

Monsoon Journal

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SRI LANKAN PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION ON NOVEMBER 16, 2019

Keen contest between two main candidates - Sajith Premadasa and Gotabhaya Rajapakse

MINORITY VOTE EXPECTED TO DECIDE THE WINNER...



Left - Sajith Premadasa, Right - Gotabhaya Rajapakse

By Siva Sivapragasam

The Sri Lankan Presidential election scheduled for November 16th is likely to be a keen contest between Sajith Premadasa (United National Front) and Gotabhaya Rajapakse (Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna) while political analysts predicting that the votes of the minority communities (Tamil and Muslims) as the main factor in deciding the winner.

Sajith Premadasa is the Deputy Leader of the UNP and the son of former President Ranasinghe Premadasa while Gotabaya Rajapakse is a former Defense

Secretary and the brother of former President Mahinda Rajapakse.

The incumbent President Maithripala Sirisena's term of office will end on 9 January 2020. This is the first Presidential election in Sri Lanka where no sitting President, Prime Minister or opposition leader is contesting for the post of President.

Among the key issues in the election are the preservation of democracy, Rule of Law, national security situation in the country, corruption and nepotism, issues affecting the minorities etc.

The next president will have fewer

powers than his predecessors, following a 2015 constitutional amendment that will hand more powers to the Prime Minister and Parliament after the election.

Slowing economic growth, national security, allegations of corruption and deep ethnic and religious divisions in the South Asian nation will be key issues at the upcoming polls, political analysts say.

Economic growth is expected to hit a low this year, after the Easter attacks on luxury hotels and churches hurting the country's tourism industry.

Santha Panchalingam re-elected as President of the Canadian Tamils' Chamber of Commerce

By Siva Sivapragasam

The incumbent President of the Canadian Tamils' Chamber of Commerce Santha Panchalingam was re-elected as President for another term at the recently held Annual General Meeting of the members at JC'S Banquet & Grill House.

Please see Page 37 for full information.



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2019 CANADIAN FEDERAL ELECTION

How the Tamil Canadian candidates fared: *Post-Election Analysis*

by Raymond Rajabalan

In the closely contested 43rd Canadian Federal elections held in late October, four Tamil Canadians participated and only one of them was successful by retaining his seat with a considerable majority.

SCARBOROUGH-ROUGE PARK



Liberal incumbent wins second term in Toronto's Scarborough-Rouge Park

Liberal **Gary Anandasangaree** was able to win a second term in Toronto's Scarborough-Rouge Park, with a majority of about 21,000 votes. It was an easy win for this very dedicated lawyer with considerable professional experience. He was the first ever Sri Lankan to be elected in Canada from the Liberal Party and who has successfully retained his seat for another term of office.

Final Results

- Scarborough-Rouge Park

31,339 Gary Anandasangaree – LIB
10,088 Bobby Singh – CON
5,735 Kingsley Kwok – NDP
2,324 Jessica Hamilton – GRN
466 Dilano Sally – PPC

The Liberal incumbent of this Greater Toronto Area (GTA) riding who is a popular lawyer first won this riding in 2015 Elections.

Sathiyasangaree "Gary" Ananda-

sangaree is a Tamil Canadian lawyer, human rights activist and politician. He was elected to represent the riding of Scarborough-Rouge Park in the House of Commons in the 2015 Federal Election.

Gary Anandasangaree and his mother travelled to Canada on August 31, 1983. After high school, Anandasangaree attended Carleton University, graduating in 1996 with a B.A honours degree.

He is married to Harini Sivalingham and they have two daughters - Bairavi and Sahanah. Anandasangaree was a registered real estate broker between the years 1996 and 2006.

Anandasangaree entered Osgoode Hall Law School and graduated in 2005 with a LL.B degree, and was called to the bar in 2006. Anandasangaree was the principal lawyer at Gary Anandasangaree and Associates, a Toronto law firm specialising in business law, real estate and international human rights law. He is a member of The Law Society of Upper Canada, Canadian Bar Association, Ontario Bar Association and South Asian Bar Association.

Anandasangaree has served on various community groups: Canadian Tamils' Chamber of Commerce (President); Canadian Tamil Congress (Counsel); Canadian Tamil Youth Development Centre (Chairman); Newcomer Grants for the United Way of Greater Toronto (Member); Toronto Board of Trade (Member); Toronto City Summit's Emerging Leaders Network (Member); and Youth Challenge Fund (Board Member).

He has also lectured at the Centennial College Centre for Small Business and Entrepreneurship. He has received the Queen Elizabeth 11 Golden Jubilee Medal and Queen Elizabeth 11 Diamond Jubilee Medal. He has also been awarded the TREB Award and Henry Marshall Tory Award for Service.

Anandasangaree has been a vocal campaigner against Human rights abuses during the Sri Lankan Civil

War and has attended several sessions of the United Nations Human Rights Council.

Anandasangaree became active in politics after joining the Liberal Party in October 2013. Anandasangaree announced that he would be seeking the Liberal Party nomination for the Scarborough-Rouge Park for the 2015 federal election. He won the nomination election held in August 2014. He won the election held on October 19, 2015, securing 29,906 votes (60.1%).

Anandasangaree continued his advocacy for Human Rights in parliament, speaking on International Human Rights Day about welcoming Syrian refugees and an Iranian scholar (Dr. Hossein Raessi) who was protected due to a joint program between Carleton University and University of Ottawa.

Anandasangaree sat on the Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development committee in the 42nd Canadian Parliament.

MARKHAM-STOUFFVILLE

Meanwhile, in a very close contest in Markham-Stouffville riding, a Tamil Canadian Conservative Party candidate Theodore Antony lost to liberal candidate by about 5,000 votes.



Theodore Antony, Conservative Candidate for Markham-Stouffville loses to Liberal Helena Jaczek in 2019

Federal election.

Final results

24,743 Helena Jaczek – LIB
19,570 Theodore Antony – CON
13,216 Jane Philpott – IND
4,013 Hal Berman – NDP
1,581 Roy Long – GRN
531 Jeremy Lin - PPC

Antony who was expected to win the election managed to gain nearly 20,000 votes but unfortunately could not win the election. This was due to a vote split among liberals due to a former liberal MP and Health Minister Jane Philpott contesting as Independent.

Theodore immigrated to Canada with his family and holds the experiences of new Canadians close to his heart.

Professionally, Theodore was a Director in the RESP industry. He was passionate about supporting Canadians planning for their children's post-secondary education. In addition to the supervision and management of service providers, Theodore ensured all business practices were compliant with the Ontario Securities Commissions policies and procedures to the highest standard.

SCARBOROUGH- GUILDWOOD



Quintus Thuraisingham

Contd. on pg 5...

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The Impact of the Regional Divide in Canadian Elections

By: J. A. Rajah

The regional divide in Canada played a significant role in the general elections held in Canada recently. Not a single party was able to get sufficient seats in all the regions in the country. Canada is a vast country extending from the Atlantic Ocean in the East to the Pacific Ocean in the West. Apart from the English and the French, Canada is a hotchpotch of diverse nationalities who have migrated into the country from all parts of the world. There are also the indigenous people in the north and claiming for their rights. The major regions of Canada are:

- I. The Atlantic Region - Nova Scotia, NFL,
- II. Central Canada - Ontario, Quebec,
- III. the Prairie Provinces - Manitoba, Saskatchewan,
- IV. British Columbia - West Coast.
- V. The North-Nunavit, Yukon,



Atlantic Provinces

NW Territories.

The Liberal Party which won the highest number of seats did not win any seat in Alberta or Saskatchewan. The Conservative Party which came second did not win any seat in Quebec or Nova Scotia. The Bloc Quebecois Party won seats only in Quebec. The elections brought out the reality that Canada lacks national integration. The regional factor is evident from the fact that a national party like the NDP was able to get only 24 seats but the Bloc-a regional party -won 32 seats . Most of the immigrants too lack



Atlantic Provinces

a sense of Canadian consciousness though they are reckoned as legal citizens. For example the Indians though in Canada feel that they are part of their former country. The Chinese too have the same outlook. Canada being a democratic country gives the freedom for all the immigrants to practice their own culture



Ontario



Quebec

and that has enriched the life-style of Canada in a great way. All the people of the world are able to feel at home in Canada. Many Chinese immigrants do not hesitate to speak publicly in their own language and mostly confine their activities among themselves



Prairie Provinces

without mingling much with others. The other immigrants too continue to enjoy parties and festivities among their own kith and kin. However, such freedom should not affect or hinder the feeling or development of national consciousness amongst the people of Canada.

Every Provincial government should use educa-

tion as a means of social and national integration. The Canadian educational programs are already geared to such goals. There is a need for greater emphasis on political education and enlightenment. A popular political party should be able to win sizeable number of seats in all the regions of Canada. Such a change would lead to national and political integration and solidarity. It will make it possible for a party to win large number of seats to for a strong government. A strong government is essential to enact speedy and progressive legislation for the betterment of the country. The political parties should work towards this goal through their party hierarchies- instead of waiting to do so only in election times. The NDP which was earlier the third stronger party has now been relegated to the fourth position by the Bloc, which is just a regional party. If Canada is to grow as a nation, the political parties must strive towards building up such national consciousness. They should have active branches in all the major regions of Canada. They should also bring the indigenous people into their fold. Therein lies the hope for Canada's future cohesiveness or national solidarity and above all the much needed unity.

Illustr: Map showing Canada's Regions.



2019 CANADIAN FEDERAL ELECTION

Contd. on pg 5...

There was an interesting race in the riding of Scarborough-Guildwood, where a first time candidate Quintus Thuraisingham challenged the incumbent liberal MP John McKay.

Though this was a Liberal stronghold the Sri Lankan Candidate ran a very effective and organized campaign and managed to gain nearly 10,000 votes.

Final Results

- 25,797 John McKay – LIB
- 9,501 Quintus Thuraisingham – CON
- 4,687 Michelle Spencer – NDP
- 1,198 Tara McMahon – GRN
- 643 Jigna Jani – PPC
- 112 Kevin Clarke – IND
- 88 Gus Stefanis – CNP
- 71 Stephen Abara – IND
- 70 Kathleen Marie Holding – IND
- 52 Farhan Alvi - CFF

Quintus Thuraisingham has been employed with Thomson Reuters, the world's leading source of information for businesses and professionals, in the capacity of Senior Supervisor for more than two decades. His career at Thomson Reuters, and experience in the me-

dia, has provided him with an abundance of leadership, organizational, communication and human resource skills.

He has served in many leadership positions in numerous organizations and has contributed effectively in raising funds for those in dire need.

As a political commentator on a local television station, and as a news anchor, reporter and news writer for radio stations and community newspapers, Quintus has had extensive experience providing information and background to topical political issues.

SCARBOROUGH – CENTRE



Jeremiah Vijeyaratnam

Final Results

- 25,424 Salma Zahid – LIB
- 10,320 Irshad Chaudhry – CON
- 5,329 Faiz Kamal – NDP
- 2,518 John Cannis – IND
- 1,328 Dordana Hakimzadah – GRN
- 1,157 Jeremiah Vijeyaratnam - PPC

In this yet another strong liberal stronghold, a Sri Lankan Canadian Jeremiah Wijeyaratnam from the Peoples Party of Canada contested but managed to poll about 1500 votes.

Conclusion

It is nearly 30 years since the first

wave of Sri Lankans arrived in this great country. Ever since their arrival, the hard - working Tamils have made their mark in every profession. However, for some reason only a few chose to enter politics. In proportion to the population of nearly half a million Sri Lankan Tamils residing in Canada it is obvious that we need more representation from our community so that their needs can be better served. As such, we need many more to represent us at all levels of government. In this context we have to impress upon the leaders of the major political parties the need for more of us to be nominated to contest in the future Municipal, Provincial as well as well as the Federal level.

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from the publisher's desk

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Speak Up and Renew Commitment to Protect our Planet Even in Face of Hostile Armed Aggression: International Day for Preventing the Exploitation of the Environment in War and Armed Conflict

By Harrish Thirukumaran

On 5 November 2001, the UN General Assembly declared 6 November of each year as the International Day for Preventing the Exploitation of the Environment in War and Armed Conflict (A/RES/56/4).

Though mankind has always counted its war casualties in terms of dead and wounded soldiers and civilians, destroyed cities and livelihoods, the environment has often remained the unpublicized victim of war. Water wells have been polluted, crops torched, forests cut down, soils poisoned, and animals killed to gain military advantage.

Furthermore, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) has found that over the last 60 years, at least 40 percent of all internal conflicts have been linked to the exploitation of natural resources, whether high-value resources such as timber, diamonds, gold and oil, or scarce resources such as fertile land and water. Conflicts involving natural resources have also been found to be twice as likely to relapse.

The United Nations attaches great importance to ensuring that action on the environment is part of conflict prevention, peacekeeping and peacebuilding strategies - because there can be no durable peace if the natural resources that sustain livelihoods and ecosystems are destroyed.

On 27 May 2016, the United Nations Environment Assembly adopted resolution UNEP/EA.2/Res.15, which recognized the role of healthy ecosystems and sustainably managed resources in reducing the risk of armed conflict, and reaffirmed its strong commitment to the full implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals listed in General Assembly resolution 70/1, entitled "Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable De-

velopment".

Wars in Afghanistan, Colombia, and Iraq have led to the immense loss of natural resources. In Afghanistan itself, deforestation rates have reached 95 per cent in some areas. In 2017, the Islamic State triggered vast toxic clouds that set ablaze oil wells and a sulfur factory near the Iraqi city of Mosul, poisoning the landscape and people.

Critical biodiversity hotspots in Colombia, Democratic Republic of Congo and South Sudan have offered cover and refuge for rebel groups.

It has proven disastrous for wildlife and forest conservation as these habitats have opened the doors to illegal logging, unregulated mining, massive poaching and breeding grounds for invasive species. In Gaza, Yemen, and elsewhere, water infrastructure, from groundwater wells to wastewater treatment plants and pumping stations to desalination plants have been damaged, posing environmental and public health risks. So, it would be considered a dangerous mistake to ignore these environmental consequences of conflict, requiring the international community to act with a greater sense of urgency.

As with previous days of observance, it is imperative that this International Day for Preventing the Exploitation of the Environment in War and Armed Conflict be an opportunity to speak up boldly and renew commitment to protecting our imperiled planet even in the face of hostile armed aggression.

This is all the more important given that a commitment to protect our planet from the devastating effects of war and especially at a time where our warming planet is already threatened by the impacts of runaway climate change. Advocate for the environment in the presence of conflict.

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LEST WE FORGET

November 11

On this Remembrance Day Monsoon Journal Pays Tribute and thanks All Canadians who have worn a military uniform

Canada Historical Milestones: November 23, 1984

Fredericton City Hall in New Brunswick is designated a National Historic Site of Canada. The building was constructed in 1875-1876, making it the oldest city hall in the Atlantic region still used for municipal government.

The building at 397 Queen Street in Fredericton previously included some uses beyond municipal matters. An opera hall was located on the second floor, and until 1951, there was a market in the basement.

Fredericton City Hall features cubic architecture. The building includes a red brick facade and a central tower. The tower clock is 2.4 metres in diameter and retains its original brass mechanism. via: bac-lac.gc.ca



"Gold is good in its place; but loving, brave, patriotic men are better than gold." - Abraham Lincoln - , (February 12, 1809 - April 15, 1865) 16th US President

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Ontario Encouraging Families to Get Free Flu Shot

Protecting Yourself and Your Family will Help End Hallway Health Care

October 30, 2019 9:54 A.M.
Ministry of Health

TORONTO — As the cold weather approaches, Ontario is reminding everyone about the importance of getting their free flu shot to protect themselves from getting the flu and spreading it to others.

who are at high risk of flu-related complications. It will be available at family doctor and nurse practitioner offices, public health units and participating pharmacies for anyone five years of age or older. For children between six months and four years old, the shot can be administered by a doctor or



Each year, thousands of people across the province get sick with the flu, which puts extra pressure on hospitals and the health care system. The flu shot provides the best defence and is a proven way to reduce emergency department visits and wait times to help end hallway health care.

Today, Christine Elliott, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health, was at Rexall Pharmacy at Women's College Hospital in Toronto to get the flu shot.

"Every Ontarian can join our efforts to put an end to hallway health care by getting their flu shot," said Elliott. "In fact, getting your flu shot is an important part of keeping all Ontarians healthy and out of hospital, while reducing the strain on our emergency departments. The flu shot will be available across the province to protect you and your family."

The free flu shot is especially important for young children, pregnant women and people 65 years and older

nurse practitioner.

Several health care leaders joined Elliott in encouraging Ontarians to get their free flu shot.

"Minister Elliott set an excellent example for Ontarians today by getting the flu shot," said Sandra Hanna, Interim CEO of the Neighbourhood Pharmacy Association of Canada. "The vaccine remains the single most effective way to protect against influenza and its complications. Pharmacists in 4,500 communities across the province are ready to deliver the flu shot in a convenient, accessible way."

"The flu shot is safe and is your best defence to protect you, your loved ones and your community," said Dr. Sohail Gandhi, President of the Ontario Medical Association. "While the flu is common, it can also be serious and cause many complications. The flu kills an estimated 3,500 Canadians every year and puts more than 12,000 in the hospital."

"Nurse practitioners are proud to

Ontario Investing in Seniors Health and Well-Being

Helping Seniors Stay Active and Socially Connected Across the Province

October 30, 2019 11:00 A.M.
Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility

TORONTO - Ontario is committed to helping seniors keep active, healthy, safe, independent, and socially connected in their own communities. Yet, many seniors face financial and other obstacles in accessing programs and services that will help support their overall health and well-being.

That is why Ontario is investing \$14.1 million to support more than 300 Seniors Active Living Centre programs in communities across the province.

"Supporting our seniors today is about investing in all of our futures. This funding will have a direct and positive impact on seniors in communities across the province by giving them an opportunity to take part in programs and services that will help keep them active, socially connected, and healthy," said Raymond Cho, Minister for Seniors and Accessibility. "These programs and services support healthy aging and help seniors to live the qual-



ity lives they deserve."

Seniors Active Living Centre programs support over 100,000 seniors across the province, and this funding will provide a variety of programming and activities to help seniors stay active, socially engaged, safe, and healthy. This is especially important given that about 30 per cent of Canadian seniors are at risk of becoming socially-isolated.

Ontario remains committed to protecting what matters most to seniors and their families.

Via news.ontario.ca

play such an important role in administering flu shots across Ontario," said Dawn Tymianski, Chief Executive Officer of the Nurse Practitioner's Association of Ontario (NPAO). "It is a proven way to increase both personal and public health and NPAO applauds efforts by the government to increase awareness and access."

"Since 2012, Ontarians have increasingly demonstrated their preference to getting their flu shot from their community pharmacist, with more than 1.2 million pharmacy immunizations last year alone," said Justin Bates, CEO of the Ontario Pharmacists Association. "Getting your flu shot is the best way to protect yourself and everyone around you against influenza, and what better place than getting it close to home, when you want it - from your pharmacist."

Ontario has a comprehensive plan to end hallway health care, which in-

cludes making investments and advancing new initiatives across four pillars:

1. Prevention and health promotion: keeping patients as healthy as possible in their communities and out of hospitals, including offering all Ontarians free flu shots.
2. Providing the right care in the right place: when patients need care, ensure that they receive it in the most appropriate setting, not always the hospital.
3. Integration and improved patient flow: better integrate care providers to ensure patients spend less time waiting in hospitals when they are ready to be discharged.
4. Building capacity: build new hospital and long-term care beds while increasing community-based services across Ontario.

Via news.ontario.ca

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Around the World

UN chief praises Japanese climate resilience, as Typhoon Hagibis cleanup begins



UN PHOTO/ESKINDER DEBEBE
United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres.

13 October 2019

Climate Change

With Typhoon Hagibis causing destruction and loss of life in Japan, UN Secretary-General António Guterres has praised the leadership role the country is playing in climate resilience, and its “extensive and efficient preparation for this latest extreme weather event”.

The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) has described the typhoon as one of the highest impact storms to hit Japan in many years, with hurricane-force winds, record-breaking rainfall, devastating storm surges, and coastal and inland flooding.

Hagibis made landfall on Saturday, south of the capital Tokyo, before moving north. The typhoon has brought widespread devastation and disruption to densely populated cities, and infrastructure, and has led to the deaths of at least 25 people, with 15 declared missing. The casualties are believed to result mainly from landslides, or from being swept away by flood waters.

According to media reports, tens of

thousands of troops, firefighters and other emergency workers have been sent to the worst-hit areas, to rescue people trapped by floodwater.

By Sunday, the intensity of the storm had lessened, and it had moved off land. Utility companies were reportedly attempting to restore power to hundreds of thousands of homes.

Hagibis hit Japan just a month after another intense storm, Faxai, caused widespread damage to property in parts of the country, including tens of thousands of homes, which have yet to be repaired.

In a statement, released on Sunday, the Secretary-General said that he was saddened by reports of loss of life and extensive destruction caused by Hagibis. The UN chief extended his deep condolences to the families of the victims, the Government and people of Japan, and wished a speedy recovery to those who have been injured.

A World Meteorological Organization (WMO) video showing the progress of Typhoon Hagibis

Via news.un.org

From ‘strength to strength’ UN-African Union security partnership growing, Security Council hears

30 October 2019

Peace and Security

The Security Council highlighted the growing partnership on matters of peace and security between the United Nations and African Union (AU) on Wednesday amidst calls to bolster overall effectiveness.

“The partnership between the African Union and the United Nations continues to grow from strength to strength”, Hanna Tetteh, Special Representative and Head of the UN Office to the AU told the Chamber via videolink.



In introducing the Secretary-General’s annual report on the partnership, she elaborated on a various mechanisms based on the 2018 Joint UN-AU Framework for an Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security.

Ms. Tetteh also highlighted joint field visits and consultations between the Security Council and the AU’s Peace and Security Council and noted

UN rights chief urges ‘immediate dialogue’ to end Chile unrest



DIANA LEAL

Protesters take to the streets of Santiago, Chile.

21 October 2019

Human Rights

The top UN human rights official is calling for politicians and civil society in Chile to engage in “immediate dialogue” to resolve the deadly crisis which has gripped the nation in recent days.

At least eight people have died and more than 40 have been injured in protests against rising inequality. The demonstrations began last week following a proposal to increase public transportation fares, which was later scrapped.

“There needs to be open and sincere dialogue by all actors concerned to help resolve this situation, including a profound examination of the wide range of socio-economic issues underlying the current crisis,” UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet, said on Monday.

She added that: “It is essential that all actions, by the authorities and by protestors, that have led to injury or death, are subjected to independent, impartial and transparent investigations.” Ms. Bachelet warned against the use of “inflammatory rhetoric” which she said will only further aggravate the situation.

The unrest prompted Chilean President Sebastian Pinera on Saturday to declare a state of emergency in the capital, Santiago, which has since been extended to other cities.

The UN rights chief said any appli-

cation of the state of emergency “must be exceptional and rooted in law” and that the authorities must act in accordance with international human rights standards.

“There are disturbing allegations of excessive use of force by security and armed forces, and I am also alarmed by reports that some detainees have been denied access to lawyers, which is their right, and that others have been mistreated while in detention,” said Ms. Bachelet, who noted that members of the security forces are also reported among the injured.

The High Commissioner called on the Chilean Government to work with all sectors of society “to find solutions that can help calm the situation and address the grievances of the population”.

She called on those planning to take part in any protests to do so peacefully.

The UN Country team in Chile has also expressed concern following violence in the capital this past weekend, where several deaths were reported in fires at looted supermarkets. The team lamented the high number of people injured in these incidents, as well as the damage and losses sustained.

Echoing the High Commissioner, the UN system in Chile recalled that states of emergency must be applied in strict compliance with the rule of law and international human rights standards.

Via news.un.org

some “major challenges” that need to be addressed, including workable funding for AU peace operations.

Meanwhile, in her video briefing, AU Ambassador Fatima Kyari Mohammed described the burgeoning cooperation between the two organizations, noting that their combined efforts have contributed to positive recent developments in Sudan, following its major political upheavals this year.

She pointed out that both organizations also prioritize the accelerated implementation of the new 17 August Constitutional Declaration on the full

transition from military to civilian rule.

Ms. Mohammed asserted that the two organizations should enhance joint work in technical areas, such as mission planning, financial management and accountability for peace operations.

Following their briefings, Council members similarly welcomed the growing collaboration between the Security Council and the AU’s Peace and Security Council and called for strengthening the relationship further.

Via news.un.org



'Historic' new Syria talks should focus on relief for war-weary civilians, says UN negotiator

30 October 2019

Peace and Security

Work on drafting a new foundational text for war-torn Syria officially began at the UN in Geneva on Wednesday with representatives from the Syrian Government and opposition sitting face to face and preparing to discuss the country's future for the first time in the nearly nine-year conflict.

Addressing the delegations – as well as a third group representing Syrian civil society - UN Special Envoy, Geir Pedersen, urged them to seize the “historic” opportunity of working together, for the sake of the Syrian people.

Potential new beginning

“The future constitution belongs to Syrians, to the Syrian people and them alone,” he said, adding: “Today could become the beginning of something new, something meaningful for Syria and for Syrians everywhere. And this will be led by you, and you only, as both Co-Chairs have emphasized. Together, we can make this come through; tomorrow, the hard work begins.”

UN Special Envoy for Syria Geir O. Pedersen chairs the first face-to-face talks between Government and opposition to take place during the nearly nine-year Syria conflict, as the Syrian Constitutional Committee meeting in Geneva got underway, 30 October.

According to the rules of procedure in these UN-facilitated discussions, meetings of the 150-member Committee will take place in parallel with a smaller “drafting group”, made up of 15 people from each of the three delegations.

It will be tasked with writing any new constitution, depending on what is voted on by the larger Committee.

Mr. Pedersen highlighted that the existing Syrian constitution could be re-examined, in line with UN Security Council resolution 2254, adopted unanimously on 18 December 2018, in New York.

“The Constitutional Committee may review the 2012 constitution including in the context of other Syrian constitutional experiences and amend the current constitution or draft a new constitution,” he said, adding that it was “the first political agreement between the Government and the Opposition to begin to implement a key aspect of Security Council resolution 2254, which called for setting a schedule and a process for drafting a new constitution.”

In addition to endorsing a road map for a negotiated peace between belligerents, the UN Security Council resolution also called for a nationwide cease-



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Schoolchildren in eastern Aleppo in the Syrian Arab Republic return from the first day of school, passing the rubble of nearby houses. (21 September 2016)

fire and free and fair elections, as part of a Syrian-led, Syrian-owned political transition.

Ahead of the official convening of the 150-member body at the UN's European headquarters in Geneva, the organization's Secretary-General, António Guterres, welcomed the fact that both the Government of Syria and the opposition Syrian Negotiations Commission “will sit together and take the first step on the political path out of the tragedy of the Syrian conflict”.

The UN chief also welcomed the fact that women's representation on the committee was “very near 30 per cent”, a “minimum threshold” that the UN has long pushed for, in the interests of representing the widest possible number of Syrians affected by the conflict.

'Positive change' on the agenda

In his comments to the forum, the Government of Syria Co-Chair, Ahmad Kuzbari, expressed an openness to reviewing the country's existing foundational text, the latest dating from 2012.

“It is a modern constitution,” he said, “but that does not prevent us Syrians from meeting for the purpose of considering any possible amendments to the current constitution or to consider a new constitution that would improve our reality and bring about a positive change that can be directly reflected in the lives of our people.”

And while Mr. Kuzbari underscored the fact that the Government was “committed to the success of this part of the political process”, he warned against “any occupying forces on our territory, the spoliation of the resources of our country and the continuing imposition of unilateral economic sanctions”.

These elements could threaten “the entire political process”, he said, insist-



UN PHOTO/VIOLAINE MARTIN

ing that they also breached the UN Charter and international legitimacy.

Looking for similarities, not differences

From the opposition, Committee Co-Chair, Hadi Albahra, underscored his delegation's desire for progress in negotiations, noting nonetheless that “the 150 people meeting today in this room have diverging opinions on many issues”.

Be that as it may, “after eight painful years of suffering in Syria, we came here determined to look for similarities and not differences”, Mr. Albahra said, highlighting that the conflict had claimed one million lives and displaced millions more. “We are fully aware of the aspirations of a whole nation that awaits salvation from unspeakable suffering.”

He also appealed for progress on other confidence-building measures on the ground in Syria, particularly the release of prisoners - or information about them.

“We must achieve the release of all detainees at the hands of all parties and to discover the fate of the missing and the forcibly displaced, we must respect the right of families to know the

fate of their loved ones,” he said.

Work through consensus

While acknowledging that “it is not easy for all of you to be here together” after nearly nine years of violent conflict, Mr. Pedersen expressed his gratitude to each delegate for agreeing to attend the negotiations, which are due to continue on Thursday.

Calling on all those present to show patience and persistence in agreeing on a new foundational text, the Special Envoy insisted that it could “help heal the wounds of a devastating conflict and indeed establish the foundations for a new co-existence”.

The Committee Co-Chairs were “equal” and “will need to work together...in consensus”, the UN negotiator continued, as would the smaller 45-member drafting body.

“Your duties of course are not only to your own side, but to all members of the Committee,” Mr. Pedersen said, without detailing any deadlines, while underscoring the need to include the third group representing Syrian civil society – known as the Middle Third – in all discussions.

Via news.un.org



Malta: Human rights experts call for justice in case of murdered journalist

16 October 2019

Human Rights

Two years since the murder of anti-corruption journalist Daphne Caruana Galizia on the Mediterranean island of Malta, justice has yet to be served for the shocking crime, UN-appointed independent rights experts said on Wednesday.

In an appeal to the Maltese authorities to do more to find the ringleaders and masterminds responsible as their top political priority, Special Rapporteurs Agnes Callamard and David Kaye suggested that too little had been done to fully investigate her killing.

“Two years have passed. No convictions, no trials of ringleaders and masterminds,” they said in a joint statement with monitors Dunja Mijatović from regional human rights body, the Council of Europe, and Harlem Désir from the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE).

“On the contrary, posthumous libel suits continue to target the family of Daphne Caruana Galizia and make-

shift memorials of her are frequently removed. This only adds to the sorrow and pain of her family and loved ones.”

Ms. Caruana Galizia, a well-known investigative reporter who made a name for herself uncovering graft in the Mediterranean island, was killed by a bomb planted under her car seat near her home in Bidnija, on 16 October 2017.

Three men who were charged with her murder were “finally” ordered to stand trial, the rights experts noted, almost 20 months after the killing.

According to media reports of initial court proceedings, the defendants, who were charged with planting and detonating the bomb, pleaded not guilty, and are awaiting trial.

Ahead of Wednesday’s statement by the rights experts, the Maltese authorities announced that a public inquiry into the killing had been set up.

Highlighting the need for accountability for “not only those who carried out the murder, but everyone complicit in it, including the masterminds behind



UN PHOTO/MARK GARTEN - Press Briefing by Ms. Agnes Callamard, Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions.

it”, the experts underlined widespread public revulsion at the crime, which “shook people in Europe and beyond”.

Journalism – as practised by Daphne Caruana Galizia is in the interest of the public and democracy, the experts maintained, while attacks on journalists “not only deny their right to life... they deny the public’s right to know”.

They added: “The echo of the explosion that killed Daphne Caruana Galizia is still ringing in our memory with

the ultimate question: when will justice be served, and bring a little comfort to her loved ones? The Government of Malta owes an answer to Daphne, her family, Maltese society and all journalists around the world.”

According to the UN agency mandated to monitor the safety of journalists, 43 reporters have been killed so far this year, from Afghanistan to the United Kingdom.

Via news.un.org

Suicide: every 40 seconds, a person puts an end to his life (WHO)

September 9, 2019: Suicide prevention measures are progressing in some countries but the World Health Organization (WHO) believes that states must do much more.

In the five years since the publication of the first WHO Global Report on Suicide, the number of countries with suicide prevention strategies has grown: this is the finding of the Organization, which is currently preparing for the World Day for Suicide. suicide prevention, which will take place on September 10th. However, the total number of countries with strategies, at just 38, is still too low and governments must commit to developing such strategies.

“Despite the progress made, there is still one death per suicide every 40 seconds,” said Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General of WHO. “Each of these deaths is a tragedy for family, friends and colleagues. Suicide can be avoided. We call on all countries to integrate, in a sustainable manner, proven suicide prevention strategies into their national health and education programs.”

With rates highest in high-income countries, suicide is the second leading cause of death among young people

The global age-standardized sui-

cide rate for 2016 was 10.5 per 100,000 population. However, rates vary widely from one country to another, from 5 deaths per suicide per 100,000 population to more than 30 per 100,000. While 79% of suicides in the world occur in low- and middle-income countries, high-income countries have the highest rate of 11.5% per 100,000 population. Almost three times as many men as women end up in high-income countries, while in low- and middle-income countries, the differences between men and women are smaller.

Suicide is the second leading cause of death among young people aged 15 to 29, after road traffic injuries. Among young people aged 15 to 19, suicide is the second leading cause of death for girls (after maternal conditions) and the third leading cause of death for boys (after traffic accidents and interpersonal violence).

The most common suicide methods are hanging, self-poisoning by pesticides and firearms. Key interventions that have proven effective in reducing suicide include limiting access to suicide; media awareness of responsible media treatment of suicide; the implementation of programs aimed at young people to enable them to acquire the capacities to face the difficulties of life; and the early identification and man-



agement as well as the follow-up of people at risk.

Pesticide regulation: an underused but highly effective strategy

The intervention that has the greatest immediate potential for reducing the number of suicides is the limitation of access to pesticides that are deliberately used for poisoning. The high toxicity of many pesticides means that suicide attempts by this means often lead to death, especially in situations where there is no antidote or nearby medical facilities.

As stated in the WHO publication published today, Suicide Prevention: Indications for Pesticide Registration and Regulatory Services, there is now a growing body of international data showing that banning the use of highly hazardous pesticides can lower national suicide rates. The best-studied country is Sri Lanka, where a series of bans has resulted in a 70 per cent

drop in the number of suicides and an estimated 93,000 lives saved between 1995 and 2015. In the Republic of Korea, where paraquat - a herbicide - was responsible for most suicides in the 2000s,

Improve data quality

Timely registration and regular monitoring of suicides at the national level is the foundation of effective suicide prevention strategies at the national level. Yet only 80 of the 183 WHO Member States for which estimates were made in 2016 had good-quality civil registration data. Most of the countries where these data were missing were low- and middle-income countries. Better surveillance will lead to more effective prevention strategies and more accurate reporting on progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals.

- UN.org

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CARING FOR KIDS IN SCARBOROUGH

We are offering more services for families to get the right care for their children.

Scarborough Health Network is transforming care. Here are some of the new and improved services we will have for getting kids the care they need when they need it.

Kids After Hours Clinic at General hospital

We will have a new walk-in clinic for children who have common medical issues to be seen by a paediatrician. No referrals are necessary.

Kids Short Stay Clinic at Birchmount hospital

Children in our Birchmount Emergency Department (ED) who need further care may be seen in our new Kids Short Stay Clinic.

Kids Pass Clinic at Centenary and General hospitals

Children brought to the EDs at our Centenary and General hospitals will be fast-tracked to our Kids Pass Clinics as appropriate.

Learn more at [SHN.ca/paediatrics](https://shn.ca/paediatrics) [▶](#) [📺](#) [📱](#) [🐦](#) [📘](#) @SHNcares



TRANSFORMING EMERGENCY CARE IN SCARBOROUGH

Ontario invests in expanding and redeveloping Birchmount hospital's Emergency Department.



Code: Transformation! Scarborough Health Network's (SHN) mission to improve our patients' lives through exceptional care got a half a million boosts this morning.

Christine Elliott, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health joined SHN staff and physicians, and MPPs from across Scarborough, at Birchmount hospital to announce a \$500,000 investment to support the first phase of planning to expand and redevelop the hospital's emergency department.

"Our government is committed to ensuring local emergency departments receive the funding they need to improve patient experience and the delivery of care in the community," said Elliott. "Investing in projects like expanding emergency departments in hospitals like Birchmount is just another example of how Ontario will reduce wait times for emergency care and end hallway health care."

Currently, Birchmount hospital's Emergency Department serves 51,000 patients every year in a space designed to serve 25,000.

"At its busiest," explained Dr. Norman Chu, Medical Director and Chief of Emergency Medicine at SHN's Birchmount and General hospitals, "we have a new patient coming in to receive emergency care every three minutes."

Despite its space limitations, Birchmount has one of Ontario's top three performing Emergency Departments. Today's commitment is the first step toward a comprehensive expansion and redevelopment of Birchmount's Emergency Department. The new Emergency

Department will be more than twice the size of the current department to meet the growing needs of the Scarborough community. The new facility will be modern and state-of-the-art, with a patient-centred design that incorporates architectural best practices.

Once open, it will provide a compassionate and safe care environment for patients and staff, and will capitalize on advancements in technology and practice in emergency medicine to create the best outcomes and patient experience.

SHN is thrilled to start Birchmount's Emergency Department redevelopment.

Birchmount hospital's new Emergency Department will feature:

- A child- and-family-friendly paediatric assessment zone to soothe children and avoid exposing them to seriously ill and injured patients
- Increased privacy for patients
- A dedicated space for seniors designed to support elder-friendly interventions
- A safe, secure Mental Health and Urgent Care Unit
- Improved family waiting areas with private bereavement rooms
- Improved family and patient support areas

"With this transformative investment, today we begin a new chapter in shaping the future of care for Scarborough," said Maureen Adamson, Scarborough Health Network Board Chair.

"Together, with Minister Elliott and the Government of Ontario, we will deliver the highest quality of care and services to all the residents of Scarborough. I want to personally thank the Minister on behalf of all

the frontline staff, physicians and patients that we serve at Birchmount hospital for your commitment and dedication to improving lives, ending hallway medicine and lowering wait times."

SHN demonstrates teamwork on and off the field



A big "congratulations" goes out to team Scarborough Health Network (SHN) who were crowned champions of the second annual Invitational Soccer Tournament hosted by the Region of Durham Paramedic Services. Staff came together to face off against fellow health care practitioners and emergency services personnel in the annual soccer tournament with proceeds being donated to the Wounded Warriors, a charity that honours and supports Canada's ill and injured Canadian Armed Forces members, Veterans, First Responders and their families.

Organized by Sergio Gutierrez, an orthopaedic technologist at SHN's General hospital, the team brought together staff from across the organization including physicians, surgeons, nurses, social workers and more.

"I was super proud of my colleagues and the way we came together with one goal in mind," said Sergio. "Now, whenever we pass a fellow teammate in the hall, we have mandatory high-fives. I'm already excited to represent SHN next year and bring another win back to our health network!"

The tournament hosted 12 co-ed teams divided into two pools of six, at the Iroquois Park Sports Complex in Whitby. The top two teams from each pool played in the semi-final game with the winners of the semi-finals playing the championship game. Each team played five games in total, on a hot September day.

"The win was definitely much deserved. It was a hot and humid day and we still managed to get through five tough games without a hitch," shared Jenny Gutierrez, a registered nurse in the intensive care unit at the General hospital. "Everyone really came together and played like a well-oiled machine, despite having various skill levels on the field at any given time."

Other teams included paramedic services from Durham, Toronto East, Toronto West, and York, and emergency department staff from Markham Stouffville Hospital and Lakeridge Health.

Team SHN was open to any and all staff who wanted to participate. For Scott Wisner, a social worker at the General hospital, it was the perfect opportunity to have a day of fun and meet colleagues he wouldn't have met before.

"It will be nice to see my teammates in the hallways and be able to share a smile, a laugh and a recollection of a good time together – and winning the whole thing was pretty awesome too!"

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Improving Colon Cancer Screening in Scarborough



A new colon cancer screening clinic at SHN is helping people in our community get the care they need, as conveniently as possible.

Using Fecal Immunochemical Testing (FIT) to screen people who have an average risk of developing colorectal cancer, the FIT Positive Screening Clinic will reduce wait times for FIT testing and colonoscopies for patients who need them.

The FIT test is a stool-based test that detects early signs of colorectal cancer and/or pre-cancerous lesions.

“For patients who are identified as FIT positive, it is important that they receive timely access to colonoscopies,” notes Dr. Elaine Yeung, Corporate Chief of Medicine, Scarborough Health Network. “With the rapid access that this clinic offers, we are helping to rapidly detect early signs of colorectal cancer or pre-cancerous lesions and get our patients the care that they need, quickly.”

The new clinic will have a patient care coordinator who works with family physicians to ensure patients are seen as quickly as possible, and guides patients through the clinic process. FIT Clinic patients will be able to see specialists like gastroenterologists and general surgeons within the clinic, instead of travelling to other offices or hospitals.

“This clinic will bring the care and services we provide to people who need colorectal cancer screening and treatment to a new level,” highlights Frederick Go Director, Surgery & Ambulatory Care. “This means our community will get screened for colorectal cancer faster, and will be supported by our clinic staff during every step in their journey.”

FIT testing was introduced as the standard for colorectal screening by Cancer Care Ontario in 2018 and a phase out of the previous testing method, the guaiac fecal occult blood test (gFOBT) took place throughout 2019. The new FIT initiative at SHN will work to ensure that we are meeting Cancer Care Ontario’s recommended timelines.

The FIT Positive Screening Clinic is located at SHN’s Birchmount hospital and will operate on Mondays from 8:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. If you think you are at risk of colorectal cancer or are due for a screening, please talk to your family doctor about a referral to the FIT Clinic.

FIT Positive Screening Clinic

SHN Birchmount hospital
3030 Birchmount Rd., Scarborough
Main Level

Hours: Monday, 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Phone: 416-495-2552

Fax: 416-495-2488

Transforming Women’s and Children’s health care

Scarborough Health Network developing Centres of Excellence at the General and Centenary hospitals

After a year of planning, research, consultation, and collaboration, in October, Scarborough Health Network’s (SHN’s) Women’s and Children’s program took a big step toward developing Centres of Excellence in care for women, babies and kids.

New clinics opened at the General and Birchmount hospitals, a new Kids Care unit welcomed its first patients and families at the General hospital, and expanded birthing and maternity units at the General and Centenary hospitals were full of brand new families.

The changes to the Women’s and Children’s program will allow the SHN team to expand their expertise in treating women with high-risk pregnancies, and newborns, children and teens with complex and specialized needs. This will reduce patient transfers from Scarborough to downtown hospitals, making it possible for more Scarborough families to receive the care they need, right here in Scarborough.

Making these changes happen took dedication and planning. From renovations, to enhanced education and skills training, to planning patient moves, SHN’s Women’s and Children’s team put patients’ safety and comfort first.

And, on the first day that the new Kids Care unit was open at the General hospital, the sound of giggles and excited voices filled the hallway as young patients, their families, and care team settled into the bright and newly renovated unit.

The health network is focusing on developing Centres of Excellence at the General and Centenary hospitals, but all three SHN hospitals continue to provide excellent care for in care for women, babies, and kids.

The Birchmount hospital emergency department, just like the Centenary and General emergency departments, provides expert care to everyone who comes through the doors. And expanded clinics and family-friendly spaces in the Emergency Departments will make visits to the hospital faster, and more comfortable for SHN’s youngest patients.

With these exciting and positive changes, SHN continues to shape the future of care for people in Scarborough, and transform health care for women and children today, and lead young lives to a healthier tomorrow.

To learn more about how your community health network is shaping the future of care please visit www.shn.ca



Hearty congratulations to our dialysis vascular access team!

Congratulations to Scarborough Health Networks (SHN) dialysis vascular access team for their outstanding work in renal care, as recognized by The Ontario Renal Network (ORN).

The ORN awarded SHN for achieving the Vascular Access Surgery Wait Time (Priority 3) indicator for the 2018/19 fiscal year. Meeting a rate of 98.9 per cent, an increase from the 2017/2018 year, places SHN among the top third in provincial performance.

“The centre has been a consistent high performer and continues to provide high quality, patient centred care,” says Dr. Peter Blake, Provincial Medical Director, Ontario Renal Network.

The Ontario Renal Network assesses Regional Renal Programs using both regional and facility-level data to monitor progress towards multiple performance indicators and recognize top performers. These indicators encompass topics such as Home Dialysis Prevalence and Vascular Access

surgery wait times along with other high-priority metrics.

“These achievements would not have been possible if it weren’t for the commitment of our surgeons and staff to improve the lives of our patients through exceptional health care,” said Ethel Macatangay, Patient Care Director Nephrology and Chronic Disease. “Their dedication is a true reflection of how SHN is shaping the future of health care in Scarborough.”



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18th ANNUAL TRILLIUM DIWALI RAISES AN OUTSTANDING \$710,000 FOR CANCER CARE AND RESEARCH

Funds to support leading-edge cancer treatment technologies and community-based health care research at Trillium Health Partners

October 28, 2019
(Mississauga, ON)

– On October 18, an incredible \$710,000 was raised at The Trillium Diwali Gala Presented by Mortgage Company of Canada, GTA’s first and longest running Diwali festival. For the first time in the event’s 18-year history, more than \$100,000 was donated on the spot during the program’s “Call for Cash” portion.

“The overwhelming generosity and support of our community is what makes this event so successful year after year,” said Sapna Mehta, Trillium Diwali Community Chair. “We are incredibly grateful for the important role our community members play in the overall betterment of our shared community.”

Funds from this year’s event will support Trillium Health Partners’ leading cancer program by directing

proceeds to cancer care and treatment technologies. Money raised will also support health care research to improve patient outcomes. To date, the annual gala has raised more than \$10 million for medical equipment, patient care spaces and research.

“We know that with an aging population, cancer volumes are on the rise and early detection is our best line of defense for better patient experiences and outcomes,” said Dr. Mala Bahl, THP Medical Oncologist and Trillium Diwali Chair. “Proceeds from this year’s gala will allow us to invest in new equipment like mammography x-rays, for prevention and early detection, and linear accelerator units for more personalized and localized radiation treatment. Thanks to the money raised, we will continue to advance care for patients and their families.”

Close to 1,000 community members

gathered to celebrate. Guests were treated to entertainment by award-winning South Asian dance group Sanskriti Arts, a live performance by celebrity singer Kanika Kapoor and fusion foods fit for a spectacular Diwali celebration.

The Foundation would like to thank Mortgage Company of Canada for being the presenting sponsor, as well as Pearson Convention Center, Coffee Oyster Champagne, IAMGOLD Corporation, Paul Babber and Associates, Morguard, Tasco Appliances, Bell Canada, Cargojet, HomeEquity Bank, Past Community Chairs, Royal Bank of Canada, Salvatore Ferragamo, Square One, The Host Fine Indian Cuisine and Paras Events for supporting this year’s event. The Trillium Diwali gala is also supported by a number of generous donors including table sponsors, ticket purchasers, cash donors, gift-in-kind

donors and auction bidders.

In the spirit of Diwali, Trillium Health Partners Foundation invites the community to make a gift to help raise funds for Trillium Health Partners. Visit www.trilliumdiwali.ca or call 905-848-7575 to donate.

About Trillium Health Partners Foundation

Trillium Health Partners Foundation is dedicated to raising the critical funds needed to address the highest-priority needs of Trillium Health Partners, the largest community-based, acute care facility in Ontario. Trillium Health Partners is comprised of The Credit Valley Hospital, Mississauga Hospital and Queensway Health Centre.

To learn more, visit www.trilliumgiving.ca





Markham Stouffville Hospital Foundation's Fortune Leadership Council Celebrates \$500,000 Donation

On Monday, October 7th, Markham Stouffville Hospital (MSH) Foundation celebrated and recognized the Fortune Leadership Council's (FLC) \$500,000 contribution to the hospital. MSH has proudly named the paediatric outpatient clinic waiting room in honour of the FLC's gift.

The FLC, presided over by City of Markham Mayor Frank Scarpitti, as Honourary Chair, is a network of business leaders from the local Chinese community that has been raising funds for MSH since 2016. Under the leadership of Co-Chairs, Alan Kwong and Kenny Wan, the FLC was able to achieve this goal in three years, thanks to the generosity of 25 donors.

"We came together for a common cause – to give back to the community and to sustain quality health care at our hospital," says Kwong and Wan. "We are grateful for the continuous support of the Fortune Leadership Council members and their network of friends who have helped the hospital in purchasing critical life-saving equipment and medical technology. We hope this initiative is an inspiration to others in the Chinese community to step up and support MSH and continue to make a lasting impact on our community."

This generous contribution will support care close to home for the patients and families who rely on the hospital

every day.

"As a paediatrician I have the pleasure of seeing first-hand the impact that FLC's generosity has on the 15,000 newborns, children and adolescent patients we see every year in the paediatric outpatient clinic," says Dr. Veronica Chan, MSH paediatrician. "Support from donors impacts our ability to provide leading-edge paediatric care to our community."

Suzette Strong, CEO, MSH Foundation alongside Jo-anne Marr, President and CEO, MSH commemorated the contributions made by the FLC. "Hospitals rely on support from the community to sustain excellent patient care close to home. We are proud to recognize and celebrate the Fortune Leadership Council for supporting our highest priority needs," says Strong.

The FLC's commitment will not end with this gift. The group has already started raising funds for their next \$500,000 goal pledging their ongoing support to the hospital.

Markham Stouffville Hospital Foundation exists to enable the growth of Markham Stouffville Hospital by raising funds and awareness for its ongoing priorities and needs. Donations from the community fund life-saving medical equipment that helps to ensure the delivery of first-class healthcare at MSH.



Fortune Leadership Council donors



L-R - Suzette Strong, CEO, MSH Foundation; Mayor Frank Scarpitti, City of Markham; Kenny Wan, MSH Foundation Board Member and Co-Chair, FLC; Alan Kwong, MSH Foundation Board Member and Co-Chair, FLC; Dr. Veronica Chan, Paediatrician, MSH

The Village Grocer donates all day's sales to Markham Stouffville Hospital to give thanks

On Saturday, October 19th, the power of community was on full display at the inaugural "The Village Grocer Giving Thanks" event in support of Markham Stouffville Hospital (MSH). Thousands came to shop while numerous MSH doctors, clinicians, hospital leaders, supporters and Markham Firefighters helped behind the counters and throughout the store.

The Village Grocer donated 100 per cent of the day's sales to the hospital. This would not be possible without the continued commitment by The MacDonald Family. Evan and Cathy MacDonald, owners of The Village Grocer, have been supporters of MSH for more than 20 years and wanted to continue the tradition of making a difference.

Together we raised over \$101,000 to benefit our community's health. The entire \$101,000 contribution

from the inaugural Village Grocer "Giving Thanks" event was matched \$1 for \$1 thanks to the Gerhard and Elma Schickedanz Foundation longtime MSH supporters and regular customers at The Village Grocer. A total of \$202,000 raised.

A tremendous thank you to the Schickedanz and MacDonald families for making this possible. Their spirit of generosity is the reason that thousands of patients and families can count on MSH for extraordinary care.

Markham Stouffville Hospital Foundation exists to enable the growth of Markham Stouffville Hospital by raising funds and awareness for its ongoing priorities and needs. Donations from the community fund life-saving medical equipment that helps to ensure the delivery of first-class healthcare at MSH.



L-R: Allan Bell, VP Community Relations & Corporate Partnerships, MSH Foundation, Thomas, Cathy and Evan MacDonald, Owners, The Village Grocer, Suzette Strong, CEO, MSH Foundation, Avo Oudabachian, Board Chair, MSH Foundation, Dr. Bear



L-R: Dr. Martha Carruthers, Family Physician, MSH; Dr. Bear; Dr. Mateya Trinkaus, Oncologist, MSH; Dr. Jeya Nadarajah, Infectious Disease Specialist, MSH; Dr. Subarna Thirugnanam, Intensivist, MSH.



Salmaan Alvi, Board Director, MSH Foundation and family



Take it or Leave it

Investing in Yourself

“I’m talking about a joy that emanates from your heart as a human being—where you get to a point in your life where you just start enjoying life, not what’s happening in your life, enjoying life itself.”

We’re going to be talking about seeds. One thing to understand: you work every day. At first, you worked on playing. For this, you needed toys. Hopefully your parents got you toys; maybe you had more toys than you wanted, that you could have a better time with, but at first you wanted to play.

Then you started going to school, and you invested in your education. Your parents invested, but you did too; you had to go every day, carry your homework, do all the things. So you invested in your education.

After that, you came out and you invested in getting a job. And now you invest, every day, in your financial welfare by having a job—by having a job, by taking care of that investment. You come home; you bring the money; you try to invest that—whatever! But you are, one way or the other way, invested.

And your life is how it is. But you know that you need that job to keep that money going. So you invest every day: get up in the morning, go to your job, take care of it, try to do as well as you can, so on and so forth.

So the issue here is that you know you have to invest—in your job, in your friends—well, same thing with your friends, the time you spend on your phone answering all your friends. Your investment—it’s your investment, whether it is energy you invest, whether it is time that you invest, time and energy that you invest—you invest!

Oh, yeah, by the way, we are here to talk about peace. We are here to talk about the possibility of this desert blooming. Aren’t we? How invested are you in peace? You want peace, no? How invested are you? What investment do

All your life you have invested in your education, recreation, career and social life. If you want joy—you have to invest in yourself.

they have their beer, saying, “It doesn’t get any better than that,” and then everybody wakes up with a hangover.

Not that kind of joy; I’m talking about a joy that emanates from your heart, as a human being—as a human being—where you get to a point in your life where you just start enjoying life, not what’s happening in your life.

You see the difference between the



you make? Every day?

You want clarity in your life? How invested are you in clarity? You want joy in your life? How invested are you in joy? You want understanding in your life. How invested are you in understanding in your life? You want to know yourself. Well, how have you invested into knowing yourself?

How do you invest? What have you done to bring a little peace in your life, bring a little joy, a true joy?

Not that that kind of joy where you go with your friends for a few minutes—and you have your, you know, wine and beer—and whatever they show; they have advertisements of this. And then

two? Where you actually just start enjoying life itself—the coming and going of this breath, you being on this earth, you being alive, you being able to see, you being able to feel—not what you feel, but enjoying feeling; not loving somebody, but enjoying the love; not enjoying listening to a record, but enjoy listening. Enjoy listening....

I’m not talking about enjoying a particular thing. I’m talking about enjoying being alive.

- Prem Rawat

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GLOBAL CHART-TOPPING INDO-PAKISTANI CANADIAN GROUP JOSH THE BAND CAPTURES THEIR INSPIRING JOURNEY IN NEW CONTENT SERIES WITH SAMSUNG CANADA

Canadian performance duo shares their unique creative journey with the Galaxy A series

SAMSUNG

Galaxy A



MISSISSAUGA, Ont., October 8, 2019 - Samsung Electronics Canada announced a new partnership with international chart-toppers JoSH the Band, a Canadian Indo-Pakistani Bhangra pop music group that has sold more than three million albums worldwide. The partnership spotlights the singer-songwriters behind JoSH (pronounced "Joe-SH"), Rup Magon and Quram "Q" Hussain, both of the Greater Toronto Area, with a series of #CaptureYourJourney videos as they share their inspiring journey to becoming close bandmates and international recording stars.

JoSH the Band have been named MTV India's Artist of the Year, collaborated with internationally-renown recording artists and performed at sold-out shows in 25 countries worldwide. Rup and Q both have families in Canada, and reveal how they stay connected as well as celebrate cultural traditions.

"Technology has completely transformed how people engage with culture – today we have so much available in the palm of our hand," said Q. "Our story is one that we feel is echoed by many Canadians – about discovering identity, overcoming barriers and pursuing a dream – and with Samsung Canada and the Galaxy A series we see an exciting opportunity to tell that story and encourage Canadians to share their own."

The video series will be shared by both JoSH the Band and Samsung

across social media, and Canadians can follow their story using the hashtag #CaptureYourJourney.

"We are excited to be bringing this partnership to life for Canadian fans," says David Allard, Chief Marketing Officer, Samsung Electronics Canada. "As part of Samsung's ongoing efforts to highlight the incredible diversity of our smartphone users, this is a journey that celebrates Canadian cultural moments through the power of technology – and the Galaxy A series' versatile cameras with an Ultra-Wide angle lens makes it easy for people to capture moments in real-time."

At a media event on October 8, 2019 at the Samsung Experience Store in the CF Toronto Eaton Centre, Rup and Q joined the Samsung Canada leadership team to debut the first video from the upcoming #CaptureYourJourney content series.

Galaxy A Series

Samsung launched the Galaxy A series in June at major retail locations and carrier partners nationwide, expanding the mid-tier device portfolio and delivering exciting new device options at an accessible price point. Designed for the way that people connect today – sharing, capturing and consuming live content - the Galaxy A20, A50, and A70 provide Generation Z, young millennials and like-minded consumers with an opportunity to choose from a variety of models to

suit their needs and passions.

To see the first #CaptureYourJourney video with JoSH the Band please visit Samsung Canada's YouTube page at youtube.com/user/SamsungCanada.

To learn more about Samsung and its latest innovations, please visit: Samsung.com/ca.

About Samsung Electronics Canada Inc.

Samsung Electronics Canada inspires Canadians to reach their full potential through a transformative ecosystem of products and services that deliver innovation and distinct design to every aspect of their connected

lives. The company is redefining the worlds of TVs, smartphones, virtual reality and wearable devices, tablets and digital appliances. In 2019, Samsung was ranked as one of Canada's "Most Admired Brands" in Leger's Corporate Reputation Study. "Best Global Brands" list. Dedicated to helping make a difference in the lives of Canadians, Samsung's award-winning corporate giving initiatives support public education and health-related issues in communities across the country.

To discover more, please visit www.samsung.com.

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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

DEVELOPMENTS IN JAFFNA



Water cannon salute for the first flight landing at Jaffna International Airport. Picture courtesy ANI

“So... so... so...,” everyone wants to know from me these days - “Are you thrilled about developments in Jaffna?”

What developments in Jaffna?

“Why the airport of course.”

Ah of course.

Well, I am sure it'll come in handy if I ever want to go to India.

Meanwhile, my regular three wheel driver is devastated. He's unlikely to get his ancestral land in Palaly back - he had held out hope all this while, while eking out a living to pay for his rented house by Jaffna town.

Some of you regular readers of my writings here might even remember this three wheel driver from a piece I wrote a few weeks ago - on the Eluga Tamil issue. Then, he was quoted criticizing Tamil nationalists who sought to impose an economic blockade in the North for the Eluga Tamil rally. Such a blockade would hit non-salaried breadwinners like him smack on their guts.

No work, no pay. Go hungry that day. This poor elderly man has already been through so much in the war years - and he still doesn't see retirement in sight. He still has to work hard to support his family - his children are all grown up now, some of them run their own three wheelers too - but without land or homes of their own, survival is precarious at best. And so he ferries people in his trusty three wheeler from early morning till late at night to earn his keep.

A gentle, mild mannered man, he doesn't like to talk much - especially of his past. They bring back too many traumatic memories for him. “What's the point of thinking of all that? It's best to move on,” he says. Yet I occasionally prod him for his stories.

Among the many things I managed to ferret out of him - he once spent several years in jail, watching as many young men and women around him were brought in, tortured, and ‘disappeared’. He was sure he was going to end up with the same fate, but for unknown reasons was

eventually released without charge.

How did he end up in jail? Was he a part of the LTTE? Far from it.

He had been a driver for a private bus. A passenger one day had got into an argument with the conductor of the bus - he didn't even remember what their original tussle was about, it must have been something minor. Whatever it was, the conductor unceremoniously off loaded the passenger from the bus. The next thing they knew, they were both arrested - the passenger had complained to the army that these two men were LTTE aides - in those days, circa the 1990s, that was enough to get one arrested without any kind of due procedure or investigation.

Wait a minute, isn't the Prevention of Terror (PTA) act still operational?

I was too hasty in saying ‘those days’ then, it still could happen these days too.

Such was the malevolent spectre of the PTA, I have seen it used as a threat among Tamils themselves - “Just you wait, I am going to report to the CID that you are LTTE.”

Needless to say, Tamils lived in fear of their non-Tamil fellow citizens at the time - even minor arguments could lead to spurious charges where one would easily vanish under the PTA - and many scores were settled exactly like that.

His young family had had to depend on relations' good will to survive while he was incarcerated - something he still tears up about. He made it out eventually, and prefers to keep quiet about his experiences.

Something missing in all these gushing reports about the newly opened airport - were the private landowners of Palaly compensated for it or not?

I called my three wheel driver to check; “they called us for a meeting recently, where they offered alternate land or money. Some took the alternatives offered but others like us are holding out for our own lands back,” he said.

Did the compensation offered actually compare to the value of the land taken? The government is famous for offering peanuts as compensation in these parts. “I don't know, since we didn't take that option, we didn't ask how much was being

given. Anyway, even those who agreed to receive compensation have not actually received anything yet. We'll have to wait and see,” was his response. “My land is not directly in the airport's way. I still hope for it back.”

Crown Prince in Town

Namal Rajapaksa was touring Jaffna recently. I was invited to attend his campaign meeting at the Thinnai Hotel. He didn't have much to say about political prisoners or the fate of the disappeared people - he gave a short speech where he said that education and development were the two main drivers of his uncle Gotabhaya Rajapaksa's campaign, and this was crucially relevant to Jaffna too. Fair enough, it certainly is crucially relevant but just a day earlier his uncle had claimed to the Hindu's correspondent that no people had gone missing from among the Tamils' after being handed over to the army. The mothers of the disappeared still camping along the roads of Kilinochchi, Mullaitivu and Jaffna in hopes of news of their children are all mistaken apparently - if not outright liars. It looked as if Namal was going to leave this elephant in the room unaddressed but after he threw the floor open to questions, the Jaffna district parliamentarian Angajan Ramanathan, sitting to Namal's right whispered in his ear apparently prompting him to address the issue - so Namal reluctantly addressed it - although he didn't have much to say. “Ah... And also... I think one of the political topics in the North is about the missing people and the political prisoners.. Actually, that's one of the topics President Rajapaksa tried to address in his time, after the end of the war. That's why we formed the LLRC commission - to have a domestic mechanism for a permanent solution.”

He also said that he had spent time with the political prisoners for over a week in jail, and had got to know them ‘like a family’. That he was very happy about spending the week with them in a jail cell because 30 years earlier, while his mother had been pregnant with him, his father Mahinda Rajapaksa had served time in the same cell. And that while he sympathized with the prisoners and

had formed a bond with them, it was not possible to go beyond the judicial process to procure presidential pardons for them - especially if they had indeed engaged in terrorist activity.

Couldn't fault him on what he said - he certainly possesses good PR skills. It was more what he didn't say. Among all the pretty promises of economic development, pain still languishes. As does fear. Namal however maintained that Tamils did not appear to fear either him or his family because we were highly critical of the entire family without fear, while simply claiming that we feared them. Whom we actually feared he said, appeared to be the Tamil politicians, whom many of us never dared publicly criticize.

As for land, he said that his father's government had released 17000 acres out of 24000, while the current government had released only 4000 acres thus far. “Even with all the demining we had to do after war's end, we released more lands than this current government, keep that in mind.”

OK, but then they held pretty much all of the North and East after war ended - so they did have to eventually release the lands for people to settle, once they started trickling out of Menik farm.

Some prime property in central locations were withheld as High Security Zones however - where their family built private mansions and hotels - when the govt changed, those massive buildings' construction work were abandoned and they are lying vacant today.

In the meantime, while most people's houses in these parts had been destroyed during the war, others' found them standing - such as in Palaly. Many Palaly residents thought they would be able to resettle fairly easily because their houses were still standing after war had ended - but then sometime in 2012-13, the Rajapaksa government razed them down. And never returned the land. Neither has this government - who have at this last minute delivered an airport to show something for it.

Is this a good development? I don't know. You tell me.

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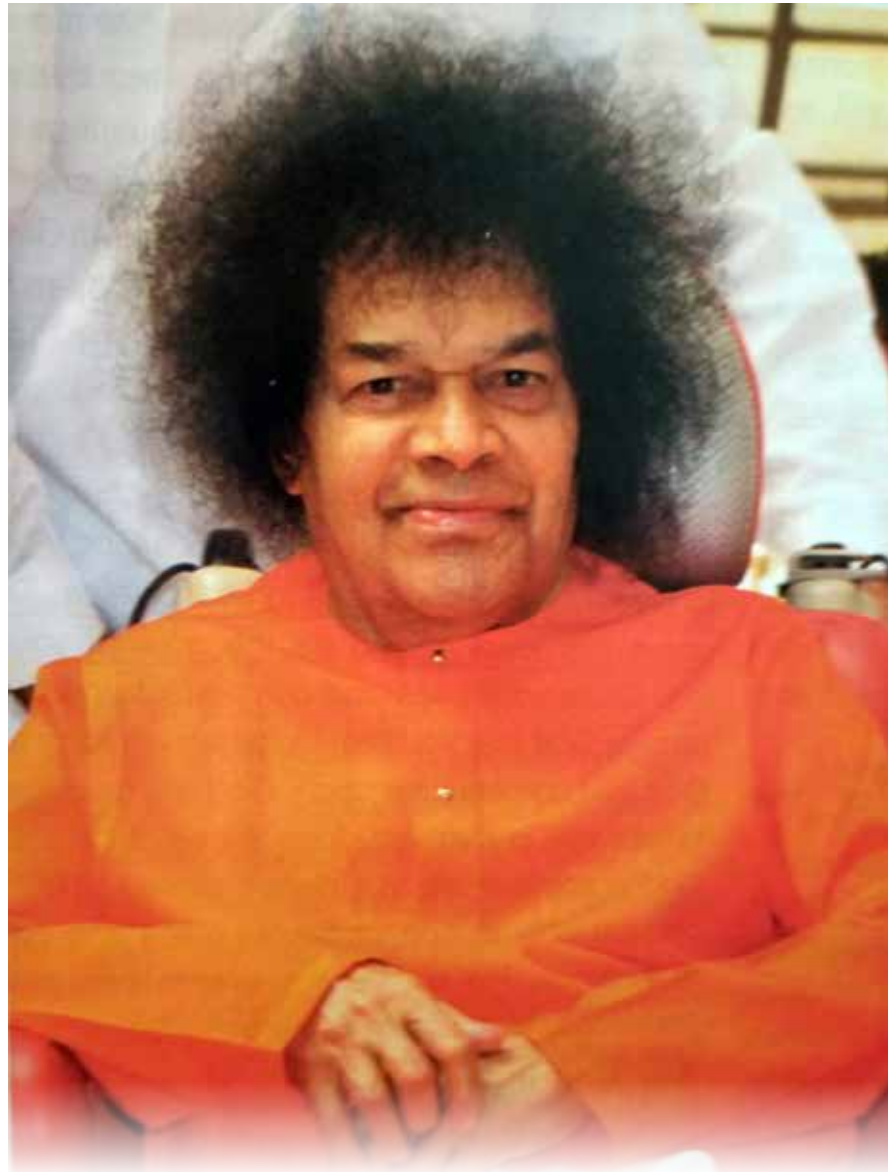
GOD IN HUMAN FORM

For the spiritual uplift of man

By: C. Kamalaharan

On the 23rd of this month Sathya Sai Baba centres throughout the world will be celebrating Swamy's 94th Birthday. To be part of the celebrations devotees will make a bee-line towards their respective centres spread all over. In Puttaparthi too a vibrant atmosphere will prevail. What was considered a water-starved wilderness Puttaparthi had been transformed into a hectic spiritual environment for millions of devotees to assemble and seek solace. How was it possible to bring forth such a fabulous transformation by Swamy? It was possible only by Swamy himself who as an 'Avathar' had descended on earth for the ascent of man. Swamy drew His devotees towards Him through His miracles which were His visiting cards. Furthermore Swamy's selfless service of providing free education free health services and free water supply drew millions of devotees towards Him. Swamy's teaching based on the innovative human values of Sathyam Dharmam Shanthi Prema and Ahimsai also lured the masses towards him. Even after Swamy left His physical body His presence is being felt in some Sai centres and in the residences of some devotees.

Swamy's omnipresence omniscience and omnipotent nature had been experienced by many devotees in the past. I wish to present my personal experience as a sevadal at Prashanthi Nilayam a rarest of rare opportunity provided for a few Sri Lankans who were fortunate to join the Tamil Nadu sevadals for the annual service at Prashanthi Nilayam. I was assigned duty at the Super Speciality Hospitality RH canteen (the canteen serving food exclusively for those who accompany the patients). Once after serving food during lunch a fair quantity of rice remained. We told the cook to preserve the leftover rice for dinner and to prepare lesser quantity to substantiate that. In the evening as usual we had a short bhajan session and got ready to serve food. To our dismay we found that the leftover rice had become stale and was emitting a foul odour. "Sai Ram! What shall we do" was our immediate concern. "Shall I prepare some rice," suggested the cook. "Prepare rice now! How can that be the people have already formed a queue" Without wasting time we unanimously decided to manage with all what we had. First we began serving the freshly prepared rice which as expected was over within minutes. "What next! Finding no other alternative we informed the sevadal who issued tokens to inform the people in the queue about the availability of only the stale rice. As there were no eating houses nearby serving quality food at cheap rate they remained in



Swami Baba

the queue to eat whatever was provided. Chanting "Sai Ram" we lifted the vessel containing the stale rice on to the table and removed the lid. What a miracle! The rice was fresh without emitting foul odour. And what more the vessel too was warm and there was sufficient rice just enough to serve the last person. Swamy aware of the predicament we were in had provided succour at the right time. There were many such instances when Swamy had helped His devotees.

In return what does Swamy expect from us. He expects every devotee to be simple unassuming and egoless, to shed all bad habits and to follow the guidelines provided in His 9 points code of conduct. Earlier Swamy said, "My life is My message." Later He said, "Your life is MY message." He meant every devotee should be of exemplary character leading a virtuous life and displaying the three Ps – Patience Perseverance and Purity.

Today most devotees lament for not having been to Prashanthi Nilayam during Swamy's physical presence there. A few years ago I met a devotee during a bhajan session in Toronto. He said that he was very keen to go on a pilgrimage to Prashanthi Nilay-

am and have Swamy's dharsan. I said, "Better do it now as the influx of devotees to Prashanthi Nilayam is increasing by leaps and bound. In reply he said that he was not in a sound financial position to make a trip owing to his commitment to settle his long term monthly mortgage payment. To him and to those who were not fortunate to make a trip to Prashanthi Nilayam Swamy had said, "It's need-

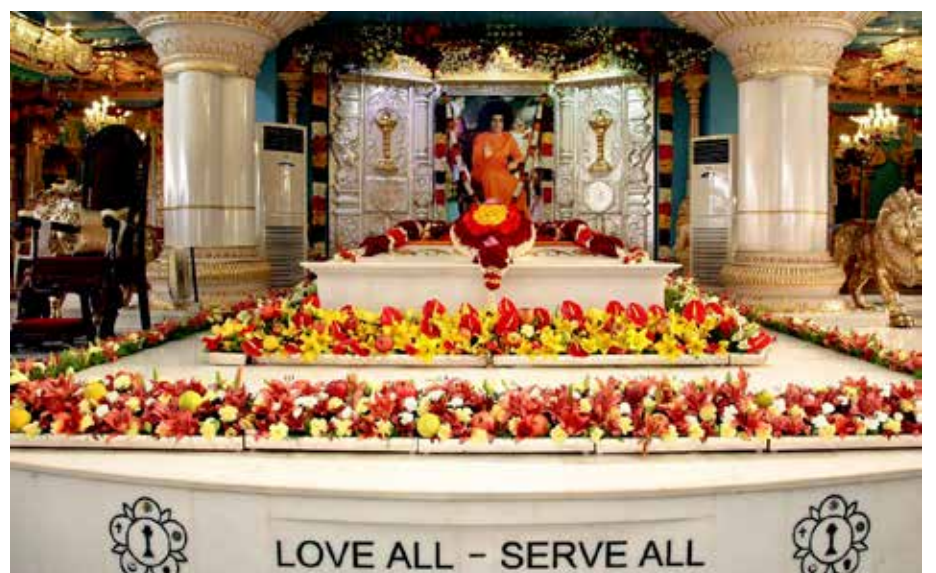
less for anyone to worry as My blessings are for all irrespective of whether they are in Prashanthi Nilayam or far away in distant lands. I remember once during dharsan when a devotee was in a grief – stricken mood Swamy had asked him, "What is worrying you?" "Swamy I am worried about my family I left behind in Sri Lanka." To which Swamy had said, "It's better for you to think of Prashanthi Nilayam from Sri Lanka rather than thinking of Sri Lanka from Prashanthi Nilayam." Swamy indirectly meant that He is with us wherever we are.

When I recollect my past I find that thinks had worked out successfully due to His timing and not mine. He had guided me step by step not all of a sudden and everything fell into place. He had tested my patience and had answered my prayers only at the last moment by grasping my hand just before a fall from a precipice. I had many plans but they weren't successful. Swamy knew what was best for me and had provided them at the appropriate time and place and continue to do so even after he left His physical body.

Leave everything to the Will of God. Only then will he give you what you really require and what you don't require. You also do not know what is good for you and what is not good for you. He will give you on his own what is good for you, what is beneficial for you and what is ideal for you. It all depends on His Will when to give and what to give. When you offer everything to God with a steady mind and do all actions to please Him, He Himself will look after all your requirements.

Sanathana Sarathi – July 2009

Swamy's Samadhi at Prashanthi Nilayam



Swamy's Samadhi



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Took a position at Globe & Mail just after 5 months from the program start date. Then worked at Google, eBay, Seagate, WSIB and TD Bank on major projects. *Current earning potential is \$220k+.*



WILLIAM

Got a job in 5 months from the program start date. He has been working in a major bank as a Senior Technical Lead for many years. *Earns a 6 figure income.*



ROHIT

Joined as an international student and took a position as a Senior IT Consultant. He is now a DevOps Engineer. *Earns a 6 figure income.*



EMMANUEL

Worked on multiple projects with IBM and CIBC at the same time immediately after graduation. *Earns a 6 figure income.*



JERRIN

Joined as an international student and got a position as a Senior IT Support Consultant in a major community college. *Earns a 6 figure income.*

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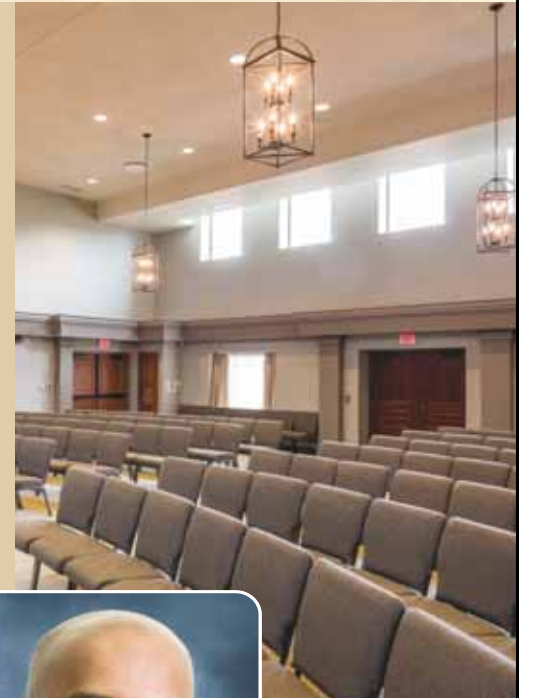
உங்கள் உறவொன்றை பிரிந்து தடுமாறும் வேளையில் இறுதி நிகழ்வுகள் பற்றிய கவலை உங்களுக்கு வேண்டாம். அனுபவத்துடன் கூடிய அன்பான சேவையை வழங்குகின்றோம்.

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SRI LANKAN PRESIDENT HANDS OVER DOCUMENTS DECLARING MADHU SHRINE AS A 'SACRED PLACE'.

By: Raymond Rajabalan

The documents declaring the Shrine of Our Lady of Madhu in Mannar as a sacred place, was handed over by President Maithripala Sirisena to Mannar Bishop Rev. Dr. Emmanuel Fernando on Oct 29, 2019.

Thousands of local and foreign devotees visit the shrine which is of significant religious importance, during the Madhu Church festival in August every year.

However, the area surrounding the sacred shrine has remained under-developed for a long time since the three-decade long LTTE war, the President's Office said.

Cabinet approval had been granted to develop the area and provide more facilities for devotees, after President Sirisena had put forward a proposal to that effect, citing it as a timely need.

In early October, the Megapolis Ministry issued a gazette declaring 300 acres of the land area surrounding the shrine as an Urban Development Area to carry out development activities.

Accordingly, infrastructure, water, and sanitary facilities for the convenience of devotees visiting the shrine would be developed under this project.

In addition, a 5000-acre land has also been declared as a Protected Area of the Shrine.

About Shrine of Our Lady of Madhu

The Shrine of Our Lady of Madhu is a Roman Catholic Marian shrine in Mannar district of Sri Lanka. With a history of over 400 years, this shrine acts as a center for pilgrimage and worship for Sri Lankan Catholics. The site is considered as the holiest Catholic shrine in the island and is a well known place of devotion for both Tamil and Sinhalese Catholics. The church has been a symbol of unity not just between Tamils and Sinhalese, but also between people of different religions, including Buddhists, Hindus and Protestants.

Pope Pius XI granted the image of Our Lady of Madhu a Canonical coronation on 2 July 1924.





Avoiding Faults

- spectator.co.uk

By: J.A. Rajah

'Varumun kavathan vazhlkkai erimunnar, Vaithoorupol kedum'

The life of a man who does not guard against disastrous developments, will be like a haystack before an advancing fire. Wise men foresee events that may come about in due course, and, if they can do nothing to shape them must at least prepare themselves to meet all eventualities, with minimum damage to themselves and their environment. Freedom from arrogance, and meanness ensures

dignity in greatness. Parsimony born out of greed, selfish pride and excessive pleasure seeking are the triple faults of a princely life. People who fear disgrace, should avoid even tiny millet sized faults, treating them as of major dimension like a palm tree. Prompt avoidance of faults is helpful in building a personality free from all faults-big or small. As faults are one's worst enemy leading to ultimate ruin, it is wise to guard against all faults. Faultless will be the person, who corrects himself before he goes on to spot other's faults. Jesus admonished the Pharisees

when they wanted to stone a prostitute to death by saying, "Let an absolutely faultless person cast the first stone on her." The miser who does not put his money to legitimate and purposeful use will find his wealth decline and vanish. Avarice, which is the denial of charitable inclinations in men, is not just a vice; it is the worst of sin. Never indulge in self-praise; nor should you go in for activities that do not produce any good results. One should enjoy his delights in secret rather than exposing him to the machinations of his enemies.

"Paatullam ennum ivaranmai ettullum, Ennappaduvathu onru anru". (Kural: 431-440).



Valluvar's Views



D.S. Gnanapragasam

(Gnanam Master) - 1931-2019



It was very sad news for the thousands of past students to hear of the recent passing away of their beloved teacher Mr. Gnanapragasam, affectionately called as Gnanam Master, an extremely popular Physics teacher known throughout the length and breadth of Northern Province for several decades.

Soon after his graduation from University of Colombo he was offered government employment but on his mother's request, he joined his Alma Mater St. Patrick's College, Jaffna, and the prestigious Catholic High School in 1955 where he taught for a quarter century with great devotion and dedication.

Within a couple of years of his joining the school, he along with a great colleague and a very popular Chemistry teacher, Sam Alfred, began producing excellent results. Dozens of students began entering University and within a short time, the Sam-Gnanam duo brought great prestige to their school. Consequently, the number of students seeking admission to A/L classes at St. Patrick's began to swell. The fame of these two great teachers began to spread across the entire Northern Province resulting in hundreds of students gathering at the residences of Sam Master and Gnanam Master for private tuition.

Further, due to special requests from the principals of Vembadi Girls High School, Holy Family Convent and Chundikuli Girls High School, Gnanam Master taught at these institutions during after school hours.

After nearly 25 years of dedicated service at St. Patrick's College he prematurely retired in 1981 and moved to Colombo where Gnanam Master was welcomed with open arms by the management of Holy Family Convent, Bampalapitiya. In addition, he also taught at the Muslim Girl's High School. On the request some of his past students he also taught in some private institutes.

Though he would have continued to teach in Colombo for many more years, Gnanam Master began feeling uneasy due to the daily hassle of being subjected to questioning at several military check points in the city. It was for this reason that he decided to move to Canada in the late nineties, where

ter for several years. However after he moved to Canada, I had the rare privilege of meeting him at his residence in Scarborough on two occasions and discuss some of the past memories.

Late Gnanam Master was a great teacher in more than one sense. He was unique in several ways. He taught Physics for little over six decades while maintaining the same standard of teaching. This is an incredible feat and most certainly it appears to be a sign of divine blessing.

Teachers are considered to be the light givers to the society. When a teacher renders their services with dedication, it is certain that the younger generation will become better human beings and consequently, the character of the citizens will become polished.

Late Gnanam Master was a teacher who taught with passion and loved his students like his own children. He went beyond mere teaching in the classrooms, as he provided academic and emotional support to all of his students... Gnanam Master is remembered with the deep respect that we all hold for him because of the strong influence that he had on his students.

Gnanam Master took teaching as a vocation and not only as a means of earning his livelihood. He worked harder to humanize students through teaching. This is why the passing away of this passionate teacher has caused so much grief to the hundreds of his past students.

Late Gnanam Master is survived by his wife, four children and his grandchildren.

May this great teacher's soul rest in peace.

Goodbye dear Sir, goodbye forever.

S. Raymond Rajabalan,
B.Sc. (Hons) Cey

**I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race,
and I have kept the faith. 2 Timothy 4:7-8**



he lived until his recent passing away. Never being used to remaining idle, Gnanam Master was active until recent times providing private tuition.

After leaving St. Patrick's College, I did not have the opportunity of meeting Gnanam Mas-

The Importance of Art

Part 2

Angela Yuan



The Reproductive System in Abstraction (2018), Oil on Canvas by Angela Yuan

Art is now deemed as one of the lowest reputable careers that a child could take. It's seen as a career that appears to require little skill compared to the formulae and lab experimentations of glorified subjects like Math or Science. Today, if a child were to say, "I want to be an artist when I grow up!", many adults, teachers, or peers might look down on them and apply relentless pressure into shifting their careers towards becoming a doctor, a lawyer, an accountant, or anything else that would provide a financially stable income. However, instead of focusing on whether a field may seem more or less enticing due to the number of zeros attached to a pay check, it is more effective to consider a child's



Wrapped Organics (2019), Acrylic on Canvas by Angela Yuan

talents and affinity to a certain type of labour. Thus, in order to play fairly towards a child's possible compatibilities and opportunities, art should not be a subject made obsolete from school curricula. Whether or not a child grows up to become a dentist or a graphic designer, implementing the core fundamentals of visual arts is beneficial to any field, as it heightens their individualities and multiple dexterities.

Firstly, art promotes critical thinking and creativity. In our current age of hyper fast technology and instant search engine gratification, it's easy to slip into the false comfort of understanding concepts and regurgitating academic information onto assignments, lab projects and tests. Learning becomes passive. However, artmaking develops active learning and forces the artist to think analytically about why and what they are creating. Since all artists start out with a blank canvas and given infinite free reign of control, their manipulation of x medium on y surface conveys a statement in of itself. How does using gold foil

lettering on consumer waste by-products communicate themes about excessivism or economic materialism? How does using plastic bottles and forks with rubber band enforcements express environmentalist motifs? An artist's liberties also become their greatest detractors, thus encouraging innovation from stereotypical clichéd thinking. As more and more ideas quickly become unoriginal and boring among the multiple carbon-copies of the same subject matter, artists foster analytical thinking of how to be different from others, and how to define one's individuality. Additionally, artists learn how to balance out the various elements of colour, line, or texture together to produce an effective composition, thus successfully directing impatient fleeting eyes toward target subjects and derivative detailings. Artists learn how to apply the principles of contrast, repetition, or rhythm together to produce metaphors, visual puns, or symbolisms that emotionally charge their audience in mere seconds upon viewing. Above all, the thoughtful consideration for all aspects of a product is what sets artists apart from the average intellectual. An artist's attention to detail towards composition, material, and personalized themes train vital workplace skills of critical thinking and creativity. Even if a child were to grow up into a doctor or an engineer, the thinking and juggling abilities harnessed through fine art production are easily applicable into innovative methods of cancer research, integral design, or of any problem that seeks an answer.

Secondly, studying visual arts can promote hand-eye coordination and observation. From the preliminary basics of life drawing or observational studies, artists are able to interpret 3D subjects to 2D representation. The act of measuring angles and distances improves cognition and detail-oriented awareness, as well as increased efficiency of translating thought and will into material and physical form. A consistent practice of drawing and painting rounds off the capabilities of the left and right brain, fostering further concentration and precision in handheld tools and techniques. Since many industries are theory-reliant but application-heavy, exercising hand-eye coordination provides a strong base for multiple in-field operations. Should a child grow up into a surgeon, any amount of studying or theory-based knowledge would not be beneficial without a steady hand and aptitude from art-trained coordination and observation.

Thirdly, students who engage in visual arts learn open-mindedness and perseverance. Since art is a subjective discipline, there is always constructive criticism coming from all perspectives. Some people may come from a Surrealist background or from the lens of a Realist, or even from the mind-set of a non-artist, thus offering forth variations in what may or may not be worthwhile to consider or correct. Yet, no matter what context the critique is coming from, artists exercise a willingness to take risks, to try new things, and to at least gain a better understanding and appreciation from other angles of expertise. They even learn to reflect on past art movements such as Dadaism, Fauvism, or Impressionism to take inspiration and fine-tune adjustments with antique standards and values. With constructive criticisms, students learn the importance


of progress-driven perfection, and will realize the benefits of sharing ideas and techniques to produce something new, original, and often improved. Many people are too conceited and proud about their work, often becoming bitter and personally offended after receiving criticism. Yet, this dismissive and self-centred approach closes doors and opportunities to better oneself. Instead, artists will appreciate critiques to at least learn from one another, and to grow and develop their skills as well as their characters.

As vital as art is for the developing child's acceleration towards societal favoured careers, we also need to have new generations of professional artists in our world today to continue to pass on our cultural values and history. Texts can only do so much in terms of delivering information, but visual imagery targets our emotive receptors and expresses the same message but in less time than a monotonous piece of writing would. We respond more readily from visual cues, as our brains are able to recognize more imagery, connect it to a strong emotional response, and ultimately produce vivid memories. This is why we are able to see pictures within the shapes of clouds, to pinpoint faces from inanimate objects, and to recognize our friends and families from a sea



Angela Yuan


of people. We are stimulated by visuals. Therefore, no matter what industry society may honor the most, art will be the underlying mechanism to broadcast our deepest beliefs and morals. Art is the main vehicle needed to propagate our learned knowledge of sciences, ethics, and ideologies to our present day communities and future generations. Art is a catalyst to change, because colour, line, shape, value, form, texture, and space, all play a role in evoking emotions, forming memories, and ultimately spreading awareness and understanding. Art is what makes us human, and until we can begin placing this creative discipline on the same pedestal as Math or Science, we will never be able to truly appreciate and interpret the complexities of the world around us.



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2019

NOBEL PRIZE IN MEDICINE GRANTED TO NOVEL DISCOVERY ON OXYGEN

Trio Scientists Won Nobel Prize for Finding Out How Human Cells Use Oxygen

By: *Uthayan Thurairajah*

2019 Nobel Prize in Medicine has been jointly awarded to William Kaelin Jr., Sir Peter Ratcliffe, and Gregg Semenza for their pioneering research into how human cells respond to changing oxygen levels and “for their discoveries of how cells sense and adapt to oxygen availability.” The Karolinska Institute in Stockholm announced the prize on Monday. The Nobel prize committee said that the trio’s discoveries had paved the way for “promising new tactics to fight cancer, anemia, heart attacks, strokes, and many other diseases.”

The value of oxygen has long been established, but how cells adapt to changes in its levels remained unknown. Randall Johnson, Nobel prize committee member, described the trio’s work as a “textbook discovery.” “It is fundamental biology where students learn how cells work, and, from that standpoint alone, it is an interesting thing,” he said.

Later, Semenza found out that a protein complex named “HIF” mediated the oxygen response.

THE EXPLICIT STORY

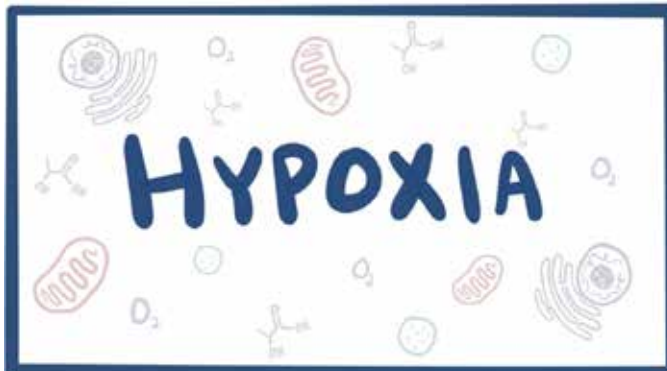
The laureates worked independently over more than two decades to establish how cells can sense and adapt to changing oxygen availability. The 2019 prize laureates, the committee said, identified molecular machinery that regulates the activity of genes in response to varying oxygen levels.

Trio scientists had hugely expanded our knowledge of how physiological response gives life and were inevitable players in deciding how this whole thing operates. Johnson added that their discoveries were now a “complete and explicit story.” It is clear that we now understand this fundamental biological switch that impacts all our lives as living creatures here on earth, breathing oxygen.

We need oxygen to unlock the energy in food. When we breathe in, oxygen breaks down (oxidizes) chemical bonds in calories and releases the energy for use by our cells. The product of the process is CO₂. This exchange has been understood for centuries. The novel discovery is how cells adapt and respond to changing oxygen levels. For example, our cells know to ramp up breathing when we exercise and need more energy — and oxygen — to keep going. We need oxygen to live, and how we adapt to changing levels of oxygen is the novel discovery.

“The molecular machinery regulates the activity of genes in response to varying levels of oxygen,” according to the Nobel committee statement. It is an understanding of “the mechanism for one of life’s most essential adaptive processes” has already led to promising new strategies for treating many diseases.

The new knowledge of the molecular machinery that controls a physiological process that’s essential to life had immense connections for the research of the disorder. “Hypoxia is a hallmark of many diseases including heart failure, chronic lung disease, and many cancers,” said Andrew Murray, University of Cambridge. “The work of trio scientists and their teams has paved the way to a higher understanding of these common, life-threatening conditions and new strategies to treat them.” The committee said that the labs and pharmaceutical companies around the world were racing to develop



Medical School in 2002. Kaelin was sleeping when he received a call on Monday from Thomas Perlman, Secretary of the Nobel Committee. The American scientists, particularly physician-scientists like himself and the other two laureates, were “under tremendous pressure” to justify the importance of their work.

Sir Peter Ratcliffe was sitting and working on his EU Synergy Grant application, after learning he had been awarded this year’s Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine. Semenza, also from New York and became a full-time professor at Johns Hopkins University in 1999. He has been the Director of Cell Engineering for the Vascular Research Program since 2003.

Semenza found a protein complex called hypoxia-inducible factor (HIF). He said the influence on people’s health was “the most significant portion of the method.”

Ratcliffe was born in Lancashire, England, studied medicine at Cambridge University. He founded an autonomous research group at Oxford University, be-

came a full professor in 1996. Ratcliffe discovered a universal device for detecting and responding to low oxygen levels, known as hypoxia. Ratcliffe announced that he was in the process of writing a grant proposal. Any discovery of science impact becomes evident later. The three laureates will share the nine million Swedish kronor equally.

HYPOXIA RESEARCH

The trio scientists won the prestigious Lasker award in 2016. The researchers ridiculed in various phases of how cells in the body first feel and then react to low oxygen levels. The oxygen is used by tiny cells called mitochondria were seen in humans, and nearly all animal and plant cells to change food into valuable energy.

The scientists confirmed that when oxygen is in short supply, a protein complex that Semenza called hypoxia-inducible factor (HIF), builds up in nearly all the cells in the body. The rise in HIF has several outcomes but most prominently increases the action of a gene used to create erythropoietin (EPO), a hormone that, in turn, boosts the creation of oxygen-carrying red blood cells.

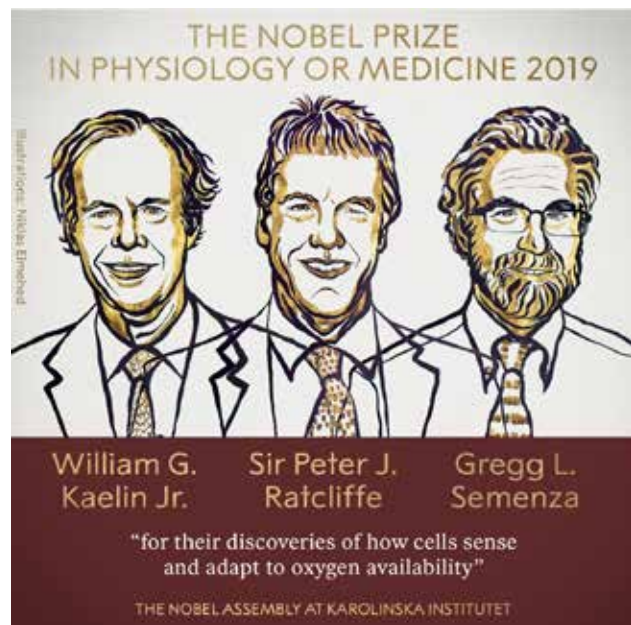
Professor Randall Johnson, molecular physiology and pathology, said the role of HIF was crucial from the earliest days of life. “If an embryo (egg) does not have the HIF gene, it will not survive early embryogenesis. Even in the mother’s womb, our bodies need this gene to do everything.”

The work has led to the increase of several drugs such as roxadustat and daprodustat, which treat anemia by tricking the body to think it is at high altitude, making it shake out more extra red blood cells. Related drugs aim to help heart disease and lung cancer patients who struggle to get enough oxygen into their bloodstream. More experimental drugs based on the finding seek to prevent other cancers from growing by blocking their capacity to make new blood vessels.

The president of the Royal Society, V. Ramakrishnan, said the prize was “richly deserved” by all three winners. “Oxygen is a necessary element for the survival of every cell in our bodies. Too little or too much can spell catastrophe. Knowing how evolution has provided cells to detect and respond to fluctuating oxygen levels.” It helps answer fundamental questions about how life emerged.

THE WINNERS

New York-born Kaelin Bega has a research laboratory in Boston and became a full professor at Harvard



BASIC TO HUMAN LIFE

Humans have adapted various ways to ensure cells get enough oxygen. Previous Nobel winners, Corneille Heymans, was awarded the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine 1938 for convincing that the carotid arteries in the neck have cells that sense the blood’s oxygen levels and control our respiratory rate in response. We breaths faster to take more oxygen in if

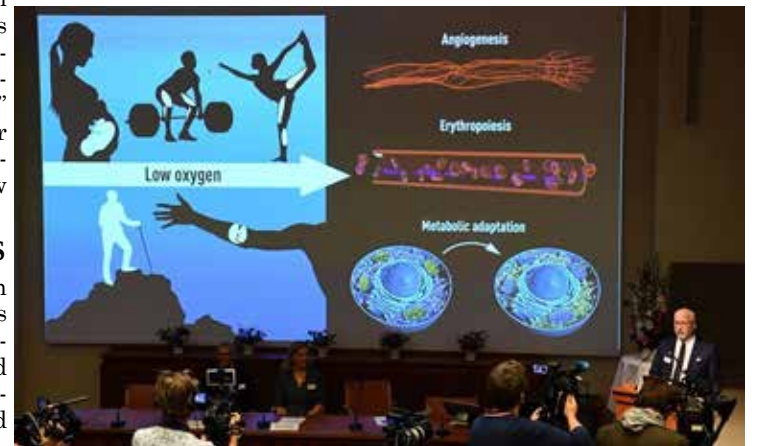


oxygen levels in the blood drop.

A hormone called erythropoietin (EPO) rises in the body when oxygen levels drop. It sends a flag to increase the production of red blood cells — which carry oxygen to the body’s tissues. The hormonal control of red blood cells was known earlier, but how this process was itself controlled by O₂ remained a mystery. Semenza found out that DNA segments near the EPO gene tested the cell’s response to low oxygen levels using genetically-modified mice. Ratcliffe built on that work. Along with Semenza, he found that oxygen-sensing mechanism “was present in virtually all tissues, not only in the kidney cells where EPO is normally produced.”



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

Pay down your mortgage or invest in your RRSP?

How to decide which course of action is your best long-term alternative

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

Have you ever wondered whether it makes more sense to pay off your mortgage or to invest in a Registered Retirement Savings Plan? Perhaps you're expecting to receive some extra money from an inheritance or an employment bonus, and you're not sure which route to take. The truth is, there is no easy answer. Deciding which route to take

between paying down your mortgage and contributing to an RRSP is dependent on your present situation. There are many variables that must be taken into account. Concentrating on paying down a mortgage may be the best route for one person, while focusing on an RRSP may benefit another.

through all your retirement years. The best retirement savings strategy for most Canadians is a Registered Retirement Savings Plan (RRSP) because your contributions and all the income that accumulates in your plan are tax deferred until you start using that money in retirement. Add in the fact that your contributions can be used to reduce taxes and the magic of compounding that enhances RRSP growth over time, and it's easy to see why a registered plan makes such good financial sense.

Young people who are starting a career and working toward major financial goals such as paying off student debt or buying a home often put contributing to an RRSP on the backburner in the hope that they'll



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Investment returns: Pay attention to the general rate of investment returns you could reasonably expect to earn when you make your decision. Astute investors could be further ahead by Investing their money than paying down the mortgage. The benefits of investing are magnified by an RRSP, with tax-deferred growth within the plan and the tax deductions on contributions.

Your mortgage rate: If your current mortgage rate is low, it may make more sense to invest in an RRSP. In times of good returns for financial markets, low borrowing costs make a compelling case for contributing to your RRSP.

ing up financial security in retirement. Of course, you can focus on both your RRSP and mortgage. For example, you could contribute to your RRSP and then apply the tax refund it generates towards a prepayment on your mortgage. Before you make a decision, you may want to ask for an assessment of your personal situation. An advisor can help you decide which course of action suits your financial circumstances and objectives.

Deciding which route to take between paying down your mortgage and contributing to an RRSP is dependent on your present situation. Look at all the factors, such as your age, income, investments,



Here are some factors to consider:

Your age: When you're young, it is wise to make your RRSP a priority. The sooner you get money into a sheltered retirement plan, the longer it will grow on a tax deferred basis. But don't overlook the need to build home equity. It can give you a head start on the expenses of moving to a larger home as your family grows.

Preparing for retirement should start early with a savings strategy that will make it possible for you to accumulate the most wealth for use (and enjoyment!)

be able to catch up later. The truth is a small amount invested earlier in your life has a greater financial impact than more money invested later on.

Your income: The more you earn, the higher the rate of tax you'll pay. That means you must earn more in before-tax dollars to make mortgage payments. If you're a high income earner you may want to quickly reduce this expensive debt. This being said, higher tax rates also mean bigger tax savings from your RRSP contribution.

Comprehensive

Are you behind on your RRSP?: If you have made less than your maximum annual RRSP contribution in the past, a lump sum could allow you to catch up. You are allowed to make up for unused contribution room that you've accumulated from past years—which can also generate a healthy tax benefit.

Your pension plan: Those with generous workplace pension plans that provide for a secure retirement may be able to concentrate on a mortgage without giv-

ing up financial security in retirement. They will all play into determining which course of action to take.

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.



DINNER & DANCE GALA CELEBRATIONS OF JUAA CANADA



By: Dr.K. Theivendirajah,
JUAA Canada.

The Jaffna University Alumni Association Canada (JUAA Canada) celebrated its first annual dinner & dance on Saturday, October 19th 2019 at the Princess Banquet Hall, Scarborough.

The President of the Association Sellathurai Suthakaran welcomed a full house of members, their families and some well-wishers. He urged the past graduates of Jaffna University living in

Canada to promote excellence at our alma mater by the exchange of their academic and professional experiences with the counter parts at the University of Jaffna.

Veeragathi Manivannan, Ph.D. (McMaster), one of the founder members of JUAA Canada and the past President of the Association of SriLankan Graduates of Canada was the chief guest. He was introduced to the guests by Dr.K. Theivendirajah, former Senior Professor of Botany at the University of Jaffna. Dr.V. Manivannan spoke of the wonderful experience he had at the University of

Jaffna as an Assistant Lecturer in Chemistry for two years and also wished the new association all success.

Everyone present at the dinner had a wonderful time. There were plenty of entertainment of dance, music and games to keep them engaged. The credit goes to the organizing committee led by the President and Secretary Shankari Balendra for providing an excellent show.

Readers may also visit www.juaacanada.com for more information.

Photos-Courtesy of Somakumar Kumarathevan





Colombo Ladies College OGA Toronto Branch celebrates Dinner/Dance 2019



By: Siva Sivapragasam

The Colombo Ladies College Old Girls Association, Toronto Branch celebrated an Annual Dinner/Dance with an evening of entertainment recently at the Markham Convention Centre, Scarborough.

Ladies' College has been in the forefront of private girls' education in the country for over a century and has a reputation for holistic education and academic excellence. Many of the students who received their education at Ladies College have had career success in different fields all over the world, including Toronto.

The 2019 Dinner/Dance which was held recently at the Markham Convention Centre was well attended and provided the guests with an evening of fine entertainment of music and dance. The function had a variety of events this year that kept the guests entertained during the night.

(Seen here are some pictures of the event – Picture Courtesy: The Sri Lankan Anchorman)



President of Colombo Ladies College OGA Toronto, Premila Sivapragasam addressing the guests



Colombo Ladies College OGA Toronto Committee Members



Jaffna Hindu College Association Canada hosts an extravagant "Kalaiyarasi 2019"

Jaffna Hindu College Association Canada's Art and Heritage Subcommittee hosted their Annual cultural program, "Kalaiyarasi 2019" on October 13, 2019 at Flato Markham Theatre.

This event consisted of several varieties of cultural programs this year such as folk drama, cultural

dance, villupaddu, drama, musical programs with native songs and speeches. A souvenir too was published and released called "Kalaiyarasi Magazine". The cultural committee included many heritage materials in the souvenir that was made possible with support of many loyal advertisers.

The committee members dressed in Tamil traditional attire and overall the program was well attended with yet another successful year.

Some of the photos from the event can be seen here.

Photo Courtesy: Ekuruvi



GENIE SISTERS

SAMAYAL
SANTHAI



Welcome to our recipe corner! We sisters will entice you with recipes that we have fallen in love with and teach you a little Tamil along the way, as all the ingredients will have their Tamil names. Both of us love to cook and we have developed very different styles. Niranjini has a very refined palate and cooks more contemporary world cuisine with an Asian touch. Rajini is the founder of Tamilfood and teaches individual and group cooking classes in Toronto and abroad. Follow us on Instagram: @ninjaeatsfood and @tamil_food Facebook: /tamilfoodclasses Eat more, learn more!

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

Banana and Honey tea bread

It's true us Brits are as obsessed with tea as they say we are, but here in Canada as we prepare to settle in for another winter, we have for you the perfect warming bread recipe filled with the goodness of healing spices and the perfect treat for your morning or afternoon tea.

Ingredients:

- ✓ 115g butter
- ✓ 115g light brown sugar
- ✓ 115g set honey
- ✓ 2 eggs beaten
- ✓ 225g self-raising flour
- ✓ ½ tsp of cinnamon (or nutmeg)
- ✓ 2 large bananas
- ✓ 1 tsp lemon juice
- ✓ 50g crushed walnuts
- ✓ 115g butter
- ✓ 115g light brown sugar
- ✓ 115g set honey
- ✓ 2 eggs beaten
- ✓ 225g self-raising flour
- ✓ ½ tsp of cinnamon (or nutmeg)
- ✓ 2 large bananas
- ✓ 1 tsp lemon juice
- ✓ 50 g crushed walnuts

Method:

Preheat your oven to 350F and lightly grease and line a 2lb bread loaf tin. Beat together the butter, sugar and honey until it's light and fluffy. Slowly add in the beaten eggs and then fold in the flour with the spice of your choice (nutmeg or cinnamon)

In a separate bowl mash the bananas and add the lemon juice and then fold this mixture into the flour mixture prepared above. Pour into the loaf tin, level and top with the walnuts.

Bake for 1 hour and cool for a few minutes on a cooling rack before serving. This recipe keeps for up to a week in an air tight container and makes the perfect lunchbox filler too.

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



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Santha Panchalingam re-elected as President of the Canadian Tamils' Chamber of Commerce

By Siva Sivapragasam

The incumbent President of the Canadian Tamils' Chamber of Commerce Santha Panchalingam was re-elected as President for another term at the recently held Annual General Meeting of the members at JC'S Banquet & Grill House.

Mr. Panchalingam is a business entrepreneur, a long-standing member of the Chamber and has held various posts in the Executive Board.

In his speech after his re-election Mr. Panchalingam emphasized the need for CTCC's own office space and stressed the need to purchase an office building during his new term. He invited all the members to provide continuous support so that the Chamber could rise to new heights.

The following are the members of the new Board of Directors:

Santhalingam Panchalingam - President

Thipan Raj - Executive Vice President

Murali Sivaguru - Vice President, Internal Affairs

Ari Ariaran - Vice President, Finance

Vina Devadas - Vice President, Membership

Christeen Seevaratnam - Vice President, Community Relations

Thirusenthuran Sivapatham - Director

Sumi Prabakaran - Director

William Kennedy Bernadius - Director

Dilani Gunarajah - Past President



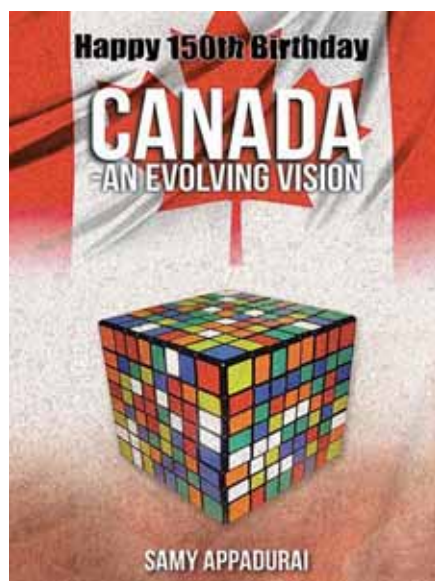
Right Pic: President Santha Panchalingam
Bottom Pic: Board Members 2019/2020



Books by Samy Appadurai

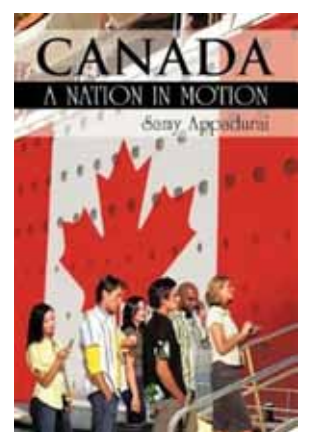
Canada - An Evolving Vision Canada - A Nation in Motion

Canada - An Evolving Vision is a special blend of analysis, wit, and humor that takes into account the uneasy history of immigration, the changing demographics, the challenges on the economy, the position of the global village, the political dimensions of this country, and where Canada is likely to see itself in the near future. Canada: An Evolving Vision is not only a thoughtful book; it is one filled with optimism, the humble optimism that Canadians are known all over the world.



Canada - A Nation in Motion is a bold look at issues facing Canada today from the perspective of a Canadian who truly understands the issues. In his special blend of analysis, humor and wit, Samy Appadurai offers up an intelligent discussion of issues ranging from the history of immigration in Canada, the G20 Summit and the Vancouver Olympics to the position of Canada on the world stage. Along with masterful storytelling, Samy provides a detailed analysis and commentary on each subject he covers in a way that anyone can easily understand. The perspective that Samy Appadurai takes is one of a well-respected community leader who has dedicated his life to not only serving his community, but also his country. His belief in the

importance of learning about the issues that face Canada as a nation is clear. However, he is not afraid to take a stand and provide an alternative point of view in order to spark conversation and debate. Canada is a country that is constantly changing from within and without but Samy Appadurai tells us exactly what it is that keeps Canada moving.





A Journal of Repute



*The Monsoon Journal
Newspaper of repute.
You are coconut kernel
To readers sans dispute.*

*You appear every month:
To appease thirsty readers.
Who devour and look forth
Contributions from favourite writers.*

*Articles of home land from Thulasi,
Teachings of Valluvar from A'Rajah.
Kamalaharan on diverse issues,
Sivapragasm on political values.*

*Monsoon kitchen ladies' favourite,
Articles of renowned writers
News items acquainting forthright
Many other items for readers.*

*You are in your teens
You are only thirteen.
We readers love you.
Wish you many more years.*

Kingsley



Soles4Souls Canada Expanding with New Warehouse Space in Toronto



WHEN SOMEONE DOESN'T HAVE SHOES
It's not just their feet that suffer!

Mississauga, Ontario – Soles4Souls Canada has opened a new 3,000 sq. ft. warehouse in the Toronto area. Soles4Souls Canada is a non-profit social enterprise that creates sustainable jobs and provides relief through the distribution of shoes and clothing around the world.

Soles4Souls Canada will accept new or gently-worn shoes from donors and corporations around Canada at 2740 Slough Street, Mississauga, Ontario. Volunteer opportunities are also available at the warehouse.

One person's unwanted shoes can help provide meaningful opportunities that many in developing nations need. The donated shoes will be distributed to Soles4Souls' Canada micro-enterprise programs that create jobs in Haiti, Honduras and other developing nations. The micro-enterprise model provides individuals the ability to start small businesses by providing a steady supply of high-quality, low-cost product. They also give a second life to unwanted shoes and clothing, keeping them out of landfills and protecting the environment.

Leigh Marshall, a member of the

Soles4Souls Canada Board of Directors, said, "Our own warehouse means we are positioned to accept more donations, which is going to increase the impact we have, both here in Canada and globally."

The World Bank estimates that approximately 767 million people live on less than \$1.90 per day. Many people living in extreme poverty simply do not have access to stable employment. The income generated by selling just one pair of shoes in Haiti can provide up to five meals for a family in need, whereas 30 pairs sold by an entrepreneur in Honduras can provide up to a year of schooling for a child.

Revenue generated by the micro-enterprise operations funds the Soles4Souls Canada's free distribution programs. These distributions provide relief in many developing nations around the globe in times of disaster, and helps bridge the economic gap in Canada and the United States.

For arranging donation drop-off or for more information, please contact Maria Proc at 416-831-6430 or via e-mail: mariap@soles4souls.org. To host a shoe drive, become volunteer or find out more information, go to www.soles4souls-canada.org.

About Soles4Souls Canada

Soles4Souls Canada disrupts the cycle of poverty by creating sustainable jobs and providing relief through the distribution of shoes and clothing around the world. Headquartered in Mississauga, Ontario, the organization repurposes product to supply its micro-enterprise, disaster relief and direct assistance programs. Since 2006, Soles4Souls has distributed more than 35 million pairs of shoes in 127 countries. A nonprofit social enterprise, Soles4Souls Canada earns more than half of its income and commits 100% of donations to programs. Visit soles4souls-canada.org for more information.





by **Samy Appadurai**

“Under this flag may our youth find new inspiration for loyalty to Canada: for a patriotism based not on any mean or narrow nationalism, but on the deep and equal pride that all Canadians will feel for every part of this good land.”
Pierre Trudeau.

My primary long term concern expressed by most Canadians at the Canadian 43rd Federal election held on October 21, 2019 is not about the lavish or reasonable spending on social amenities, nor the concern around uplifting the lower middle class income earners or the tightening of the belts of others for the sack of long term benefits; rather it is the uprising of regionalism that occupies my mind.

As far as the major polices are concerned, on affordability and economic insecurity all of them have acknowledged that we have to come out of the recession and have an economic boom, but none of them focused on how we would have to adjust from the adverse effects from the protectionist policy of the U.S under the leadership of Donald Trump, how to obtain a balanced budget and reduce the government debt for the tax payers and how to increase production and have a fair distribution of wealth. The Liberal and New Democratic Party leader were so concerned on the distribution of wealth while the leader of the Conservatives spoke more of protecting the investors and producers. Although they did touch those topics, they did not yield any substantial

resolved, but Justin Trudeau has given a green light in dealing with the issue seriously but this is an age-old issue and it will not be that easy to develop a clear-cut solution.

The next important issues are polarization, human rights and immigration. One of the biggest issues discussed at the time of the election campaign among a substantial number of Canadians is to have a check and balance on the inflow of new immigrants, particularly the entry of undocumented immigrants crossing the U.S border in bulk. There are always two opposing factors when it comes to this issue. These days the pushing forces from the United States of America is very depressing and drives of undeserving and ineligible illegal immigrants among the new

Liberal government adapted the super-visa program and other programs with small modifications from the polices adapted by the former conservative government headed by Stephen Harper.

The third one is refugees and others on humanitarian and compassionate grounds and it was in this category the Conservative Leader deviated slightly. He would have preferred to have an open policy in accepting new immigrants rather than having a portion from selected countries like Syria. As far as the number of accepted new immigrants the People’s Party of Canada would prefer to slash it down to almost half of what the Liberals proposed to around 350,000 new immigrants.

All the parties spoke up on the is-

An Evolving Vision with Uncertainty

Let us have a look at the nature of the voting patterns and then discuss the motive and concerns beyond them.

During the period of the forty-day election campaign after the 42nd parliament was dissolved by Her Excellency Julie Payette, the Governor General of Canada on September 11, 2019, voters were hoping to have an outstanding leader or dynamic polices on their respective election agenda before making a decision to whom to cast their votes. After watching the speeches made during the period of canvassing and both the French and English debates among the respective leaders of six major parties namely Justin Trudeau of the Liberal party of Canada, Andrew Scheer of the Conservative Party of Canada, Jagmeet Singh of the New Democratic Party, Yvers-Francois Blanchet of the Bloc Québécois, Maxime Bernier of the People’s Party of Canada and Elizabeth May of the Green Party of Canada and the rest of the 21 registered political parties for this election, the five major topics discussed were affordability and economic insecurity, national and global leadership, Indigenous issues, polarization, human rights and Immigration and the environment and energy.

The outcome of the debates and speeches by these six leaders were more or less similar in their debating talent, convincing ability, and attacking the opponent. In Canadian politics there two main factors that push or pull the voters and they are the outstanding capability and reliability of the party leader and its caucus and the other one is the election strength of their manifesto. They are like the Queen and the Bishop and the members of the rest of the caucus are the main players and ordinary members of the parliament or candidates are pawns in the chess game.

workable plans and polices that were better than the opponents.

National and global leadership is another area where Canadians have concerns. None of the leaders seemed to exhibit any outstanding leadership qualities over the rest of the leaders. We are in a bargaining stage in the world where the quality of the leadership is essential so we can claim our fair share in the economy and status on the world stage. Strong leadership is a must when it comes to our nation receiving due recognition in areas such as international trade, security, diplomacy, development and humanitarian assistance and excellent leadership sets the stage for building a comprehensive foreign policy for the future.

One of the long standing and yet to be resolved fundamental issues concerns the rights of the First Nations, Metis and Inuit. The main issue for the First Nations is having a pipeline for crude oil exportation to the United States of America and other countries via Vancouver. The Trans Mountain pipeline expansion would be more than 1,000 km long from Alberta to the Port of Vancouver, via the lands of the First Nations. Their concerns have not been

immigrants and refugees into Canada. It looks ridiculous and unacceptable in the eyes of some. The act of crossing the Canada-US border outside of a point of entry to claim asylum is not considered an offence under the Criminal Code but the regulations of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act do require any person seeking to enter Canada to “appear without delay” at the nearest port of entry. While entering Canada outside of a port of entry may represent an unlawful act, section 133 of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act requires that charges related to the crossing are stayed while an entrant’s claim is being processed.

There are four main classes immigration as such the independent class immigrants who are either potential investors or the skilled workers who have been considered as the most resourceful and economically essential for the sound economy of the nation and it accounts for around 60% -63% of the total new immigrants in Canada. Almost all of the party leaders had a similar vision on this topic. The second category is family class immigrants which involves spouses, children and parents and dependants. Here too the

sue of global warming and we have to have workable plans and must do more than what we have done so far. It was very interesting that just before the introduction of the carbon tax it was published in the mass medias that Canada is one the countries that cares less about global warming and also one of the worst contributors to global warming.

One serious and most worrisome outcomes of the election result of 2019 are that in some areas of the country, nationalistic inclinations appear to be one of the deciding factors in the voting patterns and there is growing concern even after the election about separation in the prairie provinces and in the province of Quebec. In Alberta the Liberals in the election 2019 lost its four members of parliament in which one of them was a minster in the cabinet of the last Liberal government. In the province of Saskatchewan there is a similar trend and the Liberals could not win in any of the ridings.

The primary reason was that the past Liberal government was not vigorous enough in pushing the construction of the pipelines from the oil fields in Alberta to the United States and to

Political Party	#of elected MPs	%of votes	Comparison 2015-2019	MPS 2015	% of Votes
Liberal Party of Canada	157	33.1%	-27	184	39.5%
Conservative Party of Canada	121	34.4%	+22	99	31.9%
Bloc Québécois	32	7.7%	+22	10	4.7%
New Democratic Party	24	15.9%	-20	44	19.7%
Green Party of Canada	3	6.5%	+2	1	3.5%
People’s Party of Canada	0	1.6%		0	
Independent	1	0.4%		0	
Total	338	66%		338	68.3%

<https://globalnews.ca/news/6064160/liberals-minority-government-promises/>

the sea port in Vancouver, British Columbia. There is a reason for that. During the regime of Barack Obama, it was not encouraged to import Canadian oil sand (bitumen) due to the reason that it is not favourable for environmental reasons. But the Republicans and the President Donald Trump is in favour of having it and also sold oil at a reduced rate from the crude oil market price. These days oil has also become a political weapon, like in 1973 by the OPEC action in order to penalize the buyers of oil that helped Israel. But today it is to weaken ISIS, the Islamic terrorist movement that generates revenue from the oil wells in the Middle East. This is one of the reasons that the alternative sources of energy have been promoted. The so called black gold will

central Canadians. Until the discovery and exploration of crude oil it was like any other prairie province which predominantly depended on agriculture and not having basic similarities with central and eastern Canada. This was improved after the transpacific railway was built between 1881-1885. The railway made transporting tools for agriculture easier and in return products from the farms could be transported to eastern and central provinces more efficiently.

It was in 1930 that separatism sparked in a party named the Social Credit Party, which formed the Government of Alberta after the 1935 election. After the discovery and drilling of oil in Alberta in the early 20th century, even though it was first discovered in

province of Quebec the Bloc Québécois won 24 seats but received only 4.7 % of the total votes cast in the election. The reason for the low percentage was that it did not nominate candidates in all ten provinces and three territories and this is due to the primary concern that this party is geared more in the interest of the province of Quebec. There is no grievance or dissatisfaction that was made a main focus during the election campaign but the inclination towards pouring more support for the Bloc Québécois by shifting the votes from the Liberals and new Democratic Party is something that has awakened the rest of the Canada. In the election of 2015, the Bloc Québécois won 10 ridings and 4.7% and in contrast to this election of 2019 won 32 ridings with

of western alienation and Quebec sovereignty on pages 321 and 322. In the case of Quebec, I mentioned the visit made by Charles de Gaulle to Canada in 1967 where he declared “Vive le Quebec libre” (Long live free Quebec)”. In this statement de Gaulle was acknowledging that Quebec was different from the rest of Canada and should be treated as such.

When it comes to western Canadian alienation, the people of western Canada have not forgotten what Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said in 2010 on the Tele-Quebec program “Les Francs-Tireurs” when he compared the Conservative politicians in the west with Quebecers saying that Canada was “better off in the hands of leaders from Quebec”.



Federal Election 2019

be rated as black aluminum. The past liberal government should have acted better with the knowledge of these circumstances.

Proven reserves of bitumen contain approximately 100 billion barrels and total natural bitumen reserves are estimated at 249.67 Gbbl worldwide, of which 176.8 Gbbl that accounts for 70.8%, are in Alberta, Canada. Canada is the fourth largest producer and exporter of crude oil and 96% of the exports goes to the United States. The estimated capital investment is \$313 billion and oil sands account for 11% of Canada’s total GHG emissions and 0.1% of the global percentage. A February 2019 poll by the Angus Reid Institute found that 50 per cent of Albertans would support secession from Canada.

Many of the Albertans have the notion that they are socially and economically distinct society from eastern and

south western Ontario in 1857, Alberta became the prominent oil producer in Canada. When Pierre Trudeau expanded biculturalism into multiculturalism and enforced bilingualism some Albertans believed that the policy was targeted against the interest of Albertans and added oil into the fire for separation. Some of the Albertans feel that their province pours billions of dollars towards Canada, but without political representation equal to that of Central and Eastern Canada.

Although the birth of the Reform party accepted federalism, it was still more inclined towards Western Canadian’s interests. The Reform Party later became the Canadian Alliance in 2002, and then merged with the Progressive conservative Party in 2003, forming the Conservative Party of Canada.

The second one was that in the

7.7%.

It appears now there is a motivation for Quebec sovereignty over federalist sentiments and its revival for after almost 70 years even though Liberals won 35 ridings and Bloc Québécois, 32, Conservatives 10 and National Democratic Party 1 whereas in 2015 Liberals won 40 ridings out of 78 ridings.

The federal system of Canada with many others having such system has allocated substantial powers for the provincial governments and if they want to be separated they would have to go through a provincial referendum and unilaterally move on.

It appears that these provinces are not to be fed by lip service, rather their expectations are heavy in nature and the rest of the provinces also have their concerns and opinions about it.

In my book “Canada An Evolving Vision” I made mention of the issue

Even though a long time has passed since both of these incidents, the non-Quebecers and Western Canadians do not easily forget and incidents such as these can have a huge impact on the vote as Justin Trudeau has no doubt noticed.

In the coming days and weeks, it will be very important for our Prime Minister to seek consensus from the opposition parties. Western Canadians and Quebecers gave him a very clear message—they will not be ignored. However, I am confident that Justin Trudeau will be able to reach a compromise no matter how difficult because he believes in this great nation and for a great nation to progress, we need to do it together.

.....
Samy Appadurai is a renowned broadcaster, freelance journalist, author, educator and public speaker.

THE HINDU TEMPLE SOCIETY OF CANADA

Richmond Hill Ganesha Temple



Compiled by *Kidambi Raj*

DEEPAVALI / DIWALI



DEEPAVALI or **DIWALI** is a festival of lights celebrated by Hindus, Jains, Sikhs and some Buddhists every year in Autumn. Deepavali means series of lights and is derived from *Deepa* meaning *light* or *lamp* and *Avali* meaning *series of lines or rows*. Though it is celebrated all over India, it is celebrated for one day in South India and as a five-day festival in North India. The Deepavali for South Indians coincides with the third day of North Indians five-day festival occurring on the darkest night of the Hindu Calendar month of *Karthikai*. In the Gregorian calendar, this festival falls between mid October and mid November. (November).

Deepavali or Diwali symbolizes the spiritual victory of light over darkness, good over evil and knowledge over ignorance. Light is a metaphor for knowledge and consciousness. It is a festive restatement of the Hindu belief that the Good ultimately triumphs over Evil. The Deepavali festival celebration and the rituals, vary from region to region. Deepavali is usually celebrated eighteen days after the ninth day of Autumn Navaratri festival.

Deepavali is not a mere festival of lights where wealth is worshipped and people congregate to indulge in vanity and ostentatiousness. This festival is a ritual worship of light and divinity to express the allegiance of human beings to Gods rather than Demons. It involves series of rituals for five days by the devotees to express their gratitude to Gods for their service and in return their obligations towards them through prayers and offerings. The lights that are lit during this festival are part of their offerings only. Therefore, the celebration of Deepavali with lights and fire crackers constitute divine worship with discipline, faith and sincerity play an important part.

THE FIVE-DAYS OF CELEBRATION OF DEEPAVALI:

DAY 1 is known as *Dhanteras* or *Dhantrayodasi*. Dhan means wealth *Trayodasi* means 13th day. As the name implies it falls on the 13th day of the first half of the lunar month. According to the legend, it is believed that, Lord *Dhanvantri* (God of Medicine) emerged from the bottom of the ocean holding the Knowledge of the Spiritual Medicines of Ayurveda, to help the mankind fight sickness, disease and death. On this day people light lamps using oil filled clay cups and worship the Goddess of wealth, Lakshmi.

DAY 2 is known as *Naraka Chaturdasi*. *Naraka* means hell and *Chaturdasi* means the fourteenth day. Religiously speaking, this day marks the end of an evil empire in some prehistoric past and the beginning of a new era of Light and Knowledge.



As per the legends, on this day Lord Krishna supported by His Consort Satyabhama and His huge army, killed the demon *Narakasura*, in a legendary battle between the Gods and demons and released the world from darkness of fear and oppression. It is also believed that it was on this day that Lord Vishnu incarnated upon earth as *Vamana* and put His feet on the head of the demon King *Bali*. With His foot he pushed *Bali* down into the nether world and freed the earth and the Goddess *Lakshmi* from his control.

DAY 3 Deepavali or Diwali is celebrated on the third of the five day festival, when the moon completely vanes and total darkness sets in the night sky (*Amavasai*). It is in this darkness that Deepavali finds its true expression. On this day people worship *Lakshmi*, Goddess of Wealth and Prosperity and express their gratitude for all previous favours. As the evening sets in, homes are decorated with lots of lights, lamps and candles. People keep the doors and windows open with all lights on, expecting the Goddess to come inside.

According to a legend, on this day, Lord Krishna completed His incarnation upon earth and left this world, leaving the *Pandavas* and His kinsmen in utter confusion.

DAY 4 The fourth day is known as *Padwa*. According to legend, at the behest of Lord Krishna, the people of *Braj* worshipped the

hillock *Govardhan* on this day to save themselves from an impending storm unleashed by the fury of *Indra*, the Lord of Heaven. Even today, in the northern India, in the land of *Braj*, people continue the tradition of worshipping *Govardhan* on this auspicious day. In a sense, this is an act of invocation to appease the forces of Nature to prevent the occurrence of floods and cyclonic storms, a tradition that is rooted in the Vedic times.

DAY 5 *Bhai Duj* or *Bhayaaduj*. On this day brothers and sisters get together to strengthen their bonds of love and affection and celebrate the occasion. Sisters put a ceremonial mark, usually with vermillion, on their brother's foreheads and wish them long life. According to the legend, this tradition began when *Yamuna*, the sister of Lord *Yama* honoured her brother with a *tilak* on his forehead and wished him long life.

Other interesting facts about Deepavali are:

1. Goddess *Lakshmi*'s Birthday. The Goddess of wealth, *Lakshmi* incarnated on this *Amavasai* day of the Tamil Calendar month *Karthikai*, during the churning of the ocean (*Samudra manthan*) and hence the association of Deepavali with Goddess *Lakshmi*.

2. Deepavali commemorates the return of Lord *Rama* to *Ayodhya*, after slaying the demon, *Ravana*. People were overjoyed by the news of the arrival of *Rama* and *Sita*, and started lighting lamps. It is said that it was the start of the tradition of the festival of lights, Deepavali.

3. It is a special day for *Jains* also. It is said that it was on this day that *Mahavir Thirthakar*, the founder of modern day *Jainism* attained *Nirvana*.

4. In 1577, the foundation stone of the Golden Temple at *Amritsar* was laid on Deepavali day.

5. In 1619, the sixth Sikh guru, *Hargobind Singh*, who was held by the Moghul Emperor *Jehangir*, was released from the *Gwalior Fort* along with 52 kings on Deepavali day.

6. The coronation of *Vikramaditya*, one of the greatest Hindu Kings took place on Deepavali day and hence Deepavali became a historical event as well.

7. Deepavali is also a Special Day for the followers of *Arya Samaj*, since it was on that day, *Maharshi Dayananda* attained his *nirvana*.

The Pope's Deepavali Speech. In 1999, Pope John Paul II, performed a special Eucharist in an Indian church where the Altar was decorated with Deepavali lamps and the Pope had a *Tilak* marked on his forehead and his speech was bristled with references to the festival of light.

THE HINDU TEMPLE SOCIETY OF CANADA

Richmond Hill Ganesh Temple



Community Watch

Compiled by *Kidambi Raj*

NAVARATRI, SARASWATI POOJA & AYUDHA POOJA

ABOUT NAVARATRI

Hindus celebrate Navaratri falls four times a year. Of these, the one that comes in the Tamil month Purattasi (September-October) Navaratri near autumn equinox is the most celebrated, and the Vasantha (Spring) Navaratri near spring equinox (March-April) is next most significant to the Indians. In all cases, Navaratri falls in the bright half of the Hindu lunar-solar months. The celebrations vary by region, leaving much to the creativity and preferences of the Hindus.

The other two Navaratri are minor and observed regionally or by individuals:

1. Magha Navaratri:

In Magha (January-February), winter season. The fifth day of this festival is often independently observed as Vasantha Panchami, the official start of spring in the Hindu tradition wherein Goddess Saraswati is revered through arts, music, writing. In some regions, the Hindu God of Love, Kama is revered.

2. Ashada Navaratri:

It is celebrated in the Tamil month of Aani (June-July), the start of the monsoon season.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

GODDESSES OF NAVARATRI:

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

The Goddesses of Navaratri will bless you with health, wealth and prosperity

on worshipping them with faith and devotion. Of the nine days, three days are dedicated to each of the Goddesses, helping to tap into specific, vibrant and creative life energy prevalent on those days.

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

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

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

What's the Significance of Navaratri?

During Navaratri, we invoke the energy aspect of God in the form of the universal mother, commonly referred to as Durga, which literally means the remover of miseries of life. She is also referred to as Devi (goddess) or Shakti (energy or power). It is this energy, which helps God to proceed with the work of creation, preservation and destruction. In other words, you can say that God is motionless, absolutely changeless, and the Divine Mother Durga, does everything. Truly speaking,



Navratri Kolu

our worship of Shakti re-confirms the scientific theory that energy is imperishable. It cannot be created or destroyed. It is always there.

Why Worship the Mother Goddess?

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

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

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

2. Due to the changes in the nature, the bodies and minds of people undergo a considerable change, and hence, we worship the divine power to bestow upon all of us enough potent powers to maintain our physical and mental balance.

Why Nine Nights & Days?

Navaratri is divided into sets of three days to adore different aspects of the supreme goddess. On the first three days, the Mother is invoked as powerful force called *Durga* in order to destroy all our impurities, vices and defects. The next three days, the Mother is adored as a giver of spiritual wealth, *Lakshmi*, who is considered to have the power of bestowing on her devotees the inexhaustible wealth. The final set of three days is spent in worshipping the mother as the goddess of wisdom, *Saraswathi*. In order have all-round success in life, we need the blessings of all three aspects of the divine mother; hence, the worship for nine nights.

SARASWATHI PUJA

The ninth day of Navaratri is called Saraswathi Puja and special pujas are offered to Goddess Saraswathi, the Divine source of knowledge, wisdom and enlightenment. Books and musical instruments are placed in the puja and worshipped.



Navratri Kolu

VIJAYA DASHAMI: What is Vijaya Dashami and when is it celebrated:

Vijaya Dashami also known as Dussehra or Dasara or Dasha or Tenth Day of Navaratri or Durgotsav is one of the important Hindu festivals celebrated in various parts of India, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh. The name Dussehra is derived from Sanskrit Dasha-hara which literally means Dashanan Ravana (name of the devil and in short Dasha and Hara (defeat) referring to Lord Raama's victory over the ten-headed demon King called Ravana. It is celebrated on the tenth day of the month *Asvina* or *Iyypasi* according to the Hindu lunisolar calendar corresponding to October-November of the Gregorian calendar. The first nine days are celebrated as Maha Navaratri or Sharada Navaratri (the most important Navaratri) and culminates on the tenth day as Dussehra.

How is it Celebrated:

Vijaya Dashami is celebrated in various ways in different parts of South India. In when all fine arts like dance, music are

venerated and any new venture is begun. In Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Karnataka it is celebrated the day after Saraswathi Puja, when Goddess of learning is worshipped by placing books, musical instruments and other and other implements of life such as computers, vehicle and professional tools at her feet to be blessed. On this day, after the puja, everyone takes the books, musical instruments etc. placed on the puja the previous day and read at least a page or two and play the musical instruments for a brief time. This day is also called as *Ayuda Puja* in Tamil Nadu, India and Sri Lanka. Almost all mechanic shops, heavy industries etc. celebrate this day. Also on this day, the 10th day, one of the dolls kept in Kolu is symbolically put to sleep to mark the end of the year's Navaratri Kolu.

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

Legends :

Victory of Lord Raama over Raavana:

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

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

Victory of Goddess Durga over Mahishaasura:

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

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



Durham Tamil Association and Scouts Canada

DTA - Navarathri vizha

The celebration went very well. DTA is fortunate that members, committee, sub-committee takes pride in celebrating this event as a united team. DTA thanked all participants.



DTA's Halloween/Diwali festival

The Diwali/Halloween festival went so well. DTA again thanked all volunteers who came to help with the Halloween/Diwali festival. Without their hard work, it would not have been possible.



Pink Ribbon Campaign

Many volunteers participated in the Pink Ribbon Campaign. DTA thanked everyone who came out to volunteer for the pink ribbon campaign. It demonstrated the dedication that the parents and youth volunteers give to these great causes.



DTA - Seniors Monthly Meeting

DTA Seniors monthly meeting and Birthday Celebration took place at the end of the month. DTA was happy to see all seniors together and proved that Unity is strength.





Tamil Cultural Nite becomes a platform for local artists



Waterloo, ON.: TAMIL CULTURAL NITE 2019 performing arts festival is one of the biggest event outside of Toronto for Canadian Tamil community. It unites artists from the Waterloo-Guelph region and Toronto under one roof. Based on the theme, CULTURE FOR ALL, the Sri Lankan and Indian community from Kitchener, Waterloo, Cambridge, Brantford and Guelph area invited the students of Bruntha Galanaya Music College “ Isai Kalaviththakar “ Ham-sathvani Singarajah (Veenai) and Students of Shreemathy Vasantha Daniels (Bharatha Natyam) from Toronto.

The 19th annual “Tamil Cultural Nite” was held on Saturday, Oct. 19th at the Humanities Theatre, University of Waterloo. This performing arts festival is an annual event, held to reflect the rich cultures primarily from Sri Lanka and India. The chief guest was Hon. R.N. Logendralingam, Chief editor Uthayan Newspaper, Toronto.

The secretary of the association Mr. Dennis Loyola welcomed the guests and inaugurated the festival. He also introduced the Master of Ceremony Mrs. Thayani Gunanathan and Mr. Raju Ravi. Students from the Tamil School of Cambridge inaugurated the event with Tamil Thai valthu and Canadian National Anthem. It was followed by a pushpanjali dance from the students of Tharsini Yoga of Cambridge. Mrs. Yoga Arumugam, the president, thanked the sponsors for supporting the festival. Her speech reflected the association’s non political commitment and a strong vision to promote TAMIL culture in the region. “It’s a mile stone to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the association, this year”.

Waterloo native Miss. Ramya Ramachandran and Guru Prassad showed off their beautiful voices with Tamil movie songs. Waterloo Region Tamil language school enacted “ Avvaiyarin Thiruvilaiyadal” drama. The festival included Bharatha Natyam Dance pre-

sented by the students of Senthil Selvi Sureshwaren. During the secession, Mr. Sivakumar Somasundram and Mrs. Dharini Sivakumar were honored with an award for their valuable community service. Carnatic Music performance was presented by the students of Shyamala Ramachandran.

More than 80 students from the University of Waterloo performed a group dance reflecting the regions of India. Vinayagar Villas catering of Toronto provided Sri lankan snacks during intermission. A 30th Anniversary Magazine was released to the audience.

The Cultural Nite is sponsored by the City of Waterloo, City of Kitchener, City of Cambridge, CIBC, Investors Group and Remax Real Estate. This year’s festival attracted around 600 guests in and around the Waterloo Region and Toronto. The festival is an admission free event organised by the Tamil Cultural Association of Waterloo Region.





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