

MONSOON JOURNAL



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Ontario recovering after shutdown from COVID - 19

By Siva Sivapragasam

After almost a three - month period of shutdown of economic activity Ontario is gradually recovering from the COVID-19 disaster and moving fast towards normalcy.

The Government has laid down a framework to reopen economic activity and business services through a three stage programme while maintaining the health and safety of the people as a priority measure.

Stage 1 of the framework provides businesses owners, workers, and families with the information they need to reopen safely in this new environment and make the restart of Ontario's economy a success.

The first stage of reopening focused on workplaces that are well-positioned to follow public health advice to maintain physical distancing, implement workplace safety guidance and limit gatherings.

Stage 1 also lessened the pressure on public transit and other services giving them more time to safely prepare for future stages. Public Health officials will monitor progress of each stage to lower the risk of outbreaks and prevent a surge in the health system. Working from home and staying home will continue to be crucial in stopping this pandemic.

Stage 2 will take a regional approach to opening more businesses and services, as well as community, recreational and outdoor spaces, and places of religious worship, while emphasizing public health advice and personal responsibility.

Phase 3 will focus on creating jobs and opportunity across the province, while



Hon. Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario

working to restore long term prosperity for the benefit of every individual and family in Ontario.

The path to recovery depends on continued efforts in stopping the spread of this virus and the ability to adapt to changing circumstances on the ground. The Government also plans to pay approximately 375,000 frontline health-care workers a pandemic pay premium.

If everyone across the province keeps doing their part, the Government expects success in the fight against this virus and the province will emerge ready for a strong recovery.



I am pleased to congratulate the staff and management of

MONSOON JOURNAL

on the occasion of this publication's 15th anniversary.

The enterprise and hard work of those who have built Monsoon Journal over these many years is an accomplishment that has benefited the community and our province.

Congratulations once again.

I wish you continued success.

Legislative Building, Toronto
June 12, 2020

**Doug Ford
Premier**

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CANADA NEWS 

Support for Small Business Tenants and Landlords Now Available

Commercial landlords can apply for urgent rent assistance through Canada Emergency Commercial Rent Assistance for small businesses

May 29, 2020 9:30 A.M.

Ministry of Finance

TORONTO — All commercial landlords in Ontario can now apply for rental assistance to help their small business tenants impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. This initiative will keep more small businesses in operation and more people employed as the province gradually and safely restarts the economy.

The Ontario government, in partnership with the federal government, has launched the Canada Emergency Commercial Rent Assistance (CECRA) for small businesses. The province is committing \$241 million to the program, which will provide more than \$900 million in support for small businesses across Ontario during this difficult time. To find out how much rent support you may be eligible for, visit Ontario.ca/rentassistance.

"We know that some of the necessary measures put in place to stop the spread of COVID-19 have created significant financial hardships for small businesses," said Rod Phillips, Minister of Finance.

"That's why we've partnered with the federal government to deliver urgent rent assistance and help both small businesses and commercial landlords make ends meet. I encourage all commercial landlords to take

advantage of this benefit as soon as possible in order to provide some certainty for our small businesses."

The CECRA for small businesses, administered by the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), provides forgivable loans to eligible commercial landlords to help cover 50 per cent of commercial rent for tenants for the months of April, May and June 2020. The tenant will be responsible for covering up to 25 per cent of rent, so that up to 75 per cent of the rent is covered.

To receive the forgivable loan, eligible commercial landlords will be required to enter into a rent reduction agreement with their impacted small business tenants for April to June 2020, which includes committing to a moratorium on evictions for three months.

"As Ontario's economy gradually reopens, we will continue to work with our federal partners to ensure people and businesses across the province get the support they desperately need. We want to do everything we can to ensure our small businesses are able and ready to reopen their doors when the time is right," said Phillips.

To learn more and apply for the CECRA for small businesses, visit the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation's (CMHC)



application portal.

Quick Facts

- The CECRA for small businesses is administered by the CMHC and will be available until August 31, 2020. Support will be retroactive to April 1, covering April, May and June 2020.

- The CECRA for small businesses has been developed to share the cost of rent between small business tenants, landlords and the governments of Ontario and Canada. Small business landlords would be asked to forgive at least 25 per cent of the tenant's total rent, tenants would be asked to pay up to 25 per

cent of rent and the provincial and federal government would share the cost of the remaining 50 per cent.

- Partnering with the federal government to deliver rent assistance builds on the government's actions to support small businesses during COVID-19. As part of Ontario's Action Plan: Responding to COVID-19, the first phase of the government's response, the province has implemented \$10 billion in cash flow supports to help support jobs and businesses through tax and other deferrals.

Via news.ontario.ca

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau speaks with premiers on continued efforts to address the impacts of COVID-19

May 28, 2020

Ottawa, Ontario

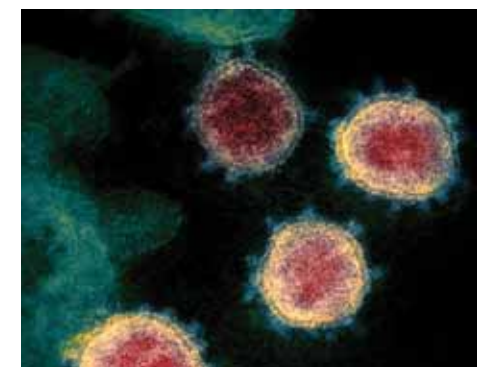
Today, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Deputy Prime Minister Chrystia Freeland held their eleventh call with premiers to discuss the evolving COVID-19 situation. The leaders discussed the collaborative efforts by federal, provincial, and territorial partners to combat the pandemic and protect the health, safety, and economic well-being of all Canadians. They also discussed the recent reports by the Canadian Armed Forces on long-term care facilities in Ontario and Quebec, and agreed to take action to improve care for seniors.

First Ministers were briefed on the work being done by the COVID-19 Immunity Task Force, which will coordinate country-wide blood test surveys to tell us how widely the virus has spread in Canada and provide reliable estimates of potential immunity and vulnerabilities in Canadian populations. In a short time, the task force has developed partnerships to support national coordination and to promote rapid progress toward these goals. First Ministers recognized the importance of its work in understanding and combatting the virus.

The Prime Minister updated premiers on the federal government's ongoing work to

procure critical personal protective equipment, and successful efforts to ramp-up the made-in-Canada supply. He also discussed how the federal government is working with each jurisdiction, including on border measures and a collaborative national approach to testing and contact tracing.

The Prime Minister spoke to premiers about his commitment to ensure every worker has access to ten days of paid sick leave a year, and asked premiers about how the federal government could further assist them to reopen their economies. First Ministers agreed that reopening the economy is a complex and difficult process, and that



having the appropriate supports in place to protect the health and safety of all Canadians is critical.

All First Ministers reiterated the importance of a Team Canada effort in addressing the challenges of COVID-19. The Government of Canada is taking a whole-of-government, comprehensive, and coordinated approach to respond to COVID-19.

Via pm.gc.ca

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Monsoon Journal
Wishes Readers, Advertisers, Outlets
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Happy Father's Day
Sunday, June 21, 2020



2020 World Elder Abuse Awareness Day: Watch for signs of elder abuse and learn how to get help and report abuse

By **Harrish Thirukumar**

According to data from the National Institute of Aging on May 6 in Canada, 3,436 residents and six staff members of long-term care settings had died representing 82 per cent of the 4,167 deaths reported from COVID-19. It demonstrates the overwhelming toll that the coronavirus has taken on the elderly population in Canada. At the same time, it has also illustrated instances of elder abuse in long-term homes across the country.

The United Nations is well-aware of this problem and has dedicated June 16 on an annual basis as World Elder Abuse Awareness Day. It was officially recognized by the United Nations General Assembly in resolution 66/127, December 2011, following a request by the International Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse (INPEA), who first established the commemoration in June 2006. It represents the one day in the year when the whole world voices its opposition to the abuse and suffering inflicted to some of our older generations.

Elder abuse is defined as "a single, or repeated act, or lack of appropriate action, occurring within any relationship where there is an expectation of trust which causes harm or distress to an older person." Elder abuse can take various forms such as physical, psychological or emotional, sexual and financial abuse. It can also be the result of intentional or unintentional neglect.

The COVID-19 pandemic in particular has highlighted how long-term care facilities have been neglected for many years in Ontario for example. It has brought about a time where more appropriate actions need to be taken to safeguard the interests of the most vulnerable

citizens in the province. This should apply everywhere as well. In Canada, long-term care homes are not included as an essential service under the Canada Health Act and there are no national standards for the level of care required in them.

Along with public health, recent research findings draw specific attention to financial exploitation and material abuse of older persons as a common and serious problem. Based on available evidence, 5 to 10 per cent of older people globally may experience some kind of financial exploitation.

Approaches to define, detect and address elder abuse need to be placed within a cultural context and considered alongside culturally specific risk factors. For example, in some traditional societies, older widows are subjected to forced marriages while in others, isolated older women are accused of witchcraft.

From a health and social perspective, unless both primary health care and social service sectors are well equipped to identify and deal with the problem, elder abuse will continue to be underdiagnosed and overlooked.

Some critics and organizations have called for a public inquiry in long-term care homes in Ontario to expose these issues of abuse and neglect, hopefully paving a way to meaningful reform of the system. To address elder abuse in all its forms including financial in the meantime, you and the rest of the Canadian public can watch for signs of elder abuse and learn how to get help and report abuse. Older people can learn to stay connected to family and friends, more about their rights, to use professional services for support where available and make sure their financial and legal affairs are in order.

Canada Historical Milestones:

June 22, 1960

Lawyer and politician Jean Lesage is elected Premier of Quebec. His Liberals defeat the socially conservative Union Nationale government, which had been in power for the previous 16 years. Lesage is known as the father of the Quiet Revolution. This period of change will give rise to a less traditional, more urban and more modern Quebec society.

Before becoming premier, Lesage was a federal Member of Parliament and in Prime Minister Louis St. Laurent's Cabinet. Lesage will serve as Premier of Quebec until June 16, 1966.



*"Wherever there is great property,
there is great inequality"*

- Adam Smith (June 16, 1723 - July 17, 1790) Economist and Philosopher

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

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Ontario Opens Up COVID-19 Testing Across the Province

Strategy Expands Testing for General Public, Frontline Workers, First Responders and Workplaces

May 29, 2020 1:15 P.M.

Office of the Premier

TORONTO — As the province carefully and gradually reopens the economy, the Ontario government is implementing the next phase of its COVID-19 testing strategy to detect and quickly stop the spread of the virus. Testing will now be available to more people in more locations across the province.

Today, Premier Doug Ford and Christine Elliott, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health, released the next phase of the province's COVID-19 testing plan, Protecting Ontarians Through Enhanced Testing, which includes three branches of testing:

1. Assessment Centre Testing: expanding who gets tested to now include asymptomatic individuals concerned about exposure and continued routine symptomatic testing at assessment centres.

2. Targeted Campaigns: detecting and containing cases by expanding asymptomatic surveillance for vulnerable populations, including in long-term care homes and other shared living spaces like shelters and group homes, as well as targeted testing of workplaces in priority sectors which work with priority populations and where it may be difficult to physically distance.

3. Outbreak Management: testing to ensure rapid and agile response capacity for outbreak management, including in specific neighbourhoods and regions or at hospitals, institutions and workplaces.

"Ontario now has the most open and robust testing criteria in the entire country. In fact, anyone who feels they need a test will be able to get a test," said Premier Ford. "We can't manage what we can't measure, and our newly expanded testing strategy is our best defence against stopping the spread of COVID-19 as we gradually and safely reopen the province. More proactive testing will give employers and their employees confidence as they return to work and will fortify our alert system for any potential surge in new cases."

Together, these branches of testing will support Ontario regions' extensive efforts to reduce the rate of transmission, also known as instantaneous reproduction number, or Rt.

To help enable increased access to routine symptomatic testing, people will no longer need a referral to go to any of the more than 130 assessment centres across Ontario. Information about the assessment centres is now easily accessible on Ontario's dedicated COVID-19 website.

"The significant expansion of testing of symptomatic and asymptomatic individuals will go hand in hand with public health units' ongoing contact tracing and case management efforts to stop the spread of the virus and keep our families and our communities safe," said Minister Elliott. "I just want to caution people, although your test may be



negative, you must continue to practise physical distancing, wear a face covering when physical distancing is a challenge, and wash your hands regularly. These simple actions will help keep everyone safe and healthy."

Ontario will also expand proactive surveillance testing to detect outbreaks and more actively monitor any spread among our most vulnerable populations in hospitals, long-term care homes, group homes, shelters, emergency child care centres, correctional facilities and other shared living spaces. This will include testing of symptomatic and asymptomatic residents and frontline staff in long-term care and retirement homes, as well as those working with priority populations, including first responders, essential workers and other workplaces as the economy gradually reopens. Moving forward, the province expects that private-sector workplace testing will leverage private and public resources as the government works with private-sector employers to develop the appropriate models for each sector and workplace. Further proactive surveillance testing will also be conducted in rural, remote and Indigenous communities.

In response to a declaration of an outbreak in a specific neighbourhood, region, institution or workplace, the province is also developing agile testing resources, such as mobile testing teams, that can be rapidly deployed to communities across Ontario to enhance existing outbreak management.

Ontario will also soon release a renewed strategy to support public health units with case management and contact tracing, including launching a new exposure notification app that will alert Ontarians when they may have been exposed to COVID-19 and would recommend appropriate actions, such as monitoring for symptoms, self-isolation and/or appropriate next steps on getting tested.

Via news.ontario.ca

Ontario Takes Further Action to Protect Seniors and Staff in Long-Term Care Homes during COVID-19 Outbreak

Mandate of Incident Management System Long-Term Care Table Extended



May 28, 2020 1:00 P.M.

Office of the Premier

TORONTO — To further protect seniors and staff in long-term care homes, the Ontario government announced today that it is extending the mandate of the Incident Management System Long-Term Care Table. This table is composed of health care professionals who make immediate decisions to deal with issues related to staffing levels, infection management and resources during the COVID-19 outbreak.

"As Premier, it's my job to push the system. Fixing what we inherited starts with strong leadership through this crisis and beyond to protect and care for our long-term care residents," said Premier Ford. "Today's announcement demonstrates that we are making progress in fighting this terrible virus in our long-term care homes and we will continue to do everything in our power to fortify the iron ring of protection around our most vulnerable seniors."

In April, an Incident Management System (IMS) structure was established to coordinate operational support to long-term care homes. The IMS table meets daily to organize efforts across multiple providers and government to make rapid decisions that support long-term care homes in need. Homes identified for support are those struggling to control outbreaks, complete infection prevention and control assessments, ensure appropriate staffing levels, have access to personal protective equipment (PPE), and complete the testing of all long-term care home residents and staff.

"The Incident Management System Long-Term Care Table has been able to drive immediate decisions and resource deployment for urgent issues facing the sector, at a time when clear direction and communication is critical," said Minister Fullerton. "I am incredibly grateful to know the government and our long-term care homes can continue to rely on their steady leadership and health system expertise."

Under IMS leadership, Ontario has seen the following improvements to long-term care homes affected by COVID-19 outbreaks:

- Since May 1, increased the number

of low-risk green homes from 356 to 547 homes, representing 87.4% of all long-term care homes.

- Since May 1, reduced the number of high-risk red homes from 35 to 19, a 54.3% improvement.

- As of May 27, 37 hospitals had deployed teams into 59 yellow homes and 19 red homes.

- Completed testing of long-term care resident and staff, with a second round of testing already underway.

- Number of COVID-19 positive tests in long-term care homes decreased from 12.5% to 7.5%.

- As of May 28, 129 out of 626 long-term care homes are in active outbreak, from a high of 190 on May 18.

- 164 outbreaks have been resolved.

The IMS table also facilitated assistance from the Canadian Armed Forces into five homes and deployed 150 hospital teams to support staff in other long-term care homes. Under their leadership, standard infection prevention and control guidelines were issued to all homes and a regular data reporting structure was set in place for long-term care home assessment and testing.

Leadership of the IMS includes:

- Deputy Minister Richard Steele, Ministry of Long-Term Care
- Deputy Minister Helen Angus, Ministry of Health
- Dr. Kevin Smith, President and CEO, University Health Network
- Matthew Anderson, President and CEO, Ontario Health
- Michelle DiEmanuele, President and CEO, Trillium Health Partners
- Dr. Jack Kitts, President and CEO, The Ottawa Hospital
- James Schlegel, President and CEO, Schlegel Health Care
- Dr. Tom Stewart, President and CEO, St. Joseph's Health System, and CEO, Niagara Health
- Dr. David Williams, Chief Medical Officer of Ontario
- Dr. Dirk Huyer, Chief Coroner of Ontario

Via news.ontario.ca



CANADA NEWS

Canada's Consumer Debt levels will rise due to COVID19

Canada's consumer debt levels will rise as homeowners struggle to pay high mortgages adding to debt strains that were troublesome even due to the COVID-19 pandemic according to CMHC the country's national housing agency.

In a testimony before the House of Commons Finance committee, Evan Siddall, president and CEO of the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), said the country could see claims from defaulted mortgages reach \$9 billion due to the coronavirus. As many as 20 per cent of mortgages could go into arrears if the economic situation in Canada does not improve, Siddall said.

It is estimated that two-thirds of consumer debt in Canadian households is tied up with mortgages. International organizations like the International Monetary Fund had warned Canada about its rising consumer debt levels, which now threaten to spill over into the economy as the country enters its third month of lockdown.



Adding to real estate concerns amid COVID-19, the agency also sees housing prices plummeting in the next calendar year.

"The resulting combination of higher mortgage debt, declining housing prices (estimated between 9% and 18%) and increased unemployment is cause for concern for Canada's longer-term financial stability," Siddall stated.

"Our support for home ownership cannot be unlimited," he said. "It's like blood pressure, you can have too much, [but] you need some."

Statement by the Prime Minister on the International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers

May 29, 2020
Ottawa, Ontario

The Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau, today issued the following statement on the International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers:

"Today, we join the international community to recognize the courage, selflessness, and sacrifices of the more than 1 million people who have served as United Nations (UN) peacekeepers since 1948. We also honour the memory of the thousands who have lost their lives in the cause of peace.

"Whatever their nationalities or cultural backgrounds, UN peacekeepers share a common purpose: to protect those most vulnerable and help countries transition from conflict to peace. Every day, they work tirelessly to provide essential help and give hope to millions of people affected by conflicts. By supporting the empowerment of women and girls, advancing the rule of law, and promoting human rights, UN peacekeepers lay the groundwork for long-term, sustainable peace.

"UN missions are also on the front lines of the global fight against COVID-19. In the Democratic Republic of Congo, the mission is supporting local production of protective masks. In South Sudan, the mission ran a month-long radio campaign in different languages to raise awareness of the virus and help people take steps to limit its spread. In Cyprus, the mission is working with non-governmental organizations to prevent and respond to gender-based violence in



communities affected by the disease. Around the world, UN peacekeepers are stepping up their efforts and finding new ways to assist the people they serve.

"As 2020 Chair of the UN Peacebuilding Commission and through its leadership of the Elsie Initiative for Women in Peace Operations and the Vancouver Principles on Peacekeeping and the Prevention of the Recruitment and Use of Child Soldiers, Canada is doing its part to build more effective and diverse peace operations. We are also investing to strengthen conflict prevention and peacebuilding, and to advance the women, peace, and security agenda. Canada is committed to helping shape the evolution of peacekeeping and to making a positive contribution to international peace and security.

"On behalf of all Canadians, I thank UN peacekeepers for their dedication to building a brighter future and a safer, more prosperous world. There is no greater gift that we can leave our children and grandchildren than true and lasting peace."

Via pm.gc.ca

COVID-19 BENEFIT TO SENIORS

- Compiled by Ari A. Ariaran, CPA, CGA

Federal Government is providing a one-time tax-free payment of \$300 for seniors eligible for the Old Age Security (OAS) pension, with an additional \$200 for seniors eligible for the Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS).

This measure would give a total of \$500 to individuals who are eligible to receive both the OAS and the GIS, and will help them cover increased costs caused by COVID-19.

NO APPLICATION NECESSARY

Seniors who are already receiving the Old Age Security (OAS) pension and the Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS) do not have to apply for the new one-time payment as it will be applied automatically.

They are temporarily extending GIS and Allowance payments if seniors' 2019 income information has not been assessed.

This will ensure that the most vulnerable seniors continue to receive their benefits when they need them the most. To avoid an interruption in benefits, seniors are encouraged to submit their 2019 income tax information as soon as possible and no later than by October 1, 2020.

Government also reduced the required



minimum withdrawals from Registered Retirement Income Funds (RRIFs) by 25% for 2020.

Ontario Community support program:

If you are a low-income senior or a person with a disability (PWD) in need, such as those in supportive housing environments or community-based independent living programs, you can get:

- paid or subsidized delivery of meals
- delivery of medicine and other necessities

If you are over 70 years of age, have a weak immune system or a medical condition, stay home as much as possible. If you need any help, please call 211 on any phone.

Readers Forum

"Monsoon Journal" May 2020 issue

Thank you for sending this excellent publication. It shows how vibrant our community is. The articles on the epidemic, virus etc. are very useful. Your past publications have also been of a high standard. This edition has a wide variety of articles.

It is also heartening to see how our community has integrated well in Canada and assists the local hospitals etc. I have heard of this from sister in Toronto as well. The articles on Covid-19 including the one on history of virus epidemics are very informative. The commercials in between indicate how vibrant and successful our business community is in Canada.

Congratulations on this service to our community. May God Bless you and your team to continue this work,

With best wishes,

Nadana and Myurathy

Drs K & M Nadanachandran
Sydney /Australia

Although I do not live in Toronto (nor even Canada or North America for that matter), I enjoyed the good selection of articles on offer in the May issue of "Monsoon Journal" providing comprehensive news, views and information. I was intrigued to see that the same consistent response to Covid-19 is being implemented in Canada as the UK, where I live. One example that stands out immediately for me was the "Frontline Workers Appreciation Salute" (p.16) which is highly reminiscent of the British people being encouraged by the UK government to clap for the National Health Service every Thursday evening. The touching tribute "Mother", written by Raymond Rajabalan (p.19), is

a timely reminder of the importance of family and community in times of crisis. "Why Worry" (p. 20, by PremRawat) is particularly pertinent. We should not allow ourselves to fall into the troughs of worry or anxiety in the face of unrelenting news coverage of the Covid-19 event. It is also essential during these unprecedented times that people get as much sun - and hence melatonin - as possible (see the important article by UthayanThuraijah on p.31). Keep your immune system strong. Do not just sit at home. On a final (this time non-Corona) note, I was fascinated to read ThulasiMutulingam's piece "English Chinglish - Don't be Tinglish" (p.22). As someone who works with English-language books every day this goes to prove how English (or indeed any dominant language) can be used as a means of creating and maintaining social snobbery, division and control. Altogether a great and thought-provoking read!

David Karunanithy, Assistant Editor /
Library Researcher for the Oxford English Dictionary - UK

"Monsoon Journal" May issue was heartening to read and enjoy. A full coverage of South Australia's Sri Ganesha Hindu Temple events with pictures was well received as we circulated the issue to our members who are from the South Asian community. Best wishes to "Monsoon Journal" from South Australian Hindu community.

Siva Selva,

Treasurer & Former President,
Sri Ganesha Temple, Adelaide,
South Australia

WORLD NEWS



Contact Tracing Limits COVID-19 Cases in Northern Indian State

By Anjana Pasricha

May 29, 2020 02:57 PM

NEW DELHI - When COVID-19 cases started surfacing in India in March, India's northern state of Himachal Pradesh went into a stringent lockdown as soon as it identified its first two cases.

Worries were high because picturesque towns in the state, nestled along Himalayan slopes, receive many domestic and foreign tourists – India's initial infections came through overseas travelers.

The state took on the challenge of controlling the infection by putting in place a system of contact tracing involving tracking and testing anyone who had been in contact with an infected person to help break the chain of transmission.

"As soon as we get a positive, within an hour or half an hour we are able to trace the entire contacts using digital technology, and the very next day we get them tested," said Rakesh Prajapati, the district collector in Kangra, the state's largest district.

Contact Tracing Limits COVID 19 Cases in a Northern Indian state

While contact tracing is being used throughout India, the battle against coronavirus has been more successful in states that have done it intensively, as have Kerala in the south and Himachal Pradesh.

"Contact tracing is very critical because in a fast-spreading virus, we have to isolate people who have been in contact with a person diagnosed with an infection till they are beyond the symptom period. The whole idea is that they should not infect others," said K. Srinath Reddy, the head of the Public Health Foundation of India in New Delhi. "It limits the spread of infection from unsuspected and undiagnosed contacts."

It is not an easy task but the battle has been more successful in states such as Kerala and Himachal Pradesh that have an extensive network of community health workers rather than in dense cities like Delhi and Mumbai without strong primary health care systems.

In Himachal Pradesh, soon after coronavirus began spreading, these health workers, who usually go door to door in villages and act as a bridge between villages and the public health system, helped raise awareness and identify people with symptoms.

Coronavirus posed a special challenge though. The rampaging infection did not



FILE - Indian police officials wear protective masks as they stand guard at an entrance of Himachal Pradesh Cricket Association



An Indian man uses AarogyaSetu app on his mobile phone in New Delhi, India, May 7, 2020

give much time to sensitize communities. India's low testing rate also meant it was important to physically verify whether people were suffering from symptoms.

"There were not enough workers, so we roped in teachers and community-level workers so that we could cover the entire population in our district. Teams of two went to every home to collect data," said Meenakshi Gupta, a medical officer in Kangra. "In a day they would cover about 25 to 40 households, depending on how far they had to travel."

To reach remote rural mountain hamlets, ambulances were converted into testing vans. In some places, doctors used school buildings for screening and conducting tests.

Himachal Pradesh managed to keep its numbers low – less than 100 in the state of 7 million – until last month; tens of thousands of migrant workers, who returned from other parts of India as lockdown restrictions have eased, have brought new infections and posed fresh challenges.

That has set off a scramble to set up temporary quarantine centers for those back

from "red zones" where infections are high. The task is not easy as the numbers who need to be quarantined exceed the existing medical infrastructure.

"This is a learning experience for all us. Creating facilities sometimes at a day's notice, and making proper arrangements for their stay, food, medical examination, other needs and ensuring proper social distancing, that is a big challenge," Gurdarshan Gupta, Kangra's chief medical officer said.

Those who show no symptoms and come from less-affected parts of the country are being sent to home quarantine.

Everyone in home quarantine also has to be tracked, which is done by health workers, often by phone. Village councils also work to ensure that quarantine rules are not broken.

"Every day both me and my family get calls asking how I am feeling and if I am displaying any symptoms. They also check out whether I am following the quarantine procedures," Arun Kumar Rana, who is in quarantine in his home in Chadiyar village after returning from Delhi, said.

While Rana could isolate himself on the first floor of his house, some people who had to stay in home quarantine set up temporary structures in fields to keep a distance from their families.

While the immediate challenge is to tackle coronavirus infections, there is another front on which the battle against the virus has to be waged, the social stigma sometimes faced by victims even after they recovered.

"In the past we have stigmatized many diseases such as HIV, tuberculosis, and many others and we have spent lots of money in ensuring the stigma is removed," Prajapati said.

To ensure that it does not happen with COVID, officials pay a visit to send a message to the entire village.

"Starting with the first patient who recovered, we approach them, give them bouquets, shake hands with them so that people understand that meeting them is not a risk," he said.

That initiative may have to continue for a while. Himachal Pradesh's more than 270 coronavirus cases are among the lowest in India, but there has been a spike in recent weeks.

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WORLD NEWS

Cyclone Amphan's trail of destruction in Bangladesh and India



WB State Inter Agency Group on Disaster Management.
Cyclone Amphan made landfall in eastern India on Wednesday afternoon local time

21 May 2020

Humanitarian Aid

UN humanitarian and partners are working hard to assist the people of Bangladesh and India suffering from the impact of Cyclone Amphan, which made landfall on Wednesday, wreaking havoc, causing high tidal surges, flooding and embankments to collapse.

"It is believed that around 10 million people in Bangladesh are impacted by the cyclone, with half a million families potentially having lost their homes", UN Spokesperson Stéphane Dujarric told reporters during a regular virtual briefing on Thursday, from New York.

The cyclone, which lashed coastal areas with brutal winds and rain, left at least 84 people across India and Bangladesh dead, according to news reports.

"Our humanitarian colleagues tell us that the storm has damaged houses and crops in Bangladesh", he continued. "Power has been cut off to cities and towns, many of which are working to contain the COVID-19 pandemic".

Noting that while the cyclone had been downgraded to a tropical depression, he asserted that "it is still expected to bring heavy to moderate rain over the next 24 hours".

The Bangladesh Government has already evacuated nearly two million people to more than 12,000 cyclone shelters that are supplied with, among other things, masks and sanitizers, to combat the spread of the coronavirus.

Refugees sheltering in Bangladesh

The Office of the UN Resident Coordinator in Bangladesh flagged that preliminary reports indicate that damage is minimal in Cox's Bazar - home to hundreds of thousands of Rohingya refugees who have fled Myanmar - with some 300 shelters damaged, approximately 60 of which were fully destroyed.

Flooding and small landslides have been reported in several refugee camps, as well as blocked drains and damaged stairs, latrines, and bridges - but no word of casualties or deaths.

Humanitarian partners are on standby to ensure access to information, temporary shelter, food, safe drinking water and other vital services for affected refugees according to need.

Damage in India

Meanwhile, the UN Country Team in India reported that Cyclone Amphan, which caused widespread damage around Calcutta is now considered even more destructive than Cyclone Aila, which slammed the region in May 2009.

Amphan hit seven districts badly, namely South 24 Paraganas, North 24 Paraganas, East Medinipur, West Medinipur, Howrah, Hooghly and Kolkata, with damages also reported in the district of Birbhum.

Power and telecommunications have been affected across the cyclone-affected districts and North and South 24 Parganas are facing water scarcity.

Massive damage is also expected to standing crops and plantations.

Kolkata

While fires have maimed transformers and telecommunications in Kolkata, uprooted trees and damaged electric poles have caused power cuts.

Moreover, several roads have been blocked, shops damaged, and streets waterlogged from the heavy rainfall during high tide.

Embankment breaches have occurred throughout the state while water inundation and wind have damaged Kolkata airport.

As the Chief Minister closely monitors the situation, road clearance West Bengal and its Chief Minister has estimated \$13.2 billion in losses for the state and restoration work are underway both in the districts and city of

Peacekeepers exemplify 'service, sacrifice and selflessness', in face of pandemic



UN PHOTO/ESKINDERDEBEBE

Secretary General António Guterres during a wreath-laying ceremony on the occasion of the International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers 2020.

29 May 2020

Peace and Security

To honour the more than 3,900 women and men who have lost their lives under the UN flag since 1948, Secretary-General António Guterres laid a wreath at the Peacekeepers' memorial on Friday, International Day of UN Peacekeepers.

At a related event, he upheld that while the COVID-19 pandemic has changed almost everything the Organization does, it has not inhibited the powerful sense of "service, sacrifice and selflessness", of the more than 95,000 women and men serving in 13 peacekeeping operations worldwide.

"Every day, our peacekeepers continue to protect vulnerable local populations, support dialogue and implement their mandates while fighting COVID-19", said the UN chief. "They are doing everything they can to be an integral part of the solution to this crisis while keeping themselves - and the communities they serve - safe".

Peacekeeping chief Jean-Pierre Lacroix noted their "tremendous contributions towards peace", and paid tribute to "the service of those peacekeepers who paid the ultimate sacrifice", saying in a tweet that it was "their memory that we continue to carry our work forward".

Saluting women in blue helmets

Under this year's theme, "Women in Peacekeeping: A Key to Peace", Mr. Guterres emphasized how women help improve all aspects of UN peacekeeping, saying it is "more effective for everyone when we have more women peacekeepers at all levels, including in decision-making".

"We will continue to do everything we can...to reach this goal", he stated.

During an awards ceremony, the Secretary-General formally bestowed the '2019 Military Gender Advocate of the Year

Award' on Commander Carla Monteiro de Castro Araujo, a Brazilian naval officer serving with the UN Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), and to Major Suman Gawani from India, who served in the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS).

Diversity in peacekeeping

As UN peacekeeping has evolved to better reflect the populations it serves, women have become increasingly more involved, generating positive impacts in areas ranging from servicing in a police or military role, as well as civilian.

In all areas, women have proved that they can perform the same roles, to the same standards and under the same difficult conditions, as their male counterparts, bolstering women's rights at the same time.

Women 'blue helmets' have greater access to communities, help promote human rights and the protection of civilians, and encourage women to become a meaningful part of peace and political processes.

They help to build trust and confidence with communities and support local women, such as by interacting with those who are prohibited by custom from speaking on equal terms with men.

These peacekeepers also work to mitigate the disproportionately negative effect that conflict has on women by addressing the needs of women in conflict and post-conflict settings - including those of women ex-combatants and child soldiers during the process of demobilizing and reintegration into civilian life - and serve as mentors and role models, setting examples for affected women and girls to advocate for their own rights and pursue non-traditional careers.

In short, "more women in peacekeeping means more effective peacekeeping", the department said.

Via news.un.org

Kolkata.

Meanwhile, the power supply was cut off in vulnerable districts of

Response

Currently, the National Disaster Response Force, State Disaster Response Fund, Kolkata police, fire services and West Bengal state police are in the throes of relief and restoration efforts.

And the state and district-level Interagency Group coordination mechanism has been activated in West Bengal.

UNICEF, which is closely monitoring the situation with state departments, expressed concern that the COVID-19 could deepen the cyclone's humanitarian consequences in both the countries.

Via news.un.org



Pakistan Says India Wants to Team Up to Fight Locusts

By Ayaz Gul

May 25, 2020 01:10 PM

ISLAMABAD - Pakistan has confirmed that arch-rival India is proposing a trilateral response in partnership with Iran to fight a crop-killing desert locust invasion, which threatens food security for millions of people across the region.

India's rare offer of cooperation comes amid escalating military tensions with Pakistan over the disputed Kashmir region, worsening historically strained relations between the nuclear-armed neighbors.

"We have received a proposal from India," Pakistani Foreign Ministry spokesperson Aisha Farooqui told VOA.

"We believe that a well-coordinated response is critical to deal with the challenge posed by desert locusts," she stressed. She would not say what Islamabad's possible response to the Indian proposal would be.

Farooqui, however, noted that Pakistan was "working closely" with regional countries, including India and global partners, particularly the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), to address the looming locust threat.

The ongoing wider regional cooperation is happening under FAO's Commission for Controlling the Desert Locust in Southwest Asia (SWAC), established in 1964 with Afghanistan, India, Iran and Pakistan as its members.

Under the proposed trilateral response, New Delhi has reportedly suggested to Islamabad that both countries "coordinate locust control operations along the border and that India can facilitate supply of malathion, a pesticide, to Pakistan."

The Hindu newspaper quoted Indian officials as saying that Iran has welcomed the



FILE - Locusts sit in trees near Miyal village in Banaskantha district some 250km from Ahmedabad, Dec. 27, 2019. A massive locust invasion has destroyed thousands of hectares of crops in northwest India, authorities said

offer of pesticide to control desert locusts in the arid Iranian province of South Khorasan and the Sistan-Balochistan province that borders Pakistan.

Imminent threat

Keith Cressman, FAO's senior locust forecasting officer, told VOA that India and Pakistan face an "imminent threat of several waves of spring-bred swarms" from southwest Pakistan and southern Iran during May and June.

"They are likely to be supplemented by additional swarms coming from East Africa in about early July. The locusts will appear along both sides of the Indo-Pakistan border in areas that receive monsoon rains for summer breeding," Cressman warned.

Small swarms of desert locusts have

already arrived in India from Pakistan and are moving east into the Rajasthan and Jodhpur regions, according to Indian media reports.

Analysts say the danger posed by the locust attack has apparently pushed New Delhi and Islamabad to set aside mutual differences to increase cooperation to tackle the challenge at a time when both countries are struggling to contain the spread of the coronavirus.

Despite mutual tensions, locust-related cooperation between India and Pakistan has been going on for decades to ensure food security in both countries.

Teams of locust experts from the two countries meet six times a year to discuss the evolving situation and share information

about pest breeding patterns, control strategies and local forecasts. Three of the meetings are held in Pakistan and three in India under a decades-old mutual understanding.

Pakistan situation

The threat of a locust flare-up comes as summer crops of cotton, sugar cane and rice are being sown in Pakistan, while fruit and vegetables are ready to be harvested.

The latest FAO situation report warns that desert locust breeding is ongoing across 38% of land area in Pakistan, with the entire country under threat of an invasion if the pest is not contained.

Pakistan suffered its worst locust attack in nearly three decades in 2019, for which the country was ill-prepared at the time.

But officials and FAO experts say the country is "well-prepared" this year to fight the crop-eating locust. Special teams are already conducting "effective" locust-control spray operations in affected areas in Pakistan.

In January, Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan declared a national emergency to protect crops from desert locust and help farmers save their assets.

China, meanwhile, is also assisting Pakistan in its locust efforts. The Chinese Embassy in Islamabad said in a statement that Beijing has already sent teams of agricultural experts to advise Pakistani farmers, donated 300 tons of malathion and 50 air-powered high-efficiency remote sprayers to combat the insects.

The FAO estimates losses to Pakistan agriculture from locusts this year could be as high \$2.2 billion for winter crops, including wheat and potatoes, and nearly \$3 billion for summer crops.

Viavoanews.com

India Resumes Limited Domestic Flights Even as COVID Cases Surge

By Anjana Pasricha

May 25, 2020 08:33 AM

NEW DELHI - Airline crews donned body protective suits and passengers arrived with masks as India resumed limited domestic flights on Monday after two months amid a gradual easing of lockdown restrictions.

The resumption of air services was accompanied with chaos and confusion as many passengers arrived at airports only to find that scores of flights had been cancelled after some of the worst affected states such as Maharashtra decided to limit air traffic into hotspots such as Mumbai.

The country threw open its skies even as it became the world's 10th most affected nation after witnessing a record surge of coronavirus cases on Sunday to surpass Iran in the total number of infections.

"With the opening of the economy the infection rates are going to rise," says Rajmohan Panda, a health expert at the Public Health Foundation of India. "But one should not look at the sheer numbers. We have to worry but there is no need to panic. The lockdown gave India time to fight the pandemic."

India had halted all domestic and international flights in late March as it sought

to stop the spread of coronavirus with the world's largest lockdown. But faced with the uphill task of reviving an economy battered by the pandemic, it is gradually opening up travel and allowing businesses to restart.

Taking a flight was a totally different experience from what it used to be – some passengers called it unnerving, while others said the strict protocols put in place made them confident about undertaking the journey.

Passengers had to arrive at least two hours before their flight, their luggage was sanitized and they had to undergo thermal screening even as security staff enforced strict new social distancing norms. They also verified that passengers had a government COVID-19 contact-tracing app on their phones. Some passengers donned face shields for extra protection against the virus. The hustle and bustle before the pandemic was replaced with a more somber mood.

Most passengers were headed back to hometowns – the lockdown announced with a four-hour notice, had caught many people off guard and left them stranded far away from families.

"Indians Soar In The Skies Again," Civil



Airline crew members arrive at the airport as domestic flights resume operations after a nearly two-month lockdown amid the COVID-19 pandemic, in Ahmedabad, India, May 25, 2020

Aviation Minister Hardeep Puri tweeted.

Several states announced that passengers would have to undergo a mandatory quarantine in the cities to which they were headed.

On Sunday, 6,977 new cases took India's total of coronavirus infections to 138,845 – nearly double the count 13 days ago. More than 4,000 people have died and health experts fear that India could emerge as one of the world's hotspots after keeping its

numbers relatively low compared to some Western countries.

"The fatality rate has not been that huge. Widespread projections which were given to number in tens of thousands did not happen and we have been able to avert many deaths," says Panda. At the same time, he said India will have to ramp up surveillance and testing as it tries to fight off the virus.

Via www.voanews.com



WORLD NEWS

Remembering Tamil Nadu Former Chief Minister & DMK Patriarch Kalaingar Karunanithi on his 97th Birth Anniversary

By Siva Sivapragasam

Former five-times Tamil Nadu Chief Minister and Patriarch of the DMK party ninety - four year old MuthuvelKarunanithi passed away at the Chennai Kauveri Hospital three years ago surrounded by family members without any pomp and pageantry usually associated when he was living.

Karunanithi was five times Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu which boasts as India's largest state with a population of over fifty million.

Tamil Nadu is the citadel of Tamil and Hindu culture. The majestic temples in Tanjore built by the great Chola king Raja Raja Cholan, Madurai Meenatchi Amman Temple where the pillars do not cast shadows, and the tall Sivan Temple in Rameshwaram where Lord Rama set foot before he travelled to Lankapura to defeat the ten-headed demon King Ravana, are truly sculptures of repute.

MuthuvelKarunanithi, better and more known as "Kalaingar" was Chief Minister five-times of this culturally famous state of Tamil Nadu, the largest populated state in India. He was until death the leader of the DMK Party founded by Periyar and nurtured by Arignar Annathurai.

Karunanithi started his journey in politics at a tender age listening to the speeches of Periyar, the founder of the Dravidian movement and watching his mentor and DMK leader Annathurai addressing meetings.

Karunanithi was gifted with a dual skill - an oratorical talent and a finesse in film script writing. Karunanithi was a diplomatic politician par excellence and possessed an extraordinary skill in maneuvering



Karunanithi with his daughter Kanimoli



Karunanithi with his son Stalin

difficult political situations. MK Stalin who is Karunanithi's son now leads the DMK party.

Karunanithi and his onetime erstwhile colleague and friend actor Sivaji Ganesan dominated Tamil Nadu's film industry with block-buster movies giving the DMK a further boost. Karunanithi's longtime friendship with Sivaji was demonstrated at Kalaingar's eightieth birthday celebrations when Karunanithi stated "எனது உரைகளுக்கு உயிர் கொடுத்தவன் சிவாஜி". Sivaji responded by saying "பராசக்தி படத்தில் கலைஞரின் உரைகளை பேசியதால் ஒரே இரவில் வானத்தை தொட்டுவிட்டு வந்தேன்"

The final chapter in one of Tamil Nadu's popular politician's history has now been written and has been laid to rest.

Sri Lanka seeks \$1.1 billion loan from India



"Will help under terms favourable to Sri Lanka" says Indian PM Narendra Modi

By Siva Sivapragasam

Sri Lankan President Gotabaya Rajapaksa has sought a "special" \$1.1-billion loan facility from India to boost its depleted foreign exchange reserves against the background of the coronavirus pandemic.

This request for the loan comes in addition to the Central Bank of Sri Lanka which had recently sought a \$400-million currency swap with the Reserve Bank of India under the SAARC facility. Mr. Rajapaksa told Prime Minister Narendra Modi over the telephone that the additional amount "to top" the \$400 million "would enormously help Sri Lanka in dealing with our foreign exchange issues," according to a statement issued by the President's office here.

Mr. Modi assured that he is personally committed to help Sri Lanka, the President's office said. "We are ready to help under terms that are favourable to Sri Lanka," Mr. Modi said, according to the press statement.

Following Saturday's call, Mr. Modi said in a tweet: "Had an excellent talk with President @GotabayaR. Sri Lanka is fighting COVID-19 effectively under his leadership."

He added: "Friendship of centuries & bonding of culture & religions will continue to be the basis of the relationship between #India & #LKA. Thank you HE Shri @narendramodi for your hand of friendship during trying times. We will continue to stand by #India." Mr. Rajapaksa also thanked Mr. Modi for support, including 10 tons of medical supplies to combat COVID-19, the official statement said.

The call between the leaders comes over a week after Chinese President Xi Jinping spoke to Mr. Rajapaksa over telephone, suggesting that the two countries "gradually resume practical cooperation in various fields, advance major cooperation projects in an orderly manner and promote the high-quality construction of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)."

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HEALTH & WELLNESS

Pelican Events & Catering donate \$15,000 with Domino's Franchisees in GTA to the Scarborough Hospital Foundation in appreciation of the services of the Health workers during the COVID – 19 Pandemic

By Siva Sivapragasam

The fear and uncertainty created by the current COVID – 19 Pandemic is somewhat reduced by the untiring efforts and support given by the front-line hospital workers who are the heroes of today in the battle against the deadly virus.

As a token of appreciation on behalf of these front-line workers, Messrs. Pelican Events and Catering in Oshawa together with Domino's Franchisees in GTA teamed up to donate \$15,000 to the Scarborough Hospital Foundation recently.

Pelican Events and Catering is a fully licensed and certified company for Durham health and restaurant services headed by Kumar Muralitharan who is a Chef with several years of experience. He was the Winner of an Award presented by the CTCC at their Annual Awards Gala in 2013. Currently, the Company caters to Meal and Wheels, senior residences along with hotels in the Durham area and Toronto. The Armed Forces are also supplied by Pelican Catering at a Whitby hotel. A specialty of Pelican Catering is their famous cakes and pastries. Due to the current Corona crisis, Pelican Catering believes that the safety and well-being of their employees and customers is always a top priority. To ensure their employees remain in a healthy environment they have implemented additional



hygiene measures. Pelican Catering is now accepting orders for their homemade frozen and hot meals.

Domino's Franchisees in GTA were overwhelmed with the valuable services that health workers are offering in Hospitals

during these times and wanted to show their gratitude and appreciation to them. Mr. Kumar, on behalf of Domino's Franchisees in GTA, teamed up with Pelican Events and Catering to donate \$15,000.00 Cheque to Scarborough Hospital Foundation.

Mr. Srinivasan, Executive Producer of Kalaapam TV was the event organizer and he coordinated the event.

See here are some pictures taken at the event.



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HEALTH & WELLNESS



LONGEST-SERVING SHN VOLUNTEER HONoured WITH MOTORCADE

Shirley McDonald was genuinely surprised when a drive-by motorcade arrived at her street and slowed down near her home to celebrate her 60-year milestone as an SHN volunteer.

She was aware that her colleagues from SHN's Volunteer Services would stop by at 3 p.m. but she never expected a vehicle procession. The cars passed by, horns honking, hands waving, and heads popping out shouting: "Thank you Shirley!" "Shirley you're amazing!" "We love you Shirley!"

As the sounds of horns and expressions of gratitude continued, her neighbours came out to see what was happening, and instantly joined in the celebration when they learned that Shirley was being recognized for 60 years of consistent voluntary work with SHN.

It was a happy moment and Shirley who was lost for words kept saying, "This is wonderful. Thank you. This is just wonderful," as some waved from afar while others handed her balloons and flowers.

Shirley McDonald is our longest-serving volunteer. She began her volunteer journey at our General hospital on May 5, 1960. She has volunteered in numerous assignments, such as clinical units, information desks, executive roles with our volunteer auxiliary, volunteer office, archive committee, and countless fundraising initiatives. Shirley is currently the Chair of our Social Committee and she previously held the title of Chair of Candy Strippers and the Director of the Volunteers Auxiliary.

Thank you Shirley!



Shirley McDonald

RECORD-BREAKING RADIOTHON SURPASSES \$500,000



Organizers from Scarborough Health Network (SHN) Foundation and Sing Tao A1 Chinese Radio were left in awe as donations poured in during an incredible 11-hour radiothon on Thursday, April 23, 2020. Thanks to this outpouring of support from more than 2,300 donors,

Hospital. This additional support enabled our Radiothon to surpass the \$500,000 milestone.

This total is a record success for the annual SHN event and represents the most money ever raised in a single day for a Scarborough Chinese-language Radiothon. As well, the event helped drive SHN Foundation's highest single day of online donations, totaling more than \$191,000. Funds raised will help SHN address urgent equipment

SHN Foundation. "The unmatched success of this event demonstrates the incredible impact that is possible when the community comes together for a good cause. Our immense gratitude goes out to the listeners who tuned in last week and who made a gift in support of doctors, nurses, and frontline hospital workers."

Organized by SHN Foundation in partnership with Sing Tao A1 Chinese Radio for the first time, the Radiothon started in the early hours of Thursday at 7 am, with interviews from Alicia Vandermeer and Elizabeth Buller, President and CEO of Scarborough Health Network. These were followed by interviews with prominent community leaders and physicians. They shared stories and highlighted the importance of supporting the hospitals as the community fights through the COVID-19 pandemic.

"I've been doing this for the past 25 years, and I have never before seen this amount of money raised in a single day," said Anson Wong, host of Yellow Cow College at Sing

Tao A1 Chinese Radio, and who helped lead the afternoon show for the Radiothon. "We appreciate this amazing experience and thank the SHN Foundation team for the pleasure of working together to raise this exceptional amount for such an important cause."



the Sing Tao A1 Radiothon raised a record-breaking \$470,000 for the COVID-19 Emergency Fund at the Scarborough Health Network (SHN) hospitals.

The initial amount was topped up thanks to a late gift of \$30,000 by Ms. Katherine Li, a retired medical worker from Toronto General

needs in the face of COVID-19, including items such as ventilators.

"Thank you to our community for supporting health care heroes at Scarborough Health Network through this year's Radiothon, and to our partners at Sing Tao A1 Chinese Radio for making it a reality," said Alicia Vandermeer, President & CEO,



The Radiothon was broadcast live in both Cantonese and Mandarin as gifts were made by phone, online, and through mobile SMS. During the afternoon show, the Sing Tao A1 Chinese Radio hosts went live on Facebook and YouTube to inspire the community with magical acts and singing performances. The initial goal for the event had been set at \$150,000, but the event ended with more than triple that amount.



HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS RAISE \$13,000 TO PURCHASE PPE



With school closed after Toronto's stay-at-home order, Timothy Wang, Matton Xia, and J.T. Zhang found themselves wanting to help out their local community. "I noticed we had a lot of free time, and I wanted to do something very meaningful with my time and not waste it," said Matton.

Seeing the need for support for Toronto frontline workers, these three Grade 11 students from North York's Crescent School raised more than \$13,000 for Scarborough Health Network's COVID-19 Emergency Fund. They started their fundraiser by

said J.T. "I consulted my parents right away and asked for their help. They helped us spread the news, and all our parents worked hard to get our fundraiser out to friends, businesses and their colleagues."

As they cold-called hospitals to see what they could do to help and support frontline workers, the students were connected with Scarborough Health Network's Dr. Lisa Salamon and Dr. Kanna Vela, from the Department of Emergency Medicine. The two doctors supported the initiative and helped the high school trio coordinate with the procurement department to help secure PPE with select suppliers.

Their initiative quickly spread through their family, friends and classmates, and they were able to obtain 2,000 masks from one of the parents in their school (which were donated to SHN in April). In less than a month, more than \$13,940 was raised through the GoFundMe campaign, with no signs of slowing down yet.

The group presented a check to SHN on May 11, alongside Dr. Salamon, Dr. Vela and Alicia Vandermeer, President & CEO of SHN Foundation.

"We were thrilled to learn about the fundraising efforts from the students to help our frontline staff fight the COVID-19 pandemic," said Alicia. "The leadership they've demonstrated by spearheading this



creating a GoFundMe page and naming themselves Boundless and garnered the support of more than 70 donors from the local community.

"We watched the news, and we saw some very horrific conditions that some hospitals were in right now, and we wanted to do something to help."

initiative is truly inspiring and extraordinary. We are incredibly thankful to Timothy, Matton and J.T. for supporting our hospitals during these challenging times. "I'd like to think our parents are proud," said J.T. on their group's fundraising accomplishments. But the students wanted to

ensure that this was not about them. "We want to keep the attention on the frontline workers, not on us. Everything we're doing right now is for them. We want to say a huge heartfelt thank you to our frontline workers."

Timothy shared that they hope to continue raising funds for SHN and organizing fundraisers like this in the future. "We're just three regular high school kids. No matter your age, you can make a difference. I encourage people to try and help and do whatever they can."



To support Boundless and the students' efforts to help fight COVID-19, visit their GoFundMe page: <https://www.gofundme.com/f/boundless-covid19>

You can also make a direct donation to Scarborough Health Network Foundation at <https://shnfoundation.ca/covidfund>

SPECIAL FEATURE



Sivaganga Sahathevan, OAM Queen's Birthday Honours, Australia 2020 Recognized for service to the Indian community of Victoria, and to music

By Carl Buhariwala

Fleeing the civil war in Sri Lanka and then seeking refuge in India, Sivaganga Sahathevan is no stranger to seeking peace through music. With an appreciation for music from an early age, Sivaganga helped spawn an awareness of an existing stream of Indian music in her hometown in Preston as a gift to the Indian community who gave her a sanctuary.

Sivaganga vividly recalls that she was on her way to Darebin City Council in Preston to pay her council rates when she saw a poster advertising the Darebin Music Feast. As she read the poster, she wondered why there was no Indian component. Determined to find out, she talked to a few locals in the area and crossed paths with the producers of the Feast. With her willingness to contribute back to the Indian community at heart, she helped arrange a performance of Carnatic music for the event. That was way back in 1998.

Since then, she continues to actively take

part in the Feast. From 2001, her group had a standalone performance in the programme. "We decided to donate all proceeds to the Starlight Children's Foundation and this very important partnership has continued ever since," Sivaganga told Indian Link as she discussed the breadth of her contribution. "In 2017 we also started performances that raised funds for the Girls from Oz, a charity that enables indigenous girls from rural and remote Australia to obtain musical education and to help sustain their communities."

With her efforts and the support from her team, contributions of \$37,000 have been passed on to the two charities. Sivaganga is thankful to her team, in particular DrChandrabhanu and the Bharatalaya Academy.

"DrChandrabhanu gave me my first opening in Melbourne's world of Indian music and dance, and the Darebin Music Feast gave me the platform to present Indian music to the wider Melbourne community."

Both enabled her to engage with the



community, encourage artists to showcase their talent, and work with groups of people who share a passion for comforting others through music and performance.

"This latest award is for them," she said with gratitude. "It is also motivation for me to keep going."

Sivaganga acknowledges the participation

and assistance of many organisations in her musical career including the Academy of Mary Immaculate, the Australian Girls Choir, Multicultural Arts Victoria, Vani Fine Arts Society (UK) and Shylar Productions in Chennai. She recognises the incredible devotion of the Taste of India committee, her students, the many families and friends and, very importantly, established Australian and international artists and sponsors.

Talking of the future, Sivaganga shared that her aim is to develop activities to engage the elders in the community and draw on their experiences and knowledge. She also wants to offer a platform to enable up and coming children and students to express their culture through music and performance.

"You can see that this is a pretty challenging agenda," she laughed. "However, I believe not only that each person can make a difference, but also that being a leader to a team of dedicated individuals keen to work together, will support the community."

'We stand together in our determination to confront racism' - York Region District School Board

Full Text of Statement

May 30: We have all seen the disturbing and heart-wrenching video of the death of George Floyd, an unarmed Black man who died while in police custody in the city of Minneapolis. Many may also have seen coverage of the resulting protests that erupted in Minneapolis and across the US. While this incident of anti-Black racism occurred in the US, we know we have to face the truth of anti-Black racism in Canada, in York Region and in our schools. Incidents of anti-Black racism have a profound effect on members of our York Region District School Board family, particularly on our Black staff, students and community. These feelings run the gamut from sadness to anger to fear for safety. We want you to know that we here at the YRDSB remain resolute in our stand against anti-Black racism and against all forms of hate and oppression. We want all families to also know that we remain vigilant in our conviction to stand together to confront anti-Black racism and violence wherever and whenever it occurs.

We know how important it is to support our students and families during this painful time. We also appreciate the importance of creating a safe space where our students can speak freely about their feelings and how events of anti-Black racism affect

them. Therefore, we will be reaching out to our Black community partners and working with our professional staff to create these spaces. Under the current circumstances, this means securing a technology solution that works best to create this space. We will spend the next few days to find this solution and will announce details as soon as they are available. We recognize and appreciate the importance of having identity-specific support available whenever required and, as such, are working to identify and retain the services of Black professionals for such a session.

Our board is fortunate to have a strong Alliance of Educators for Black Students (AEBS) and partnerships with community agencies, including those that work with the Black community who we know will support those affected. We'll work to pool these resources for our students and their families.

Even though we remain physically apart at this time, we will all stand together in our determination to confront racism, hate and violence. Former US President Barack Obama said in response to this tragic event, "If we want our children to grow up in a nation that lives up to its highest ideals, we can and must do better." We know anti-Black racism is not confined to American society, as it is unfortunately the lived experience of



many here in Canada. At the YRDSB, we are firmly committed to strengthening our resolve in working toward removing systemic barriers that prevent our students from growing up and thriving in a nation that lives up to its highest ideals. We also want all our students and staff to learn and work in environments that are identity affirming. Currently, if you have concerns about your child's emotional well-being, please do not hesitate to contact your school so that we may arrange for the appropriate supports to be put in place.

We remain united as a community in the face of these upsetting incidents of

anti-Black racism. Together, we must name these acts of hate as deplorable because they are just that. Each of our students and staff needs to feel safe and be safe and everyone has a responsibility to create these environments. By bringing these hateful acts to the forefront of discussion, supporting each other and taking action, we reinforce our commitment and dedication to the equitable world that we must build together.

Sincerely,
Juanita Nathan, Board Chair
Louise Sirisko, Director of Education



SPECIAL FEATURE

Heavenly Father

We celebrate Father's day this month, honouring the fathers throughout the globe

Raymond Rajabalan

The following collection of verses from the books of Holy Bible from Genesis to Revelation, titled a "Letter from the heavenly Father" illustrates the profound love of God almighty for the mankind.

A letter from the heavenly Father

HE chose to send his only son Jesus Christ to this world as the sacrificial lamb to be crucified to death so the sinful humanity can be redeemed, thus proving HIS unlimited love for the mankind.

The letter from the heavenly father reproduced below contains verses chosen from the Books of Holy Bible from Genesis up to Revelation.

A Letter from the heavenly father

My child,

• You may not know me, but I know everything about you.

Psalm 139:1

• I know when you sit down and when you rise up.

Psalm 139:2

• I am familiar with all your ways.

Psalm 139:3

• Even the very hairs on your head are numbered.

Matthew 10:29-31

• For you were made in my image.

Genesis 1:27

• In me you live and move and have your being.

Acts 17:28

• For you are my offspring.

Acts 17:28

• I knew you even before you were conceived.

Jeremiah 1:4-5

• I chose you when I planned creation.

Ephesians 1:11-12

• You were not a mistake, for all your days are written in my book.

Psalm 139:15-16

• I determined the exact time of your birth and where you would live.

Acts 17:26

• You are fearfully and wonderfully made.

Psalm 139:14

• I knit you together in your mother's womb.

Psalm 139:13

• And brought you forth on the day you were born.

Psalm 71:6

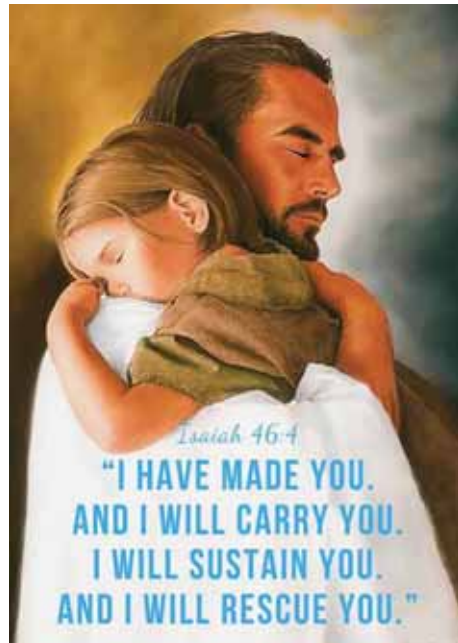
• I have been misrepresented by those who don't know me.

John 8:41-44

• I am not distant and angry, but am the complete expression of love.

1 John 4:16

• And it is my desire to lavish my love on



you.

1 John 3:1

• Simply because you are my child and I am your Father.

1 John 3:1

• I offer you more than your earthly father ever could.

Matthew 7:11

• For I am the perfect father.

Matthew 5:48

• Every good gift that you receive comes from my hand.

James 1:17

• For I am your provider and I meet all your needs.

Matthew 6:31-33

• My plan for your future has always been filled with hope.

Jeremiah 29:11

• Because I love you with an everlasting love.

Jeremiah 31:3

• My thoughts toward you are countless as the sand on the seashore.

Psalm 139:17-18

• And I rejoice over you with singing.

Zephaniah 3:17

• I will never stop doing good to you.

Jeremiah 32:40

• For you are my treasured possession.

Exodus 19:5

• I desire to establish you with all my heart and all my soul.

Jeremiah 32:41

• And I want to show you great and marvelous things.

Jeremiah 33:3

• If you seek me with all your heart, you will find me.

Deuteronomy 4:29

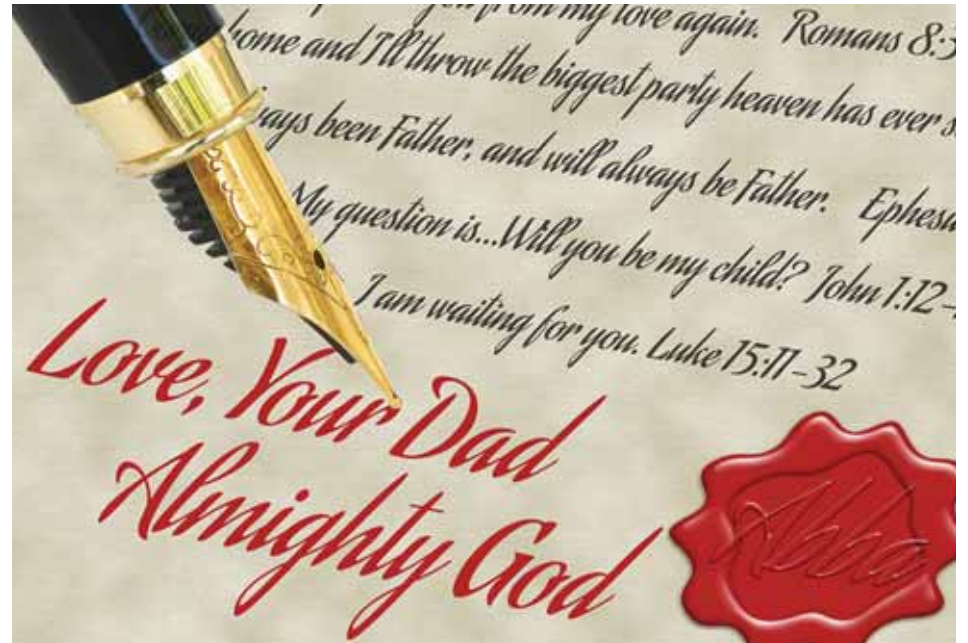
• Delight in me and I will give you the desires of your heart.

Psalm 37:4

• For it is I who gave you those desires.

Phillippians 2:13

• I am able to do more for you than you could possibly imagine.



Ephesians 3:20

• For I am your greatest encourager.

2 Thessalonians 2:16-17

• I am also the Father who comforts you in all your troubles.

2 Corinthians 1:3-4

• When you are brokenhearted, I am close to you.

Psalm 34:18

• As a shepherd carries a lamb, I have carried you close to my heart.

Isaiah 40:11

• One day I will wipe away every tear from your eyes.

Revelation 21:3-4

• And I'll take away all the pain you have suffered on this earth.

Revelation 21:3-4

• I am your Father, and I love you even as I love my son, Jesus.

John 17:23

• For in Jesus, my love for you is revealed.

John 17:26

• He is the exact representation of my being.

Hebrews 1:3

• He came to demonstrate that I am for you, not against you.

Romans 8:31

• And to tell you that I am not counting your sins.

2 Corinthians 5:18-19

• Jesus died so that you and I could be

reconciled.

2 Corinthians 5:18-19

• His death was the ultimate expression of my love for you.

1 John 4:10

• I gave up everything I loved that I might gain your love.

Romans 8:31-32

• If you receive the gift of my son Jesus, you receive me.

1 John 2:23

• And nothing will ever separate you from my love again.

Romans 8:38-39

• Come home and I'll throw the biggest party heaven has ever seen.

Luke 15:7

• I have always been Father, and will always be Father.

Ephesians 3:14-15

• My question is... Will you be my child?

John 1:12-13

• I am waiting for you.

Luke 15:11-32

Love, Your Dad.

Almighty God

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SPECIAL FEATURE



CORONAVIRUS DISEASE 2019 (COVID - 19)

A vital vaccine is the need of the hour

C. Kamalaharan

The Coronavirus considered most deadly
Swarms all over the earth unceasingly
From country to country it inflicts
Dreadful viral infections that afflicts
Everyone irrespective of age inevitably
Among whom a few end up fatally.

To combat the spread of the virus further
Countries have adopted measures firmer;
Laws enforced for complete shutdown
Through stringent methods of crackdown
Causing all activities to breakdown
And placing people on lockdown.

Indoor life without activity seems boring
Eating sleeping yawning and dreaming
Besides the TVs non-stop blaring
And school kids wailing and crying.

Hitherto husband and wife were well attached
Now thro' petty squabbles they seemed
detached
Worst hit are the passionate lovers
Unable to meet under the bowers
So are a few regular pub boozers
After closure are 'kasippu' boozers
Drink in public illicit alcohol
And also engage in drunken brawl.

Saloons shut down indefinitely
Maintain social distance effectively
So are the deserted cinema halls
And the restricted business malls
Other activities too forced to slowdown;

In employment there is cut down
In business shutdown
In relationship breakdown.

While people are constantly afflicted
Global economy too is badly affected
Unless a strong vaccine is found
Situation will be more profound.





SPECIAL FEATURE

Take it or Leave it

A Ride Called Life

The only thing different between your past and your future is 'now.' This is different. This will never happen again.



How many times have you heard me say "the Divine is in you"? And why can't you understand and totally accept that the Divine is in you? Because of your idea of what the Divine is. That's why. Your idea has no idea of what the Divine is! But you have given that idea a shape! "How can this be in you?"

So, your ideas are the very thing that is keeping you from that Divine that is in you. And the day you can drop your idea of the Divine, you'll find the Divine.

One day Guru Nanak goes to this river, and everybody is taking their vessel, this lota—or, you know, metal vessel—and they're offering water to the sun god, to God. And so Nanak turns around and starts going like this. And everybody looks at him and says, "Hey! That's the wrong direction."

He goes, "No, no, this is the right direction." "No, no, no, that's the wrong direction; the sun is over that way. You need to be making your offering to the sun." And he goes, "Well, if your water can reach the sun, I'm just trying to water my fields; they're just a few miles that way."

Show me a place where there

Human concepts about God are often the very thing that prevent a real sense of connection with our Creator.

isn't a Divine. And it is not of the physical presence that you think has to be. Wherever you go, whatever happens in your life, once you even go on the other side of that wall, the Divine will be with you.

But you see, you have to let go of your concepts of the Divine to understand that. "With me? Like, 'Hello, Divine.'" No! Because this won't be there. This won't be there. This won't be there—but you will be. How? How is that possible? Because you are dust. And when you hit that wall, you'll become dust again. And when you do, that's it.

"Oh, oh. Oh, that sounds terrible." Well, what the whole universe is made out of, and the universes beyond that! And the universes beyond that.

It's all dust, and dust, and dust, and dust, and dust, and dust, and dust. And you thought what made you was your name, your personality. Your sunglasses, your reading glasses, your mustache, your lipstick, your eye shadow. You've got it all wrong!

You've got it all, all, all wrong.

This is who you were, and this is what you will be. You really want to know about your tomorrow? That's your tomorrow. You want to really know about your yesterday? That's your yesterday: dust, dust, dust, really not any different than your tomorrow.

You want to know about your past? It's really not any different than your future. And that is your future—guaranteed. Nothing is more guaranteed than that.

This is your now. This is not your future; this is not your past; this is your now. Are you riding it? Because this ride is called "life." Ride it. Ride it. Ride it.

You know, I've never said this before, not in these words. "That's your past. It's not any different than your future. And the only thing that's different between your past and your future is 'now.' This is different. This'll never be again."

That has happened before! That which is about to happen, you being dust? Oh yeah, that's

the way it was. But this, this force that's prying these two open in the midst of everything—you have life, your life—not my life, your life, your existence. And this is now!

Does that make any sense? I hope it defines a little bit more of what "now" is—and up till now it was like, it was this tiny fragment. I don't know; like I have said, it's like, "And this is now." All of a sudden, it's like, "Well, wait a minute. This is now, too. This is my now."

Give away, take away what my ideas are. Start living, start existing, start feeling—and you become free. You have heard that saying, "To fly, you don't need to sprout wings; you just need to cut the ropes that bind you back."

Well, guess what binds us back? Ideas about everything.

And so, understand: the Divine is in every atom of that dust. And that's how that Divine will be with you.

Because there's nothing in this world where that Divine isn't. And even now, in this change, the Divine is with you.

- PremRawat

www.timelesstoday.com



Translation of Thiruvagasagam (j pUthrfk)

By: Kumar Punithavel

I was leafing through the translation of the Thiruvagasagam by the great Canadian born English and Tamil scholar Rv. U. G. Pope, M.A, D.D. Incidentally year 2020 is the two-handed birth anniversary of the laurate. Rv. Pope was born in New Brunswick, and moved to England at a very young age. After finishing his studies, he went to India to do evangelical work. While working in South India he was greatly impressed by the rich Tamil literature he became a great scholar in Tamil language. He went on to translate many Tamil books.

When, to my surprise and astonishment; I found he had left out the translation of only thirteen lines in Thiruvagasagam! It was surprising that a person who translated many great epics (including the Thirukural. Thiruvagasagam and Naladiar) from Tamil to English dropped thirteen lines of Thiruvagasagam.

Upon reading the thirteen lines in question, I found them to be on the topic of educating people about conception and child birth. It may be the Victorian nature of the English culture at the time that prevented Rv. Pope from including these lines in his translation.

The author of the Thiruvagasagam, St. Manickavasagar, was a Chief Minister of the Pandya Kingdom, and was a great learned person who lived around 850AD. He has provided veritable verbal images of conception, gestation and birth in a time when there was no access to technologies such as ultrasounds etc. In these stanzas he thanks Lord Shiva for his grace and benevolence in guiding and protecting him through the various stages from conception to birth.

It's important to note that in my translations I have used the words withstand and survive somewhat interchangeably, I have varied it based on context of the given stanza even though St. Manickavasagar has used the same word (gpi oj Jk) throughout.

On earth grit by the watery seas, from elephant to ant,
Through many matrices I passed,
Obtained a human form within my mother's womb

During the human birth in Mother's womb

khDI g; gmggDs; khj h c j uj J

The sperm from the father of the baby enters the womb of the mother where it resides for several moons before coming out into this beautiful world as a person.

Winning the harmless battle of sperms,

<dkpy; fpUkpr; nrUt;pdpw; gpi oj Jk;

The mature follicle opens and releases the egg from the ovary of the mother; the sperms in large numbers will struggle for an opportunity to impregnate the ovum. It is the first battle a person faces in this mortal life. Hence the saint begins with the first battle of a person in this mortal life.

On the first moon that which is two will survive as one,

xU kj ij ; j hclwpa;pd; , Ui kapw; gpi oj Jk;

On the fertilized egg grows a water-tight sac which gradually fills with fluid. This is called the amniotic sac, and it helps cushion the growing embryo. The placenta also develops. The placenta is a round, flat organ that transfers nutrients from the mother to the baby and also transfers waste from the baby. It is a very critical month as two different entities, the sperm and egg, merge to form a unique baby. This in addition to the previous line describes the process of fertilization or conception in entirety.

On the Second moon oneness survives,

, U kj p tpi st;pd; xUi kapw; gpi oj Jk;

On the second month the facial features continue to develop and come together. Each ear begins as a little fold of skin at the side of the head. Tiny buds that eventually grows into arms and legs are forming. Fingers, toes and eyes are also forming. In the second month the fetus has to survive while gathering together as a single entity.

During the third moon withstand nausea and food aversion's effects,

Kkkj p j dDs; mkkj k; gpi oj Jk;

The baby's arms, hands, fingers, feet, and toes are fully formed. The baby can open and close the fists and mouth. During the third month mother the develops aversion effect on food, and will like certain tastes like sour. They also develop morning sickness, a great hindrance indeed for the baby.

At twice two moons (four months), withstand the descent of vast grace

<upU j p;pf;spw; NguUs; gpi oj Jk;

By the fourth month the heartbeat can be heard through a doppler. The fingers and toes are well-defined. Eyelids, eyebrows, eyelashes nails and hair are formed. The child can even suck the thumb, yawn, stretch and make faces. It is the gift of grace that the person is complete as is. Thus, the saint is grateful to have survived the descent of this vast blessing.

During the fifth moon survive death,

mQR j p;pf;spw; KQRj y; gpi oj Jk;

After the aversion of the food and morning sickness of the mother, the fetus may be deprived of much needed nourishment. As a result, there is a high risk of miscarriage during this period. Hence, the child in a sense survives death in this period.

During the sixth moon withstand the bud blooming,

MW j p;pf;spw; Cuyu; gpi oj Jk;

During this period skin is reddish in colour, and veins are visible through baby's translucent skin. The baby's eyelids pars and open. Even it responds to sounds and movements. Within the mothers the

egg is immersed like a flower bud which is fertilized by father's sperm. Its blooming is the development of the baby in mother's womb. In the seventh month he calls the child's development the blooming of the bud.

Seventh moon withstand the lowering on earth,

VO j p;pf;spw; j hoGtp gpi oj Jk;

Seventh month is a critical month. If the baby survives this month, it has greater viability of surviving the birth and will grow up to be a full-grown person with fully developed organs and limbs. Hindus believe that the soul enters the body at the end of this month. What started as a bud has fully flowered now.

Eighth moon withstand discomfort and difficulty,

vl Lj ; j p;pf;spw; fl l Kk; gpi oj Jk;

In the eight month the baby and the mother will be under great pain as the baby keeps growing in the womb. The baby is fully grown now and the time of delivery is imminent. Foreseeing the pleasure of having the child the mother bears the pain patiently. The mother will feel the pain of her future gem kicking. It is happy pain indeed.

Ninth moon survive the impending arrival of pain,

xdgj py; tUj U J dgKk; gpi oj Jk;

The baby continues to grow and mature: the lungs are nearly fully developed and one will notice the baby moves less due to tight space. And baby's position changes to prepare it self for birth. The baby drops down to the pelvis.

In the golden tenth moon, both mother and self withstand pain and suffering together

j qf j rkj p j hnahL j hd; gLk;
J ffrhfuj ; J auji l g; gpi oj Jk;

The saint calls it the golden tenth for it is when the mother delivers the baby and holds her treasure in her hands, and baby begins its journey in this blessed world. It is indeed a very painful episode of delivering the child. It is clear in this stanza that the child and mother are now distinct individuals as St. Manickavasagar refers to himself in the third person.

It is clear that these lines which were not translated by Rev. U.G. Pope are pretty much a comprehensive lesson in the conception and delivery of a child. I couldn't help but wonder at the medical and obstetrical knowledge of the people in the Pandian Kingdom nearly thousand years ago. The chief minister St. Manickavasagar gave so vivid a description of the activities happening within the mother's womb that our great Canadian Rev. U.G. Pope did not attempt to translate it. Every Tamil should be proud their forefathers who were able to fathom the wonder that happens in the womb of a mother, and be proud to be born to a Tamil mother.

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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

CREATIVES & ARTISTES OF JAFFNA WHERE YOU AT?

I am thinking of starting an FB group called "Jaffna Artistes and Creatives."

It's for people with any kind of creative talent or aspiration - singing, dancing, photography, make-up/fashion, whatever...

The idea is to have a collective space where creative people can interact creatively.

Hopefully, once the corona scare goes away, we can also meet offline, and brainstorm ideas on how we can grow as a creative community.

The space is open for everyone from established artistes to those just starting out or want to develop a creative talent.

We can motivate, mentor and grow along with each other.

For example, I am willing to help as a mentor for those engaging in narrative story-telling on social media.

I can teach long form newspaper feature

Jaffna Artistes & Creatives OPEN GROUP

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writing as well but unfortunately only in English. I can teach basic journalistic skills in Tamil however.

Those who know more in whichever field can show the way to those just starting out. In Jaffna especially, we need a space where we can reach out to each other and

grow. I'll get this translated into Tamil for wider reach. People interested can respond in either Tamil or English.

As for why I am restricting it to Jaffna, it's not to exclude anyone. Just that creative people here mainly live in a creative unfriendly space where we are often told

to "stop wasting time" when pursuing creative fields.

We need to get past that and create a more wholesome space where we feel good about what we can do or aspire to do.

Please drop me a message, if you want to be part of this group.

BROWN IS BEAUTIFUL. BLACK IS BEAUTIFUL.

A common problem in Tamil movies and serials (not sure about Sinhala movies & serials, let me know in the comments) is the focus on the female lead always having to be "beautiful" ergo white skinned.

And dark skinned women being typecast as "ugly" despite having fine features.

As artists & creatives, what is your opinion on this? What can be done to change this prevalent attitude that other artists before us have perpetuated?

Even now, many make up artists in Jaffna cake brides' faces from the neck up in white foundations that make them look like they are wearing white masks atop their brown bodies. The effect is usually ridiculous and nothing beautiful.

Brown is beautiful. Black is beautiful.

We have been brainwashed into a lie.

Now how can we undo it for the next generation?

Which came first - the chicken



or the egg? South Indian movies started out with South Indian actresses - and enjoyed decades of popularity with dark skinned actresses (alongside lightskinned South Indian ones) before making the switch to North Indian / European actresses.

I don't think it was the audience demand so much as the directors' demand. They made a choice based on the belief that light skin is more beautiful than dark skin - but applied it only to women, not men. And the audience over the next few decades got used to it.

But it was an idea sold to the audience, not the other way round.

And it can be unsold again. A lot of women in our cultures are suffering due to this.

ENGLISH TEACHING FOR CHILDREN



All my sins for refusing to learn English teaching for children instead of adults is coming home to roost.

Got roped into volunteering to teach some up country children brought over to Jaffna to study as thier families lack computers at home for them to study online.

There are about 10 of them, of varying age groups from 8 -14.

Extremely sweet natured, eager children to learn - and I desperately want to help them, but have little to no clue how.

I am not going to be using board and chalk - the ages and abilities are too far varied.

I told the priest who commandeered my time in their service that I would expose them to reading / watching interesting children's stuff in English and boost them up that way.

There are a few children's books available at the church house that we are going through.

Please recommend some other resources ; videos, websites etc to pique and hold the attention of this age group collectively?

I grew up on Sesame street. Is that still around? What else is there?

AUNTIES AROUND ME

Went by my old neighbourhood yesterday to do some shopping. Its a famous shopping presinct.

Didn't stop by to see my mother. Too pressed for time. News got back to her.

The CID missed out by not having old Tamil aunties on their payroll.

They are very, very good at noticing every movement 'out of turn' by Tamil boys and girls - even if it was just buying paruppu for Rs.170/- at the supermarket instead of for 165/- loose in the boutique shops outside. So today, I felt obliged to fulfill my filial duty by paying a call of respect. Much good it did me.

Apparently aunty X had shamed my parent in her own community temple in front of other worshippers as well as the priest over what ungrateful, disobedient children she had. Boo hoo hoo.

Right! Aunty X is the ultimate loser in the neighbourhood who's proud she never put a foot wrong in all the boundaries set upon her as a woman. So in her estimation, she's a winner.

And in her estimation, all us 'girls' ought to emulate her perfect womanhood. Of being subservient, quiet and meek around the men in her life. Of never going out of her house unless its to some temple. And then never without a chaperone - usually another community woman dragged along willy nilly to safeguard her dubious virtue, even at 75.

And since I am a "disobedient child" who at the shockingly young age of 38 broke away from the parental home to live on my own - and am engaging in scandalous behaviour such as going grocery shopping in broad daylight - it has to be brought home to my parent what a bad job she has done raising me.

I just wasn't raised right.

Boo hoo hoo, went my mother, relaying all this to me. "You tell aunty X" I snapped back "that Thulasi said to say, you had such an effect on her as the community role model you strive to be that she strives to be as unlike you as possible. It gives her nightmares that she might die a waste of space like you."

Of course that didn't go over well either.

You can't dish out hometruths like that to 75 year old paragons of virtue.

Aunties around me unhappily married, unhappily single, unhappily widowed, just generally unhappily alive...

Why don't you just die unhappy and let the rest of us live???

SENSE OF HUMOUR

Let's talk about sense of humour - I think it's important to have one, especially to take a step back and see the 'big picture', to be able to laugh at oneself etc etc... but not every one is blessed with one, and that is not necessarily their fault.

Here's the thing though - many people without a sense of humour feel entitled to crack 'jokes' against those who can take a joke - yet take umbrage when even the most light hearted of jokes are returned on themselves. What gives?

This is not simply a bashing post. I am genuinely puzzled by the head space of those who do this - and they do this a great deal. Any insights as to why that might be?

Cinnamon Life complex in Sri Lanka resumes construction at site

By Siva Sivapragasam

Cinnamon Life by the John Keells Group, Colombo's iconic landmark and the single, largest, private mixed development investment in Sri Lanka, has resumed construction after a lockdown since March 2020.

An inspection of the Cinnamon Life construction site was made by Colombo Chief Public Health Inspector Dr. R. L. De S. Wijayamuni and other public health inspectors to assess the health and safety standards that have been introduced at the site.

Commenting on the resumption of work, Suresh Rajendra, President- Property Sector at John Keells Holding stated, "The decision to resume operations was taken with careful consideration of the health and safety of our staff. This is our foremost priority."

Cinnamon Life, the iconic 4.5 million sq. ft integrated mixed-use development, is a city within a city, and is envisioned to be the epicentre of modern South Asia. With 10-acres of integrated spaces, Cinnamon Life designed by globally acclaimed master architect Cecil Balmond will consist of a luxury 800-room five-star hotel, 427 premium residential apartments, a 30-storey office complex, 5-storeys of retail and unlimited entertainment. whilst making its mark as Colombo's lifestyle capital, the property will



feature an 800-room luxury "Cinnamon" hotel, an array of entertainment facilities, premium residential apartments, shopping and entertainment mall, state-of-the-art office spaces, and many other attractions to set stage as the entertainment hotspot in the Indian Subcontinent.

The 30-storey state-of-the art office tower at Cinnamon Life will be a hub for multi-national companies setting up in Sri Lanka and it will be the leading business address in Colombo. Most expats who will work at the Cinnamon Life office tower will prefer

to live within the development. This will also enhance the value of the rentals for the Cinnamon Life apartments.

In the centre of Colombo's most exclusive of locales, Cinnamon Life is set to stand as a

pinnacle of luxurious living. Cinnamon Life is all about living life just the way you want – comfortable and convenient with a touch of the extraordinaire.

4.5 million sq. feet Residential, Office and shopping complex will be a city within a city



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MONSOON JOURNAL



Messages of Congratulatory & Best Wishes as "Monsoon Journal" enters 15th Year of Publication



KUMAR NADESAN
Managing Director,
Express Newspapers Ltd, Sri Lanka

"Print editions set the standard, ensuring that the basic principles of a newspaper are fulfilled i.e. truth, balance, and accuracy with responsibility. Your newspaper, in both, print and digital formats, is surely setting these standards, especially with Logan & you at the helm." I am delighted to note that the "Monsoon Journal" is now in its 15th year of publication with a 100,000 combined readership in print and online editions.

In the era of digitalization, print editions are fast disappearing, and I am glad to note that your print edition continues to be available to its readers. I firmly believe that print editions set the standard, ensuring that the basic principles of a newspaper are fulfilled i.e. truth, balance, and accuracy with responsibility. Only then can we increase brand value and credibility of any news-worthy publication. Digital editions need such strong foundations.

Your newspaper, in both, print and digital formats, is surely setting these standards, with Logan & you at the helm.

Please accept my congratulations on reaching this milestone and I wish you much success as you continue your historic journey.
With warm wishes,
Kumar Nadesan



MANO RAVI THILLAINATHAN
President of the Richmond Hill Hindu Temple

On behalf of the Richmond Hill Hindu Temple, I am very delighted to congratulate the editorial board, entire staff and readers of the Monsoon Journal, a monthly English News Paper, on entering its 15th year.

You have been providing the Canadian South-Asian community with a very reliable and comprehensive coverage of local and world news, articles on multi-facts, say Health Care, Science & Technology, Business & Finance, politics, Religion, Food and community events.

What is really noteworthy is your articulation of the contribution of the Tamil community in Canada and at the same time encouraging the younger generation to share the role of the Tamil community in Canada through the medium of English language, a language that the younger generation is very familiar with. We, at this great Temple in Richmond Hill are grateful to Monsoon Journal for publishing articles of the festivals, community events and other articles related to Hinduism every month.

Kindly accept our best wishes for continued success of your Monsoon Journal for years to come and looking forward to the next milestone of 25 years (Silver Jubilee).

Yours very truly,
Manoravi Thillainathan



KUMAR PUNITHAVEL
President, Senior Tamils' Centre of Ontario

"Not only our members, but Tamils all around the world look forward to your publication"

First, let me congratulate you on publishing a successful monthly newspaper for the last fifteen years. Not only our members, but Tamils all around the world look forward to your publication. This monthly newspaper was started at a most opportune time for the Tamils in Canada. Specifically, the upcoming second generation of Tamils from Sri-Lanka have immensely benefitted from your articles. They all wanted to find their roots, and you have played a pivotal role in that process through your journal. The articles about our rich Tamil heritage, along with local and world news fulfill a need that is not met by mainstream media.

You had been always supportive of the Senior Tamils' Centre of Ontario's endeavours, for which we are ever indebted. We at the STC wish you a remarkably successful future and look forward for many more years of your publication.
Kumar Punithavel



SANTHA PANCHALINGAM
President - Canadian Tamils' Chamber of Commerce

"Monsoon Journal has achieved this historic journey of fifteen years and its commitment to the community." I am pleased to offer my congratulations and best wishes to "Monsoon Journal" on reaching the 15th year of continued publication.

It is no easy task in running a newspaper for fifteen years specially when the newspaper is distributed free to the readers. "Monsoon Journal" has achieved this historic journey and its commitment to the community. "Monsoon Journal" has always supported the Canadian Tamils' Chamber of Commerce through a wide and extensive coverage of CTCC events over the past years. Such exposure to the public through the columns has certainly helped to build up the image of the Chamber among the Tamil business community.

Congratulations and best wishes to Messrs. Logan Velumailum and Siva Sivapragasam along with the editorial team of "Monsoon Journal" for the valuable media exposure they are offering to the community and I wish them on behalf of CTCC to continue their good work in the years ahead.
Santha Panchalingam



SIVAN ILANGKO
President of the Canadian Tamil Congress

"As a widely circulated newspaper with high quality articles and relevant news, Monsoon Journal has established its name within the community." It gives me great pleasure in congratulating the Editorial Team of Monsoon Journal entering their 15th year of service in publishing the newspaper which has reached a 100,000 readership. Monsoon Journal is an outstanding newspaper, covering timely news and articles on a variety of topics including politics, history and arts and culture.

The Tamil community is currently spread all over the world with a significant number of people in Canada. Considering this, it is important to have a newspaper that covers the news and matters relating to the Tamil community in sufficient detail to provide information to people. Monsoon Journal certainly addresses this need. It is also important to recognize Monsoon Journal's service to community organizations, businesses and charities in their efforts for the betterment of society. Some examples of these include supporting fundraising efforts to assist Scarborough Hospitals, The Harvard Tamil Chair and its ongoing support for establishing the Toronto Tamil Chair. As a widely circulated newspaper with high quality articles and relevant news, Monsoon Journal has established its name within the community. I extend my best wishes to the Editors for their continued growth and success.
Sivan Ilangko



MELANI DAVID
Law Offices of Meleni David

"A very simple yet powerful combination of great individuals came together in "Monsoon Journal" to deliver clear and coherent messages to our community." "Monsoon Journal" has been an essential part of our Tamil community business's journey and success- including my law office. A very simple yet powerful combination of great individuals came together in Monsoon Journal to deliver clear and coherent messages to our community throughout 15 years.

Hard work, diligence, perfection and perseverance, have taken you this far and earned the community's respect as an esteemed publication. Thank you for dedicating 15 amazing years to the betterment of our community. I along with my employees take this opportunity to extend our heartiest congratulations for setting yet another milestone in your journey.



APPADURAI MUTTULINGAM
Founder Director/Tamil Literary Garden
Founder Director/Tamil Chair Inc.

"Fifteen years is a milestone and is indicative of the importance of your service to our community." Dear Editor, On behalf of the Directors and members of Tamil Literary Garden, Tamil Chair Inc. and that of Tamil community in Canada I wish to congratulate the Monsoon Journal for providing in the last 15 years significant and meaningful service to the Tamil community in Toronto and elsewhere.

Over the past 15 years, on the first of every month we have looked forward to reading the various topics presented in the Monsoon Journal about our community and others in Canada. We enjoyed the content and the photographs that accompanied the news items. I must specifically thank the Journal for its excellent coverage of the events conducted by Tamil Literary Garden promoting Tamil and The Tamil Chair Inc. that raised funds for the creation of a Tamil Chair at the University of Toronto, Scarborough.

Our community benefits immensely by reading in the Journal about local and international news and the people who make our community great. Fifteen years is a milestone and is indicative of the importance of your service to our community.

Please accept our best wishes for your continued success and our heartfelt appreciation for providing relevant and noteworthy articles in a timely fashion.
I congratulate you and wish you great success in the future.
A. Muttulingam



SAMEEM MOHAMED
President/CEO Century 21 Innovative Realty Inc.

"I take this opportunity to congratulate "Monsoon Journal" for providing professional and quality journalism over the years in English and wish them success in the future too."

I am pleased to offer my message of congratulations to Logan,Siva, and the editorial staff of "Monsoon Journal" for having produced a quality newspaper over the years with professional and quality content.

The newspaper has successfully provided articles and information to the readers on subjects of varied interest. Our Real Estate Company has always supported "Monsoon Journal" through advertisements and obtained marketing promotion for our services.

I take this opportunity to congratulate "Monsoon Journal" for providing professional and quality journalism over the years in English and wish them success in the future too.
Sameem Mohamed



PROF. (DR.) P. PUVANARAJAN
Former Professor-University of Sri Lanka,
London, U.K

"I wish the architects behind the publication many more years of service to the Tamil community in Canada and to the wider world at large."

I wish to confess to all readers that it is indeed my pleasure to speak my mind out about the Monsoon Journal now being successfully published for 14 long years in Toronto Canada and entering the 15th year of publication. The newspaper meets the multi faceted needs of the large migrant Tamil community. I would attribute the success of this monthly publication to the Publisher Mr.Logan Velumailum and the Executive Editor Mr. Siva Sivapragasam for steering very efficiently the editorial task.

Siva has reflected his rich journalistic experience that he gained whilst working in the Sri Lankan "Daily News" and in an executive capacity for many years for the popular "Virakesari" Newspaper in Sri Lanka. It is very commendable that the Monsoon Journal besides producing wide coverage of local cultural and commercial activities does cover a wide range of very current international issues that interests the readers very much with non-partisan approach.

I fervently wish the editorial team handling the publication persists in keeping this trend in presenting issues, a strategy I would regard as vital for the continued success of the journal. I wish the architects behind the publication many more years of service to the Tamil community in Canada and to the wider world at large.
Prof. (Dr.) P. Puvanarajan



DR. SETHA VISWASAM
Family Dentist - Sunshine Dental

"I take this opportunity to congratulate the editorial team of "Monsoon Journal" which consist of persons of several years of media experience for producing a quality and professionally styled English newspaper for the community."

I am pleased to pen a complimentary and congratulatory message to "Monsoon Journal" as the newspaper enters its historic journey of fifteen years. The newspaper has been featuring excellent content with articles of interest to the community over the years.

As a health professional, I am pleased that the newspaper has always included articles related to health issues in almost every issue of the newspaper over the years. The contents of the newspaper cover a variety of issues which are of interest to all ages in the community.

I take this opportunity to congratulate the editorial team of "Monsoon Journal" which consist of persons of several years of media experience for producing a quality and professionally styled English newspaper for the community. Since the newspaper is in English it will serve the needs of the future younger generation. I wish "Monsoon Journal" several more years of continued success.



KUBES NAVARATNAM
Managing Partner, Nava/Wilson Law Office

I am pleased to offer a message of congratulations and best wishes to "Monsoon Journal" as it enters the 15th year of continued publication with print and online editions, serving the community with valuable and interesting content every month.

Newspapers serve communities by providing them news and articles which eventually help to mould public opinion. Both as a reader and an advertiser, I have watched "Monsoon Journal" grow over the years ensuring this basic principle of a Media.

It gives me great pleasure in congratulating the Editorial Team of "Monsoon Journal" for having provided the community news and articles on a variety of topics of interest as the newspaper enters its 15th year of publication.

I sincerely and fervently hope that "Monsoon Journal" continues its historic journey in providing the community with valuable and interesting contents in the future too as it has done in the past.



KUMARAN NADESAN
Founder Chair, comdu.it

"Over these many years, the Monsoon Journal - in both its print and online versions - has given voice to many stories in the South Asian community in and around the Greater Toronto Area."

On behalf of comdu.it, a fast growing Canadian non-profit organization engaged in sustainable development work in the traditional Tamil homelands in Sri Lanka, it gives me great pleasure to congratulate the publishers and editorial team of the Monsoon Journal on the 15th anniversary of the publication.

Over these many years, the Monsoon Journal - in both its print and online versions - has given voice to many stories in the South Asian community in and around the Greater Toronto Area.

Running an enterprise that is responsible for shaping our social awareness of the world while also making sure it remains in business may have seemed like an impossible task on most days - and for that the able leadership of Messrs Siva Sivapragasam and Logan Velumailum must be commended. As the publication looks forward to the next 15 years, I hope it will continue to deepen its journalism capacity so that it can further strengthen its important role as a key democratic institution within our community that is fair and free from undue political and business influence.
Best wishes,
KumaranaNadesan



THAYANANDAN (SASI) RAJARATNAM
President - Durham Tamil Association

"This team has produced content unparalleled in the Tamil Media for the past 15 years with content in English."

Durham Tamil Association congratulates the journalists, contributors, advertisers, and a special thanks to Siva Anna, the Executive Editor and Logan the Publisher & Managing Editor. This team has produced content unparalleled in the Tamil Media for the past 15 years with content in English with youth contributors and esteemed writers and reaching mainstream Canadians with a focus on allowing young contributors to express their views. Whilst being an advocate to the war-affected Tamils in Sri Lanka, It is also notable that all Sri Lankan ex-pats from Tamil, Sinhala, Muslim, Christian background and our neighbours in India Pakistan & beyond reading and support this publication. Durham Tamil Association could not have continued to deliver its voluntary services for the past 20 years without the support of such community based, unbiased editorial driven, publications such as Monsoon Journal. Tamils in Durham Region and beyond are grateful to everyone at Monsoon Journal.

We hope that after Covid-19, we get to celebrate this important milestone in person.
Congratulations and Best Wishes.
Sasi Rajaratnam



VASA NATHAN
President, Tamil Cultural and Academic Society of Durham

"In the last 15 years Monsoon Journal team has taken the Tamil culture and our value to the mainstream by publishing the paper in English."

Congratulations to the Monsoon Journal team, Our heartfelt thank you for your continuous dedication and coverage of Tamil community, business promotion, cultural and academic events. The Monsoon Journal team has been a great supporter of the Tamil Cultural and Academic Society of Durham (TCASD) since the organization was established in 2008. As a growing organization, it is important to have media support in the community, and MJ team was never hesitant to share our events and latest news. In the last 15 years the Monsoon Journal team has taken the Tamil culture and our value to the mainstream by publishing the paper in English. This also allows the next generation to read and understand the issues of our community, as the Journal continues to cover both local and international news.

We wish all the best to the Editor and entire publication team for their continued success and growth.
Vasa Nathan

ARUL S. ARULIAH
Former Managing Editor of Refuge
- Journal published by the Centre for Refugee Studies, York University

It is with great pleasure that I offer my warmest congratulations to you and your team in taking the Monsoon Journal to the 15th year of its publication. Your contribution is immensely significant to the South Asian community and in particular that of the influential Canadian Tamil community in Greater Toronto. Advertiser based quality journalism is always a challenge to any publisher and to withstand it and to bring out change is sincerely appreciated. You have performed your duties well and is being thankfully noted by a person who had the privilege to have five decades in the community, and MJ team was never hesitant to share our events and latest news. In the last 15 years the Monsoon Journal team has taken the Tamil culture and our value to the mainstream by publishing the paper in English. This also allows the next generation to read and understand the issues of our community, as the Journal continues to cover both local and international news.

We wish all the best to the Editor and entire publication team for their continued success and growth.
Vasa Nathan



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COMMUNITY WATCH 

HOW TWO LEADERS ARE PRESERVING THE TAMIL LANGUAGE FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS AT UFT, SCARBOROUGH



A Muttulingam

Sivan Ilango

Tina Adamopoulos

A ppadurai Muttulingam couldn't believe it when he learned that a donation had been made from Yellowknife to U of T Scarborough's Tamil Chair initiative. Donations have been gifted from all over Canada and the globe, but he still called to show appreciation.

"These are the people that give us strength and hope," says Muttulingam, Director of Tamil Chair Inc, and an award-winning author.

Muttulingam and Sivan Ilango, President of the [Canadian Tamil Congress](#), are at the forefront of the Tamil Chair initiative. They've also dedicated their careers to support and celebrate the Tamil community.

In 2018, the two non-profit organizations pledged \$3 million to establish the full-time position in Tamil Studies to U of T Scarborough. The funds will support academic programming and research in Tamil language and history, but most importantly, preserve its rich culture for future generations.

At the time of writing, \$1.3 million has been raised.

"Creating a Tamil Chair in Toronto has been a long-time dream of the Tamil community," Ilango, chair of the Toronto Tamil Chair

Committee, says. "There are more than 7,000 languages in the world and Tamil is one of the seven classical languages. It's an integral part of our identity."

In the U.S., doctors Sundaresan Sambandam and Vijay Janakiraman helped to successfully raise funds for a Tamil Chair at Harvard University. It sparked global momentum, and the opportunity for partnership with U of T followed.

"We lost our land and we lost our language," Muttulingam says, referring to the Sri Lankan Civil War. "Language for us, living here in Canada, is very important. That's why it is important for us to come together."

In light of the initiative and the [declaration of Tamil Heritage Month in Canada](#), Ilango pitched the idea to celebrate the month on campus. The first celebration was in 2019 and it's now an annual event.

Muttulingam credits Gary Anandasangaree, MP for Scarborough-Rouge Park, for carrying the motion on the establishment of Tamil Heritage Month in Canada.

"A leader is not the one who takes the road. It's the one who makes the road, and he made it for us," Muttulingam says. The author of multiple books in Tamil throughout his decades-long

career, Muttulingam published his first book at the age of 25. He co-founded the Tamil Literary Garden, a Toronto-based non-profit organization that annually recognizes excellence in Tamil literature.

Ilango immigrated to Toronto in 2001. Climbing the corporate ladder, he wanted to create opportunities to prepare youth to succeed in the workforce.

In 2012, he co-founded the Centre for Leadership and Innovation, a non-profit organization that strives to nurture leadership skills and build confidence in youth from the Tamil and other multicultural communities.

"Students from our first classes are graduating from university. They still keep in touch with us," Ilango says. "It's something I'm very passionate about, along with the Tamil Chair."

"When you have a positive impact on people's lives, that naturally makes you happy as well."

While the COVID-19 pandemic has postponed events around the initiative, members have participated in volunteer groups to support front-line healthcare workers.

(Courtesy: UFT Newsletter)



SPECIAL FEATURE

Paths of Goodness - 2

Awwiayaar



Unpathu naazhli, uduppathu nanku mulam,
Enpathi kodi ninaithu ennuvan-kanputhaintha
Maanthar kudi vazhikai mannin kalampol
Saarthunayum sanchalame than.

- Nanlvazhli- 28

By: J A Rajah

All one needs is a plate of food and a length of cloth but one desires millions of things. The life of people who do not realise this is as brittle like a clay pot and is filled with misery.

In this venba (Four lined verse), Avvaiyar explains the simple needs of life. She decries the avaricious desires of the human heart which is difficult to fulfill and leads to everlasting problems. Kamban in his saga of Ramayana portrays the story of Ravana who had all the

talents and riches but still craved to covet the wife of Rama and lost everything he had and also fell into disrepute and disgrace. As materialism advances, needs of people have vastly increased. People find it difficult to control their wants. Avvaiyar's words are still helpful watchwords for people of the modern world to live with ease and peace.



The Effects of the Pandemic in the Modern World



- economist.com

By: J A Rajah

The world is nearly brought to a standstill by the pandemic that started in China in March 2020. Today more than 4.3 million people have been found to be infected and nearly 300,000 have died. Covid-19's greatest effect is the damage it has done to world economies and how it would precipitate social and political changes. Covid-19 attacks the respiratory system. It often shows itself with symptoms similar to those of common cold, such as cough, sneezing, nose block and breathing difficulty. It did not come by without previous warnings. By the end of December 2019, Chinese officials had alerted the WHO about dozens of pneumonia-like cases in the city of Wuhan. From that time onwards, the coronavirus crept in and out of the news until it rapidly became infectious and experts opined that it would not pass away easily. It is a pity that health-care workers and front-line medical practitioners are also becoming victims. It is a direct challenge to relief efforts.

There have been lot of changes after the pandemic. The economies of most countries have been brought to a halt. All social gatherings have been halted. In Toronto we have parties for all kinds of reasons. Birthday parties, anniversaries, parties of school associations, religious celebrations etc. Churches do not function. Parades and marches have stopped. People enjoy when there is a chance to get together. The scare of the virus has put a halt to everything. There have been stories of pestilences and pandemic diseases in history. King David sings in the 91st psalm about pandemics that affect people and had

sought the help of God to overcome these disasters. Most people confined to their homes are undergoing mental strain. Even domestic violence is reported in many areas. When faced with fear and anxiety many people just copy what others are doing. They feel a sense of unease and unpreparedness. They panic when they see others hoarding. They feel their world rapidly running out of control and express their panic in extreme 'Me first' actions-like buy all of a store's supplies, leaving nothing for other shoppers. Anxiety, unease and a sense of losing control have led many to hoard toilet paper for a respiratory disease. On the other hand people have discovered new ways of attending to their needs. On-line shopping, on-line meetings, Zoom based prayer meetings and teleconferences have now started to operate. Some are able to get whatever things they need through on-line orders. On-line business activities proliferate through web-sites. Eg. Amazon.com, Walmart.ca. E-commerce is the fashion of the day.

Now pandemic has become important in politics. In Western nations a new wave of more conservative, populist political infighting to replace the previous liberal, globalist agenda is beginning to emerge. Vast amounts of money have been committed toward saving the day, and the vast national debts being generated only to push the bills to an unknown time in the future. Globalism cannot continue as it was before. This worldwide crisis is driving all before it, creating a very different world in its wake. Current emergency may affect the November elections in the US. Everything depends on how the current ad-

ministration succeeds in dealing with the pandemic. For many health professionals, the only solution to the problem of infectious disease is to put more money into finding new medications and establishing clinics to provide treatment. In developing countries the people living in crowded, unsanitary living conditions-lack of clean water, disposal of garbage and human waste, lack of protection against disease bearing insects- are the people who are more prone to be victims. Corrupt leaders do not provide enough facilities to such people. They squander international aid money to enrich themselves. Some people living in poor rural areas do not understand how infectious diseases are transmitted and how they can be prevented. Many swim, bathe, wash clothes, and drink water from streams, lakes and water holes. Consumption of animals and other organisms that transmit disease is also a factor in the spread of infectious diseases. Changing individual behavior is a major challenge in the battle against infectious diseases.

In recent times there have been protests against lockdown restrictions in some parts of the world especially in America, France and the U.K. Some countries like New-Zealand have already started to open up. US being the most affected country is hastening to open up. The pandemic is bound to make a serious dent in the economy of many countries of the world. However, caution should be exercised and gradual opening up of human activities is essential to avoid further outbreaks which could harm the efforts already taken. The world should fight the good fight and come out victorious at the end.



EDUCATION & CAREER

ONLINE LEARNING NO LONGER A CHOICE, BUT A NECESSITY

By: R. Shu

Online learning has been rising in popularity for the past few decades. However, despite the obvious upward trend, it is not until COVID-19 hit the world that the rest of traditional education is now forced to face a daunting reality - online learning is no longer a choice, but a necessity.

Learning in the traditional classroom is widely favoured by many students and parents, but online learning is not without its merits. Technology is heavily embedded in our everyday lives. When young children are growing up with smart phones and ipads easily accessible to them, schools must also adapt to their increasingly intuitive tech-savviness. Education must keep up with the new and cognitively different generations of students.

This is why online learning is important and honestly quite beneficial to students. The world is rapidly changing, and online learning allows students to utilize the tech they are familiar with to conduct their learning. Many online learning programs come with a Learning Management System (LMS), which students use to manage their homework, assignment submissions, class schedules, and communication with the teacher. Being accustomed to these LMS interfaces allow students to exercise their organization and independence which develop and facilitate good learning habits.

Online learning also offers greater flexibility for students and parents who have busy sched-

ules. Classes are often offered at various times of the day, and parents no longer need to account for travel time to schools and learning centers. Moreover, as long as students are equipped with a laptop, they can virtually learn anywhere with internet access.

Online learning is also a cost-effective option for learning. In addition to the reduced gas cost for commutes, material fees are often lower. For post-secondary students who want to study at an institution far from home, they no longer need to account for housing expenses.

Most importantly, looking into online learning now is an excellent idea for parents who are concerned about gaps in their child's learning needs due to the school suspension in Ontario. With 3.5 months of the remaining school year cancelled, students must now study more diligently to be prepared for the next grade. Online learning will allow students to keep up with their studies in a safe environment.

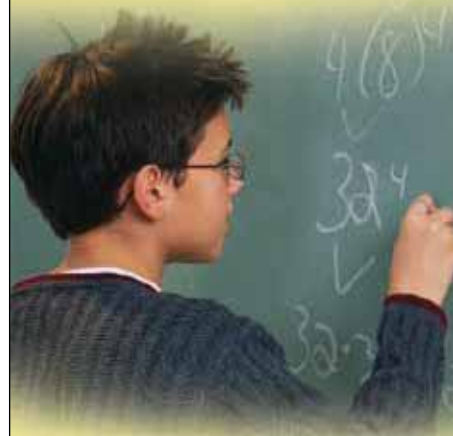
RG Education Centers is offering online classes, which will allow students to work on physical work packages, while getting the help they need from weekly online sessions with experienced tutors. The packages will help students to catch up with any concepts they missed in their grade, as well as help prepare them for the next school year. For inquiries, please call (416) 609-9508 or e-mail info@rgeducation.com.



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SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY



DOES SUNLIGHT DESTROY COVID-19?

Vitamin D Supplements Could Prevent and Treat COVID-19 and Pneumonia Infections

By: Uthayan Thurairajah



U.S. President Trump referenced an “emerging result” from research by the Department of Homeland Security that indicates exposure to sunlight, heat, and humidity seems to weaken the coronavirus. Bill Bryan, the acting homeland security undersecretary for science and technology, said at a recent briefing: “Our most surprising observation to date is the powerful effect that solar light appears to have on killing the virus—both surfaces and in the air. We have seen an equal effect with both temperature and humidity less favorable to the virus.”

Introduction

The world is now enduring its third major pandemic of coronavirus (CoV) diseases. A new CoV infection pandemic began in Wuhan, China, in late 2019, formerly called 2019-nCoV (Zhu et al., 2020) and renamed as COVID-19 by the World Health Organization (WHO) in February 2020. Previous pandemics include severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS)—coronavirus, which began in China in 2003 (Zhong et al., 2003), and Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS)—coronavirus in the Middle East, started in 2012 (Assiri et al., 2013). These pandemics began with animal-to-human infection. The death rates were >10% for SARS and >30% for MERS (Song et al., 2019). The primary reason for death is generally due to the severe atypical pneumonia (Yin et al., 2018). Pneumonia also is usually the cause of death for people who develop flu. However, the death rate is lower (1%–3% for influenza A H5N1 pandemic of 1918–1919 in the United States (Britten et al., 1932).

Vitamin D

Low vitamin D in winter allows viral pandemics. During winter, people who do not have access to sunlight exposure or take vitamin D supplements are likely to have low plasma 25-hydroxyvitamin D [25(OH)D] absorptions. Vitamin D reduces the risk of viral epidemics and pandemics in many ways. First, higher 25(OH)D collections decrease the risk of chronic diseases, including cardiovascular disease, cancers, diabetes mellitus, chronic respiratory tract infections (RTIs), and hypertension. Patients with chronic illnesses have a significantly higher risk of death from RTIs than otherwise healthy people.

Second, vitamin D reduces the risk of RTIs by three tools: keeping tight junctions, killing hidden viruses through the initiation of cathelicidin and defensins, and reducing the creation of pro-inflammatory cytokines by the natural immune system, through decreasing the risk of a cytokine storm heading to pneumonia.

Given the enormous economic impact of Covid-19 pandemics, means need to be found to decrease the infection and death to large populations at a low cost. Vitamin C and vitamin D can be suitable because they have shown antiviral properties (Colunga et al, 2020) and antimicrobial properties, which are critical in reducing disease (Watkins et al, 2015) and are cheap. Vitamin C plays an important role, as outline in several studies that have identified mechanisms whereby ascorbic acid reduces the risk of RTIs (Cai et al, 2015), reviewed in (Khomich et al, 2018), this article focuses on a review of the proof for vitamin D. Vitamin C and vitamin D can work together to reduce the incidence as well as treat the infection.

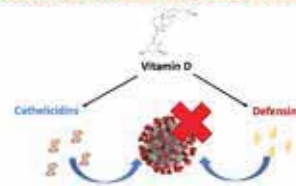
Seasonal influenza

Influenza virus affects the respiratory tract by direct viral infection or by damage from the immune system response. Patients who develop pneumonia are more likely to be <5 years old, >65 years old, Caucasian, and nursing home residents; have chronic lung or heart disease and history of smoking and are immunocompromised. (Kalil et al, 2019). Seasonal influenza infections generally peak in winter (Hope-Simpson, 1981). Cannell hypothesized that the winter peak was due in part to the conjunction with the season when solar UVB doses, and thus 25(OH)D concentrations, are lowest in most mid- and high-latitude countries (Cannell et al, 2006). As a result, mean serum 25(OH)D concentrations in north and central regions of the United States are near 21 ng/ml in winter and 28 ng/ml in summer, whereas in the south region, they are near 24 ng/ml in winter and 28 ng/ml in summer (Kroll et al,



2015). In addition, the winter peak of influenza also coincides with weather

Vitamin D, Immune System, & SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19)



conditions of low temperature and relative humidity that allow the influenza virus to survive longer outside the body than under warmer conditions (shaman et al, 2010).

In vitro laboratory experiments confirmed the findings regarding temperature and UV radiation, although UVC was effective and UVB was not. UVC does not reach Earth’s surface. A later article reported a laboratory experiment showing that sunlight exposure reduced the half-life of influenza viruses in aerosols at 20% and 70% relative humidity from 31.6 minutes in darkness to 2.4 minutes in full sunlight (Schuit et al, 2020). Thus, part of the seasonal variation in influenza incidence is probably affected by the amount of sunlight in inactivating the virus.

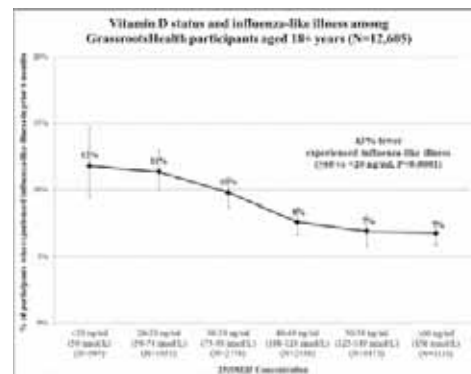
Ecological studies suggest that raising 25(OH)D concentrations through vitamin D supplementation in winter would reduce the risk of developing influenza. A comprehensive review of the role of vitamin D and influenza was published in 2018 (Gruber-Bzura et al, 2018). On the positive side, vitamin D-related innate and adaptive immune responses to viral infections exist. A vitamin D randomized controlled trial (RCT) conducted on schoolchildren in Japan reported significantly reduced incidence of influenza type A but not B for children in the treatment arm taking 1200 IU/d of vitamin D (Urashima et al, 2010). Although most other trials did not support a beneficial effect of vitamin D supplementation in reducing risk of influenza infection, another recent RCT did (Arihiro et al, 2019). The Gruber-Bzura article concluded that the evidence of vitamin D’s effects on the immune system suggest that it should reduce the risk of influenza but that more RCTs are required to evaluate that possibility.

Coronavirus infections

“Pandemic flu is sudden events linked to the emergence of a reassorted human-pathogenic disease. A virus that spreads rapidly in the immunologically artless population, with enormous clinical and economic impact” (Peterander et al, 2016). Covid-19 pandemics have outcomes different from those of sea-

sonal flu. CoVs and influenza share several essential features: they have enveloped viruses (Schoeman et al, 2019), the peak infection is usually in winter, and the cause of death is generally from resulting pneumonia. Covid-19 can survive a long time outside the body. A laboratory study reported that Covid-19 could stay over two hours on aluminum and paper, and over eight days on plastic at average room temperature (Kampf et al, 2020). At temperatures of 30°C to 40°C, Covid-19 survival time was lower.

In Korea, between October 2011 and May 2014, mean serum 25(OH)D concentrations for people older than 60 years were ~18 ng/ml for males and ~15 ng/ml for females (Yu et al, 2016). Food



is enriched with vitamin D, and few inhabitants take vitamin D supplements. A 13-year study conducted in Milan, Italy, reported that summertime means 25(OH)D concentrations reached about 33–35 ng/ml in the summertime for both males and females and ~20 ng/ml for males and 23 ng/ml for females in winter (Ferrari et al, 2019). An analysis of standardized 25(OH)D concentration data from 14 European population studies indicated that 13.0% of the 55,844 European individuals had serum 25(OH)D concentrations <12 ng/ml on average in the year, with 17.7% and 8.3% in those sampled during the extended winter (October–March) and summer (April–November) periods, respectively. The prevalence was 40.4% for 25(OH)D concentrations <20 ng/ml (Cashman et al, 2016).

More importantly, several studies indicated that chronic diseases people have lower 25(OH)D densities and developed inflammation. The SARS-CoV epidemic began in late November 2002. The first peak happened in early February 2003. Many supplementary peaks occurred in mid-April with few cases end of May. An outbreak in Taiwan due to a peak in April (Chan-Yeung, et al, 2003). The epidemiological characteristics of the COVID-19 outbreak in

- continued on page 41



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 investment risk actively

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

In the investment world, the term “investment risk” relates to the fluctuations in the value of a stock, bond or a mutual fund assets. Investors generally want to avoid excessive investment risk. It stems from the rationale that investors feel a great deal more displeasure when the value of their investment declines, than the pleasure they experience when their investment increases. Therefore, it stands to reason if investors are going to invest in risky assets such as stocks and bonds they would prefer to do so in such a way that the potential rewards outweigh the potential risks. Given a choice between two investments with the same amount of risk, a rational investor would always take the security with the higher return. Given two investments with the same expected return, the investor would always choose the security with the lower risk.

Achieving your investment goals requires patience and a keen understanding of how you would like to achieve those goals. Designing your investment portfolio should not only consider the rate of return you wish to achieve but also the investment risk you may encounter. Generally, the desire for a specific investment return should be secondary. The primary focus should be on identifying your comfort level with risk and then, through proper analysis, determine an appropriate mix of assets that will potentially provide the highest return that corresponds to the desired amount of risk you are willing to withstand.

The objective to reduce investment risk is critical, as it is far easier to lose money than it is to earn it. What is often overlooked is

that it takes a greater effort to recover a loss than it did to incur that loss in the first place. Market declines have been known to be even more extreme which places an even greater emphasis on obtaining higher returns to recover investment losses. Proper care must be taken to avoid excessive market volatility and insulate yourself as much as possible from such occurrences. The easiest way to reduce risk is by investing in assets that offer a guaranteed rate of return. The problem is that the investment return of a guaranteed investment is relatively low. This means that over time the effects of inflation will likely ravage the value of the investment. Quite often investing in risky assets such as stocks and bonds tends to be the most appropriate means for achieving an investment goal. To that end, the best way to invest in stocks and bonds without incurring an excessive amount of risk is by diversifying your assets. Proper diversification and asset allocation is essential, as it will reduce risk without sacrificing a whole lot of return. Investing always involves an element of risk, and no matter how careful an investor is, losses will occasionally occur. That is why an appropriate investment strategy must be in place to help minimize risk.

As a seasoned investor, you know the value of effective asset allocation – but you can also unlock additional opportunities by taking traditional asset allocation one step further via an investment strategy known as dynamic asset allocation.

As you may already know, asset allocation is the practice of allocating investments



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across various asset classes, such as equity and fixed income, to best balance risk and reward for each investor. You have your own unique risk tolerance, which differs from that of other investors. You also have your own asset allocation strategy based on your tolerance for risk, your financial goals and your investment timeline.

Dynamic asset allocation takes asset allocation to another level. Through ongoing analysis of the global financial market, investment managers can uncover opportunities that still fit within the parameters of an appropriate pre-determined range of risk tolerance. The primary aim of such an investment is to reduce the impact of shorter-term market fluctuations, thus providing a smoother ride towards achieving your long-term financial goals.

As the appetite for a potentially higher return increases, so does the corresponding investment risks. That is because obtaining a higher return usually involves a greater emphasis on equity type investments that are characteristically more volatile in terms

of price fluctuation. For the more aggressive investor, a portion of their equity investments may focus on emerging markets or a particular industrial sector. Through a strategic asset allocation approach, it is possible to combine a series of fixed-income securities and equities together in a portfolio that will exhibit less volatility than most of the individual constituents — provided every security included complements the diversity of the portfolio's content. Using this approach and resisting the temptation to “time” the market by temporarily concentrating holdings in any one area will not completely remove the risk of financial loss, but it can help you to build personal wealth without taking undue risk.

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 and/or to arrange a free educational seminar please contact me.

BUSINESS / FINANCE

Toronto Public Health provides expanded guidance to help prepare more businesses and locations for a safe reopening

June 17, 2020: Toronto Public Health has expanded the number of guidance documents available to help local businesses and community organizations to prepare for safe reopening when the city receives provincial approval for Stage 2 reopening. These documents will provide guidance on adjusting operations to reduce the spread of COVID-19.

There are 13,588 cases of COVID-19 in the city, an increase of 86 cases since yesterday. There are 284 people hospitalized, with 75 in ICU. In total 11,397 people have recovered from COVID-19, an increase of 202 cases since yesterday. To date, there have been 998 COVID-19 deaths in Toronto. Case status data can be found on the City's reporting platform.

Certain businesses and workplaces may begin to prepare to reopen by reviewing public health guidance to help them to operate safely when we reach stage 2. Some of these measures include ensuring physical distancing measures are in place, staff and customers use cloth masks where physical distancing is not possible, and keeping a log of staff and customers with check-in times and contact information to help public health notify individuals, if needed.

Toronto Public Health has prepared guidance documents for local businesses and settings including food premises, personal service settings such as hair and nail salons, places of worship and a number of other community settings for reopening including farmers' markets. There are many other guidance documents available online for business owners, operators and the public to view.

The COVID-19 monitoring dashboard will provide the public with a current summary on how the city is progressing in the response to COVID-19, as Toronto moves to recovery. It will also help Toronto Public Health to carefully monitor COVID-19 activity and adjust actions if the local situation changes.

The City's coordinated COVID-19 Enforcement Team remains focused on providing education about the physical distancing bylaw and provincial orders. Provincial Emergency



Management and Civil Protection Act orders and the City bylaw on physical distancing remain in effect. Yesterday, the City received 114 complaints involving people using outdoor amenities or not practising physical distancing in parks or squares. Bylaw officers issued four tickets in parks or squares. This month, bylaw and police officers have spoken to more than 5,000 people in City parks about the closures and public health measures.

More information on COVID-19 guidance for community and workplace settings is available here at toronto.ca/home/covid-19/covid-19-protect-yourself-others/community-settings-workplaces.

The City's website is updated daily with the latest health advice and information about City services, social supports and economic recovery measures. Check toronto.ca/home/covid-19 for answers to common questions before contacting the Toronto Public Health COVID-19 Hotline or 311.

Toronto is home to more than 2.9 million people whose diversity and experiences make this great city Canada's leading economic engine and one of the world's most diverse and livable cities. As the fourth largest city in North America, Toronto is a global leader in technology, finance, film, music, culture and innovation, and consistently places at the top of international rankings due to investments championed by its government, residents and businesses. For more information visit toronto.ca or follow us on Twitter at twitter.com/CityofToronto Opens in new window, on Instagram at [instagram.com/cityofto](https://www.instagram.com/cityofto) Opens in new window or on Facebook at [facebook.com/cityofto](https://www.facebook.com/cityofto).

comdu.it raises \$102,322.90 for COVID-19 Relief for Tamils in Sri Lanka

comdu.it 

On May 14, 2020, comdu.it successfully concluded its COVID-19 Relief Fund for Tamils in Sri Lanka, having raised a total of \$102,322.90 in less than six weeks that helped provide temporary poverty relief to 8,525 families. It was the largest humanitarian relief campaign that comdu.it has ever undertaken and has been recognized as a significant effort within the Canadian and German diaspora.

Working with a large network of local non-governmental organisations, charities, and independent activists, comdu.it focused on especially vulnerable families. Of these, 8,150 families were from the districts of Ampara, Badulla, Batticaloa, Colombo, Jaffna, Kandy, Kegalle, Kilinochchi, Kurunegala, Mannar, Matara, Monaragala, Mullaitivu, Nuwara Eliya, Puttalam, Trincomalee, and Vavuniya. These families included that of daily wage earners, plantation workers, seasonal laborers, tradespeople, IDP returnees, ex-combatants, families of the disappeared, war widows, commercial sex workers, female-headed households, LGBT, persons with disabilities, children's and special needs homes in the Eastern Province, and others.

comdu.it also assisted an additional 375 Sri Lankan Tamil refugee families living in the Mandapam Camp in the district of Ramana-thapuram in Tamil Nadu, India.

Given the generosity of donors especially amidst the current global economic uncertainty, comdu.it also took the unprecedented step – potentially for the first time by any diaspora organization - of openly publishing our fund snapshot to demonstrate its commitment to transparency and accountability: <https://tinyurl.com/yaytgxhn>

The focus will now shift to collecting reports and documents in support of the relief provided over the past few weeks so that aid impact can be evaluated.

comdu.it is a fast growing global network of diaspora volunteers committed to the sustainable development of the traditional Tamil homelands and other vulnerable communities in Sri Lanka. It is committed to helping shift diaspora engagement from charity to sustainability, from aid to economic development, and from sending remittance to building a knowledge economy instead.

Learn more at www.comdu.it



Helping Small Businesses Go Digital Critical to Economic Recovery

(Toronto - June 11, 2020) - Today, Rocco Rossi, President & CEO, Ontario Chamber of Commerce released the following statement in reaction to the joint announcement by the Government of Canada and Government of Ontario in support of small businesses accessing new opportunities by creating and enhancing their online presence and expanding their reach to new customers in and beyond Ontario.

"Ontario's economy and communities thrive when small businesses succeed. The OCC welcomes today's support for small business to get online and embrace digital tools to grow their organizations.

We understand the hardships small businesses are enduring while COVID-19 abatement measures are in place and applaud government efforts to help them pivot to recovery and growth post-pandemic.

"Today's news coincides with RBC's release of their report, Small Business, Big Pivot. The report underscores that small firms need to leverage new technologies and adapt to the virtual economy.

As consumer behavior changes, the ability of small businesses to pivot to digital will be a major determinant of Ontario's long-term economic recover."




COMMUNITY WATCH

Vanni Rehabilitation relief measures to severely disabled and disadvantaged families during the Corona Pandemic

"Tears of Vanni"

Cash payments have been made by the Vanni Rehabilitation under the title "Vanni Tears" to vulnerable, severely disabled and disadvantaged families unable to generate income from their Livelihood projects because of the corona pandemic. Emergency cash payments totaling Rs. 455,000 were paid to more than 100 families recently. Among those who received payments were persons who were severely injured and had lost their limbs during the time of the civil war. Pictures of some of the beneficiaries appear below:



CTC's COVID-19 Food Support to Northern and Eastern Provinces of Sri Lanka

The Canadian Tamil Congress had supported 3074 Tamil families with COVID-19 Food Relief between April 5th, 2020 and May 20th, 2020 in all eight districts of the Northern and Eastern Provinces of Sri Lanka.

Each of these families has received one week of dry food supplies, costing anywhere between 1000 and 1300 Sri Lankan Rupees. These poor and daily wage-earning families also include 496 Tamil refugee returnee families from India. They have also faced very serious challenges for food, during long and hard COVID-19 lock-down imposed by Sri Lanka. This support to this very vulnerable population in the brink of starvation by CTC was possible due to the generosity of Tamil Canadians and some US Tamils.

The CTC's COVID-19 emergency food relief distribution in Sri Lanka was implemented by the North and East Economic Development (NEED) Centre (<https://www.needcentre.org/>) (and the OfERR-Ceylon (<https://www.oferrceylon.com/>)).

Three-thousand or more Tamil families have also received food relief support in Sri Lanka through the sponsorship of other Canadian organizations, businesses and individuals with CTC facilitating this support. This included support for 320 Tamil families in the

Ratnapura district.

CTC has now extended its food relief support to some very poor families in Tamil Nadu, India and is collecting donations for this effort in support and solidarity with the people of Tamil Nadu.

Helping Poor & Vulnerable Tamil Families in the North and East of Sri Lanka become Self Sufficient in their Food needs.

The United Nation's World Food Program (WFP) has warned the COVID-19 pandemic could almost double the number of people suffering from acute hunger, pushing it to more than a quarter of a billion by the end of 2020. Sri Lanka with greater number of families under the poverty line will also face hunger by the end of this year.

The North and East Economic Development (NEED) Centre is taking this warning by WFP seriously and is acting on it by initiating the Home Food Garden – Food Security Project for these vulnerable Tamil families in the North and East of Sri Lanka.

The goal of this project is to promote Food Security during and post COVID-19 period for the most vulnerable Tamil families by making nutritious and adequate food available to them while also improving their home economy.



The project is designed to help women led families establish home-based food gardens, increasing their access to safe and nutritious food, and increases food security during pandemic such as COVID-19. In addition to encouraging home food gardens, the project will provide training and education on food security and sustainability. Target areas will include interior villages of the war affected regions of Sri Lanka that have high poverty rates.

CTC is supporting and encouraging NEED centre on this important project and is raising funds to sponsor 5 villages in different districts of the North and East of Sri Lanka.

CTC is asking for support to donate to establish one or more home gardens (one garden costs CAD \$15). CTC is also asking members of the community to reach out to your friends and family on this long-term vision to help these poor families self sustain themselves on their basic food requirements.

For more information, questions or clarification and to make a donation, please contact CTC: 416-240-0078 / 647-300-1973 / dantont@canadiantamilcongress.ca

visit: <https://www.canadiantamilcongress.ca/>
NEED Centre website: <https://www.need-centre.org/>

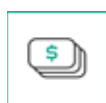


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MONSOON KITCHEN

GENIE SISTERS

SAMAYAL
SANTHAI



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

Eat more, learn more!

Sisters Niranjini Mandalia 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.



MASALA MOGO CHIPS

Masala mogo fries (or chips as we call them) are a super tasty snack made from the cassava root known as maravallikilangu in Tamil. Cassava is root vegetable that is a good source of vitamin C, thiamine, riboflavin and niacin also known as vitamin B1, B2 and B3. Vitamins B1 and B2, help break down protein, carbs and fats and maintain the body's energy supply. Vitamin B3, helps lower cholesterol, eases arthritis and boosts brain function. A lack of Vitamin B can include symptoms such as fatigue, indigestion, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, mouth sores, a swollen bright red tongue, poor circulation, and depressed mood.

Method:

Step 1: Soak the cassava for an hour before peeling, to make the process easier. Once soaked, peel the cassava and cut into thick chip-like rectangular pieces. Boil the cassava chips in salted hot water for 15-20 minutes. You can add oil into the water as well, about a teaspoon's worth. Once boiled, remove the chips and keep them aside to dry and cool down. Pat it with a paper towel to dry them efficiently. In a deep-frying pan, heat some oil and fry the cassava chips until they turn light brown in colour. Alternatively use an air fryer or bake them instead at 400F for 20 mins, turning once in between.

Step 2: In a wok, heat 2 tbsp of oil. Add the minced garlic and green chilli and once browned, add all the sauces in and stir well. Check the sauce at this point for salt and add if necessary. Add the fried cassava and black pepper and toss well. Sprinkle the chopped coriander on top and it is ready to serve. Best eaten hot!

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

Ingredients:

- ✓ 200g cassava/mogo
- ✓ 1 tsp salt
- ✓ 1 tsp soy sauce
- ✓ 1 tsp hot chilli sauce
- ✓ 1 green chilli, finely minced
- ✓ ½ tsp crushed black pepper
- ✓ 1 tsp sweet chilli sauce
- ✓ 4-5 cloves garlic, finely minced
- ✓ 1 tbsp freshly chopped coriander
- ✓ Oil, for frying



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 they embark on their 15th year historic journey
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Tribute

COMMUNITY WATCH



Reminiscing on the loss of a dear friend:

VIJAY - A COMMUNITY LEADER AND ACTIVIST



By A.R. Arasaratnam

My friend Naganather Vijayanathan ("Vijay") took permanent leave from us on May 6, 2020. He was born in Thinnavelly, Jaffna, lived in the UK, Canada and in the US. Vijay, a member of CPA, CMA and FCMA (UK), was CFO (Asia) with American Standard.

Vijay and I have known each other for the last 45 years and I have been lucky to count him as one of my best friends. We both shared a similar story, immigrating to Canada in the early 1970s and establishing ourselves as some of the very first Ceylon Tamil families in Canada. I first met Vijay, when he came to my home to seek advice about getting into the accounting field and I referred him to the same HR agency who had helped me. Our similar background and life experiences helped shape this lifelong friendship.

At that time there were only a few Ceylon Tamil families living in the Toronto area. The Vijayanathan family and our family became close friends. Family get-togethers, summer picnics, celebrating birthdays, holidays, and other important milestones happened regularly in our close-knit group of friends. I was honoured by Vijay and his dear wife Lalitha to initiate their baby Ram in the Vidyarambham (Commencement of First Learning), marking his

formal commencement to learning by writing his first letters in Tamil.

Besides friendship, one of the hallmarks of Vijay's legacy was his passion to help the Ceylon Tamils in their struggle for fundamental right to live with dignity in their own land. For some he formally organized with his friends to work for those goals and became a known leader to the Ceylon Tamil community in Canada, especially in Toronto in the 70s and the 80s.

1983 was a watershed year in the struggle of the Ceylon Tamil community in Sri Lanka and among the diaspora. July '83 communal riot and pogrom forced many Tamils, this time due to occupation, to flee Sri Lanka and seek refuge overseas. Many Tamils came to Canada and Vijay was among the community leaders who organized the refugee settlement. He tirelessly lobbied the governments and its agencies to facilitate our people for resettlement.

Vijay was also instrumental in founding two organizations with his friends; Tamil Eelam Society Of Canada ("TESOC") in 1976 with focus on the social and community activities and with wider awareness on the plight of our people in Sri Lanka. The second was The Canadian Foundation for The Tamils Refugees Rehabilitation (CAFTARR), with its focus to help displaced Tamils living in Sri Lanka during the war. Under these two umbrellas and his untiring efforts, Vijay successfully brought together

many Canadian community leaders to help our people in North-Eastern Sri Lanka.

True to Poet Bharathi's words of 'once opted for freedom would anyone consider anything else', (தமிழர் உட்கொண்டால்; நான் தான்; மறுக்கிறேன்; நான் தான்; மறுக்கிறேன்) Vijay to his end, never wavered from his original passion to promote the rights of his people in Sri Lanka for freedom. Our last meeting was during Christmas 2019 when he and his family joined our family for dinner in San Francisco. Vijay and Lalitha, (from New Jersey), their sons Ram (from San Francisco) and Krishna, his wife Rupal with baby Mila Lakshmi (visiting from Japan), celebrated Christmas with our family. It was a memorable and happy get-together for us. As Vijay was not feeling well, somehow, I felt that was the last time I would see him. Vijay was a devoted husband, father, brother, and grandfather. Getting to seeing him so happy with his family, as my last memory of him, is particularly special to me and my family.

In Vijay, I lost a very dear and close friend. Our Tamil community lost a great person and a visionary whose legacy will last for generations of Ceylon Tamil community.

May his soul rest in peace.

Mr. Arasaratnam, CPA, CA, FCA (UK), was a former president of the Hindu Temple Society of Canada, Richmond Hill, and the Canadian Foundation for Tamils Refugees Rehabilitation.



DURHAM TAMIL ASSOCIATION

DTA serves Durham Tamils during these challenging and unprecedented times

DTA is excited to provide services to its members and community during this unprecedented time.

During this period, DTA continues to provide virtual leadership classes, virtual yoga classes, Bollywood Zumba classes, thanks to the fantastic volunteers.

DTA's Tamil school continues to provide virtual Tamil classes for enrolled students. DTA had a successful and informative medical seminar and a roundtable with reps from 3 levels of Government, and it was an informative session

FEED THE NEED DURHAM



Durham Tamil Association did the food drive of non-perishable food items for a local food bank.

DTA thanks all those who donated non-perishable items for the food drive, and it was delivered to Feed the need Durham.

MOTHER'S DAY CELEBRATION



DTA celebrated virtual Mother's Day with voices singing karaoke and lots of good laughs and fun. It was a great time with all the mothers. DTA thanks the participants.

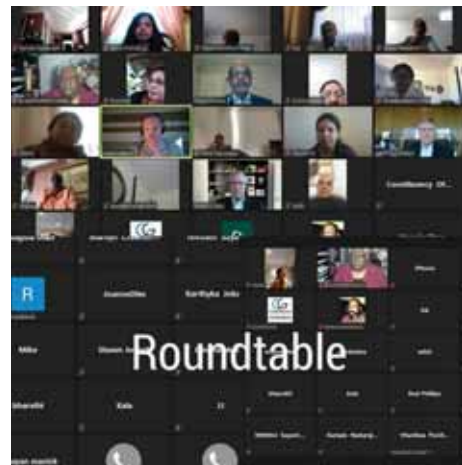
RESPECT TO HEALTH CARE WORKERS AND ELDERLY RESIDENTS OF ORCHARD VILLAGE



The Royal Canadian Legion branch 606 hosted an event for the entire Tamil community to show support and to pay respect to health care workers. It was also organized to pay respects to many of the elderly residents of Orchard Villa who were lost to the pandemic. A big shoutout to all DTA members who showed up with blaring horns and made noise to show DTA's appreciation.

DTA kids made Thank-you Notes and shared their love and support for the Front - line Health Care workers.

DTA VIRTUAL ROUNDTABLE



DTA joined the Hon. Rod Phillips, Ontario's Minister of Finance and MPP for Ajax, and Hon. Mark Holland, Chief Government Whip and MP for Ajax and His Worship Mayor Shaun Collier, Town of Ajax, for a virtual conversation with Durham Region's Tamil Community on Thursday May 21st, 2020. Honored presenters answered questions about how the federal, provincial, municipal governments are balancing the needs of the economy and society with the health and safety of the people. They also discussed the first stage of safely and gradually reopening the city, province, and country.

MULLIVAAIKAAL MASSACRE & TAMIL GENOCIDE DAY



On Mullivaaikaal Massacre & Tamil Genocide Day DTA's elected representatives participated on the occasion when Municipal, Provincial, Federal levels recognized May 18th as Tamil Genocide Day, and conveyed their condolences to the Tamil people in the homeland. MP Mark Holland talked about the continued advocacy on behalf of the disappeared, dead, and suffering Tamils for Truth, justice and reconciliation at the United Nations. DTA Thanks all participants. The quality of poems, speeches, dance, and singing came out exceptionally well.

DTA thanks all the participants who contributed to this important & heartfelt Remembrance Day program as they had only one

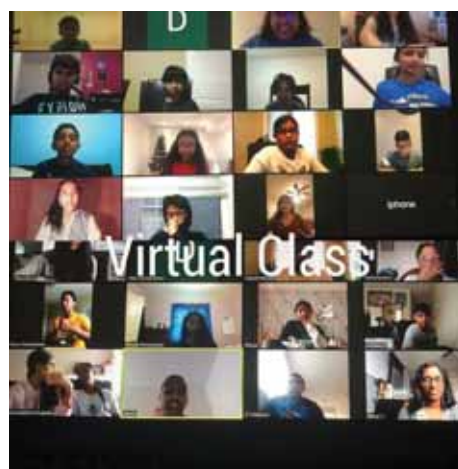
day to prepare.

TALK SERIES

"How to live in the new normal World?" a talk on measures to be adopted by children to combat Covid-19 effects by Dr. C. Shanmugapriya, Founder, NammaOoru Global schools, and "Why?

How? What?" Science experiments demonstration with explanation by Mr. Zaheer faculty member, NammaOoru Global schools. DTA was fortunate to have this helpful and informative virtual conversation with our kids. Big thanks to Dr. C. Shanmugapriya and Mr. Zaheer.

TAMIL SCHOOL



Durham Tamil Association's Virtual Tamil school has been running very successfully. As

per many requests, DTA is starting additional new Tamil class sessions. It's for ages 7 & up only. If you need more information, please visit DTA website DURHAMTAMILS.ORG

MEDICAL SEMINAR

DTA had a very successful and informative medical seminar presented by Dr. Varatnan-Muthulingam MD, FRCP - Internist, and Sunita Joseph CMHA case manager. DTA thanks them both.

Please check out the replay of DTA medical seminars at www.DurhamTamils.org/Medical-Seminars.html

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For more information on all DTA Community Support Programs and Sponsor contacts please visit www.DurhamTamils.Org

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Dear Parents,

We truly realize the importance of our children learning their mother tongue. In an effort to sustain our Tamil ethnicity, culture and language among our young Canadian born children, we are introducing TAMIL LANGUAGE CLASSES. Tamil will be taught as a Second Language, so our English-speaking children will be able to learn, understand, speak and write Tamil with ease. Don't miss out on this great opportunity.

அன்பான பெற்றோர்களே! உலகில் உள்ள ஒவ்வொருவரும் தமது மரபுவழி மொழியைக் கற்பது அவர்களது பிறப்புரிமை, அது அவர்களைத் தன்னம்பிக்கை கொண்டவர்களாக உருவாக்கும். ஆங்கிலத்தை முதன் மொழியாகவும், பேச்சு மொழியாகவும் கொண்டு வாழும் எமது கனடா வாழ்ப் பிள்ளைகளுக்குத் தமிழ் மொழியை இரண்டாவது மொழிக்குரிய கற்பித்தல் முறையைப் பின்பற்றி தமிழ் மொழி வகுப்புகள் ஆரம்பமாக உள்ளன. இணைந்து கொண்டு பலன் பெறுங்கள்.



- continue from page 31

DOES SUNLIGHT DESTROY COVID-19?

China through February 11, 2020, were recently published (Zhonghua et al, 2020). A study in Italy published that male chronic obstructive pulmonary disease cases had mean 25(OH)D densities of 16 (95% CI, 13 to 18) ng/ml and female cases had 25(OH)D concentrations of 13 (95% CI, 11 to 15) ng/ml [61]. A large body of evidence shows that higher 25(OH)D concentrations and vitamin D supplements are reduced risk of many chronic diseases, including cancers, CVD, and diabetes mellitus (Wimalawansa, 2018; Charoenngam, et al, 2019).

The human immune system needs particular micronutrients, such as vitamins A, B6, B12, C, D, and E, as well as zinc, selenium, iron, copper, and folate. The lack of those nutrients in the right proportions, physical barriers, and immune cells cannot do their work well. The daily recommended dietary allowances may not be enough to reflect what the immune system needs. Lack of micronutrients for some people and others under the physiological burdens of infection, stress, and pollution may have a loss of those nutrients stored in the body. Even a slight deficiency in one or more of the essential micronutrients can depress the immune system. A community field trial indicate that 25(OH)D concentrations above 50 ng/ml (125 nmol/l) vs. <20 ng/ml were associated with a 27% reduction in influenza. Hypothesize that raising plasma 25(OH)D concentrations through vitamin D supplementation could reduce the incidence and risk of death from disease, pneumonia, and the current COVID-19 epidemic. The supplementation of multiple micronutrients with immune-supporting roles may change immune capacity and decrease the risk of infection. Micronutrients with the most robust evidence for immune support are zinc, vitamins C and D. More reliable human clinical studies addressing dosage and combinations of micronutrients in different populations are required to substantiate the benefits of micronutrient supplementation against infection. Readers are encouraged to consult with Doctor Before Use it.

Abhishekams and Worship during Lockdown



Rain washed Sri Guruvaayoorappan Temple, New Jersey, USA on May 5, 2019

By K.Thirukumar

June 13, 2020: Had the divine pleasure of virtual dharshans or witnessing of abhishekam and/or other rituals this weekend from the five temples i have frequented in the past three decades.

Temple going aside it is probably in the past few years though i got hooked onto attending abhishekams whenever i can. A lot of times in the recent years i have not missed out a single Saturday of Abhishekam mostly for Bridgewater, NJ enshrined Lord Sri Venkateswara.

The lockdowns have resulted in 4 out of these 5 temples observing the revered Vaishnavite traditions, located in New Jersey, New York and Pennsylvania to facilitate online services. They have taken their temple social media handles directly to the deity in the main shrine of these temples; only the SV Temple in Pittsburgh not fully doing so. SV Temple at Pitt however has their FB page beaming the temple's festive deities of Lord Maha Vishnu, Goddesses Lakshmi and Bhudevi instead of the main deity Lord Sri Venkateswara on the trending social media air waves.

Abhishekams are truly a hands down daily 'bhakthi' event, as simply as taking a shower. Something of pure devotion you'd indulge your own self to usher in a new beginning and something that you would give a pet, a toddler or to someone needing your role when in a difficult situation of being physically challenged to shower on their own.

Abhishekam is same and it's for the deity kept in high esteemed devotion. The traditionally used and considered auspicious by purveyors of yore and since that is milk, honey, sesame oil, ghee, citrus and tumeric are nowa-

days infused in novel foam bath line-ups! Their pious nature when poured upon the deities, they picturize what may be the feeling of devotion, compassion, sympathy and empathy all melting from a heart full of benevolence.

In the Vaishnavite traditions, the abhishekams are known as "Thirumanjanam".

There is also an aesthetic atmosphere in administering the ceremonial shower of the almighty. An awe-inspiring respect shown to the deity is displayed as a resulting mutual benefactor to the universe, one that transcends from the deity to the chief priest performing the Abhishekam to his support clergy, those chanting slokas and hymns, artists playing traditional thavil, nadhaswaram and last but not least to the devotees and beyond.

Yet another aspect that attention spanning during the Abhishekam is the recital of Tamil hymns authored to number 4,000 by the Azhvars, the centuries earlier ardent devotees of Lord Vishnu.

In recent times i've also attended the temple of Richmond Hill, Ontario domiciled shrine of Lord Sri Venkateswara. Here the devotees render the works of the Azhavar saints in divine ragas during the weekly Saturday "Thirumanjanams" and celebrate the Azhavar's throughout the year on their birth star anniversaries.

The entire function would serve as a yoga for the eyes, ears and engaging mind.

Making in all a happy occasion to be in any given week, i too flock to this.

The arrival of Abhishekam to a handheld screen though has its critics even amongst the faithful. They argue that a delicate purity and authen-

ticity of the temples are being compromised. While only a few temples were coming to social media on a regular basis before, the lockdown is making it a necessity here to stay far beyond anyone first thought.

One notable temple that appears to have a global following of virtual worship devotees is Sri Senpaga Vinayagar Temple in Singapore. Founded in 1850, Lord Ganesha in the City State seem to be popular on Social media with "fans" all over the world. The sweetly gracing Lord Ganesha at Sri Senpaga Vinayagar promptly alerts on the said times of regular services, like that chime of time on your phone that never misses the beat.

"Don't reside in villages that don't have a temple" is a Tamil adage. The temples and rituals happen to be our ancestors set foot in and long past our time too they would provide testimony.

In moving away from our villages in our homelands to a city like say Colombo, the Hindu Temples would number small. Making to stick to the old adage now impossible. Seeing them, a few temples in piety standing in between commercial establishments even in crowded Colombo centre of Pettah would glee the hearts of devotees full of spiritual happiness. A lot of these temples were founded by merchants from South India during the colonial times.

As migration happened to shores away in the West limitations followed more rigorously.

Now the lockdowns in full circle are path-breaking to new virtual possibilities of divine justice perhaps.

They give the fingers the possibility of scrolling down to and pause at the next temple hundreds of miles away sometimes, all but piety in tact and devotion ready to pamper the soul!

THE HINDU TEMPLE SOCIETY OF CANADA

Richmond Hill Ganesha Temple



Compiled by *Kidambi Raj*

THE VARIOUS INCARNATION OF LORD VISHNU

INTRODUCTION

Lord Vishnu is the middle of the Hindu Trinity – Brahma, Vishnu and Siva. Brahma creates, Vishnu protects and Siva destroys – the three faces of Mother Nature. Also, each of the Trinity is associated with one of the three states of consciousness and the three states of relative conditions (Gunas – Sattav, Rajas and Tamas).

Lord Vishnu is depicted as a four-armed male-form: the four arms indicate His all-powerful and all-pervasive nature. The physical existence of Vishnu is represented by **the two arms in front**, while **the two arms at the back** represent His presence in the Spiritual World. The four arms represent the fulfillment manifestations in all spheres of life. They symbolize domain over four directions of space and thus the absolute power over all universe. It is also said that the four arms represent the three fundamental functions or tendencies (creative tendency- *Srishiti*, the cohesive tendency-*sthithi*, dispersion and liberation-*laya*) and the fourth being the notion of individual-existence-*ahamkara*) from which all individualized forms arise. His (Lord Vishnu's) four hands hold *Sangu* (Conch), *Chakra* (discuss), *Gada* (mace) and *Padma* (Lotus). These are described in detail in the *Gopal Uttartapani*, part of Atharvana Veda.

The name Vishnu is taken from the word *Vish*, which means **to spread in all direction** and therefore He comprises the entire Universe which ever expanding. The word Vishnu therefore means, one who pervades or **one who has entered into everything**. As a God who has the responsibility of protection and maintenance, Vishnu requires lots of wealth. His consort therefore, is Lakshmi, the Goddess of wealth and prosperity. The vehicle of Vishnu is a bird (Eagle or Hawk), half-man half-bird, named *Garuda*. The name Garuda means, **wings of speech**, a figure of great strength, power and piousness.

The sequence of appearance of Lord Vishnu on earth is in time with the evolutionary theory. In fact, the ten incarnations (Dasaavatharam) is an amazing recording of the advancement of human civilization. Despite the difference in form or time, all His incarnations had one common goal, i.e., **to end all evil and re-establish Dharma**, the path to salvation. It is for this reason that Lord Vishnu is known as the Protector and Preserver of the Universe.

The ten well known incarnations have occurred in different Yugas as given below: Matsya, Kurma, Varaaha and Narasimhaa in Satya Yuga, Vaamana, Parasuraamaa and Dasarathaa Raamaa in Treta Yuga, Balaraamaa and Krishna in Dwaapara Yuga and Kalki in Kali Yuga.

If you ask people as to how many incarnations did Lord Vishnu take, almost all would say ten, referring to *Dasaavataram*, where *dasa* means **ten** and *avatharam* means **incarnation**. It is said that in Srimad Bhagawatham Canto 1, Chapter 3, it has explained that Vishnu had innumerable incarnations, but the important ones are 24. It also seems to say that in each and everyone of the 23 incarnations, He had different forms. In addition, it says that Lord Vishnu would appear on earth one last time as 24th incarnation at the end of the present *Kaliyuga*, as *Kalki*. Here below is the complete list of all the **24 Avatharams of Lord Vishnu** and how they different from each other:

01. **Adi Purusha**: The first and primary avatharams of Lord Vishnu, also known as Sriman Naara-



ayanaa and He is depicted laying on the curls of a serpent. He is the source of all creations in the world. Lord Brahma manifested from the navel of Lord Vishnu in His state of *Yoganitra* (deep meditation). The creation as well as the expansion of the creation commenced from the organs of Lord Brahma.

02. **The Eternal Youth** (Four Kumaras): Four Kumaras were the first four conscious beings created by Lord Brahma. The four Kumaras were named, *Sanaka*, *Sanatana*, *Sanandana* and *Sanat* and they appeared like infants and their purpose was to assist Brahma in the creation of life. Sanat Kumar was the *Manasputra* (born by a wish) of Lord Brahma. Throughout his life, he maintained celibacy and engaged himself in the performance of tremendous penance.



03. **Naaradaa**: Lord Vishnu took His third incarnation as Naaradaa, with the appearance of a Sage and with a Hand Thaala Instrument and a Tambura. He had the special ability to travel between realms in moments. He was a good story teller and a musician and was often considered as the messenger of the Gods and was the first journalist. Naaradaa by becoming a *Devarishi* among all Sages, achieved liberation from all of his Karmas (actions).



04. **Nara Naaraayanaa**: Lord Vishnu took His incarnation as Nara and Naaraayanaa, the twin sages. They were born to ensure truth, justice, righteousness and other elements of Dharma on Earth. The brothers were so mighty that they were able to over power *Paasupathaastram*, a very destructive weapon of Lord Siva, purely through their meditation.



05. **Sage Kapila**: Lord Vishnu took His fifth incarnation as Sage Kapila. The objective of this incarnation was to compile all the divine knowledge that had been destroyed.



Sage Kapila was the founder of Sankhya Sastra (study of rationalism).

06. **Dattaatreya**: Lord Vishnu took His sixth incarnation as Dattaatreya, also known as Tirumurthi, a sage and master of Yoga. He is depicted as a saint with three heads each representing Brahma, Vishnu and Siva and six hands. He is a combined representation of the three deities in Hinduism. He believed that in the world, a person can learn from each and everything.

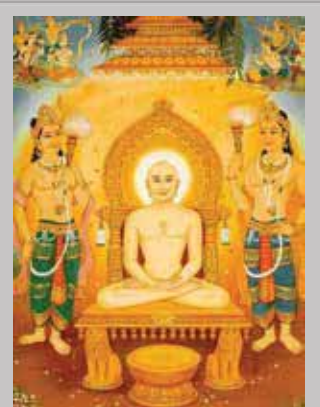


07. **Yagya**: Lord Vishnu took His seventh incarnation as Yagya also known as Yagneswara. He is



a personification Yajna, a ritual where the fire is lighted and sacrifice is made to make wishes to the deities. He had rescued a *Devagana* (celestial and supernatural being). The main thrust of his teaching was based on the values of helpfulness and protecting each other during the time of crisis.

08. **Rishabha**: Lord Vishnu took His eighth incarnation as Rishabha, a preacher and a spiritual leader. He attained the state of **Paramahansa** (an ascetic of the highest order who has controlled his anger) which is an uphill task. He was given the title **Jin** which means a **knower**. He is considered the founder of *Jainism* and his followers are known as Jains.



09. **Prithu**: Lord Vishnu took His ninth incarnation as per the wishes of the sages, as Prithu, the first sacred King. He is the one responsible for all the



greenery, and the cultivation of all the crops on the face of the earth. He dedicated his life to the service of God and taught people the ways of religion. The earth had once concealed all the vegetations within her and as a result the whole land had become barren. This incarnation is considered a very supreme incarnation, because the earth has remained dull of vegetation after that.

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10. **Dhanvantri:** Lord Vishnu took His tenth incarnation as Dhanvantri. He is the god who emerged, holding a pot of Amirtham (nectar of immortality) in his hands, after the Gods and the Demons finished churning the ocean. He is also known as the God of Ayurveda and is worshipped for gaining and maintaining sound health. He was the profounder of Medicinal Sciences.



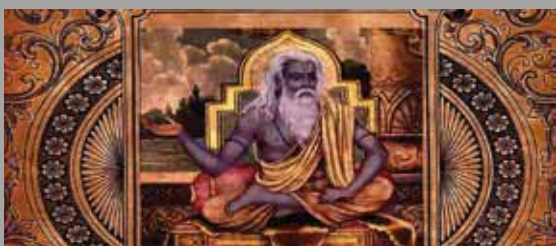
11. **Mohini:** Lord Vishnu in His eleventh incarnation, came as a most enchanting woman. By her beautiful appearance, she tricked the demons into handing over the Amritham, which they forcefully took from the Gods after the churning of the ocean. She then distributed amongst the Gods. Vishnu as Mohini was also responsible for cutting off the head of Raahu with *Sudarsana Chakra*, which today is famous as two planets Raahu and Kethu.



12. **Hayagreevaa:** Lord took His twelfth incarnation as Hayagreevaa. He is worshipped as the God of wisdom and knowledge. He has man's body with the head of a horse. He restored light and wisdom, and defeated darkness, by retrieving the Vedas that had been stolen by demons known as Madhu and Kaitaba.

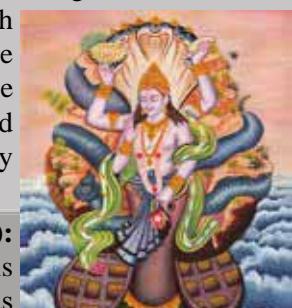


13. **Vyaasar:** Lord Vishnu took His thirteenth incarnation as sage Vyaasar, also known as Veda Vyaasar. He was an immortal Sage and was



considered responsible for the division of Vedas and made eighteen Mahaapuraanas and Mahaabhaaratham.

14. **Matsya:** Lord Vishnu took His fourteenth incarnation as Matsya, who is half fish and half human. According to Matsya Puraana, Matsya informs Manu, the leader of the humans, of the great flood and helps him save all the mortal living beings and the seeds of all plants. He gave discourses to Satyavrata along with the seven sages, while they were sitting on the boat. He also showed them his illusionary powers.



15. **Kurma (Tortoise):** Lord Vishnu took His fifteenth incarnation as

a Kurma. Kurma is half-tortoise and half-man. During the churning of the ocean, he balances Mt. Mandaraa on his shell to assist Gods and the Demons in the churning process. He is believed to have supported the weight of the cosmos on his back. He stopped the mountain Madadaaraka from going down to bottom of the ocean.

16. **Varaahaa(Boar):** Lord Vishnu took His sixteenth incarnation as a Boar. Varaahaa is half-boar and half-human. In this incarnation Lord Vishnu rescued the earth which had submerged in the ocean and brought it out. A demon by the name *Hiranyaakshaa* had abducted the *Bhudevi* (earth) and carried it to the *Rasatalaa* (the second lowest of the world). The earth is considered *as a woman* and since it is a crime to abduct a woman, Lord Vishnu in His incarnation as a Boar killed the demon and liberated the earth from his clutches.



17. **Narasimhaa:** Lord in His seventeenth incarnation came as Narasimha, half-lion and half-human. The incarnation as Narasimha protected His staunch devotee Prahallaada from his father, a demonic *King Hiranyakasipu* and establish, peace, order, righteousness and other elements of dharma on earth. He killed Hiranyakasipu by tearing his body apart by His nails. Lord Vishnu had to take this form because Lord Brahma had given a boon to Hiranyakasipu such that no human can kill him.



18. **Vaamanaa (a Dwarf):** Lord Vishnu took His eighteenth incarnation as Vaamanaa, a dwarf Brahmin. This incarnation was to check the growing powers of the demonic *King Mahaabali* who had captured all the three worlds. Indra and all other deities were wandering all around after losing heaven. To help the deities regain control of the heaven, Lord Vishnu disguised Himself as a Dwarf Brahmin and went to King Bali as he was busy performing a Yagya and demanded earth measured by His three steps. When King Bali agreed, Lord Vishnu transformed Himself from a Dwarf to a Giant. Consequently he covered the three worlds with His two steps and ultimately regained the heaven for Indra and the deities.



19. **Parasuraamaa:** Lord Vishnu took His nineteenth incarnation as Parasuramaa, a Brahmin Kshatriyaa, a sage with an axe in his hand. He was born to end the tyranny of the evil Kshatriyaas, who misused their powers and made other's lives miserable and bring them to justice. Parasuramaa annihilated the bad kshatriya kings seventeen times and consequently donated the earth recovered from them to the Brahmins.



20. **Dasaratha Raamaa:** Lord Vishnu took His twentieth incarnation as Raamaa, one of the most significant and powerful deities of the Hindu dharma and lead character of the epic Raamaayana. He killed the evil *King Raavanaa*, to end his terrorizing rule, and to free his wife Sitaa, whom Raavanaa had kidnapped and took her to Lanka. Raamaa had a bridge over the ocean constructed with the help of *Vaanaraas* (Monkeys) and after crossing to Lankaa, killed many demons like *Raavanaa* and *Kumbhakaranan*. He accomplished many astonishing feats and saved deities. He taught the value of morality.



21. **Balaramaa:** Lord Vishnu took His twenty first incarnation as Balaramaa. Balaramaa appears in Mahaabhaaratha as the elder brother of Krishna. He is known for his strength, for carrying a plow and was *Duryodhanaa* and *Bhima's* guru in teaching the weapon *Gadaa*. He killed Pralambaasuraa and many more demons.



22. **Krishna:** Lord Vishnu took His twenty second incarnation as Krishna, yet another major one. He fought exploitation right from His childhood and killed many demons like, *Kalyavan*, *Kamsaa*, *Jarasandhaa* and more. He gave Divine Knowledge to Arjuna during the battle at *Kurukshetra*.



23. **Siddhartha Gautam:** Lord Vishnu took His twenty third incarnation as Siddhartha Gautam



later known to be known as *Gautam Buddha*. Siddhartha Gautam left his family and all material possession in search of enlightenment. In the *Kaliyuga*, the demons were completely subjugated by the deities. *Sukraachaaryaa*, the teacher of the demons instigated the demons to perform Yagya so that they could regain power and authority. Fearing this, the deities prayed to Lord Vishnu for help. So, Lord Vishnu took this incarnation as Buddha and dissuaded the demons from performing *Yagya* as it involves violence and the demons stopped performing Yagyas. He founded *Buddhism* and taught people ways to end all kinds of suffering through Noble Eightfold Paths.

24. **Kalki:** This is the only incarnation of Vishnu that is yet to take place. It is said that He will end all evil by defeating the demon Kali and start a new *Satyayuga* or *Kaliyuga*. Kali is all the negative emotions and elements personified into one. Kalki is depicted as warrior riding a *White Horse* and holding a *Shining Sword*.




COMMUNITY WATCH

Pandemics That Changed History

By: Raymond Rajabalan



As human civilizations rose a number of dangerous diseases have struck them down throughout the past centuries claiming thousands of lives. However the recent spread of corona virus has caused unprecedented level of panic and fear all over the world.

With daily death tolls mounting globally all across the globe scientists are battling to flatten or at least bend the curve of the graphs that represent the ever increasing number of casualties.

Meanwhile people all over the world are bracing themselves for the tough times facing them they are also familiarising themselves with the new restrictions and health-related phrases. The medical personnel around the world together with government officials have introduced several terms such as Self-isolation, Social distancing, Lockdown, Quarantine etc. in order to provide maximum protection to the civilians, while thousands of front line workers are risking their lives in order to serve and protect the people.

While optimistically hoping for a solution to this crisis, this article provides a summary of the various deadly diseases that affected the humanity throughout the past centuries.

Epidemics and Pandemics

In the realm of infectious diseases, a pandemic is the worst case scenario. When an epidemic spreads beyond a country's borders, that's when the disease officially becomes a pandemic.

Communicable diseases existed during humankind's hunter-gatherer days, but the shift to agrarian life 10,000 years ago created communities that made epidemics more possible. Malaria, Tuberculosis, Leprosy, Influenza, Smallpox and others first appeared during this period.

The more civilized humans became, building cities and forging trade routes to connect with other cities, and waging wars with them, the more likely pandemics became.

Timeline of pandemics that, in ravaging human populations, changed history.

430 B.C.: Athens

The earliest recorded pandemic happened during the Peloponnesian War. After the disease passed through Libya, Ethiopia and Egypt, it crossed the Athenian walls as the Spartans laid siege. As much as two-thirds of the population died.

The symptoms included fever, thirst, bloody throat and tongue, red skin and lesions. The disease, suspected to have been typhoid fever, weakened the Athenians significantly and was a significant factor in their defeat by the Spartans.

165 A.D.: Antonine Plague

The Antonine plague was possibly an early appearance of smallpox that began with a group of nomadic warriors called Huns. The Huns then infected the Germans, who passed it to the Romans and then returning troops spread it throughout the Roman Empire. Symptoms included fever, sore throat,

and diarrhea and, if the patient lived long enough, pus-filled sores.

This plague continued until about 180 A.D., claiming Emperor Marcus Aurelius as one of its victims.

250 A.D.: Cyprian Plague

Named after the first known victim Saint Cyprian, the Christian bishop of Carthage, the Cyprian plague entailed diarrhea, vomiting, throat ulcers, fever and gangrenous hands and feet.

City dwellers fled to the country to escape infection but instead spread the disease further. Possibly starting in Ethiopia, it passed through Northern Africa, into Rome, then onto Egypt and northward.

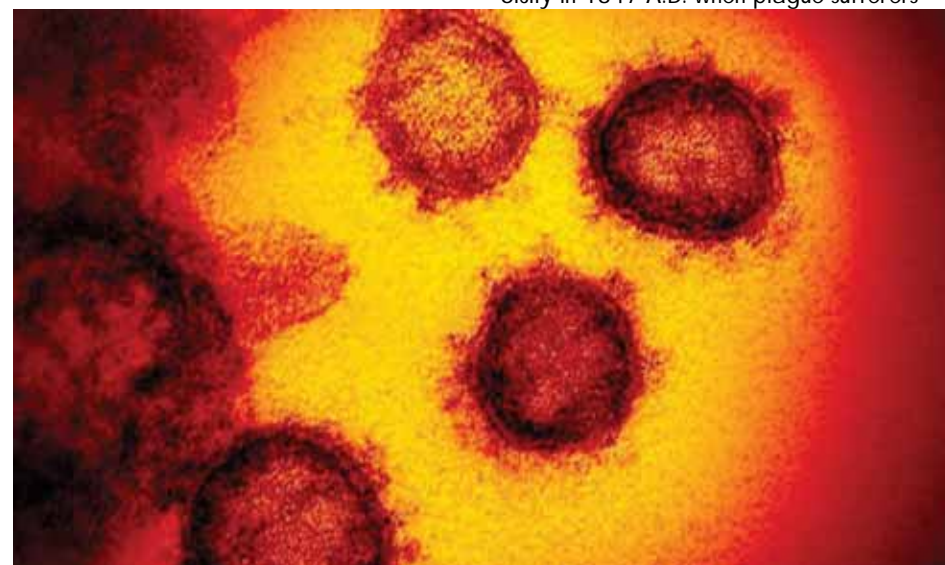
There were recurring outbreaks over the next three centuries. In 444 A.D., it hit Britain and obstructed defense efforts against the Scots and a confederation of Celtic speaking people called Picts, causing the British to seek help from the Saxons, who would soon control the island.

541 A.D.: Justinian Plague

First appearing in Egypt, the Justinian plague spread through Palestine and the Byzantine Empire, and then throughout the Mediterranean.

The plague changed the course of the empire, squelching Emperor Justinian's plans to bring the Roman Empire back together and causing massive economic struggle. It is also credited with creating an apocalyptic atmosphere that spurred the rapid spread of Christianity.

Recurrences over the next two centuries eventually killed about 50 million people,



This undated electron microscope image made available by the U.S. National Institutes of Health in February 2020 shows the Novel Coronavirus SARS-CoV-2. Also known as 2019-nCoV, the virus causes COVID-19.

26 percent of the world population. It is believed to be the first significant appearance of the bubonic plague, which features enlarged lymphatic gland and is carried by rats and spread by fleas.

11th Century: Leprosy

Though it had been around for ages, leprosy grew into a pandemic in Europe in the middle Ages, resulting in the building of numerous leprosy-focused hospitals to accommodate the vast number of victims.

A slow-developing bacterial disease that causes sores and deformities, leprosy was believed to be a punishment from God



that ran in families. This belief led to moral judgments and ostracization of victims. Now known as Hansen's disease, it still afflicts tens of thousands of people a year and can be fatal if not treated with antibiotics.

1350: The Black Death

Responsible for the death of one-third of the world population, this second large outbreak of Black death also known as the Bubonic plague possibly started in Asia and moved west in caravans. Entering through Sicily in 1347 A.D. when plague sufferers

measles and bubonic plague were passed along to the native populations by the Europeans. With no previous exposure, these diseases devastated indigenous people, with as many as 90 percent dying throughout the north and south continents.

Upon arrival on the island of Hispaniola in the Caribbean archipelago, Christopher Columbus encountered the Taino people, population 60,000. By 1548, the population stood at less than 500. This scenario repeated itself throughout the Americas.

In 1520, the Aztec Empire that originated from the nomadic tribes of northern Mexico was destroyed by a smallpox infection brought by African slaves.

Research in 2019 even concluded that the deaths of some 56 million Native Americans in the 16th and 17th centuries, largely through disease, may have altered Earth's climate as vegetation growth on previously tilled land drew more CO₂ from the atmosphere and caused a cooling event.

1665: The Great Plague of London

In another devastating appearance, the bubonic plague led to the deaths of 20 percent of London's population. As human death tolls mounted and mass graves appeared, hundreds of thousands of cats and dogs were slaughtered as the possible cause and the disease spread through ports along the Thames. The worst of the outbreak tapered off in the fall of 1666, around the same time as another destructive event—the Great Fire of London.

1817: First Cholera Pandemic

The first of seven cholera pandemics over the next 150 years, this wave of the small intestine infection originated in Russia, where one million people died. Spreading through faeces-infected water and food, the bacterium was passed along to British soldiers who brought it to India where millions more died. This disease then spread throughout the various regions of the neighbouring island of Ceylon (Sri Lanka) and caused the loss of number of lives in Northern and

arrived in the port of Messina, it spread throughout Europe rapidly.

England and France were so incapacitated by the plague that the countries called a truce to their war. The British feudal system collapsed when the plague changed economic circumstances and demographics. Ravaging populations in Greenland, Vikings lost the strength to wage battle against native populations, and their exploration of North America halted.

1492: The Columbian Exchange

Following the arrival of the Spanish in the Caribbean, diseases such as smallpox,



Western provinces in 1821. Later in 1832 claimed many lives of civilians as well as the British troops stationed in Trincomalee. The reach of the British Empire and its navy spread cholera to Spain, Africa, Indonesia, China, Japan, Italy, Germany and America, where it killed 150,000 people. Meanwhile cholera continued to spread in Ceylon and there were huge loss of lives in 1856-1867 claiming the lives of more than 10000 civilians.

A vaccine was created in 1885, but pandemics continued.

1855: The Third Plague Pandemic

Starting in China and moving to India and Hong Kong, the bubonic plague claimed 15 million victims. Initially spread by fleas during a mining boom in Yunnan, the plague is considered a factor in the Parthay rebellion and the Taiping rebellion. India faced the most substantial casualties, and the epidemic was used as an excuse for repressive policies that sparked some revolt against the British. The pandemic was considered active until 1960 when cases dropped below a couple hundred.

1875: Fiji Measles Pandemic



After Fiji ceded to the British Empire, a royal party visited Australia as a gift from Queen Victoria. Arriving during a measles outbreak, the royal party brought the disease back to their island, and it was spread further by the tribal heads and police who met with them upon their return.

Spreading quickly, the island was littered with corpses that were scavenged by wild animals, and entire villages died and were burned down, sometimes with the sick trapped inside the fires. One-third of Fiji's population, a total of 40,000 people, died.

1889: Russian Flu

The first significant flu pandemic started in Siberia and Kazakhstan, traveled to Moscow, and made its way into Finland and then Poland, where it moved into the rest of Europe. By the following year, it had crossed the ocean into North America and Africa. By

the end of 1890, 360,000 had died.

1918: Spanish Flu

The avian-borne flu that resulted in 50 million deaths worldwide, the Spanish flu is theorized to have originated in China and been spread by Chinese laborers being transported by rail across Canada on their way to Europe. In North America, the flu first appeared in Kansas in early 1918 and was visible in Europe by spring. Wire service reports of a flu outbreak in Madrid in the spring of 1918 led to the pandemic being called the "Spanish flu."

By October, hundreds of thousands of Americans died and body storage scarcity hit crisis level. But the flu threat disappeared in the summer of 1919 when most of the infected had either developed immunities or died.

1957: Asian flu

Starting in Hong Kong and spreading

throughout China and then into the United States, the Asian flu became widespread in England where, over six months, 14,000 people died. A second wave followed in early 1958, causing an estimated total of about 1.1 million deaths globally, with 116,000 deaths in the United States alone. A vaccine was developed, effectively containing the pandemic.

1981: HIV/AIDS

First identified in 1981, AIDS destroys a person's immune system, resulting in eventual death by diseases that the body would usually fight off. Those infected by the HIV virus encounter fever, headache, and enlarged lymph nodes upon infection. When symptoms subside, carriers become highly infectious through blood and genital fluid, and the disease destroys t-cells.

AIDS was first observed in American gay communities but is believed to have

developed from a chimpanzee virus from West Africa in the 1920s. The disease, which spreads through certain body fluids, moved to Haiti in the 1960s, and then New York and San Francisco in the 1970s.

Treatments have been developed to slow the progress of the disease, but 35 million people worldwide have died of AIDS since its discovery, and a cure is yet to be found.

2003: SARS

First identified in 2003 after several months of cases, Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) is believed to have possibly started with bats, spread to cats and then to humans in China, followed by 26 other countries, infecting 8,096 people, with 774 deaths.

SARS is characterized by respiratory problems, dry cough, fever and head and body aches and is spread through respiratory droplets from coughs and sneezes.

Quarantine efforts proved effective and by July, the virus was contained and hasn't reappeared since. China was criticized for trying to suppress information about the virus at the beginning of the outbreak.

SARS was seen by global health professionals as a wake-up call to improve outbreak responses, and lessons from the pandemic were used to keep diseases like H1N1, Ebola and Zika under control.

Corona Virus (COVID-19)

On March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization announced that the COVID-19 virus was officially a pandemic after barreling through 114 countries in three months and infecting over 118,000 people. And the spread wasn't anywhere near finished.

COVID-19 is caused by a novel coronavirus, the family of viruses that includes the common flu and SARS. Symptoms include respiratory problems, fever and cough, and can lead to pneumonia and death. Like SARS, it's spread through droplets from sneezes.

The very first case in China appeared November 17, 2019, in the Hubei Province, but went unrecognized. Eight more cases appeared in December with researcher's pointing to an unknown virus. The Chinese government attempted to suppress news of the virus, which delayed preventative action.

The world learned about COVID-19-19 when ophthalmologist Dr. Li Wenliang defied government orders and released safety information to other doctors. The following day, China informed WHO and charged Li with a crime. Li died from COVID-19 just over a month later.

Without a vaccine available, the virus spread beyond Chinese borders and by the end of January appeared in 10 more countries, including the United States, France, Australia and South Korea.

On February 11, the infection was officially christened COVID-19. Meanwhile this disease continued to spread throughout the world.

While the scientists all over the world are attempting to find a vaccine to control the spread of this deadly disease the people all over the globe are waiting with hope for a light to appear at the end of the tunnel.

Source: *History.com. It has recently been fully revised by the author of this article.*


COMMUNITY WATCH

Jessica Judes brightens the lives of over 500 needy families in Mullaitivu, Batticaloa Districts

By: Raymond Rajabalan



Sri Lanka, the tropical island nation is obviously quite a distance from Canada. However when it comes to feeling for the less privileged one's place of birth the distance seems to be immaterial since the superpower of human feelings overcomes the distance at any cost. That obviously seems to be the reason for a Tamil Canadian youth Jessica Judes of super singer fame to make optimum use of her talents to help the under privileged people in her parent's birth place, proving blood is thicker than water.

Jessica Judes, who has been in the forefront of several fund raising efforts for many worthy causes during the past many years has once again risen to the occasion to lend a helping hand to the deserving families in the Tamil's homeland in Sri Lanka affected by the Corona pandemic. Based on her previous experience in relief efforts, Jessica had chosen Mullaitivu and Batticaloa Districts for her current project.

Early last month Jessica profusely thanked the Diaspora Tamil community in her Facebook page for spontaneously supporting her recent COVID-19 Emergency Food Relief efforts. While expressing her deep gratitude to everyone who provided generous donations to assist the needy families in North and East in Sri Lanka, she has also released the basic details regarding the apportioning of the funds to the beneficiaries.

Reasons for choosing Mullaitivu and Batticaloa districts

Mullaitivu has had to face extreme difficulties due to Tsunami as well from the horrific effects of Civil War. Similarly various areas in Batticaloa District too had faced extreme hardships in the past due to natural disasters among other causes.

In addition to numerous difficult situations COVID-19 pandemic has caused additional hardships and posed serious challenges to the civilians of these areas. Realising the need for immediate action Jessica launched a fund raising to help these people in April and after the successful completion of her efforts she has provided details of how the funds have been put to use with the very effective assistance of Vavuniya based North and East Economic Development (NEED) Centre.

Following are excerpts from her Facebook message as well from a statement read out by a representative from NEED centre.

• According to the recent report read out by a spokesman from this Vavuniya based NEED Centre, a non-profit organization it has completed the distribution of food relief for 265 families in the Mullaitivu district in mid-May. Already 300 families in Batticaloa had been helped. This completes our efforts helping a total of 565 families. Jessica stated in her Facebook page.

Distribution of Relief Supplies in Mullaitivu

A spokesman from the NEED centre profusely thanking the timely assistance received through the fund raising efforts of Jessica and explained the difficulties facing the residents in Mullaitivu.



Excerpts from his acknowledgement speech are provided below

Mullaitivu is the poorest of all districts in the country. In addition to the disastrous effects of the Tsunami of 2004, this region had also faced the horrific effects of the final war in May 2009, with heavy loss of lives during both calamities. Most of the people here are daily wage earners and have been seriously affected by the lockdown resulting from the spread of the present pandemic.

After careful planning, 265 beneficiaries were chosen to be provided assistance. They included Women Headed families, disabled people and abandoned single persons. They were chosen from poverty ridden backward villages such as Navatkadu, Mulliyawalai, Oddisudaan, Karadypilavu, Kanagapuram, Neelakandapuram and Nedunkeany areas.

They were provided one week supply of dry rations including Rice, flour, sugar among various other basic needs.

Distribution of food relief in Batticaloa

NEED Centre distributed food relief for a total of 300 families in the Batticaloa district on May 5th and 6th. The basic details are listed below:

1. 100 Women Headed Families in the Vavunathivu area villages under Manmunai West Divisional Secretariat (DS) Division of the Batticaloa District.
2. 50 vulnerable families belonging to the Kathiravan Arts Association in Batticaloa.
3. 42 vulnerable families with visually impaired family members from the Uthayan Association of Visually Impaired
4. 66 families from Thirayamadu village including Swiss village in Manmunai North DS Division in Batticaloa
5. 42 families from Vilayavettuvan village in Manmunai West DS Division in Batticaloa

Following the distribution of relief supplies, NEED Centre also has completed the distribution of food relief for another 265 families in the Mullaitivu district?

This completes our efforts helping a total of 565 families. Jessica concluded in her thank you statement.




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NEED Centre is a not-for-profit entity which facilitates interaction between diaspora, local community and donor agencies to create business development and partnership opportunities in the North and East of Sri Lanka. Through joint ventures, NEED Centre aims to develop and implement projects in line with economic and strategic priorities, identified by the local authorities and agencies.

CONTACT INFO

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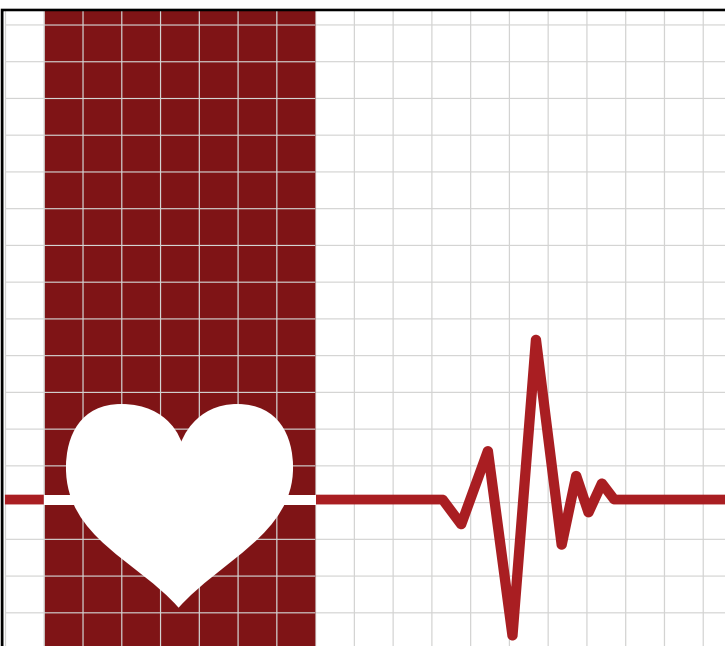
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