Scarborough, and hospital programs and caregivers.

Volunteers also support the hospital financially,



raising funds through the gift shops and other fund-raising programs. These funds help bring state-of-the-art medical equipment to SHN so that our patients receive care that transforms their health experience.

Throughout Volunteer Week, SHN hosted events and activities for volunteers, including a series of VIV (Very Important Volunteer) teas. Thanks to each and every SHN volunteer for all you do.

If you would like to join Scarborough Health Network's vibrant and fun volunteer group, you can learn more at: [www.shn.ca](http://www.shn.ca)





# CINNAMON LIFE LUXURY APARTMENTS IN COLOMBO

Representatives from leading property developer from Sri Lanka, John Keells Properties presented 2 mega condo developments, Cinnamon Life and TRI-ZEN in Toronto. The event was held on Sunday, March 31, 2019 at Toronto Airport Marriott Hotel with an evening of cocktails. The detailed presentation and explanation for answers was clear, precise and excellent by Nadeem Shums, Vice President of John Keells at the event. Cinnamon Life, the iconic 4.5 Million sq.ft integrated mixed use development, is a city within a city, and is envisioned to be the epicentre of modern South Asia. A perfect urban sanctuary, the luxury apartments in Colombo will feature the ideal blend of contemporary comfort and stylish sophistication.



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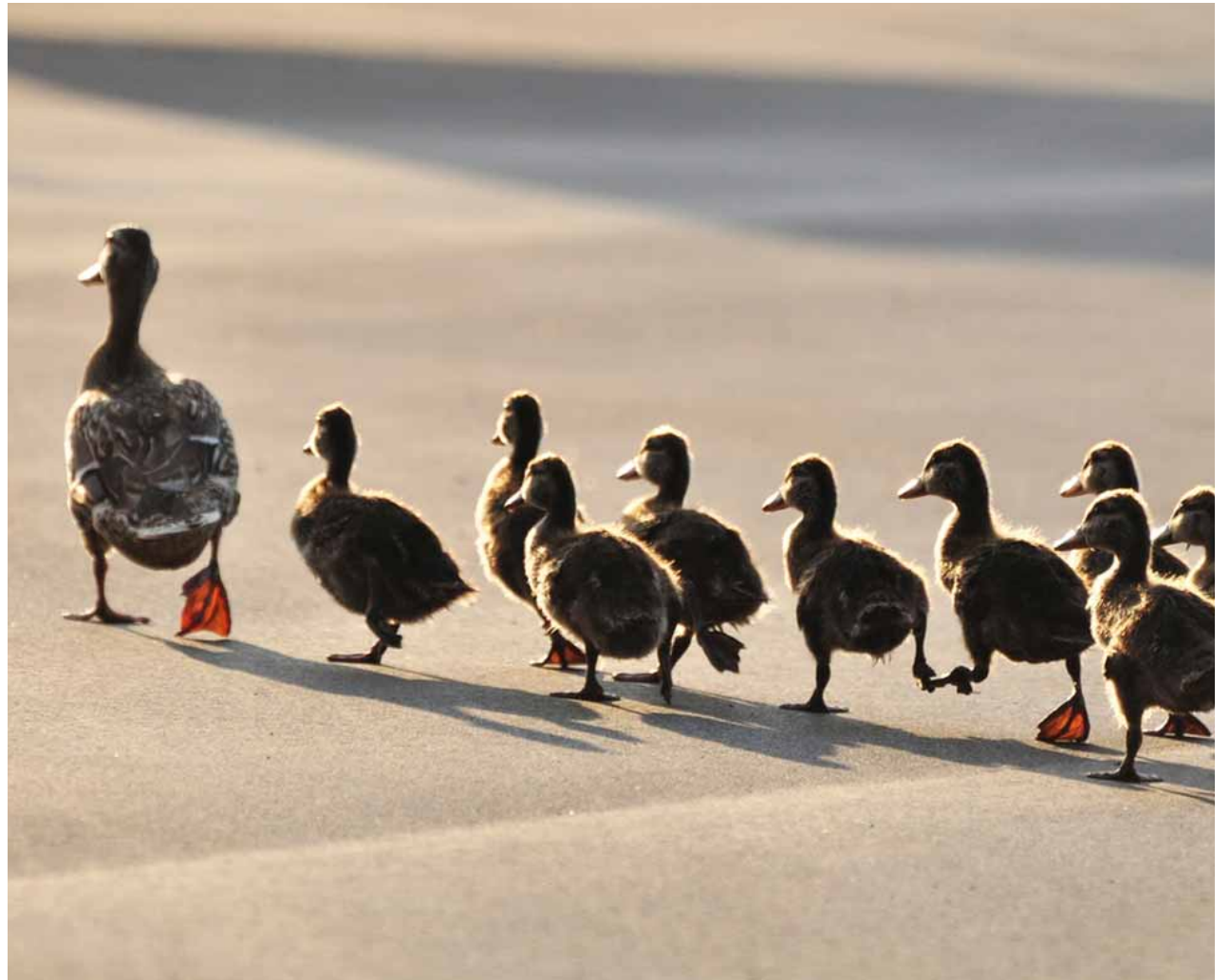
## Take it or Leave it

# CHANGE THE FILM

People look at the world and say, “Stop the wars; that’s peace.” My analogy for that is the world you see out there is just a bunch of screens. Who’s the projector? The world leaders? It really is a peculiar situation.

It’s a bit like this: There’s a whole bunch of people walking along. First, one person was walking on the road. And why was he walking? He was walking because he didn’t know where he was going, but he wanted to find out where to go, so he was walking. The second person saw him walking on the road, so he got behind him. The third person saw two of them walking on the road, so that person got behind them. Pretty soon, you have a huge crowd. And who are the leaders in the very front? Do these people know where they’re going? It depends who you ask. If you ask the people in the back, they will say, “Yes, of course we know where we are going, because the leaders in the front are taking us there.” And if you ask the leaders, “Do you know where you are going?” they’ll say, “Of course we know where we’re going. Look at all these people behind us.” Neither has anything to do with whether anybody really knows where they’re going.

I know there are people who get very upset with this. If you do, go read history. It’s documented. That’s exactly what happens time after time. Has the time not come that we should stand on our own feet for peace? If you do not like what you see on the screen, don’t blame the screen. Don’t clean the screen. Don’t polish the screen. It will only reflect what is being projected on it much better. If you do not like what you see on the screen, change the film, not the projector. This is a very important point, because this is exactly what is happening in the world. People are



both saying to themselves and are being told, “You’re no good; let’s improve you. Let’s change the projector. Let’s tweak the projector.”

Change the film. That is what is important. The miracle, the peace, the most beautiful film is waiting to be threaded onto this projector so that it can be shown. And it is not a story of desperation, trauma, drama, and what is lacking in the world. A lot of people look at what is lacking. Next time you see a forest, ask yourself, “What is that forest about?” It is about the seed that germinated, not the seed that did not germinate. No forest carries a little sign that says, “Here lies the seed that didn’t come along.” That’s history. Life is about the seeds that germinated. You are about what works, not what doesn’t work. Learn to measure this existence with what you have, not with what you don’t have.

You will begin to see that what you

have is so much more powerful, so much more beautiful than what you don’t have. Dreams are fulfilled. There is a peace dancing that is more beautiful, more tranquil, than you could have ever imagined. This is all inside of you. People say, “I’m too far away from all this.” Too far away from that? One day you will be, that is true, but not right now. I’m not here to talk about what will happen to you after you die. Sorry. There are other ones who can tell you about that.

Fortunately, in this life, there is something called the heart, and it nudges you — not to back up but to go forward. So many of us would stand at the pinnacles of our life and do nothing but look back. And **the heart says, “No. Turn around and go forward.”**

*Prem Rawat*



# M - O - T - H - E - R

boxes which she filled with fresh matchsticks. This helped her get some money to cover our needs. One wintry night I awoke to find Mother filling the matchboxes by candlelight. So I said, "Mother, go to sleep; it's late; you can continue working tomorrow morning." Mother smiled and said "Go to sleep, son! I'm not tired."

### *This was Mother's Third Lie*

When I had to sit my Final Examination, Mother accompanied me. After dawn, Mother waited for me for hours in the heat of the sun. When the bell rang, I ran to meet her. Mother embraced me and poured me a glass of tea that she had prepared in a thermos flask. The tea was not as strong as my Mother's love, Seeing Mother covered with perspiration; I at once gave her my glass and asked her to drink too. Mother said "Drink, son! I'm not thirsty!"

### *This was Mother's Fourth Lie.*

After Father's death, Mother had to play the role of a single parent. She held on to her former job; she had to fund our needs alone. Our family's life was more complicated. We suffered from starvation. Seeing our family's condition worsening, my kind Uncle who lived near my house came to help us solve our problems big and small. Our other neighbors saw that we were poverty stricken so they often advised my mother to marry again. But Mother refused to remarry saying "I don't need love."

### *This was Mother's Fifth Lie.*

After I finished my studies and got a job, it was time for my old Mother to retire but she carried on going to the market every morning just to sell a few vegetables. I kept sending her money but she was steadfast and even sent the money back to me. She said, "I have enough money."

### *That was Mother's Sixth Lie.*

I continued my part-time studies for my Master's Degree. Funded by the American Corporation for which I worked, I succeeded in my studies. With a big jump in my salary, I decided to bring Mother to enjoy life in America but Mother didn't want to bother her son; she said to me "I'm not used to high living."

### *That was Mother's Seventh Lie*

In her dotage, Mother was attacked by cancer and had to be hospitalized. Now living far across the ocean, I went home to visit Mother who was bedridden after an operation. Mother tried to smile but I was heartbroken because she was so thin and feeble but Mother said, "Don't cry, son! I'm not in pain."

### *That was Mother's Eighth Lie.*

Telling me this, her eighth lie, she died.

**YES,**

**MOTHER WAS**

**AN ANGEL!**

*Raymond Rajabalan*

"M" is for the Million things she gave me,

"O" means Only that she's growing old,

"T" is for the Tears she shed to save me,

"H" is for her Heart of gold,

"E" is for her Eyes with love-light shining in them,

"R" means Right, and right she'll always be.

Put them all together, they spell "MOTHER" a word that means the world to me.

For those of you who are lucky to be still blessed with your Mom's presence on Earth, the story below is beautiful. For those who aren't so blessed, this is even more beautiful.

Mothers very often try to hide their sorrow and pain in order to make sacrifices to bring up their children under trying circumstances.

In the process they often resort to telling various 'lies', which actually various form of her sacrifice.

The story below, written by an unknown author illustrates this very beautifully.

## EIGHT LIES OF A MOTHER

The story begins when I was a child: I was born poor. Often we hadn't enough to eat. Whenever we had some food, Mother often gave me her portion of rice. While she was transferring her rice into my bowl, she would say "Eat this rice, son! I'm not hungry."

### *This was Mother's First Lie.*

As I grew, Mother gave up her spare time to fish in a river near our house. she hoped that from the fish she caught, she could give me a little bit more nutritious food for my growth. Once she had caught just two fish, she would make fish soup. While I was eating the soup, mother would sit beside me and eat what was still left on the bone of the fish I had eaten. My heart was touched when I saw it. Once I gave the other fish to her on my chopstick but she immediately refused it and said, "Eat this fish, son! I don't really like fish."

### *This was Mother's Second Lie.*

Then, in order to fund my education, Mother went to a Match Factory to bring home some used match-

 Special Feature

# “Crucifying the resurrected” - The Sri Lankan Dilemma

By: JJ Atputharajah

.....  
Several groups held vigils and church services to mourn the loss of lives in Sri Lankan churches on the Easter Sunday. The Tamil Church of the Living Saviour at Huntingwood Drive held a service recently to pray for the loss of lives in their motherland.

Rev. Ben Manickam giving the message said that none can separate us from the love of God. He quoted a passage from the Epistle to the Corinthians which assures the love and care of God in all circumstances. We are pressurized in every way but not crushed, we are perplexed but not in despair;

we are persecuted but not abandoned; we are struck but not destroyed. In the contemporary world there is no safe place. Even in Iceland reckoned as the safest countries in the world there are frequent earthquakes to upset the lives of the people.

A letter written by a Sri Lankan sister to the killer who attacked the Christians said “Perhaps, you didn’t know that doing what you did, at the time and place you chose, it actually meant that the last words that escaped their lips were probably words of remembrance and praise of Jesus which is a noble end which many Christians could only dream of. And perhaps you

A special Song sung at the service enlightened the gathering and broadened their horizons:-

“Carry your candle, run to the darkness,  
Seek out the helpless, deceived and poor,  
Hold out your candle for all to see it,  
Take your candle, and go light your world.”

didn’t know what you did would guarantee them paradise”.

The service included relevant reflections and prayers related to the calamity that befell the Christians on the Resurrection Day. It is a pity that such unfortunate incidents should occur in a country already known for blood baths

in the past. God should protect the island nation from anymore repetitions of these unpleasant incidents.

The Hymn for Ceylon sung at the service re-iterates this need. “To Him our land shall listen, To Him our people kneel, All rule be on His shoulder, All wrong beneath His heel”.



# Canadian Tamil Business community's entrepreneur skills showcased at CTCC Awards Gala

By Siva Sivapragasam

Most of them came to a country where both the culture & climate were different. They were uprooted from their country of origin due to the unsettled conditions and the absence of a level playing field. Over the years their hardwork & skills paved the way to climb-up the ladder of success in their chosen fields.

The Canadian Tamils' Chamber of Commerce proudly presented the champions of entrepreneurship among the Tamil community at this

year's Awards Gala at the prestigious Hilton Suites, Markham recently. The show witnessed by hundreds of guests from different walks of life gave the audience a look into the stories of men and women who initially took a small step towards their success, but it led to a giant leap for the community to demonstrate its success in Canada which offered them a level playing field and gave them the opportunity to exhibit their skills and talents.

The President Santha Panchalingam congratulated the Award win-

ners and thanked the sponsors for the support they have continuously given over the years. He remarked that the continuous support was an indication of the repute and recognition the sponsors had for the Chamber.

The keynote speaker at this year's Gala was Roy Ratnavel, Executive Vice-President of CI International. His motivational and inspiring speech resulted in several rounds of applause by the audience. His own life story in Canada beginning as a "mail-room sorter" and the meteoric rise to his present position was a

clear indication that given the opportunities our community is capable of obtaining achievements in a variety of fields.

This year's winners were- Kris Sivaguru (Best Entrepreneur Award), Marina Cyril (Best Woman Entrepreneur Award), Kumar Punithavel (Best Community Service Person Award), Aparna Bhavani Srikanthan (Best Young Entrepreneur Award), Tharshan Vasanthan (Best Marketing Person Award) and Dunstan Peter (President's Award).



Kris Sivaguru, winner of the Best Entrepreneur Award



Marina Cyril, winner of the Best Woman Entrepreneur Award



Kumar Punithavel, winner of the Best Community Service Person Award



Dunstan Peter, winner of the President's Award



Tharshan Vasanthan, winner of the Best Marketing Award



Aparna Bhavani Srikanthan, winner of the Best Young Entrepreneur Award



The Board of Directors of CTCC



# Special Feature

## Bringing the Golden Temple experience to the Greater Toronto Area and Canada with the IN5 Experium: Golden Temple

by **Harrish Thirukumar**

.....  
**Contd. from page 1**

Interestingly, all curators offered diverse perspectives on their partnership to create this exhibit, and its meaning for Sikh and non-Sikh religious communities as well as South Asian and non-South Asian communities across the GTA and Canada for that matter. As an organizer of trade fairs for various industries, Pradeep Devaiah noted that the current trade fair industry will soon be replaced by current age of digital technologies such as virtual reality.

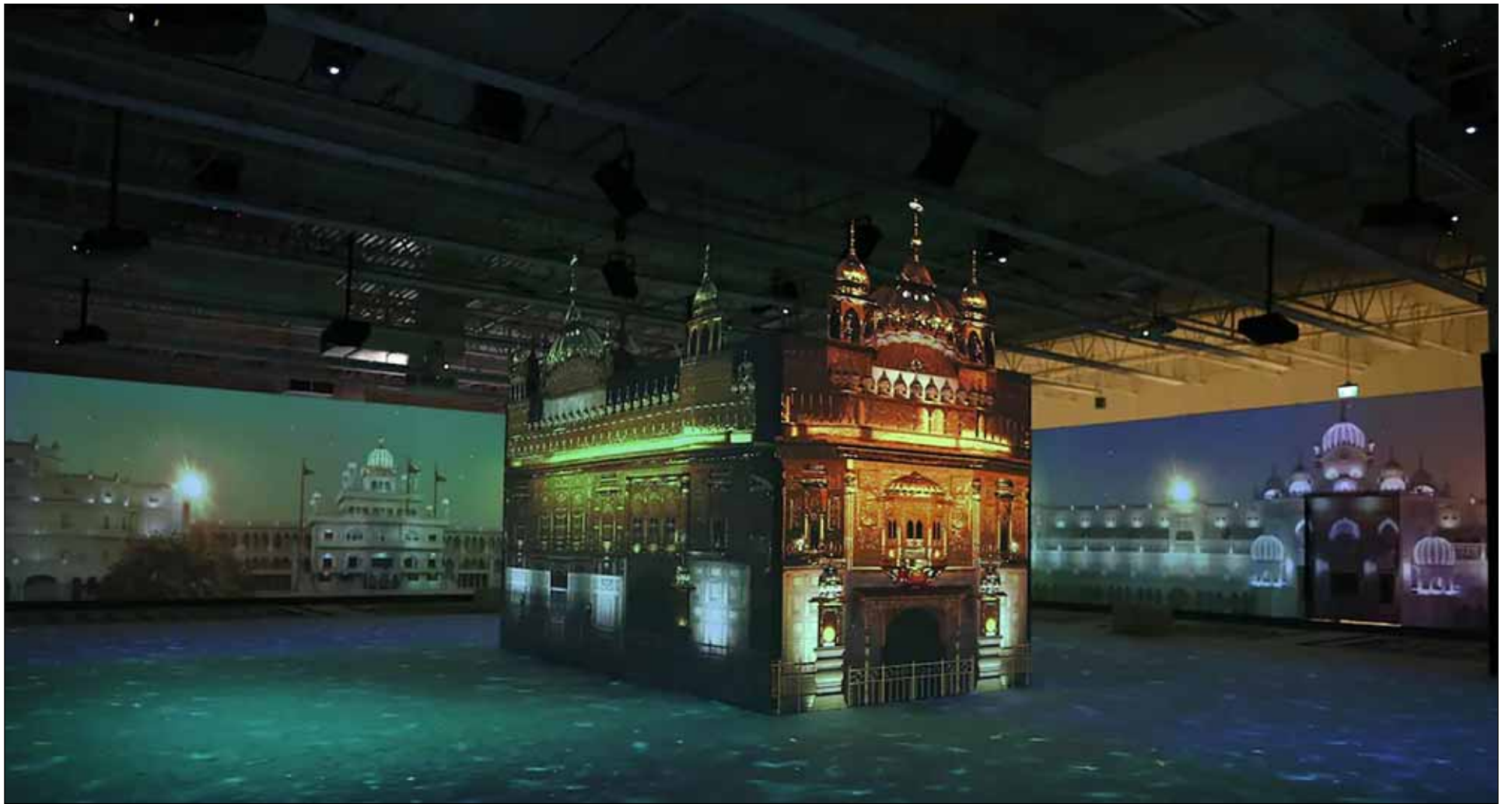
In response, his company, Trade Fairs Pvt. Ltd. have been looking closely at multimedia to enable a truly experiential space in areas of tourism, sports, and commercial endeavours. The Golden Temple was an obvious choice, given all its glory for the theme of this space.

According to Mr. Singh, the purpose of this exhibit is to create a culture of oneness, as Sikhism itself advocates both spiritually and divinely. Now that more people from Canada, especially aspiring prime ministers, are traveling to the Golden Temple, it's important that the narrative surrounding

the Golden Temple be told to both on-going and potential visitors. In terms of the multicultural mosaic that Canada prides itself on, he stated that the content of the exhibit should be seen in a more idealized sense than what is currently practiced in Canada.

In the context of the exhibit, the story of oneness means you remove categories out of a person's relationship with God. Secondly, the vocabulary in the actual exhibit is not religious in nature but offers some combination of spirituality and revolutionary elements.

Multiculturalism is thus considered open access, where it acknowledges the diversity of gender, geography as well as ideas for those coming together in a physical space. It is meant to address structural problems akin to the reconciliation conversation with Indigenous people in Canada. It is accomplished by building institutions and value systems regardless of beliefs of Godliness or non-Godliness. In light of the anti-Muslim attacks that took place in New Zealand, Mr. Singh also highlighted that oneness signifies efforts to curtail attempts by bigot-minded individuals







Special Feature

to see people of different cultures and faiths as other categories. White nationalism and these categories should not be subscribed to, because it is a mission for all of us to characterize ourselves as one when we can find divinity with God.

Therefore, it is more appropriate to refer to Sikhism as Sikhi, as told by the curators responsible more so for the content side of this project. This closely ties in with responses by Inni Kaur, noting that individuals should listen to the content carefully. The aim is to fall in love with the content as a source of celebration for divinity in all of us,

regardless of religion. If we do that, we have won. An exhibit where the whole family from diverse backgrounds can enjoy it, where they feel like they are a part of something, touching the hearts and minds of people, and appreciating the divinity in all of us, then, we can become better citizens.

Faith stands on the divine light that all of us can embrace. Mani sees the exhibit as something that applies to everyone, where it inspires individuals to go back to India and explore that piece of divinity that the exhibit conveys.

Several government dignitaries including municipal, provincial and fed-

eral elected officials graced the event with their presence. Having obtained a sneak peek of the exhibit, Ruby Sahota, Member of Parliament for Brampton North, asserted that it really is truly that experience you get from being at the actual Golden Temple in Amritsar, Punjab, India. Furthermore, she noted that the people of Brampton are excited to be the hosts of the exhibit and, as a representative of the Government of Canada, looks forward to spreading the good word of this exhibit among others.

Gurpreet Dhillon, Regional Councillor for Wards 9 and 10 of Peel Regional Council, recognizing the presence of

people of many backgrounds in Brampton and elsewhere in Canada, Councillor Dhillon stated that it was fitting that like a Sahib, Brampton has been a city that welcomes different communities including the curators of this exhibit. As someone unable to speak the best Punjabi, Gurratan Singh, Member of Provincial Parliament for Brampton East, noted that the exhibit is important for reinterpreting the history and culture of the Sikhi people for those living outside of the Punjab region.

The exhibit is now open to the public for two months starting from April 16, 2019.



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# A t o n e m e n t



*By Kumar Punithavel*

Nanthan was all dressed up to go to school, and was having his morning break-fast in the dining room. His dad Sundaram, who walked into the room, noticed that Nanthan had spilled some food on the floor. Thinking of the children these days, how careless they were made him irritated. He virtually howled, "Hey! is this the way to eat your food. See the food you have spilled. Next time I will make you to eat the food you spill on the floor".

Taken by surprise Nanthan never said a word, and continued eating the food looking down on the plate. He was virtually scared to look up at his father's face.

Sundaram dressed for work. Living in Oshawa he had to drive nearly an hour to Toronto for work. He had to leave early. As he was just stepping out Nanthan shouted from behind, "Good bye Dad!" Sundaram was greatly annoyed that his son had called him from behind as he was to start the day like a bad omen holding him back! His annoyance was visible in his face and tone of voice. "How many times I have told you not to call from behind", he said. Turned back and looking at his son hunching he was more irritated. "How many times have I told you not to hunch bow", he reprimanded him.

Out of fear Nanthan slowly raised his head and looked at his father. His only hope was his father would smile. "Look at this guy. Ogling like a jungle cat, at the parrot in a cage", saying so he walked out to the car and drove off to work.

Evening returning home, Sundaram saw his son playing soccer with his friends in the park close to their home. To the irritation of the tired man, he

saw Nanthan was playing in his school uniform. The children these days do not know the value of money thought Sundaram. He screeched the car to a halt and shouted at his son to come immediately. It was a great humiliation in front of his friends. It was a humiliation for the young lad. He meekly walked to the car hanging down his head. A lesson in economics started as Sundaram drove the car home explaining how expensive the uniform is and asking why he had not changed clothes before going to play. Finally when reaching the home told his son, "You have played enough for the day, now change your clothes and study, else sit in a corner and think about what I just told you".

At last there was calm in the house. Sundaram sat in the rocking chair and stretched his legs on the front stool. Shanthi on finishing all the cleaning up in the kitchen without coming to the parlour mentioned that she going to bed, and reminded him to switch off all the lights before coming to bed. He too replied, "O.K. I will. Good Night".

Sundaram heard some rustle near the door and looked up. He saw his son Nanthan standing holding the curtain without going to sleep. It really irritated Sundaram. He should be on the bed by this time, instead lingering awake he thought and said, "Now what do you want? Why aren't you in bed yet?"

Without saying a word Nanthan ran up to his dad and hugged him giving a kiss on dad's cheek. Saying 'Good night' and ran back to his room, afraid his dad might scold him again.

Without his knowledge the book he was holding fell on his chest. Both eyes stared tearing. He could not focus on reading the book. His mind rolled back on the events of the day. Nanthan was only a small

boy. He was doing his best to reach out to his father and the only response he got was snubbing for his efforts. After a long pause he got up and walked to his son's room. He tiptoed like a thief in his own house. Nanthan's room was in darkness, except the small night light illuminating the room. Nanthan was in deep sleep. Sunthu went and kneeled by his side to atone for his wrongful behaviour to his son the whole day. He was afraid he may wake up the boy if he sat on the bed. He thought of his young days, when his father would comb his hair as he went away for work. It simply made him feel very proud. That small action spoke volumes, and lingered in his memories.

He thought how he had rebooked the greeting in the morning when he was leaving for work. On his return from work how he fed to his ego by humiliating the son in front of his friends. He realized that he had made this world a living hell for his young son the whole day. But his son repaid with a loving hug and a kiss.

The number of times he had been harsh to his son and Nanthan's unconditional love to him made him tear more. He was reminded of the words of Charlie Chaplin: "I always like walking in the rain, so no one can see me crying." He was crying in the darkness in his own house so that his family cannot see his tears. Silently he asked his son forgiveness for his behaviour the whole day. After a while he got up and went to his room where his wife was fast asleep.

As he lay awake for a long time choking his tears. Wife Shanthi was oblivious of turmoil by her side. Slowly he fell asleep determined to be born again the next morning as a new man, treating his wonderful son better.



# Godliness is an essential virtue



- fountainoflifetm.com

By: Jesudason John Aputharajah

*'Thanakkuvamai illathan thar! sertharkallal,  
Manakkavalai maattal arithu.'*

They only escape the worries of the mind, who seek refuge in God who is the incomparable one. Every human being is beset by innumerable worries. One needs the care of God if he is to be rid of these calamities. Like the alphabets that begins with "A", so does the universe, with God.

Learning and scholarship are of no avail, if they do not lead one to worship at the feet of the almighty God. Only those find everlasting mind that contemplate on Him, who has made the blossomed mind his abode. No evil shall ever come to those who have contemplated the feet of him who is above

human frailties of desire and hatred.

The twin deeds of dark illusion will not affect those who delight meaningfully in the praise of God. Detachment from all material things good and evil and progress towards Godliness, by eschewing desire, has always appealed to the religious mind as a special grade of virtue. Those who tread the faultless path of one who is immune to the five senses and evils thereof, will attain everlasting life.

The Baghawat Gita expresses the same idea when it asserts that 'To the self-controlled and serene, the supreme self is the object of constant realization'. Except those who have found the feet of him, who is the

sea of all virtue; none can hope to cross the rest of the seas. The head that does not go before the Lord of eight attributes in prayer, is like the body with all its senses defunct.

(The eight attributes are self-dependence, immaculate body, natural understanding, omniscience, infinite detachment, infinite mercy, omnipotence, limitless bliss).

In today's world, where about 17 per cent are atheists, the message of Valluvar clearly and eloquently underline the need for faith in God to protect humans from all harm. Those who contemplate at the God's feet will cross the sea of birth, others will not.

***'Piravip perunkadal neenthuvar, neenthar,  
Iraivan adi serathar'***

(Kural: 01-10)



Valluvar's Views



- NDTV

## GOOD-FRIDAY:

# God's Stunning Plan for Redemption

The Good Friday Service at Tamil Christian Church of Canada was well planned and relayed. Good Friday observance is one of the most celebrated events of the Christian faith and the peak experience of the lent season is meant to renew their religious commitments.

The service was replete with a number of meaningful songs expressing the sufferings of Christ and their spiritual significance. The Church choir sang Lyrics like 'Siluvai maddum ummai tharlthineer', 'Unthan irantham enakkai cinthy', 'Aaruthalin theivamey', 'Enthan Jeevan yesuve, ennai meeduk kondeere', 'Inba yesu rajavaip parthal pothum' - proved to be exhilarating for the soul. The songs were suitably matched by excellent performance of the musicians like Christy Watson, Miruna Karunanithy, Jeremy Selvarajah and Lasanthi Rajkumar.

The messages were given by Pastor Sam Mills and the Parish priest Albert Jebaneson. Pastor Sam Mills explained how the Lord Jesus went through the trials and tribulations to set the correct example for humanity. Having reduced to the unfortunate state of forsakenness, he submitted his life to be taken at the cross.

Pastor Sam related the story of an eye witness in the Bombay shootings of 2008 and the imaginative thoughts of his son Micah to illustrate the theme of his message.

Pastor Albert Jebaneson who gave the second message, related how Jesus was nailed on the cross for our sins. Barabass, a criminal was spared to send the innocent Jesus to the cross. Jesus lived as a living example to prove that righteousness exalteth humanity and sin is a reproach to it. The Good Friday service proved to be a spiritual blessing to all those who attended it.





# What is Happiness to Me?



## Agastyan Ganeshan

They say happiness is contagious. It means seeing others happy will make you happy. My name is Agastyan Ganeshan, and I am very happy to be here. You ask why? Because today, I stand in front of you, prepared, confident, and respected. I feel happy because there are judges who have taken the time out of their busy lives to hear me give a speech on what makes me happy. I haven't lived in this world for a long time, but in my short time here, I've learned that I can be very happy. What makes me the happiest you may wonder – candies, video games, TV, mindless Youtube channels... Actually, what makes me the happiest is doing the things I love to do with the people I love. I love shooting basketball with my dad, cooking with my mom, and playing soccer with my brother. I also get a lot of happiness from the simple things in life, like when my grandpa feeds me dinner or when my grandma sneaks in a dessert on a school night. I know, just by me being happy, I make others happy and this world a happier place. Knowing I make this world a happier place makes me even happier. In a world where it's very easy to be sad, it is highly important that we take some time to do things that make us happy every day. I challenge everyone in this room to take 2 minutes for the next 10 days to do something that makes you happy. Because happiness is contagious, you will make this world a happier place.

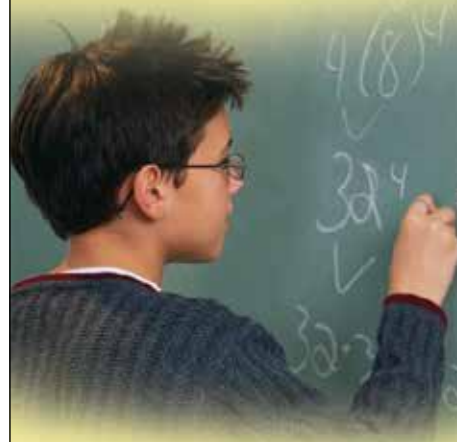
Today, I thank you for making me happy. Have a happy day!



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# REWIRE OUR BRAIN WITH NEUROPLASTICITY

WE BECOME WHAT WE THINK, TALK AND DO ALL THE TIME

By: Uthayan Thurairajah

Neuroplasticity and neurogenesis are two different concepts. Neuroplasticity is

functional changes in the brain.

2. Impaired: variations occur due to genetic or acquired disorders.

3. Excessive: the new change, maladaptive pathways that can cause complications or disability.

4. Brain exposed to injury: ill neuronal pathways are formed that make injury more impactful (Mundkur, 2005).

These processes are more noticeable in young children, allowing them to recover from injury far more effectively than most adults. In children, profound cases of neuroplastic growth, recovery, and adaptation can be seen. Adults are generally at lower intensities. However, the adult brain is still able to extraordinary change. It can restore old, lost connections, functions, enhance memory, and overall cognitive skills. The poten-



As Christopher Bergland (2017) notes, "This process opens up the hope to reinvent yourself and move or defeat past traumatic experiences that excite stress and anxiety. Hardwired fear-based thoughts often lead to escape responses that can keep you back from experiencing your life to the whole."

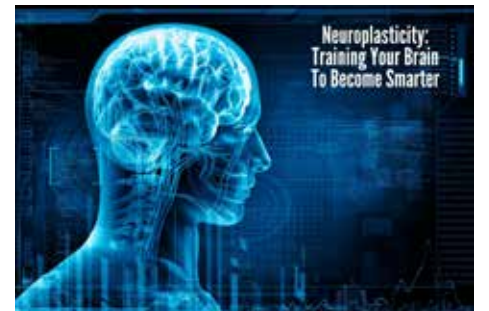
We already use chemicals and medications to alter the way our brain works. Psychology has put forth an effort to change the way the brain works by modifying our thought patterns. We can make notable changes to our brain function and structure by simple activities that we usually do every day. It is where the importance of learning comes in.

## Some Neuroplasticity Methods

Some of the ways neuroplasticity can be used. The following are a few samples methods that have been used to boost or enhance neuroplasticity:

- ♥ Sleeping: Sleeping is important and encourages learning retention through the growth of the dendritic spines that act as connections between neurons and help transfer information across cells (Nguyen, 2016).

- ♥ Periodical fasting: The fasting improves synaptic modification, supports neuron growth, improve cognitive function, and reduces the risk of neurodegenerative illness.



- ♥ Traveling: Travelling opens our brain stimuli and new surroundings, opening up new pathways and activity in the brain.

- ♥ Dancing: Dancing activity reduces the chance of Alzheimer's and enhances neural connection.

- ♥ Using helpful devices: memory training devices can improve connection in the pre-frontal cortex, parietal network and prevent some age-related memory loss.

- ♥ Musical instrument: New music learning may increase the link between brain areas and help create new neural networks.

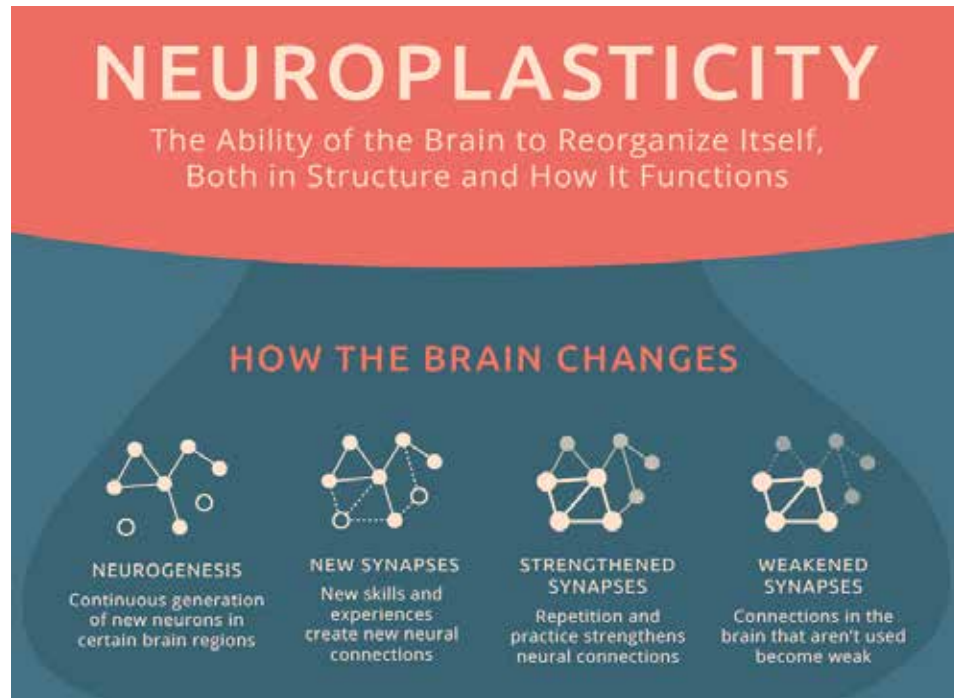
- ♥ Non-dominant hand exercises: the exercise may create new neural pathways and strengthen the connection between neurons.

- ♥ Reading fiction: Reading fiction books boosts and enhances connection in the brain regions.

- ♥ Expanding your vocabulary: Learning vocabulary activates the visual and auditory processes as well as memory processing.

- ♥ Creating artwork: Artwork enhances the connection of the brain at rest (the "default mode network" or DMN), which can promote thought, memory, compassion, attention, and focus.

We can conclude that any habit and behaviors can be changed by changing appropriate thoughts, words, and action. It is not too late to change. We can start now and do not wait for tomorrow.



## Introduction

Most of us have very different thoughtfulness and behaviors today than we did two-decade ago. This transfer is neuroplasticity in action; changes in brain structure and organization as we feel, learn and adjust. We reinforce a neural pathway with every repetition of a thought or emotion. We start to formulate a new way of life. The small repeated adjustments lead to shifts in brains function.

The things we do regularly become stronger and what we do not fade away. Therefore, Neuroplasticity is the muscle building part of the brain. Brain power increases when we do things over and over again. When we are used to, it becomes a part of us. We become what we think, talk and do all the time.

Neuroplasticity happens throughout life. The connections within the brain are continually becoming stronger or weaker, de-



pending on what is being used. Younger people change quickly, and their brains are very flexible. As we age change does not come as promptly; the brain loses some of its flexibility, and we become more established in how we think, perceive and learn.

## Meaning of Neuroplasticity

Neuroplasticity indicates to the brain's ability to adjust. "It indicates the physiological alterations in the brain that happen as the result of our interplays with our surroundings. The time the brain begins to develop until the day we die, the connections among the cells in our brains organize in response to our changing needs. This robust process permits us to learn and change to diverse experiences." – Celeste Campbell.

Our brains are amazing. The computers are built to specific specs and receive software updates regularly whereas our brains can receive hardware and software updates periodically. Different pathways form and fall dormant according to our actions. We create new connections between our neurons when we learn something new. We rewire our brains to adapt to current circumstances. It happens daily, but it's also something that we can encourage and stimulate.

## Neuroplasticity & Neurogenesis

the potential of the brain to form new pathways and connections. Neurogenesis is the even more astonishing ability of the brain to grow new neurons (Bergland, 2017).

You can see how neurogenesis is a more exciting concept. It is one thing to work with what we already have, but the potential to replace neurons that have died may open up new frontiers in the treatment and prevention of dementia, recovery from traumatic brain injuries, and other areas we probably have not even thought of.



## Neuroplasticity & Age

Neuroplasticity changes with age. Children's brains are constantly developing, changing and growing. Each new action urges a shift in brain function, structure, or both. In an infant's brain, each neuron has about 7,500 links with other neurons at birth. By the age of two (2), the brain's neurons have more than double the number of connections (Mundkur, 2005). These connections are slowly cut away as the child grows up and starts forming their connections and patterns.



There are four (4) main types of neuroplasticity recognized in children:

1. Adaptive: transitions that happen when children practice a specific skill and allow the brain to adjust to structural or



Uthayan Thurairajah, Ph.D., RSE, LC, P.Eng., FEC, is a Project Manager at WSP with over twenty years of experience in Electrical Engineering and Lighting field, and he also holds a Lecturer position at Ryerson University & professor at Centennial. Uthayan is a member of several Canadian and international professional association including Professional Engineers Ontario (PEO) and Association for Prevention Teaching and Research (APTR). He has worked on multi-disciplinary lighting and electrical projects for various clients. He researches 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 of lighting design & health. He is passionate about integrating science and health into the lighting design.



## MANAGING YOUR MONEY

## Family money – a financial checklist for families

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

Raising children is definitely a joy — it's also expensive. And, while parents are great at keeping track of schedules, appointments and making lists that keep their lives in order, financial planning can be forgotten in the rush and hustle of everyday life.

You want the best for your kids. That's why you send them to school and mentor them at home. Education is vital to success in life, but an important skill-set your kids likely won't get at school is a dollars and cents education. Young children should learn that you need money to buy things, that you earn money by working, that you might need to wait before making purchases, and that wants are not necessarily needs. As they get older, they should be taught the importance of avoiding credit card debts, investing wisely and managing risks.

But it's important to have a financial plan in place if parents are to successfully navigate the different stages of their children's lives — so here is a quick reference financial checklist for families.

**Pre-baby**

- Research all available employee and government parental benefits so you'll know what your income is likely to be while you're away from work.
- Review your current financial plan(s) and determine what you want to save in advance of having a child and what your family budget will be when your new addition arrives.
- Save early and often, in a tax-efficient way. Use RRSPs and TFSAs to build a nest egg.
- Investigate life, disability and critical illness insurance.
- Arrange for a last will and testament or update your most recent will to be sure it includes your wishes for your child's (and any future children) education, care and inheritance. Name a guardian for minor children in the event of your death.

**Infant and Toddler (0-5)**

- Register your child for all government benefits.
- Open an RESP. The government offers a Canadian Education Savings Grant which can provide 20% or more return on the money you save depending on your income.

**The early years (5-10)**

- Open a savings account for your child.
- Save the receipts from daycare and extra-curricular programs because they may be eligible for the child care expense deduction.
- Re-visit your financial plan and

anticipated future costs to be sure you're saving and investing enough to meet your goals.

Make savings fun! Give them a special bank to fill with coins from you and others. Mark their graduation to a real bank account and give them an allowance tied to completing certain tasks. A fixed amount is best because it teaches that serious choices need to be made when it comes to spending or saving. Get them to buy into pay-yourself—first strategy by saving at least ten percent of their allowance and explain how interest makes their money grow. Other good money education tools are board games and interactive websites such as the Bank of Canada's ([www.bankofcanada.ca](http://www.bankofcanada.ca)) and the Canadian Foundation for Economic Education's ([www.monwyand.youth.cfee.org](http://www.monwyand.youth.cfee.org)).

Use shopping trips to discuss debit and credit with particular emphasis on the fact that most credit cards carry much higher interest rates than other forms of borrowing, such as a personal loan.

**Adolescent and Teenager (11-19)**

- Talk to your kids about earning, saving and spending wisely.
  - If they have a part-time job, help them to divide their income into areas like current cost of living, future school savings and investments.
  - Teach them about loans and good and bad forms of debt.
  - Set goals with them and add incentives like matching their savings.
- Give your kids a hand in developing their own simple budget that includes keeping tax receipts and statements so they can keep track of where their money went. Factor in a charitable giving component to show how their money can have a positive impact on the community. Give them a bonus allowance for extra work that must be invested. Introduce them to concepts of compounding and tax-saving through RRSP eligible investments and other long-term investments.

Be sure each child files a tax return as soon as they have a job that results in a T4. This will give them an up close and personal view of income taxes and they will build up room for future contributions of RRSP eligible investments. Co-sign for a low-limit credit card in their name. Monitor its use and stress the importance of making monthly payments to maintain their good credit rating while avoiding high interest rates and late fees. Use their monthly credit card statements to discuss spending pattern and best uses for



David Joseph, M.A., CFP®, CLU, RRC.

Financial Consultant

[david.joseph@investorsgroup.com](mailto:david.joseph@investorsgroup.com)

Phone: (905)-895-6718

Toll Free: 1-888-565-9996

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their purchasing power.

**Young adult (20-25)**

- Offer to contribute toward the purchase of their first home if they are able to save a certain amount on their own.
- Talk with them about savings plans like TFSAs and RRSPs.
- Be sure they understand all the tax deductions and credits available to them through RRSP contributions, their educational expenses, and so on.
- Encourage them to work with a professional to file proper tax returns.

Teach them the difference between good debts and bad debts. Show them the examples of good debts, such as a business operating loan or even borrowing to invest. Some types of debts are even tax deductible.

**Bad debt:** This is debt you acquire through over spending, such as charging an expensive vacation on a credit card. Bad debt is any form of debt with a high interest rate for things you can't afford.

Develop some short and long term goals together, and check their progress towards these goals. Good money management begins with setting goals. It's important for them to know exactly where, when, and how they are spending their money.

Involve your kids in family financial discussions and explain how your family budget must balance expenses and income. Set aside regular time for the discussion of money matters. Avoid

blaming any member of the family for financial problems. Introduce them to investment products such as stocks, bonds, mutual funds, Guaranteed Investment Certificates, and registered and non-registered savings plans. Explain investment concepts like portfolio diversification and risk/reward decisions as well as the role insurance plays in maintaining financial stability and family protection.

Life can bring joy and happiness along with change and challenges. Your professional advisor can help navigate every stage by providing the personal financial knowledge you need and the right financial plan for your family.

**Disclaimer:**

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

- Include them in conversations about estate planning and where to find your will and other valuable information.

Life can bring joy and happiness along with change and challenges. Your professional advisor can help navigate every stage by providing the personal financial knowledge you need and the right financial plan for your family.

\*The Canada Education Savings Grant and Canada Learning Bond (CLB) are provided by the Government of Canada. CLB eligibility depends on family income levels. Some provinces make education





# LET'S TALK MONEY:

## - A Proletarian Guide to Financial Planning



By: Rajini Nathan



The opportunity to become fiscally accomplished isn't something that happens to everyone. As we grow, we are all presented with the potential to understand money management, however, what we do with those prospects and how that knowledge manifests in our lives is different for each individual.

Growing up I was always aware that money management was important, however, I don't think I made the most of the opportunities I had to learn the best ways to protect my finances. I have been working since the age of 15, starting in retail and moving on to corporate and finally running my own business. However, I never quite grasped how to manage or secure the money I made.

Today, I have been married for over a decade and spent most of that time as a stay at home parent, raising our child whilst occasionally working freelance jobs as and when I can. My wonderful husband takes care of all our financial responsibilities and therefore, I really have not had to think about anything finance related.

I understand that I may be part of a rare minority of women in this position, however, what I have discovered is that when I talk to other women in my life about finances, collectively, we know very little about how to make our money work for us and have absolutely zero knowledge in financial security. In this series, follow along as Mirna Yo-

geswaran, from Inforcelife Financial Services Inc, educates me on the importance of financial security.

Like most people, I too have strengths and weaknesses. My strengths comprise of public speaking, effective communication skills, classical dancing, singing and cooking. What I am not good at includes directions, geography, remembering historical dates (including my wedding anniversary) and numbers.

When it comes to numbers, I am phenomenally hopeless. I still use my fingers when I'm counting, adding or subtracting and I don't even bother with multiplication and division because that's what smart phones are for!

### A brief background

Mirna and I have known of each other all our lives. Our mothers were primary school friends in Colombo and Mirna often says that her mother used to talk of me as a role model to her when she was growing up. Well today, her role model is her student. Life is funny like that. Growing up in Colombo, Mirna moved to Toronto in 2008. While studying at the University of Toronto, she worked in the law and insurance industries and began her financial career in 2014. Since then, she has upgraded her designations and continues to do so.

As a Chartered Life Underwriter and Certified Health Insurance Specialist, Mirna can provide the expertise and professional network required to assist clients with all aspect of their wealth planning, risk management (including income replacement) disability, critical illness, long term care, and



group benefits. She also takes pride in the time that she invests to understand and share her clients' vision and creates solutions that are tailored for each individual financial picture.

My background is in Occupational Psychology and Media. I have a BSc (Hons) in Psychology from the University of Westminster and did a masters in Occupational Psychology at Goldsmiths University, both in London, which is where I was born and raised. I also have worked in the media industry for close to 20 years.

My family and I moved to Toronto two years ago and since arriving I have been predominantly a stay at home

mother, but also occasionally freelancing for work in various industries.

Mirna has been tasked with the challenge of educating me with what I should know about my own financial security and I will be taking you with me on this journey. Let's start with a document that I've been tasked with which is called, "Bringing clarity to your financial plan"

Find out more in the next article. Ciao for now!

If you would like to contact Mirna Yogeswaran you can do so at [kalaimirna@gmail.com](mailto:kalaimirna@gmail.com)



# Jaffna Hindu College Alumni, citadel of Tamil culture, holds annual awards gala

By **Harrish Thirukumaran**

On April 20, 2019, the Jaffna Hindu College Alumni held its annual awards gala. The event was a dinner and dance held at Scarborough Convention Centre. Jaffna Hindu College is one of the top schools in Jaffna, Sri Lanka. The College stands aloft as the Premier Hindu Institution in the Island, generations of students who had passed through its portals are spread all over the world, distinguishing themselves in whatever vocation they are engaged in. Where – ever they are, that reflects the discipline, dedication and character that have been inculcated in them during their student days.

The College has had a proud record of service in the history of Sri Lanka. Many of its distinguished Alumni have held and are holding high positions of

responsibility in Sri Lanka and worldwide. They have all contributed to the national and cultural life of the People of Sri Lanka. The College has also been the citadel of Tamil and Hindu Culture. Such attainments of the College are due to the very strong foundation laid by the Founding fathers. The pioneers bounded themselves together and acted in unison with a spirit of self – sacrifice. They did not seek name or fame for themselves but drew plans with such foresight the school could grow as it has done today. It is not the product of an individual but that of a body of men who worked in laying the strong foundations.

The event was emceed by Sudher-shi Kularatnam & Ram Prashan. The Canadian national anthem, O'Canada, was delivered by six-year old Catalina Ellakia Morisous in a trilingual for-

mat with English, French and Tamil. It was followed by the Thamil Thai Valththu by Samanthi Yoganathan. Several speeches were made to kick off the event from individuals such as Committee Chairperson Sayon Balas-untharam and President Paramsothy Thayanithy. It acknowledged the importance of the Tamil Student Assistance program, which, since 2010, is a project run back in Sri Lanka by the Canadian alumni to support students in the North and East. As a matter of fact, Old Boys Association of Canada that was founded in 1991 has worked on several projects that similarly contribute to the wellbeing of less privileged students in northeast Sri Lanka and other contributions worldwide. Three awards were given out to three people in recognition for excelling in their career and outstanding contribu-

tions.

Accordingly, Dr. Selvanayagam Thayaparan received the Award for Excellence in Academic Achievement. The award for Excellence for Achievement in Sports was given to Mr. Vigi-yakulasingam Kandiah. The third and final award for Excellence for Social Activism was earned by Mr. P.A. Jayakaran.

Dance programs were also held by the Ottawa Crusaders, Sithampara Kalai Mandram Dance Academy, and Sri Abiramy Dance Academy. A mashup of songs was performed by Vithusayani Paramanathan, Co-founder, Isai Empire Inc. in Spanish, Tamil, and English. The chief guest was Dr. Coormarasamy Kirupanathan, a gynecologist who does a great deal of social service work.

Photo courtesy: Maple Vision



Sri Abiramy Dance Academy group and teacher were honored by Thipan Raj, RE/MAX Community



Sri Abiramy Dance Academy



Sithampara Kalai Mandram Dance Academy



Ottawa Crusaders





# Jaffna Hindu College Alumni, citadel of Tamil culture, holds annual awards gala



President:  
Paramsothy Thayanithy



Chairperson:  
Sayon Balasuntharam



Chief Guest Dr. Coomarasamy  
Kirupanathan



O Canada by  
Catalina Ellakia Morisous



Thamil Thai Valththu  
by Samanthi Yoganathan



Songs by Vithusayani  
Paramanathan



Mr. Vigiyakulasingam Kandia  
received the award for Excellence  
for Achievement in Sports  
presented by Rajeef Koneswaran,  
RE/MAX Community



Mr. P.A. Jayakaran received the  
award for Excellence for Social  
Activism presented by Dr. Yalini  
Aravinthan. Mrs. Jayakaran at  
centre.



Emcees Sudhershi Kularatnam & Ram Prashan



Dr. Selvanayagam Thayaparan received the Award for Excellence in  
Academic Achievement presented by Arumugasamy Master, former  
Teacher at JHC, Mrs. Thayaparan at left

## GENIE SISTERS

SAMAYAL  
SANTHAI

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 @ninjaeatsfood.

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.

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: @ninjaeatsfood and @tamil\_food

Eat more, learn more!

# Idiyappam kotthu

Some people call this idiyappa Shiryani, but this is definitely the kotthu version of the dish where stringhoppers are torn into pieces and stir fried with vegetables. We've managed to figure out the perfect combination and here it is just for you. Mother's Day is coming soon so this would be the perfect dish to treat your Amma with.

## Ingredients:

- ✓ 15 Idiyappams shredded into pieces
- ✓ 2 tbs of coconut oil (thengai ennai)
- ✓ ½ cup of beans cut into small round pieces (bonjikkai)
- ✓ ½ cup of carrots – grated or cubed
- ✓ ½ cup of chickpeas (kadalai)
- ✓ ½ inch of ginger- grated (inji)
- ✓ ½ tsp of fennel seeds (perunseeragam)
- ✓ ½ tsp of turmeric powder (manjal thool)
- ✓ ½ tsp of chilli powder (milagai thool)
- ✓ 1 tsp of sambhar powder or masala powder of choice (sambhar podi/masala podi)
- ✓ Chilli sauce/ketchup or condiment of choice
- ✓ Salt to taste

## Method:

On medium heat, place a pan and warm the coconut oil. Add the fennel seeds and grated ginger. Once the ginger starts to brown add the beans and carrots, cover with a lid and cook for a couple of minutes. Next add the chickpeas, turmeric powder, chilli powder, sambhar powder (or alternative choice) and salt and cook till the vegetables are done (should take no more than 10 minutes to cook completely)

Once the vegetables are done, add the shredded idiyappam and mix well together. Stir fried egg, made with salt and pepper or cooked shrimp or chicken can be added to spice up the dish.

Typically, take out stores in Toronto make their idiyappam kotthu with fried potatoes and aubergines, however, this way is much healthier and so mouth wateringly tasty. Add some sauce on top and it'll be something you make again and again.

Try making this recipe this month and

Hashtag #monsoonjournal on Instagram and send us your pics, comments and feedback. Spread the love (and recipe!) :)



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# Tribute

## AMU THAYA

# Graceful gift for others in shorter life-time

By Thiru K. Thirukumaran

To say in Tamil, she's daughter-ma-gal; wife-manaivi, mom-ammah; younger sister-thangachchi; elder sister-acca; aunt-atthai/mami and friend-nanbi, the many roles a female could do in their journey through this earth. Amutha is every single one of them glowing in deep spirit, full of devotion in how she delivered in all these roles.

Amutha, a pure Tamil name means the one who is ambrosia, possessing the celestial nectar.

Amutha Thayaparan of Plainsboro, New Jersey, also known as Amu passed away on March 25. She was diagnosed in the Fall of 2016 of having pancreatic cancer. She held career positions in Hartford, Connecticut and Princeton, New Jersey, including at Berlitz International, a global language education company.

Amutha is a past pupil of St Bridget's Convent (1974 - 1987) and CMS Ladies College (1987-1989). She left Colombo in 1990 for higher studies in the USA.

Amu's simple candidness perhaps awed the US Visa official too in Colombo some three decades ago.

It is well known and student and visitor US visa applicants must establish their connection and strong ties to Sri Lanka while being interviewed by the Consul Officer. But Amu didn't do that, and went on to tell the embassy official that she has no future there!

Amu Thaya witted this in order for the visa to be declined so that she wouldn't have to leave daddy and amma and Sri Lanka. Nevertheless, Amu walked away with her multiple entry being stamped to travel to Hartford and attend Central Connecticut State University. She graduated there with a Bachelor's degree in 1995.

Connecticut is not where though I came to know Amu, nor through her anna (elder brother), my friend Jegan.

Amu's chinanna (little' elder brother) Muhundan is my sweet friend and classmate from 'DS' school days, we call fondly that is D. S. Senanayake College. There began our bonds lasting this day throughout our lives.

Their home located in a 5-minute walk from school and many a times I've gone there along with classmates or by myself after school and during times leaving school in 1981 through 1984.

Yet me seeing Amu there in Sri Lanka, even in their home for that matter - very minimal, she being

eight years younger than Muhundan any glimpse of her at home she'd be tucking and snuggling behind amma or daddy. On the other hand, Amu's thambi (little brother) Ahi, studied at DS and when we go to see him in his elementary class during our interval, he'd be so on his toes to be having big brother and friends drop by.

Now I think of this, for anytime Amu for after the 38 some years have passed, I always feel Amu greets me with these backdrops in her heart whenever she sees me, or anyone of our friends from DS for that matter.

Soon after she came to Connecticut, I too had moved to Toronto but our connections and ties existing, also through Amu's acca (elder sister) now living in Oakville, Ontario.

And then when I returned to a job in Bedminster, New Jersey in 1998, Amu and her husband Thayaparan's open arms allowed me to stay in their Woodbridge, New Jersey residence for over a month until I made up of my plans of continuing to stay in US.

Amutha, born on 20 June 1971 is 4th child of Aiyathurai Thurairasalingam and Sathyadevi Thurairasalingam of Castle Street, Borella. Amu's late father, a pioneering executive in Sri Lanka's private sector retired in 1984 concluding with a career spanning at Lipton Ceylon Ltd. Amutha's mother now lives in Oakville, Ontario.

Amu's parents and their families have deep ties to the Selva Sannithy Murugan Temple in Northern Sri Lanka. Situated in littoral Thondamanaru, Sannithy is temple

enerated for generations over centuries and it's an important shrine for global Lord Murugan devotees.

I feel very ignorant, sad and want to apologize to you Amu for failing to fully comprehend this moment since being diagnosed with incurable illness.

Nevertheless, Amu has it clear that she is not a quitter and wants to celebrate this

moment, voicing through Thayaparan at the viewing and quoting of their many conversations over the past two and a half years.

"I took all you through this journey and made you strong and understand that every minute of life is precious and do not take it as granted, therefore spend the time wisely as much as possible with loved ones and do good things." Very characteristic voice of Amu in hearing, "I didn't quit on you, make me proud by overcoming all grief; at the end rewards will be worth it".

This illness so happens to people who are one streak passionate about something and not balance it out with something quite the opposite, such as a bit of evilness in their heart for all the love and care they bring to those around them, such is the nature of Amu.

Amu is perfect epitome of this Thirukural, an ancient Tamil scripture of wisdom; herein one of its couplets - number 72, says about pure love and no one-bit evilness:

**Anbilar ellam thamakkuriyar  
anbudaiyar enpum uriyar pirarkku**

Which means:

"Those who are destitute of love appropriate all they have to themselves; but those who possess love consider even their bones to belong to others." (via Thirukural commentary by Rev Dr G U Pope and Rev W H Drew)

Still Amu is being doing better than the medical professionals in the past two and a half years said because of all of you in the family too, standing by her.

I know of all the days and weekly trips (siblings) Jegan from Hartford, Muhundan from Sydney, Ahi from Houston and acca (elder sister) from Ontario made over this time. But Jegan called me to say Amu didn't wait for him at the cusp of her final journey, though he was an exit or two away on the NJ Turnpike from Penn Medicine's Princeton Medical Center in Plainsboro, New Jersey. This beyond words is where Amu showed her divine strike; every time in the past several weeks Amu would feel better and recover after a loved one arrived in New Jersey but didn't wait for her brother Jegan that day. This may have been the only way for her to part!

It's been said many a times that good people are taken by god sooner as they have full-filled their duties and/or they've risen above earthly desires.

But knowing Amu and her care for others in her little true to heart, tot like spirit, and in these two and a half years too, beneath there is these lyrics of Poet Laureate Kannadasan:

**Kadavul oru naal ulagai kaana  
thaniye vantharam  
Kannil kanda manitharai ellam  
nalama endraraam  
Ullam engum sellam pongum  
anbai kandaaraam  
Unmai Kanden pothum endru  
vaanam sendraaraam**

Which can be translated as,  
God surfaced on the earth one day  
Saying hello to each and every passerby  
Seeing him in smiles of children  
Seeing tot hearts full of ebullient love  
Returning heaven God said truth seen enough!



Amutha with father on her wedding day

That's Amu Thaya. Little realization we have when this is who they are with their graceful gift for others in their shorter life-time.

And all whose lives Amu touch, family, friends alike I share your grief.

And Thayaparan, a Lord Siva's name meaning the abundant benefactor; I only knew Thaya since coming to the US, as one of your first roommates here in Newark, New Jersey's Pavilion apartment.

In March 1997, Amu married Thayaparan, also known as Thaya is like Amu - a 4th child to his parents late Dr. R. Arulpiragasam and late Mrs. Valliammai Arulpiragasam of Kokkuvil in the Jaffna peninsula. Thayaparan's father for decades worked as the district Government Medical Officer of Health all over the country, including for several years in Ratnapura, Sri Lanka's gemstone capital.

From our early morning conversations in the bus commuting to work in NYC, I come to know all that you endure Thayaparan, in these two and a half years and how steadfastly you full-fill your tasks.

Today you are not only Thayaparan, you are also "Thayumanavar", a name denoting Lord Siva as mother - to Brintha and Bavana, they are Amu as well in connecting the endless generational human chain.

I'd always have Amu and all of you in my thoughts, Thayaparan and Amu's daughters - Brintha (Ashley) and Bhavana (Adrienne). I want to feel at least some pain as you all do today and forever.

I will say this and go away Thayaparan; I only noticed recently, as Amu\_Tha, Amu's Instagram handle bears the first three letters of your name!!!

May the good Lord Murugan who abodes at Kokkuvil's Manchavapathi and Selva Sannithy Murugan in Thondamanaru keep Brintha, Bavana and Thayaparan in his benevolence, the god of love, beauty and valor make the days and time ahead in the usual fullest love of Amu present as always.



Amutha Thayaparan  
20 June 1971 - 25 March 2019



# Sivan Ilangko becomes President of the Canadian Tamil Congress



Sivan Ilangko, a Chartered Accountant has been elected as the new President of the Canadian Tamil Congress.

Ilangko is a Chartered Professional Accountant, currently working as an Associate Partner at Ernst & Young LLP, Toronto. Prior to that, Ilangko worked at KPMG in Sri Lanka, Ernst & Young in Bahrain and on secondment to the Maldives Islands. Ilangko is a co-founder, former director and advisor of Centre for Leadership and Innovation, an organization that develops leadership skills among youth. He is also a

director of the Stouffville Multicultural Association, Tamil Literary Garden and Tamil Chair Inc, an organization formed to establish Tamil Chairs at Harvard University and now at the University of Toronto. He was also a former Vice President – Internal Affairs of the Canadian Tamils' Chamber of Commerce.

Other Office-Bearers elected are: - Dr. Kan Chandra (Vice-President), Raveena Rajasingham (Secre-

tary), Thirukumaran Thirunavukarasu (Treasurer), Directors - Nadarajah Vijayabalan, Dilshan Navaratnarajah, and Nathan Veerasingam.

Advisory Council Members: - Ken Kandeepan, Malliha Wilson, Raj Thavaratnasingham, Sumi Shan and Dr. V. Santhakumar.



Sivan Ilangko



Dr. Kan Chandra



Raveena Rajasingham



Thirukumaran Thirunavukarasu



Nadarajah Vijayabalan



Dilshan Navaratnarajah



Nathan Veerasingam



Ken Kandeepan



Malliha Wilson



Raj Thavaratnasingham



Sumi Shan



Dr. V. Santhakumar



# \$100,000

## IN GRANT FOR THE FAMILY LIFE CENTRE BRAMPTON



The Family Life Centre received \$100,000 given as grant under Enabling Accessibility Fund (EAF) program.

David Saffrey Chief Executive Officer of The Family Life Centre Brampton, a not for profit organisation that focuses on building the family and individuals alike to reach their greatest potential announced in a gathering of over 250 members today that it has started a mentoring program that received \$100,000 as a grant under Enabling Accessibility Fund (EAF) program from Govt. of Canada. The ceremony was attended by the Hon'ble Leader of Opposition Govt. of Canada, Mr. Andrew Scheer, Ramona Singh, Arpan Khanna, Prof Dr. Kanayalal Raina, amongst other dignitaries.

The objective of the EAF is to support community-based projects across Canada that improve accessibility, remove barriers, and enable Canadians with disabilities to participate in and contribute to their community. The EAF has two funding streams: the Community Accessibility Stream (Community Stream) in place since 2007 and the Workplace Accessibility Stream (Workplace Stream) introduced in 2013.

Through grants and contributions, the program contributes to the capital costs of construction and renovation projects. This grant was to help make buildings more accessible for people with disabilities especially the aging boomer generation. At the Family Life Centre we are implementing various programs and activities to meet various community needs including people with disabilities. We are installing an elevator and some wheelchair accessible washrooms. We are very thankful to the Canadian government for a grant of \$100,000 to assist with these renovations to enable us to run the programs. We are also thankful to Prof Dr. Kanayalal Raina who assisted our team to file the application. The ultimate outcome of the program is for people with disabilities to have opportunities to participate in and contribute to community life.





# SYDNEY MURUGAN TEMPLE ANNUAL FESTIVAL

(Reminiscence of a visitor from Canada)

## C. Kamalaharan

I planned my trip to Sydney in such a way so as to arrive a couple of days prior to the commencement of Sydney Murugan's annual festival which I always look forward to. The temple serves well the spiritual, educational and cultural needs of the Saiva community. Under the guidance of the governing body Saiva Manram the administration and the various activities of the temple are carried out according to the Saiva tradition. The eleven days of spiritual awakening besides musical entertainment and merriment provide wholesome entertainment for the devotees. Saivites not only from Sydney but also from other states and even from foreign countries arrive to be part of the religious fiesta. The festival is also an occasion for a 'get-to-gather' for the Saiva community.

When I first entered the premises of the temple I stood amazed to see a huge figure of a Sivalingam at the far end. It was so captivating that I folded my palms and prayed. On inquiry I was told that it was a model of Sivalingam beautifully crafted for the Sivarathri festival held recently. After viewing the Sivalingam I entered the temple to witness the first day festival, the flag hoisting ceremony officiated by the specially invited priest from Nainativu Nagapooshani Amman temple and ably assisted by the priests of the temple. Devotees thronged the sanctified area and witnessed the proceedings praying fervently. During the morning session after the 'poojas' for the various deities the Vasantha Mandal 'pooja' was held. Here too devotees watched with rapt attention and prayed earnestly. Following this Lord Murugan and His consorts were taken around the sanctum sanctorum. During the evening session after the 'poojas' for the various deities and the Vasantha Mandal pooja Murugan and His consorts circumambulated the temple around the courtyard accompanied by Nathaswaram music and a close gathering of devotees. Circumambulation of the sanctum sanctorum and the courtyard is part of the ritual ceremonies held daily.

It is due to the Saiva Manram the festival was carried out smoothly without any drawbacks. The Saiva Manram played a vital role in the activities of the temple. The eleven day festival activities were decentralised to enable everyone to be part of it. The Flag hoisting ceremony, the 'Rathotsavam' (chariot festival) and the Theertha thiruvizha (water cutting ceremony) were sponsored by the Saiva Manram while the 'Poongavanam' festival was sponsored by the youth circle. The rest of the festivals were fairly distributed among the suburbs.

The 'Rathotsavam' was a crowd puller. Richly decorated with flags and festoons it was drawn around the temple by the devotees both males and females gripping the rope tightly and in piety. Nathaswara music and the chorus singers with cymbals and other percussion instruments enlivened the spiritual atmosphere. To fulfil their vows the men carried on their shoulders 'kavadi' (wooden arches decorated with peacock feathers) attached to the body by hooks and pins. Their tongues and cheeks were also pierced by long pins. The rhythmic movement of the body particularly the legs attuned to the Nathaswara music was a spectacular sight especially for foreign devotees. Besides the



'kavadi' display men in large numbers performed 'angaprathachana' (lying prostrate on the floor and rolling) while the women trailing behind performed 'adi alaththal' (kneeling down with their foreheads and palms touching the ground and praying.) This was repeated as they moved forward. The final item of the day was the Nathaswara kachery rendered by the artistes. Devotees remained spellbound enjoying the pulsating music as they rendered popular songs.

The 'Theertha thiruvizha' was held in the open space between the temple and the restaurant. I was not able to view it directly as the crowd all around surged in. I had to strain my neck to have occasional glimpses of the proceedings.

The 'Poongavanam' festival sponsored by the youth circle was a colourful one. The temple was teeming with flamboyantly attired youths. The 'Thirukalyanam' (celestial wedding) of Lord Murugan, Valli and Theivanai was enacted while the devotees remained as part of the invitees of the wedding. The programme ended with the serving of 'palaharan' (snacks) packed in polythene packets as it is done during Hindu weddings.

The festival came to a close with the lowering of the flag. There wasn't any flaw throughout the 11 day festival as every activity was done to perfection and everyone did his part perfectly. Duties were assigned according to a roster. The volunteers were the ones who had to shoulder heavy responsibilities; traffic control, counter duty, food serving, gardening, cleaning etc which they did in a dedicated manner without any resentment whatsoever.

To quench the thirst of the devotees while the religious ceremonies were in progress a special makeshift restaurant was set up and curd milk, sherbet, tea and coffee were served during the morning session and tea and coffee were served during the night session. In addition the special masala tea served in the nights was in heavy demand. At the close of the morning sessions delicious lunch



was served in two centers and during the chariot ceremony when there was an influx of devotees additional centers were set up. The lunch served during the poongavanam ceremony was exceptional with additional delicious dishes.

I was impressed by the way the 11 day festival was conducted without any hindrance and the proceedings were based purely on Saiva tradition. Right throughout the spiritual atmosphere there was happiness and merriment all over for the devotees to return home and reminisce. Back at home I too reminisce the wonderful time I spent in the temple charging myself spiritually, listening to the Nathaswara music, enjoying the delicious meals and mingling with fellow devotees. With that in mind I have prepared this article to share my delightful experience with my brethren in Canada.

# THE HINDU TEMPLE SOCIETY OF CANADA

## Richmond Hill Ganesha Temple



### Community Watch

Compiled by *Kidambi Raj*

## DOORS OPEN RICHMOND HILL 2019



**Saturday, May 11, 2019**

**10:00 AM - 4:00 PM**

The Ganesha Temple of The Hindu Temple Society of Canada, located at 10865 Bayview Avenue (Just north of Elgin Mills Road on Bayview Avenue) is one of 15 centres selected by the Heritage Services of the Town of Richmond Hill for "DOORS OPEN RICHMOND HILL 2019" scheduled for Saturday, in May 11th. Though the temple welcomes members of all Faiths, still lots of people are not aware of this.

This Doors Open is an excellent opportunity of people in all communities of the Greater Toronto Area to visit and get some idea of Hindu Temple.

The Board of Trustees of the Hindu Temple Society extends a very warm welcome to everyone. So, come join and enjoy the experience.

## NARASIMHA JAYANTHI

Narasimha Jayanthi is very important and significant festival for Hindus. This festival is dedicated to Lord Vishnu, since Narasimha is His fourth Avatar in this world. Lord Narasimha is half-man, half lion form. This Jayanthi is observed on the fourteenth day of Sukla Paksha in the Tamil month of Vaikasi.

Lord Narasimha is synonymous with powers and victory and represents the triumph of good over evil. The main message that Narasimha Jayanthi conveys to us is about the adherence to *dharma* and the shunning of *adharma*.

Legend of Narasimha Jayanthi:

As per the ancient scriptures, the great sage Kashyap and his wife Diti were blessed with two sons, Hiranyaksha and Hiranyakasipu. In order to protect the earth with his atrocities, Lord Vishnu had to kill Hiranyaksha.



His brother Hiranyakasipu wanted to avenge his brother's death. So, he observed sever penance and got the favour of Lord Brahma and ultimately got a unique boon. Having got that unique and powerful boon, Hiranyakasipu went on to conquering the three Lokas (Bhulokam, Devalokam and Svalokam) including the Heavens. The Devas found themselves

# HOLI



Holi is one of the major festivals of India and is celebrated with enthusiasm and gaiety on the full moon day in the Tamil month of *Maasi* (February – March) as per the Gregorian calendar.

### Significance of Holi

In spite of it being a colourful and happy festival, there are various aspects of Holi that makes it so significant for our lives. Though they may not be so apparent but a closer look and a little thought would reveal the significance of Holi in more ways than meets the eye. Ranging from socio-cultural, religious to biological there is every reason why we must heartily enjoy the festival and cherish the reasons for its celebration.

The festival signifies the victory of Good over Evil, the arrival of Spring, end of Winter and for many a festive day to meet others, play and laugh, forget and forgive, and repair damaged relationships.

### Mythological Significance

The Hindu festival Holi, has several legends associated with it. The foremost is the legend of demon King *Hiranyakasipu* who demanded everybody in his kingdom worship him and not the Gods. But his pious son, *Prahalada* became a staunch devotee of Lord Vishnu. Since he was not able to convince his son, *Hiranyakasipu* wanted his son killed. So, he asked his sister *Holika* to enter a blazing fire with *Prahalada* in her lap, as *Holika* had a boon which made her immune to fire, so she thought. The legend says that *Prahalada* was saved by his Lord Himself for his extreme devotion and evil minded *Holika* was burnt to ashes, as her boon was only if she entered the fire alone.

Since that time, people light a bonfire, called *Holika* on the eve of Holi festival and celebrate as victory of good over evil and also as the triumph of devotion to God.

Children take special delight in the tradition, as it has another legend attached to it. It says there once was a terrifying person, *Dhundi* who used to trouble children in the Kingdom of *Prithu*. She was chased away by the children on the day of Holi. So, children sometimes play pranks at the time of *Holika Dahan* (burning *Holika*).

The central ritual of Holi is the throwing and applying coloured water and powders on friends and family, thus giving the event its common name *Festival of Colours*.

This ritual is said to be based on another legend based on *Radha* and *Krishna*. It seems Lord *Krishna* while playing Holi on the banks of the river *Yamuna* with *Radha* and other *gopis* is the most popular reason for celebrating this festival the way it is done. In *Vrindavan* and *Mathura*, Holi is celebrated in memory of Divine love of *Radha* and *Krishna*. It is said that when Lord *Krishna* was young, He often complained to Mother *Yashoda* about His dark complexion and wondered why *Radha* was so fair. One day, His mother playfully suggested that he can smear colour on *Radha's* face and change Her complexion to any colour he wanted.

It is celebrated for two days. On the evening of the first day of Holi, a public bonfire is held, commemorating the burning of *Holika*. Traditionally boys spend the weeks prior to Holi combing the neighbourhood for any waste wood they could find for the bonfire. The fire is normally lit between 10 pm. and midnight.



by *Kidambi Raj*

# SPECIAL MEMORIAL SERVICE

FOR THE VICTIMS OF THE

## HORRIFIC TERRORIST ATTACK

ON SEVERAL HUNDREDS OF  
 INNOCENT PEOPLE IN SRI LANKA ON  
 EASTER SUNDAY, 2019



On Friday, April 26, 2019, the Richmond Hill Hindu Temple conducted a Special Memorial Service for all those whose life was tragically cut short by terrorists in Several Churches and Luxury Hotels in and around Columbo on the Easter Sunday of 2019. Service consisted of Chanting “Mrityunja Mantra” and Shanthi Panchakam”, just to seek Lord’s Blessings for Salvation of those who died and also to Seek His blessings to the family, the relatives, extended family and community at-large to be able to bear the premature deaths and irreplaceable loss.

A prayer also included for all those who were injured to various degrees, both physically and

mentally, seeking His help for a speedy recovery to normal health. Members of Federal Parliament, for Scarborough-Rouge River, Gary Ananadasangaree and Federal Parliament Member for Richmond Hill, Majid Jowhari, Member of the Provincial Parliament for Richmond Hill, Daiy Wai and from the City of Richmond Hill, Councillors, Castro Liu and David West. Representing York Regions’ Chief and other Officers, York Region Police Officers, Alice Tsang and Amaree Watkis joined with us in the memorial Service and expressed their dismay as to what had happened in Sri Lanka.

LET THERE BE PEACE IN THIS WORLD !!!



# DURHAM TAMIL ASSOCIATION PARTICIPATES IN FUNDRAISING FOR CANCER SOCIETY



The Durham Tamil Association participated recently in fundraising efforts for the Cancer Society where many volunteered for a good cause.

Funds were raised in many different locations by the members of the Association.

**Henna Workshop:** This workshop was for all ages. Henna is also known as Mehndi. One of the most popular beauty ingredients. This workshop one of the good way to learn about it.

**Seniors Monthly Meeting:** This is an event where many elders get together. They shared their thoughts and talked about events that they hosted this month.

**Easter Egg Hunt:** On Easter Sunday, we hosted a egg hunting event for kids. It was a huge success, with many kids going home with chocolate eggs. We also served pancakes, hot chocolate, and coffee at the event.

**Town Hall Forum Standing Up for Human Rights:** The Road of Diversity and Inclusiveness: DTA is very proud of our Teen YLP student Kenya Navanathan. She was excellent at the forum. Congratulations Kenya.

**Tamil Classes:** At the DTA, we started our newest batch of Tamil classes. These classes are a great way to learn Tamil. The DTA is very proud to be able to host these classes.

Other activities of the Association recently were as follows:

Tree Planting:

Hanna Workshop:

Seniors Monthly Meeting:

Easter Egg Hunt:

Town Hall Forum Standing Up for Human Rights:

Tamil Classes:

(Seen here are some pictures of the events)

For more information please contact us at 905.428.7007 email: info@durhamtamils.com www.durhamtamils.com

# Waterloo Region interfaith prayer vigil successfully brings people together

## About 200 people attended a service in the wake of the devastating Easter Sunday attacks in Sri Lanka that saw about 300 people killed

If there's one thing Waterloo Region doesn't lack, it's compassion.

And as it has done so often in the face of tragedy, the Region's interfaith community came together as one Sunday night in the wake of the devastating Easter Sunday attacks in Sri Lanka that saw about 300 people killed by religious extremists at churches and hotels.

"I was sitting in my chair trying to remember which faith group was attacked at the last vigil I attended and I couldn't remember — because there have been so many," said Laura Mae Lindo at a prayer vigil to support the region's Sri Lankan community at Kitchener City Hall.

But keeping a running tally isn't the point, the Kitchener Centre MPP told the crowd of about 200, because what prevails in the end isn't hate, but love.

"Love is what's going to get every person impacted by these tragic events through." Lindo is a natural orator, more so than many politicians and faith leaders who took the podium to offer words of solidarity and support.

Some read from notes, some fumbled for words, some struggled with their English, one conducted an intriguing experiment in reaching for inner peace that saw participants delving into the recesses of memory.

But Christian, Buddhist, Muslim, Tamil, Hindu, Jewish — every one spoke from the heart. And as songs, speeches and prayers unfolded under the warm glow of electric tealights, the connection between these culturally disparate groups reached a valiant crescendo.

"It's Canada!" said Liberal MP Bardish Chagger, awaiting her turn at the podium. "It's all of Waterloo Region."

This positivity in response to tragedy was not unintentional.

"The idea is not to focus on the bombing but on the hope and healing that follows," said vigil organizer Michael Clifton.

"This is an evening of prayer and commitment. Our intention is to respond not 'in kind' but with kindness in our hearts."

For some, this was easier said than done. "It's haunting us, even though it's far away," said Sivakumar Somasundram of the Tamil Cultural Association of Waterloo Region, which represents the area's more than 300 Sri Lankan families. "We want to bring closure to the dead and heal the community that is hurting."

Somasundram moved from Sri Lanka 30 years ago and actually attended one of the church's bombed. "The beauty of that church was its multi-faith," he told the crowd. "So if things happen there, it breaks our heart." Chagger, for one, echoed sentiments of resilience and hope.

"What's clear about the people of Waterloo Region is that hatred of the few is never going to defeat love of the many," she insisted. "And that love will conquer fear and hate." There were few at the Kitchener rotunda who would have disagreed.

**Courtesy: Joel Rubinoff,**  
Waterloo Region Record  
jrubinoff@therecord.com  
Twitter: @JoelRubinoff





# Uthayan newspaper International Awards Festival 2019

Uthayan newspaper's annual International Awards Festival took place recently at the Brighton Convention Centre with an attendance of dignitaries and the award winners.

There were foreign dignitaries present at the event and the awards presented to the winners covered different categories such as business, culture and youth.

The Awards festival is an event that takes place annually attended by local and foreign guests.  
(Seen here and on page 47 are some pictures taken at the event – Courtesy: Ninaivukal)



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