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SP Balasubrahmanyam: Legendary Indian singer passes away



By: Raymond Rajabalan

“I planned to be an engineer. Then music turned the course of my life. I realised not to plan and let things play out for me.” - SPB

Renowned Indian singer SP Balasubrahmanyam, a Guinness world record holder for his more than 40,000 songs over 50 years, passed away late last month at the age of 74.

Full Coverage on Page 23

★★★★★ U.S. Presidential Elections 2020 ★★★★★ **President Trump faces challenges to win a second term**



By Siva Sivapragasam

American citizens will decide on 3rd November whether Donald Trump will remain in the White House for another four years or not.

Polls forecasts suggest that Democratic challenger Joe Biden is currently leading Donald Trump in the national polls as the country approaches its next presidential election. President Trump faces several challenges to win the election this time and continues to trail behind Joe Biden in the latest national NBC News/Wall Street Journal poll.

Two U.S. polls that predicted President Donald Trump’s electoral victory in 2016—the Investor’s Business Daily/Techno Metrica poll and the University of Southern California Dornslife/Los Angeles Times poll—have both showed him losing in 2020.

There are several key issues for voters in this year’s polls, but the ones that stand out are economy, health care, COVID-19 outbreak, and Supreme Court appointments. Other issues that are dominating the election

are violent crime, foreign policy, gun policy, race, ethnic inequality, and immigration. President Trump has faced several criticisms the way he had handled the COVID-19 epidemic and downplayed it. There is heavy voting in many states in the US with just less than two weeks for the presidential election on November 3. More than 15 million have already voted, and polls observers see the current voting numbers as staggering in a pre-election situation.

There are some important states that would decide the winner and among the swing states are- Arizona, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Iowa, Maine, Michigan, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Texas, and Wisconsin. Recent polls have shown Biden with growing leads nationally and in key battleground states.

“Swing states are the most critical states in the upcoming election. They’re essentially the tipping point of who’s going to win the electoral college, then win the presidency,” explains Swing Left National Field Director Marisa Kanof.

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Ontario Implementing Additional Public Health and Testing Measures to Keep People Safe

October 2, 2020

Office of the Premier

TORONTO — In consultation with the Chief Medical Officer of Health, local medical officers of health and public health experts, the Ontario government is tightening public health measures. At the same time, in response to the second wave of COVID-19 and in preparation for the cold winter months, the government is taking action to reduce testing turnaround times while prioritizing those who are at the greatest risk.

The announcement was made by Premier Doug Ford, Christine Elliott, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health, Dr. David Williams, Chief Medical Officer of Health, Dr. Dirk Huyer, Coordinator of the Provincial Outbreak Response, and Matthew Anderson, President and CEO of Ontario Health.

Difficult, but Necessary Decisions to Prevent and Stop the Spread of COVID-19

keeping schools and businesses open. These include:

- Transitioning to appointment-based testing at Ontario assessment centres beginning Tuesday, October 6, 2020, providing certainty to patients as to when they can receive a test during the cold winter months and allowing assessment centres to conduct enhanced screening to ensure adherence to the guidelines released on September 24, 2020;

- Beginning on Sunday, October 4, 2020, assessment centres will discontinue walk-in testing services, so the province's lab network can make significant progress in processing tests and to allow assessment centres the necessary time to reset, deep clean

their results faster, including:

- Increasing testing and processing capacity to 50,000 tests per day by mid-October and 68,000 tests per day by mid-November; and
- Introducing new testing methods once they are approved by Health Canada, including point of care testing and antigen testing.

New Public Health Measures

As the number of new cases continues to rise, the province is taking decisive action to prevent and stop the spread of the virus and avoid future lockdowns. These new restrictions were adopted through the amended order O. Reg 364/20 (Rules for Areas in Stage 3 under the Reopening Ontario [A Flexible Response to COVID-19] Act, 2020). They include mandating the use of face coverings in all public indoor settings across the province, such as businesses, facilities and workplaces, with limited exemptions, including corrections and developmental services.

Targeted measures will also be implemented in Ottawa, Peel, and Toronto as a result of their higher than average rates of transmission. These include:

- Setting an indoor capacity limit to restrict occupancy at restaurants, bars and other food and drink establishments (including nightclubs) to the number of patrons who can maintain a physical distance of at least two metres from every other patron, to a maximum of 100 patrons, permitting no more than six patrons per table, requiring operators to ensure patrons lining up or congregating outside of their establishment maintain physical distancing, and mandating that the name and contact information for each patron be collected;
- Restricting group exercise classes at gyms and other fitness settings to 10 individuals, as well as restricting the total number of people allowed at these facilities to a maximum of 50; and
- Setting a limit on the number of people allowed at meeting and event facilities, including banquet halls, to six people per table and 50 people per facility.

“With Ontario’s recent alarming growth in the number of COVID-19 cases, our government is taking further action to help stop the spread of the virus and avoid future lockdowns,” said Minister Elliott. “These are difficult, but necessary decisions that are being made to keep people safe, especially our seniors and vulnerable citizens. Everyone must follow the public health guidelines if we are going to stop the spread and contain the second wave.”

This amended order will come into effect on Saturday, October 3, 2020 at 12:01 a.m.

In addition, the government is:

- Extending the pause on any further reopening of businesses, facilities, and organizations for an additional 28 days, unless already permitted to open under O. Reg 364/20;

- Pausing social circles and advising that all Ontarians allow close contact only with people living in their own household and maintain two metres physical distancing from everyone else. Individuals who live alone may consider having close contact with another household; and

- Finalizing additional guidance for seniors (70 and over) on how to minimize their risk of acquiring COVID-19, including for upcoming annual gatherings such as Thanksgiving and Remembrance Day.

The Chief Medical Officer of Health and other public health experts continue to closely monitor the evolving situation across the province to advise if and when public health measures or restrictions should be adjusted or tightened.

It remains critically important for everyone to continue following public health advice, including everyday actions to prevent the spread of COVID-19, such as practising physical distancing with those outside your household; wearing a face covering when physical distancing is a challenge or where it is mandatory to do so; washing your hands frequently and thoroughly; and following gathering limits and rules.

For additional protection, the Ontario government is encouraging everyone to download the new COVID Alert app on their smart phone from the Apple and Google Play app stores.

Via news.ontario.ca



“The modeling we released this week demonstrates the absolute necessity to take action now to reverse current trends and protect our hospital capacity,” said Premier Ford. “With the weather changing and more people moving indoors, the decision to introduce new restrictions on restaurants, gyms and other businesses was difficult. However, we will do whatever is necessary, acting on the advice of our public health experts, to turn the tide on this second wave and keep everyone safe.”

New Measures for Testing

The government is taking additional steps to respond to the second wave of COVID-19 and prevent and stop the spread of the virus, while safely

and ensure preparedness for the new appointment-based model;

- Continuing mobile testing and pop-up testing centres to reach vulnerable populations and provide targeted testing for long-term care, congregate care, and other vulnerable populations;

- Expanding the number of pharmacies where people with no symptoms within provincial testing guidance can get tested; and

- Implementing updated testing guidance for children to help parents determine when it is most appropriate for students, children and their families to seek a test for COVID-19.

Ontario is also taking longer-term actions to increase the province's test processing capacity so people can get

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INDEX OCTOBER 2020

Main News	1
Ads	2
Canada News	3 - 7
Publisher's Info	4
World News	8 - 15
Health & Care	16 - 17
Special Feature	18 - 29
Education	30
Science & Technology	31
Business & Finance	32 - 34
Food	36
Community Watch	35 - 47
Ads	48

Monsoon Journal wishes everyone
A Happy Fall 2020
Festive Season
Canadian Thanksgiving: October 12
Navarathri: October 17 - 25
Deepavali/Diwali: November 14
Kanthasashti: November 15 - 21
Thanksgiving, USA: November 26

World Teachers Day 2020: Let's Discover Ways Ontario Teachers can be Supported as They Manage Learning During the COVID-19 Pandemic

By **Harrish Thirukumaran**

“Teachers: Leading in crisis, reimagining the future.” This is the theme for 2020 regarding World Teacher's Day on October 5, 2020. Although October 5 has already passed at the time of writing, the current public health situation revolving around the COVID-19 pandemic has reimagined this day under a new perspective as teachers return to schools. This year has certainly marked the increasingly important role of teachers now more than ever in our society here in Ontario, Canada and beyond. Accordingly, the day provides the occasion to celebrate the teaching profession worldwide, take stock of achievements, and draw attention to the voices of teachers, who are at the heart of efforts to attain the global education target of leaving no one behind.

With this year's specific theme, the COVID-19 pandemic has significantly added to the challenges faced by already over-extended education systems throughout the world. It is no exaggeration to say that the world is at a crossroads and, now more than ever, we must work with teachers to protect the right to education and guide it into the unfolding landscape brought about by the pandemic.

In terms of its history, every year on October 5 since 1994, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) celebrates World Teachers' Day (WTD) to commemorate the anniversary of the signing of the 1966 International Labour Organization/ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization Recommendation (ILO/ UNESCO Recommendation) concerning the Status of Teachers. It sets forth the rights and responsibilities of teachers, and standards for their initial preparation, ongoing professional development, recruitment, employment, teaching and learning conditions. It also contains numerous recommendations for teachers' participation in educational decisions

through social dialogue and negotiation with educational authorities.

Moreover, with the the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including Goal 4 on Education, it recognizes that teachers (Target 4.c) are key to the achievement of the 2030 Education Agenda. World Teachers Day provides an annual occasion to take stock of achievements and raise awareness around challenges facing teachers and their role in the achievement of the global education targets.

COVID-19 has created a unique situation for teacher leadership, creativity and innovation to be demonstrated globally and here in Ontario. Teachers are working individually and collectively to find solutions and create new learning environments for their students to ensure that learning could be continued. In most cases without much warning and with little time to prepare, teachers have had to modify or condense the curriculum and adapt lesson plans to carry on with instruction, whether via the internet, mobile phone, television, or radio broadcast.

In many low-income countries, where there is poor or no connectivity to the internet or mobile networks, teachers have prepared take-home packages for their students. The move to online learning has required capacity for innovation and creativity never previously attempted in order to keep children engaged and learning. In a way, this applies to students right here in Ontario as well who may not have reliable Internet access to support remote or online learning based on where they live whether its in an urban or rural setting, among other sets of challenges.

Generally, for those with the stake in education today, as we take stock of the achievements teachers have made to the education system in Ontario, let's discover ways Ontario teachers can be supported as they manage learning during the COVID-19 pandemic

I judge you unfortunate because you have never lived through misfortune. You have passed through life without an opponent - no one can ever know what you are capable of, not even you.

- Seneca [circa 4 B.C. - A.D. 65] Hispano-Roman Stoic Philosopher



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Ontario Releases \$35 Million to Hire More Staff, Improve Remote Learning in Targeted Communities

Investments Build on Province's Robust \$1.3 Billion Back-to-School Plan

October 5, 2020

Office of the Premier

TORONTO — Today, the Ontario government is announcing the allocation of \$35 million to provide additional immediate school board supports in the communities of Peel, Ottawa, Toronto and York Region to enhance public health measures and protection strategies as they confront higher rates of transmission in their communities.

This funding is part of the government's robust and comprehensive \$1.3 billion plan to safely reopen classrooms across the province, including additional resources to help school boards hire more staff, keep class sizes low, and enhance cleaning in schools.

"As we find ourselves at the beginning of a second wave of COVID-19, we know there are schools in hotspot areas that need extra supports to keep students and staff safe," said Premier Doug Ford. "That's why we're immediately authorizing the release of this funding to reinforce existing investments to improve physical distancing and remote learning and hire more staff, so our kids and teachers stay



safe and healthy."

To further enhance the safety of students and staff, this funding will be used for:

- Providing increased distancing between students through the hiring of additional teachers, early childhood educators, and educational assistants; and

- Providing increased remote learning supports, including the hiring of additional teachers, early childhood educators and educational assistants, as well as devices for students who have chosen to learn remotely.

"Our priority as we enter the flu season is to ensure our schools take every preventative measure possible

to ensure students and staff remain safe," said Stephen Lecce, Minister of Education. "We are delivering this additional funding — targeting those communities with higher rates of transmission — to ensure we prevent the spread and maximize the safety of Ontario families."

Earlier this summer, Ontario unveiled one of the nation's most comprehensive plans for the safe reopening of schools in September. The plan is supported by \$1.3 billion in resources to hire more teachers and increase physical distancing, support procurement of personal protective equipment (PPE), enhanced cleaning of schools and buses, improving ventilation,

hiring of more custodians, and adding school leadership positions and administrative support for virtual schools. The province is also providing funding to public health units to support the hiring of 625 school-focused nurses, while establishing a mandatory masking policy for grades 4-12, and a surveillance strategy to monitor the virus and detect cases and outbreaks quickly in schools.

The government launched a new voluntary interactive screening tool for students, staff, and visitors to advise individuals on whether they should attend school or child care. The tool is continually updated to reflect current public health advice.

The government also released the Operational Guidance: COVID-19 Management in Schools document. This guide was developed in consultation with public health experts, including Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health, and aims to help schools identify and isolate COVID-19 cases, reduce the spread of COVID-19 in schools, and prevent and minimize outbreaks.

Via news.ontario.ca

Statement by the Prime Minister on Women's History Month

October 1, 2020

Ottawa, Ontario

The Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau, today issued the following statement for Women's History Month:

"Women have contributed enormously to making Canada the country we know today. During Women's History Month, we celebrate the significant achievements of women and girls, but also reflect on the work still to be done so that they can all reach their full potential.

"This year's theme — Because of You — honours the trailblazers, activists, and advocates who work to advance gender equality and the well-being of women and girls, in all their diversity, here in Canada and around the world. Despite hurdles and barriers to equal pay and leadership opportunities as well as experiences of violence and discrimination, women have continued to push for change and to make advances for the benefit of everyone in society.

"From journalists like Carrie Best, we learn to raise our voices against discrimination. Through artists like Kenojuak Ashevak, we witness how to express ourselves and our cultures. Thanks to politicians like Thérèse Casgrain, we see how to fight for equal rights. And by watching astronauts

like Roberta Bondar, we have the courage to reach new heights. Women like these continue to inspire others to follow in their footsteps.

"Over the past few months, women — and in particular low-income women — have been hit hardest by the global COVID-19 pandemic. Many have served bravely on the frontlines, risking their health to provide essential care and services to Canadians. Women's participation in the workforce has also fallen sharply as they have faced job losses, reduced hours of work, and at times no option other than to stay home to care for their families. Some have called it a 'she-cession.' The pandemic has highlighted and deepened the inequalities and injustices that exist for women in our society. We know that it will take hard work to fix these gaps, which threaten to get worse without decisive action. Now more than ever, we need to make sure that women are supported so that we don't lose the progress we have made in recent years.

"We are deeply committed to building a fairer, more inclusive country. That's why the Government of Canada is taking action to help women through the pandemic and to advance their economic empowerment. In May,



we announced \$15 million in funding to support women entrepreneurs through the Women Entrepreneurship Strategy, and we are committed to accelerating this strategy. We will continue to take steps to advance equality by addressing the gender wage gap, working to end gender-based violence, and making a significant, long-term, and sustained investment to create a Canada-wide early learning and child care system. The government will also create an Action Plan for Women in the Economy to help more women return to the workforce as we recover from the pandemic.

"On the international stage, Canada continues to be a leader for gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. In 2017, we launched our first Feminist International Assistance Policy with the goal

of ensuring that, by 2021-22, at least 95 per cent of Canada's international development assistance will be devoted to initiatives that improve the lives of women and girls. Last year, the Government of Canada also made a historic investment to support women and girls' health, including their sexual and reproductive health rights, around the world.

"On behalf of the Government of Canada, Sophie and I encourage all Canadians to take time this month to learn more about our history, and to honour the women who have helped shape — and who continue to shape — Canada into a fairer, more diverse, and more prosperous country through their achievements and desire to make a difference."

Via pm.gc.ca



CANADA NEWS

Ontario Increases Mental Health Funding for Postsecondary Students

October 6, 2020

Colleges and Universities

The Ontario government is investing \$19.25 million into mental health supports for postsecondary students in 2020-21, an increase of \$3.25 million over last year. This funding will help students by strengthening community partnerships and increasing the number of mental health workers and programs at colleges, universities and Indigenous Institutes.

Having mental health supports in place for when students need them most is a key part of helping students succeed, especially during this very difficult COVID period" said Ross Romano, Minister of Colleges and Universities. "This additional funding will equip our postsecondary partners with greater resources — creating the best conditions possible for students to achieve their desired goals."

In 2020-21, the ministry is investing in the following initiatives supporting student mental health:

- Good2Talk/Allo j'écoute (\$5.16M) mental health helpline service for postsecondary students, available 24/7/365;

- Centre for Innovation in Campus Mental Health (\$0.5M): knowledge exchange hub providing resources and access to expertise for the postsecondary sector;

- Mental Health Worker Grant (\$4.45M) for front-line mental health service workers on campuses, annual ongoing support to 45 colleges and

Investment will increase access to more programs, community services and mental health workers

universities to offset the costs of hiring front-line, campus-based mental health workers;

- Mental Health Services Grant (\$6M): annual support to 45 colleges and universities, for the development of programs and services as determined by the institution;

- Indigenous Institutes Mental Health Grant (\$0.5M) support to the 9 Indigenous Institutes in Ontario for the provision of mental health services, staff, and needs assessment as needed;

- Get-A-head (\$250,000) - the ministry is providing one-time funding to support the launch of a mental health online application.

The remainder of the \$19.25M will support the development of partnerships and greater access to mental health resources.

"Our government is ensuring postsecondary students have the right mental health services and supports that they need during these unprecedented times," said Christine Elliott, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health. "Targeted investments like this one, is another example of how we continue to build a comprehensive and connected mental health and addic-



tions system, so every Ontarian feels supported so they can maintain their mental wellness."

Today's announcement is part of Ontario's Roadmap to Wellness, the government's new plan to build a connected and comprehensive mental health and addiction system that ensures children, youth, and adults in Ontario receive appropriate services where and when they need them.

"As we move forward with Roadmap to Wellness, we will continue to listen and work with our partners across the mental health and addictions sector," said Michael Tibollo, Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions. "We are enhancing and strengthening the available supports, while exploring new and innovative services to ensure that every student in Ontario's colleges and universities can access the high-quality care they expect and deserve."

"Now more than ever, we must prioritize making mental health services accessible to all students. As

the need in our community remains high, we must work together - educators, community service providers and government - to reduce the barriers that students face and provide a broad range of support options," said Anne Sado, President of George Brown College. "These investments directly benefit students at George Brown College and throughout Ontario, allowing more learners to get the support they need."

"We know that post-secondary students are already going through a time of major life transitions which may cause stress and anxiety, and with the global pandemic, many may feel their lives have been upended," said Katherine Hay, President and CEO, Kids Help Phone. "That is why we thank the Government of Ontario for putting the mental health and well-being of post-secondary students first by ensuring that Good2Talk's 24/7 confidential support services are always available by phone and text."

Via news.ontario.ca

New agreements to secure additional vaccine candidates for COVID-19

September 25, 2020
Ottawa, Ontario

As Canadians continue to deal with the health and economic impacts of the global pandemic, the Government of Canada is signing new agreements to establish a guaranteed supply of potential vaccines that will help keep Canadians safe and healthy.

The Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau, today announced an agreement with AstraZeneca to procure up to 20 million doses of its COVID 19 vaccine candidate. This agreement adds to those already reached with Sanofi and GlaxoSmithKline, Johnson & Johnson, Novavax, Pfizer, and Moderna, which were made following the recommendations of the COVID-19 Vaccine Task Force. With these agreements in place, the government has now secured access for Canadians to six leading vaccine candidates.

The Prime Minister also announced Canada's participation in the COVID-19 Vaccine Global Access (COVAX) Facility, a global procure-

ment mechanism that will help deliver fair, equitable, and timely access to COVID-19 vaccines. The Government of Canada is committing approximately \$220 million to the Facility to procure up to 15 million vaccine doses for Canadians. An additional \$220 million will be channeled through the COVAX Advance Market Commitment to purchase doses for low- and middle-income countries, because we cannot beat this virus in Canada unless we end it everywhere. By joining this initiative, Canada is helping to develop and deploy safe, effective, and accessible COVID-19 vaccines.

Protecting Canadians from COVID-19 is priority number one, and the first foundation of the Government of Canada's plan for a stronger and more resilient Canada. Together, we will keep Canadians healthy and ensure they have the support they need, while we work toward beating this virus.

Via pm.gc.ca

Canada Historical Milestones

October 18, 1929

London recognizes that women have legal status as "persons," thereby paving the way for the participation of Canadian women in public life and politics.

The difficult legal battle begun in 1927 by five Alberta women activists, later known as the "Famous Five," is a decisive turning point in the struggle for women's equality in Canada.

Lord John Sankey's decision in the "Persons" case on October 18, 1929: women are persons under the law.

Since that historic judgment, the Governor General's Awards in Commemoration of the Persons Case have been handed out every year in October.

(via: bac-lac.gc.ca)



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CANADA NEWS 

Canada Home Sales rise in September creating an all-time record



Canadian home sales climbed in September from August, raising them to a new all-time monthly record for the third month in a row according to the Canadian Real Estate Association (CREA).

The largest price gains were in smaller Ontario cities and in the capital region of Ottawa along with Toronto suburbs and Ontario cottage towns also showing strong year-over-year gains. The actual average home price in Canada jumped 17.5%, hitting a record C\$604,211 in September.

A limited supply of houses for sale, along with rising demand have caused real estate prices in Toronto to skyrocket over the past few months —

and nowhere has this been observed more acutely than on the detached housing market.

Whether the upward trend in real estate sales and prices continues will depend on several factors, such as: the severity of future waves of COVID-19; how quickly the economy can recover; and when our borders will reopen to immigration.

What will have the most impact will be government action and the policies they implement to keep Canadians and the economy afloat. If the government aid is flowing —and the economy is back on track —property prices can keep rising.



New restrictions affecting Restaurant businesses



The new modified stage 2 restrictions in Toronto, Peel Region and Ottawa have hit the restaurant industry hard.

The new restrictions prohibit all indoor food and drink service in restaurants, bars and other establishments, like nightclubs and food courts. Gyms and movie theatres have also been ordered to shut down.

“Restaurants aren’t really sure where to turn right now,” said James Rilett, Vice President and Ont. spokesperson for Restaurants Canada. According to him, new indoor dining restrictions will limit nearly 80 per cent of a typical sit-down restaurant’s revenue.

Although outdoor patios are still

allowed to remain open under the new guidelines, but as the cold weather moves in many restaurants are questioning the feasibility of staying open past November. Meanwhile, Ontario government has announced they will support businesses in the impacted areas with an additional \$300 million in funding, including relief on property taxes and utility bills.

Restaurants Canada, the main trade association for the industry, warned that the end of indoor dining will cut off roughly 80 per cent of sales for full-service restaurants. The association estimated that 33,000 restaurant employees will lose their jobs in Toronto, 12,000 in Ottawa and 14,900 in Peel Region.

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WORLD NEWS

Sri Lankan President calls on WHO to facilitate 'universal access' to COVID vaccine

23 September 2020

UN Affairs

The President of Sri Lanka has highlighted the success of his country's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, underscoring the importance of a well-coordinated approach, underpinned by robust local health care system, to contain the disease.

In a pre-recorded address to the United Nations General Assembly's annual debate, President Gotabaya Rajapaksa explained that his Government's "inclusive, non-discriminatory and holistic" measures were key to saving lives and protecting people's health.

These measures include, financially supporting low-income families, pensioners, persons with disabilities, day-wage earners, farmers, and disadvantaged groups, and managing the repatriation of Sri Lankans in a coordinated manner, he said.

President Rajapaksa also voiced his country's support to the work of the UN World Health Organization (WHO), calling on the UN health agency to facilitate "universal access" to a COVID-19 vaccine, once developed.

The vaccine "should be designated

as a basic public good and be affordable and obtainable by all," he emphasized.

Alongside this, the Sri Lankan leader expressed deep concern over the economic impact of the pandemic on developing countries and urged debt relief and financial stimulus for the affected nations be duly recognized.

Commitment to 2030 Agenda

President Rajapaksa also reiterated his country's commitment to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and protecting its environment, informing the UN Assembly of his Government's initiatives to eradicate extreme poverty and improve access to education.

"A cost-free official e-learning portal for school children, with the support of telecommunication operators, has successfully contributed towards home learning during the pandemic," he cited as an example.

Fighting terrorism

Having experienced decades of separatism and terrorism, Sri Lanka condemned all terrorist acts in the strongest possible terms, be it domestic or international, underscored President Rajapaksa, calling on the international community to stand in



solidarity with his country against the scourge.

"As a nation that has witnessed the bitterness of war, Sri Lanka is committed to promoting peace across the world," he added.

End 'political witch hunts'

The Sri Lankan President also underlined the need to end "political witch hunts" through questionable motives against Member States. Doing so, he said, would ensure the sustainability and the credibility of the United Nations.

"Democratically elected govern-

ments of nations understand the pulse and needs of their people the best.

It is the responsibility of the UN to assist and support processes of such elected Governments to bring about sustainable solutions for needs of their people," he said.

"I wish to re-iterate the importance of the UN Charter which enshrines the protection of sovereignty, territorial integrity of States and non-interference in their domestic affairs," added President Rajapaksa.

Via voanews.com

India: UN expert raises alarm over mass evictions of Delhi railway track dwellers

28 September 2020

Human Rights

An independent UN human rights expert has voiced concern over an Indian Supreme Court order to evict up to 250,000 people living in shacks along railway tracks in the capital, Delhi, warning that such a move could violate the country's obligations under key international rights treaties.

Balakrishnan Rajagopal, UN Special Rapporteur on adequate housing, also said that none of those affected, appeared to have been consulted or heard by the Court beforehand, and that the judges had initially ruled that no one should be allowed to seek to overturn the eviction order.

"This amounts to a full-fledged denial of justice for the low income people living along the railway tracks", Mr. Rajagopal said in a news release on Monday.

"If this is maintained, India will squarely violate article 2.3 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights containing the core human rights principle that everyone can seek judicial relief against any decision she or he considered arbitrary."

Serious rights violation

Mr. Rajagopal also said that any eviction into homelessness would amount to a serious violation of hu-



man rights and of India's obligations under the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

The Supreme Court of India issued the eviction order at the end of August for around 48,000 households living near the tracks, giving occupants three months to leave, according to the news release.

The Court issued a second ruling to temporarily halt the eviction order, a move welcomed by the Special Rapporteur, who, however, added that the four weeks provided would be insufficient to develop any reasonable relocation plan, that would meet international legal standards, for such

a large number of households.

Mr. Rajagopal called on the Supreme Court to reconsider the case in light of India's international rights obligations, noting that the Court has a strong reputation of having previously delivered several landmark human rights decisions.

According to the the UN rights office (OHCHR), the Special Rapporteur has contacted the Indian Government to clarify the issues in question and asked for his concerns to be shared with the Supreme Court.

Ban all evictions in light of COVID-19

To avoid community spread of the

COVID-19 virus, Mr. Rajagopal urged the Government to ban all evictions during the pandemic under the country's National Disaster Management Act or its Epidemics Act.

"While the relocation of some residents living in very close proximity to a railway track may be needed to protect them from potential railway accidents, any such eviction would only be compatible with international human rights law after a relocation plan is developed in consultation with the affected households and after alternative land or housing is made available to them in proximity to their current place of residence," said Mr. Rajagopal.

Such relocation should however only be considered after the pandemic has been brought under control, as undertaking it now would expose those living in the railway safety zone to additional health risks.

The Special Rapporteurs and Independent Experts are part of what is known as the Special Procedures of the Human Rights Council. The experts work on a voluntary basis; they are not UN staff and do not receive a salary. They are independent from any government or organization and serve in their individual capacity.

Via voanews.com

WORLD NEWS



India May Have 10 Times More COVID-19 Cases Than Official Figures



September 30, 2020 08:14 AM

India now has more than 6.2 million total COVID-19 cases out of its 1.3 billion citizens — but a new study by national health authorities says the actual number could be about 10 times higher.

The Indian Council of Medical Research said Tuesday that one in 15 individuals over 10 years old contained the antibodies left behind from an earlier infection, based on blood tests taken of more than 29,000 people across the nation between mid-August and mid-September.

Dr. Balram Bhargava, the head of the ICMR, said the survey found that 15.6% of all slum residents were found to have antibodies, compared to 8.2% for all non-slum urban residents and 4.4% for rural residents.

India is second only to the United States in the number of novel coronavirus cases and deaths. The virus has surged since public transport, businesses, markets, hotels, restaurants and bars reopened in most cities after India began easing its stringent lockdown.

COVID-19 has killed more than 1 million people worldwide, including about 97,000 in India, 142,000 in Brazil and 205,000 in the United States.

In New York City, the initial epicenter of the pandemic in the United States in March and April, Mayor Bill de Blasio announced Tuesday that the city's daily positivity rate has risen above 3%, the highest number since June. Officials earlier this week had expressed concerns with eight neighborhoods in the Brooklyn and Queens boroughs, some of them home to large Orthodox Jewish communities that

have largely ignored advice such as wearing masks and social distancing.

The increase comes as the city begins reopening its public schools to in-person instruction this week.

The National Football League announced Tuesday that the Tennessee Titans franchise had closed its practice facilities in Nashville and suspended all in-person activities after three players and five non-player personnel tested positive for COVID-19.

The outbreak prompted the Minnesota Vikings, who the Titans played in Minneapolis on Sunday, to also shut down its practice facilities, although none of their players or staffers have tested positive.

The NFL says no decision has been made on whether Tennessee will host its scheduled game with the Pittsburgh Steelers on Sunday.

Also on Tuesday, U.S. entertainment giant Disney announced it will lay off 28,000 workers, the majority of them at the company's theme parks in Florida and California. The layoffs are emblematic of the devastation the pandemic has wrought on the travel and tourism industry as potential visitors avoid the risk of infection from being in large crowds.

Josh D'Amaro, the head of Disney's theme park unit, called the layoffs "heartbreaking" in a letter to employees, but said it was "the only feasible option we have in light of the prolonged impact of COVID-19 on our business, including limited capacity due to physical distancing requirements and the continued uncertainty regarding the duration of the pandemic."

Via voanews.com

India, China Agree Not to Add Troops on Disputed Himalayan Border



September 23, 2020 08:11 AM

India and China have agreed to not send more troops to a disputed border region in the Himalayas, where their respective troops engaged in deadly hand-to-hand fighting in June.

A joint statement released Tuesday says the agreement was reached after talks between senior military officials from both countries the day before. The statement said both nations have agreed to "avoid misunderstandings and misjudgments" that would lead to any further clashes in the strategic cold desert region of Ladakh, which borders Tibet.

A standoff that began in May worsened a month later when the soldiers came to blows, using bare fists and crude weapons including stones and clubs, that left 20 Indian soldiers dead and several more wounded. China also suffered casualties but has not provided details.

Both sides blamed the other for the

recent fighting. India accused China of violating bilateral agreements by amassing troops and armaments along the so-called Line of Actual Control that divides their unsettled boundary, while Beijing accused New Delhi of trespassing and firing shots that threatened the safety of the Chinese border troops.

Longstanding protocols forbid the use of firearms.

The boundary dispute between India and China has simmered since they fought a war in 1962, but both countries set the decades-old issue aside in recent decades as economic ties blossomed. The latest standoff has again put a deep strain in their ties.

India has banned scores of Chinese apps including the hugely popular video game PUBG and TikTok and restricted Chinese firms from infrastructure projects since the military standoff.

Via voanews.com

Sri Lanka Returns Hazardous Waste to Britain

September 28, 2020 04:03 AM

Sri Lanka says it is shipping 21 containers of waste back to Britain.

Officials said hazardous waste materials, including hospital waste, were found in some of the containers, in violation of international laws and European Union regulations.

Officials said the containers were supposed to be holding used mattresses, rugs and carpets for possible recycling.

An AFP reports says the containers arrived in Sri Lanka between September 2017 and March 2018.

The containers left Sri Lanka bound

for Britain Saturday, officials said.

Several Asian countries have said they are tired of being the garbage dump for wealthy nations and have refused docking privileges to ships transporting waste.

Via voanews.com



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Cinemas re-open in India after COVID-19 long break

Cinemas that were shut down due to the Covid-19 pandemic have re-opened in India after a long seven-month break.

However, very few new films have been made with the pandemic still raging in the country and the movie-makers facing the lockdown losses.

"Cinemas have got the brunt. We were the first to shut down and we will be the last to reopen," Alok Tandon, the CEO of multiplex chain Inox, told the BBC last month.

Many of India's nearly 10,000 cinema halls closed in March, just as coronavirus cases had started to appear and even before the government imposed a lockdown. Fifty per cent occupancy, staggered show timings,

social distancing, thermal screening, adequate protection gear for the staff, and compulsorily providing phone numbers for "contact tracing" are some of the changes movie-goers will see after the re-opening of the theatres.

At the food and beverages section, all food will be sterilized under UV rays in a machine for eight minutes before being handed over to the customer. Popcorn containers will be completely covered with paper lids. Despite the extra arrangements, the cinema hall officials claimed that prices of tickets and food will remain the same as pre-COVID rates.

But watching a movie in a cinema will not be the same, at least in the foreseeable future. There will be no



eager crowds or long queues at the ticket counter as social distancing is enforced. Names and phone numbers

will be collected at the entrance for contact tracing. And no hall will run full as seating is capped at 50%.

Sri Lankan born Vanushi Walters becomes an MP in New Zealand Parliament

Sri Lankan-born Human Rights lawyer in New Zealand, Vanushi Walters, has become the Upper Harbour MP in northwest Auckland at the New Zealand's general election.

Walters claimed a victory over National candidate Jake Bezzant, a former tech company chief executive and cricketer for Hamilton.

She is taking over from the retiring National MP, Paula Bennett.

During the campaign, Walters, a board member of Amnesty International, said she was passionate about the electorate because of its "diverse" and "warm" communities.

Before entering Parliament, Walters worked as a human rights lawyer and

as a senior manager at the Human Rights Commission. She is married and a mother of three sons.



Sri Lanka makes masks mandatory under new quarantine laws; to impose fine if rule violated



Colombo, Oct 16 - Sri Lanka has issued a new gazette on coronavirus quarantine regulation, making not wearing of masks and failure in maintaining of social distance a punishable offence with six months of imprisonment or Rs 10,000 fine.

Under the new norms gazetted on Thursday, wearing of masks is compulsory all time and maintaining social distance of not less than one metre

between two persons

"Among the foremost of new regulations are that every person in public must wear a face mask at all times and maintain social distancing of not less than one metre between two persons," the Gazette said.

Police said anybody violating the regulation would be subject to a 10,000 rupees fine or a six month's imprisonment.

Covid-19 vaccine maybe widely available by mid-2021



A vaccine would normally take years, if not decades, to develop.

Most experts think a vaccine is likely to become widely available by mid-2021, about 12-18 months after the new Covid-19 virus and that would be a huge scientific feat.

But scientists are optimistic that, if trials are successful, then a small number of people - such as healthcare workers - may be vaccinated before the end of this year.

Multiple research groups have designed potential vaccines, but much more work must be done. Trials need to show the vaccine is safe. It would not be useful if it caused more prob-

lems than the disease.

If a vaccine is developed, then there will be a limited supply, at least initially, so it will be important to prioritize.

Healthcare workers who meet Covid-19 patients would top the list. The disease is most deadly in older people so they would be a priority if the vaccine was effective in this age group.

The UK has also said other people considered to be at high risk - potentially included those with some conditions or from certain ethnicities - may be prioritized.

The regulations extend to cover supermarkets, retail shops and public transport.

All institutions are compelled to make a register of persons entering the premises, according to the Gazette.

The new gazette follows the ongoing spike where since October 4 some 19 areas in the Western province's Gampaha district were placed under police curfew due to the latest cluster involving a garment export factory.

The curfew was later extended to the locality around the international airport where export promotion zone employees tens of thousands of factory workers.

Till Thursday, Sri Lanka had recorded 5,244 cases out of which 3,380 had recovered with only 13 deaths since mid March.

The garment export factory as the biggest cluster had provided 1,720 cases by Thursday. - (PTI)

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2nd Annual BIG MATCH 2020

Photos by: iyah4U

Jaffna Hindu College vs Hindu College, Colombo (The Battle of Hinduities)

By: Tashvir Narine

The second annual Battle of the Hinduities took place in Canada on September 19th 2020 at the FairTree Cricket Ground in Markham, Ontario between Jaffna Hindu College (JHC) and Hindu College, Colombo (HCC). There were two matches played on the day, with the teams separated into Masters and Blasters participants. The matches were split last year with both teams taking one victory each, and past students from both colleges filled both teams once again with the intent of bring victory to their respective school associations.





MASTERS (Over 45) Game - Jaffna Hindu College won by 13 runs

In the first match (T20), Hindu College, Colombo won the toss and chose to field first and Jaffna Hindu College scored 92 runs all out in 19.3 overs. Aravinthan top scored for JHC with 19 runs with Thamilventhan and Chandramohan also assisting with 15 runs each. It was a tough day for the HCC bowlers but there was a strong bowling performance from Pradeep who allowed only 7 runs in his 4 overs while taking 3 wickets.

Hindu College, Colombo then went in to bat in the second half of the match with a target of 93 runs but they were met with a great bowling attack from JHC. Yohan top scored for HCC with 17 runs but fell to Sivaruban along with 4 of HCC's top order. In the end, JHC took the victory of the Masters' match by limiting HCC to 79 runs all out in 18.3 overs.

- Best Batsman - Aravinthan Sathananthan (JHC)
- Best Bowler - Pradeep (HCC)
- Best Fielder - Rajendrakumar (HCC)
- Man of the Match - Sivaruban Ramalingam (JHC)

BLASTERS (Under 45) Game - Jaffna Hindu College won by 1 wicket

The second match of the day was a 30-over contest with Hindu College, Colombo winning the toss and electing to bat first. Batting only 21.4 overs, HCC totalled 77 runs losing all wickets in this time. Top scorer for HCC was Sujeevan with 13 runs however HCC was met with a strong Jaffna Hindu College bowling attack lead by Sharangan who took 4 wickets in 5 overs allowing 14 runs and Jansan took 2 wickets in 4 overs allowing only 8 runs. Special mention goes to JHC wicket keeper Gana Elango who took two stumped out and assist with another two run out, performed exceptionally in the field and entertaining the crowd including the opposing team.

JHC went in to bat thinking 78 was an easy target but this was not the case as the top order batsmen struggled to keep up with the HCC bowlers. But in at number seven on the JHC batting lineup was Sharangan who rescued his school once again with a top score of 23 runs. With over 10 overs to go, JHC was able to get to the target of 78 runs but not without tension, as the final run came with the final pair of batsmen on the pitch in a nail-biting moment. The top bowling performance from HCC came from Murali who took 4 wickets in 6 overs, allowing 21 runs.

- Best Batsman - Sujeevan Ethirweerasingam (HCC)
- Best Bowler - Murali Balasundaram (HCC)
- Best Fielder - Gana J. Elango (JHC)
- Man of the Match - Sharangan Sivabaskaran (JHC)

Exceptional Contribution towards the Big Match awarded to Jansan Mariathasan (JHC) & Yazhkovan Balasundaram (HCC)

The event was enjoyed by all once again and the teams look forward to continuing this tradition in 2021. Monsoon Journal congratulates both winning teams and extends a special thanks to all players and organizers with best of luck wishes for next year.

More pictures on page 14 ...

Photos by: iyah4U



BIG MATCH 2020



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Narcissistic abuse: Breaking the cycle

Question to survivors of narcissistic abuse: Do you find that you keep attracting narcissistic and/or other abusive types into your life regularly? People who absorb all the good you have to give and then stab you on the back before leaving? There is definitely a pattern operational here but I am unable to figure out how to break it. Let me know if you have been more successful in breaking the cycle and the law of attraction blowing these trashy types our way?

Unfortunately I still keep giving people the benefit of the doubt -and keep paying for it.

In a way, my guard is up, it's not that I am easy to approach.

But frequently the only people successfully charming enough to get past that are the sociopathic kind, which I find out too late.

Stupid to be kind?

I come from an exceptionally unkind environment. I choose to be kind.

Honest question based on how people have chosen to treat me over the years for that choice - which often actively benefits them without asking anything in return: Why is it considered stupid to be kind?

Why is it considered smart to be so negative to people being good to you that they eventually shut you out?

What is the logic?

I am not sure I'm being intelligent.

These days at the first sign of contempt or ingratitude I vanish - instead of keeping on giving them the benefit of the doubt as I used to do.

I still choose to be kind - but I want that to aid only those who value it. I don't expect them to fall at my feet in gratitude but they better not be contemptuous or entitled in return.

If I spend my time and energy doing good, I want it to serve actually good people. The other kind can go hang.

It's something in between. I don't intend to teach them a lesson.

But neither do I have a good opinion of them at the point of leaving.

These are seemingly 'normal' people who think people being kind are fools for the taking. I used to make the mistake of thinking that there might be something more to it, they might have damaged backgrounds etc etc - but I'm done with that now.

I come from a damaged background too but I don't choose to hurt people.

I want no truck with those operating on that setting.

All who think this is normal to be cruel to animals

Few days ago, a very cute puppy appeared crying at our gate.

Background: People refuse to spay their female dogs. That's a 'sin'.

Dumping them crying and hungry on the roads is not apparently.

They also refuse to adopt female dogs - because she will litter.

So, hard to find her a home, even if we offer to sponsor her spaying costs - because they don't want the spaying.

She had a propensity to shimmy out of the gate and get onto the road where she exhibited absolutely no road sense - so I paid for a carpenter to come put a barrier in the opening between the gate and the ground.

During covid19, I'm already cash strapped so what does all this mean? That I'm 'crazy' as per local lore. Not the people who wilfully contribute to this problem. I'm the one who's crazy.

Unfortunately the gate barrier didn't stop her. The gate is a steel mesh full of small square holes

- she is so small, she could get out through those holes too.

The carpenter came day before yesterday, and told us to get a net to cover those holes. Before I could get around to it, she went out and got into an accident yesterday.

It's a small, slow lane, not a highway. In broad daylight, whoever had knocked her down could have easily avoided her - but did not see fit to. And so knocked an innocent puppy down and went on their way.

I spent all day at the vet's yesterday and will be going again today. She is alive but I don't know if she will recover or not.

I just want to say one thing.

I am not part of the problem.

I am not the 'crazy dog lady.'

You all who think this is normal to be cruel to animals - you are the ones who are crazy and abnormal.

I hope karma gets you.

The bumps I hit trying to teach English

You know how certain fruits like oranges and jack fruit have detachable segments? There is a word for that in Tamil - Sulai.

Do we have an equivalent in English?

These are different from cut pieces.

There is a separate word for it in my language but not sure of English.

When I searched, google threw up a word called 'carpel' but I don't see it in regular use.

Books for learners of English

Any of you have English Children's books - or even better, graded readers for adult learners of English - that you wish to donate?

Please let me know.

If enough people are willing, I'll organize collection points in Colombo and Jaffna.

Now that I am a teacher of English, I keep trying to introduce my students to the benefits of reading. Its crucial to developing language fluency fast. Would appreciate anyone who can donate your books <3

An island off Kayts

The perks of being a teacher.

One of my students from a fishing village invited the class to a group picnic in a remote island housing their church.

Interesting designs on the church gates <3

Loving the authentic fishing village experience <3



Grads

The latest batch of my students to graduate.



What I love most about teaching is the visible fast track changes I can see in my students' ability to use English to express themselves.

Am such a proud teacher <3

Russian doll



A teacher at whose feet students bow holds inside a journalist whom fans fete holds inside an accountant with a damp squib holds inside a student who is a failure holds inside a student who is a roaring success holds inside a child bewildered by an abusive world holds inside a toddler desperate to grow up, So curious about the world, so eager to know more.

They all co-exist inside each other, not always harmoniously but alive and kicking for all that End up kicking each other too.

From inside, the bewildered hurt child watches as adults bow at her feet, in gratitude for being their teacher.

How could that be, she is such a failure The adults around her said so

You are a failure
We don't like you
You will never amount to anything
You are a waste of space
We're ashamed of you
Why can't you be like that successful person
or this married person

Coexisting with other people is hard enough Ever tried living with a hurt, bewildered child as an adult who has no idea how to reach out and heal?

Just plaster the wounds and say 'tut, tut' Ignore until it oozes pus and blood then rinse and repeat That's what other adults did after all

One day hopefully this adult will be big enough to accommodate all the other beings inside her hurt bewildered child most of all Hopefully.

A live Russian doll.

Legendary Singer S P Bala- subrahmanyam Dies At 74

I'm still in shock.
R.I.P SPB.

The criminals who said older people are expendable are responsible for this.

Please, please take covid regulations seriously.

This loss is irreparable



WHAT'S IT LIKE TO BE AN SHN STUDENT VOLUNTEER?

> *SHN Birchmount hospital volunteer shares how the job has inspired big changes at school and home.*



Student Volunteer

Last month, we began welcoming a small number of volunteers back into Scarborough Health Network (SHN), beginning with our Birchmount hospital. Among the first reintroduced were student volunteers, who have resumed their vital roles as wayfinders and information booth support.

We had a chance to speak with Alice, a student volunteer, about her experience at SHN and how it's impacted her life as a high school student in Scarborough.

Let's start off big picture. Why do you volunteer with SHN?

I want to become a nurse, so it's important to me to become familiar with the work environment. I think it's a combination of growing my knowledge and experience, making new friends and building connections. And personally, I want to give back to the community I live in.

It seems as though it's given you so many benefits. Was it difficult not being able to come in during the start of the pandemic?

It was a hard time for everyone! I felt for the frontline workers especially, because everyone needed the extra help. While it was difficult, I'm glad that they kept us volunteers at home to keep everyone safe.

That's a great perspective. Now that volunteers are returning, how does it feel to be back in the hospital?

It feels great! It's nice to know we're back

and can relieve some of the pressure felt by the frontline. I've also been able to reconnect with the staff and the other volunteers. I've missed them! Birchmount hospital feels like a second home, so I'm glad to be back.

Missing that connection must have been difficult. So now that you've returned, what's different about your role now? Other than wearing a mask, right?

Right! The masks of course, but overall, there isn't too much of a difference. I did have to switch to another department. I was in day surgery before COVID-19 took over, and now I'm at the information desk and gift shop. I also needed some additional training.

Training is important for new roles, especially with new safety measures!

I know! Personal protective equipment (PPE) is only one side of it. Keeping everything clean is super important. When I'm at the information desk, we have to sanitize the whole area; speakers, computers, phones. When I'm in the gift shop, we advise no more than three customers in the store and we sanitize the counter before and after transactions. We also encourage customers to sanitize before coming in. There are just added layers to the role and responsibilities.

It sounds like you've learned a lot from your volunteering experience!

Oh definitely! I'd say my top three lessons have been related to time management,

responsibility and self-confidence. Before volunteering, I was a shy person. The staff and volunteers really helped bring me out of my shell and build up my self-confidence. It's helped me in my day-to-day school life and helped with making friends. It's also really helped me normalize scheduling. I manage my time better and complete tasks because staff put their trust in me that I'll do what needs to be done.

That's awesome! It sounds like volunteering has had a personal impact on you.

It really has. I mean, I've walked into my shift and I could see the smiles of the nurses when they see me coming in. You can see the relief in their eyes when I'm there to handle the jobs they're too busy to do. It's a really great feeling.

So Alice, I have to ask. Would you encourage others to volunteer with SHN?

Absolutely! The atmosphere and community is amazing. It's easy to make friends and the staff are easy to talk to. Specifically, if you want to have a future working in health care, I think the experience is great. Plus, you can get your volunteer hours for high school and you're helping frontline workers. It's a great cause and you get to give back to our wonderful community.

Through their generous gift of time, skills, and talents, SHN volunteers help with patient care and clinical services, administrative work and raising crucial funds to support the hospital.



HIGH SCHOOL HARDSHIPS AND COVID-19:

HOW TO HELP ANXIOUS TEENS THROUGH ONLINE LEARNING



COVID-19 - how to help anxious teens through online learnin

*Written by: Amanda Dematos,
SHN Social Worker, Mental Health*

With local school boards settling on a hybrid model of learning for high school students, with the option of full-time online learning for those who choose, it's important that we understand how these choices will impact our teens so that we can support their well-being and success.

Strong academic performance is considered the gold standard for our school systems. High achievements, challenging and innovative curriculums, and a push to future success are most often used to measure school performance.

But what about the non-academic purpose of school? The incidental learning and contributions the school community makes to the development of well-rounded, socially adept, and resilient young people is given much less priority, yet research has repeatedly shown that these two factors – academics and development – are intertwined, and one rarely succeeds without the other.

High school students are still growing and they have significant developmental milestones to meet, including a focus on managing social relationships and a growing interest in romantic and intimate relationships. Introspection, self-awareness, and understanding of their role in a larger society are also expanding during the high school years, as teens advance their more moral and ethical thinking, problem-solving, independent thinking, and future planning skills.

These milestones are not taught through textbooks and lesson plans. They are mostly achieved through the unscripted, unplanned interactions that occur every day in the school community: from meeting new people, the beginnings and endings of relationships, and mentorship and guidance from teachers, to discovering a new talent or passion, excelling in a sport they have never tried before, and being exposed to different cultures, opinions, struggles. For some, school is even a refuge, an escape from difficult home situations, and a place to receive support and encouragement from adults outside their household.

Of course, some teens will flourish academically as the pressures of attending school in-person are alleviated. However, if there is not enough focus on their non-academic development, their emotional wellbeing could suffer and we may well see a spike in anxiety, depression, and other mental illness. In turn, academics may also suffer.

While it may be tempting for teens with social anxiety to avoid in-person interactions, anxiety is never treated through avoidance because the opportunity to challenge and triumph over anxiety-provoking situations is lost. The danger of this is that the anxiety may become more entrenched and lead to more severe mental health problems later. High school is a training ground of sorts, a place to practice, make mistakes, and learn from others. The loss of these opportunities may lead to a feeling of despondency or lack of faith in the future, which, in turn, can develop into depression.

Many high-schoolers are less worried about catching or spreading COVID-19 (at their age they are familiar with health and safety guidelines), and more worried about: missing their friends; access to their favourite teacher, coach or other adult; and about lost opportunities for sport, recruitments for athletic scholarships, and team camaraderie. They are worried about not having the opportunities to play in a band, act in the school play, and be involved in set design or other artistic pursuits. In other words, they are worried about missing out on all the things that make high school a magical time in their lives.

The good news is that youth are resilient and flexible, and with the right supports, we are better able to stop natural worries from becoming anxiety disorders, or natural feelings of loss from becoming depression. Here are some of the ways we can help:

LISTEN

It is very important that we listen without judgement and without downplaying their con-

cerns. These struggles are real and will likely have a lasting impact if not addressed. Like all of us, teens need the opportunity to talk about their fears; not because they are easy to fix, but because they need validation and empathy.

SUPPORT

Support your teen's teachers. They are doing the best they can under difficult and ever-changing conditions. No program will be perfect, but working collaboratively and cooperatively with teachers will help teens feel that the system is reliable and secure.

Support your local public health initiatives, wear a mask when you need to, limit large gatherings and social distance when you can. Encourage your teen to do the same.

ENCOURAGE

Encourage your teen to stay in touch with their friends remotely, join online communities, and find socially responsible ways to maintain and develop their relationships.

Encourage them to stay in touch with their passions. Find opportunities for online music or art classes, allow time for physical fitness, and research online leadership or community involvement initiatives.

Encourage contact with teachers, coaches, or other staff with whom they have meaningful relationships.

OBSERVE

Watch for changes to your teen's daily routine, coping, and mood.

In particular, look for changes to diet, sleeping patterns, hygiene, interest in friendships, or previously enjoyed activities and increasing social isolation. Intervening early can help mitigate the onset of more severe mental illness.

CONNECT

Help your teen connect with the mental health, social, and academic resources that will be offered through their school.

Be aware of your local community counselling services.

Connect with your family doctor for a referral to a more intensive program, such as the Shoniker Clinic, if community and school-based programs do not help.

Be aware of crisis intervention services such as mobile crisis and your local emergency room for mental health emergencies.

School communities provide opportunities for growth, chances to succeed and fail, opportunities for growth and resiliency. Teachers act as mentors, coaches, confidantes, and cheerleaders.

While these opportunities will be limited this year, with the right supports and understanding our teens will make this year the year they need it to be. Although it will be different, it can also be great!



SPECIAL FEATURE

Quotable Quotes - 2020

“They said it”



“

“My dad’s wisdom, generosity, empathy, and humility had a huge influence on people around the world,”

– Microsoft Co-Founder Bill Gates wrote in a tribute when his father (Bill Gates Snr.) died recently

”

“

“These are extraordinary times and we know there are some people who need extraordinary help. The City of Toronto is doing everything it can to help people. I urge all landlords across the city to do what they can to help tenants who suddenly find themselves in very different circumstances due to this pandemic.”

– Toronto Mayor John Tory

”



“

“Accelerated epidemic growth, esp. in high incidence areas of Quebec and Ontario, is driving the ongoing t in daily cases. These provinces cases account for almost 80% of the national case count”

– Dr. Theresa Tam, Chief Public Health Officer, Canada on the COVID 19 second wave

”

“

“There is not a liberal America and a conservative America - there is the United States of America. There is not a black America and a white America and Latino America and Asian America - there’s the United States of America.”

– Former U.S President Barack Obama

”



“

“And what China has done to this country and the world, it has to pay a huge price for it. It is not your fault that this happened, this is the fault of China.”

– U.S. President Donald Trump on the spread of COVID – 19

”

APPOINTMENTS**SPECIAL FEATURE**

Standard Chartered Bank appoints Ajanthan Sivathas as Country Technology Manager in Sri Lanka

Standard Chartered Bank has announced the appointment of Ajanthan Sivathas as the Country Technology Manager, Sri Lanka, to lead the Digital and Data Strategy of the Sri Lankan office as part of the country management team.

Ajanthan joins Standard Chartered from Unilever Sri Lanka, where he was the Head of Information Technology for Sri Lanka. He worked across many digital transformation projects involving technologies related to Cloud Computing, Microsoft Office 365 tools, RPAs and Data Analytics in a career spanning over a decade.

Ajanthan Sivathas holds a degree in Electronic and Telecommunications Engineering from the University of Moratuwa and is an Attorney-at-Law. He is also certified in Project Management, Agile Delivery and SAP SD.

Niro Cooke appointed to the Commonwealth Enterprise and Investment Council (CWEIC)

The Commonwealth Enterprise and Investment Council (CWEIC) announced the appointment of Niro Cooke to its Board. Cooke, a respected Sri Lankan professional, is at present the youngest Board member appointed to the statutory board of the CWEIC.

CWEIC is the Commonwealth's business network. Founded in 2014, it has over 90 business and government Strategic Partners from 27 countries and territories.

Niro Cooke is an entrepreneur at heart and a Group Director on the Main Board of The Capital Maharaja Organization, Sri Lanka's largest privately-owned conglomerate. He is actively involved in facilitating inward investment and developing large scale government infrastructure and energy projects in Sri Lanka and the Maldives.



Linus Jeganathan appointed Managing Director of Technomedics

Technomedics, Sri Lanka's leading medical equipment and turnkey solutions provider which partners with many Fortune 500 companies has announced the appointment of Linus Jeganathan as its new Managing Director to spearhead its long - term growth objectives.

Jeganathan, a senior management professional counting over 20 years of experience in multiple sectors including, sales, FMCG, healthcare and logistics, took over Technomedics corporate operations from 01st October 2020. He will oversee operations for several companies under the Technomedics cluster employing over 300 staff.

During his career, he has served in many key management positions in Ernst and Young, Aitken Spence, Hemas Manufacturing (Pvt) Ltd and Hemas Hospitals (Pvt) Ltd. In January 2017, he joined Technomedics corporate as its Executive Director.

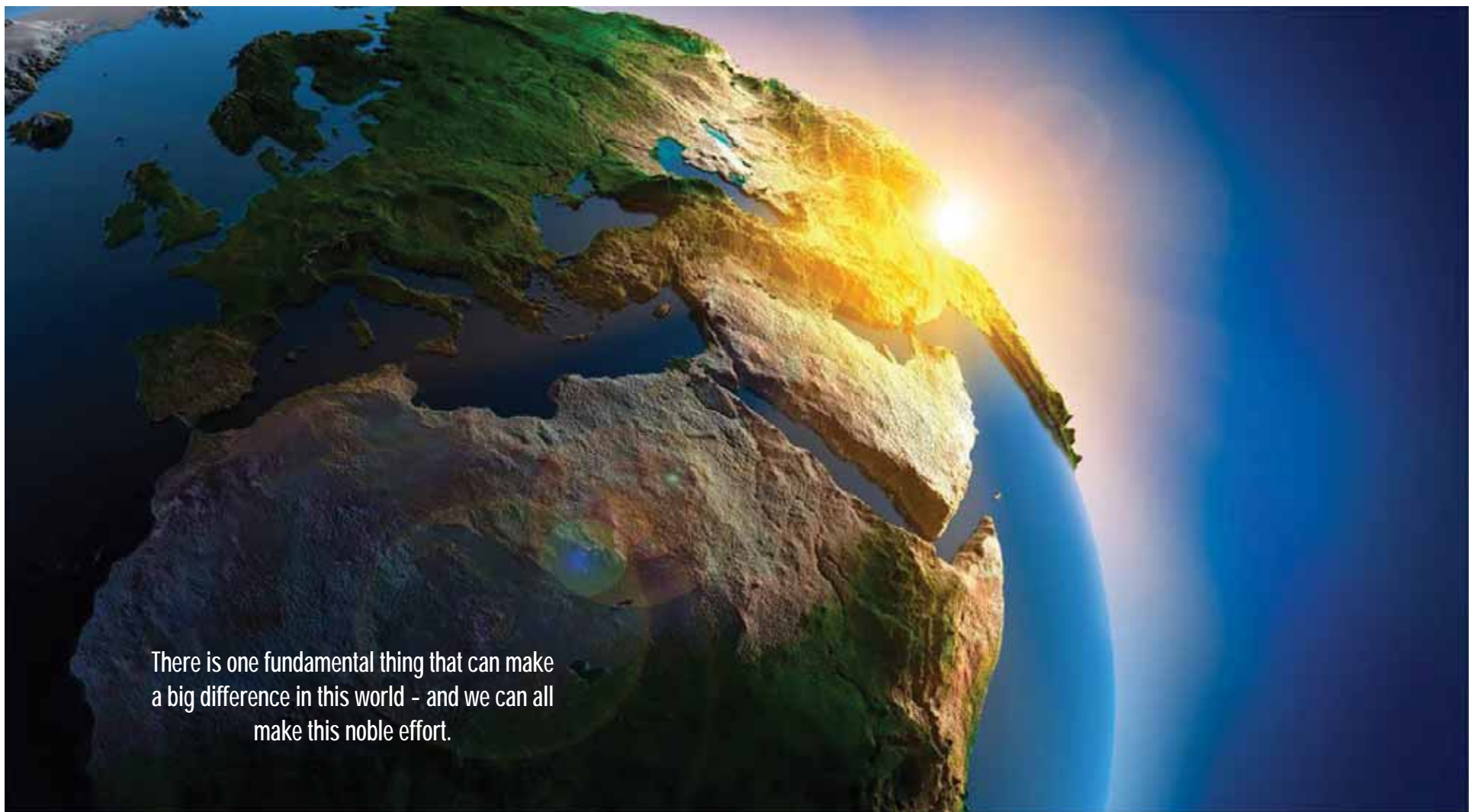


SPECIAL FEATURE

Finding Yourself

What This World Needs

“What is the law of nature? If you take two candles and bring them together, the lit candle will light the unlit candle, not the other way around.”



There is one fundamental thing that can make a big difference in this world - and we can all make this noble effort.

Earth is 4.5 billion years old. We have been on this earth as modern human beings - only as “modern human beings” for around six thousand years. What have we done? What have we done? What have we done?

On one hand, we stand at the brink of extinction. As human species created - this problem created by ourselves, not by somebody else, not by Martians, not by people from moon, but by us.

And on the other hand, we are here today to talk about Kind Malaysia. We're not here to discuss war. We're not here to discuss the extinction of mankind. We are actually here to talk about the very fundamental thing that can make a huge difference in this world. What this world needs is kindness, compassion,

understanding.

And that... as Datuk said, the word that hit him is ‘noble.’ And that indeed is noble. Because those people who understand the necessity of compassion carry a bigger burden on themselves than those who don't.

And this is what I mean. There is a law, a very fundamental law of nature. And you really have to understand this law because this is the law behind that one word called ‘kindness,’ of what it means.

There are so many NGOs here, so many people with good wish and will to help humanity. And I know that sometimes it's very disappointing. You make your effort - you make your effort day after day after day after day—and nothing happens. Or seemingly nothing happens.

Another war takes place, more innocent people get killed - stupidity. And you wonder, is it going to make a difference?

I started speaking about peace when I was 4 years old. I started taking this responsibility of spreading the peace, first in my native India when I was 9. I was around 13 years old when I went to the west, to England, America and brought this message to outside of India. So, here I am, and I'm sure there's a lot of people, “Oh, Ambassador of peace, Ambassador of...” What does “Ambassador of Peace” mean anyway? You're all Ambassadors of Peace, don't you know it? I'm not the only one. You're Ambassadors of Peace. And it is your responsibility too, to make sure that the peace spreads in this world. Because what other option do we have,

by the way? What other option is there?

So, what is this law that I am talking about? This is what gives me heart. My effort that has been going on for such a long time. This is what gives me heart. And what is this law? Here's the law. If you take two candles - a lit candle and an unlit candle, and bring them together. Guess what happens? The lit candle will light the unlit candle—not the other way around. That's the law of nature. A lit candle will light the unlit candle—not that the unlit candle will put out the lit candle. No. Not even 50-50. Every single time, the lit candle will light the unlit candle.

- Prem Rawat

www.timelesstoday .com



TAMIL HERITAGE

BY THURAIYURAN

What is Heritage ?

The history, tradition, practices etc of countries, Society or company that exists from the past and continue to be important, is defined as heritage.

Tamil heritage

Tamils have a very ancient and rich heritage to be proud of and to celebrate in the present context. Due to various reasons Tamils are now living in nook and corners of the world. The mass exodus of Sri Lankan Tamils started after the 1983 program. Before that wealthy people sent their children for higher studies mostly to the UK. Some bright students got scholarships to study in the UK, USA and Canada and most of them returned to Sri Lanka on completion of their studies. Some lecturers in the universities were also offered scholarships to further their studies in their own fields .

After the commencement of the Civil War in Sri Lanka, many migrated to South India, Malaysia, European countries, UK, Canada and the USA.

Most of these Tamils living in foreign lands have been maintaining their culture and traditions along with their language Tamil . Now their children are all grown up and have started to live with many other immigrant communities and with the mainstream population. Hence the younger generation of Tamils are facing an uphill task of maintaining their heritage. Some have already lost their heritage due to the folly of their parents and have started to follow the footsteps of the mainstream community. Hence it is the fundamental duty of the Immigrant Tamils to educate and inculcate our rich and ancient traditions and culture to the first generation Tamils living in foreign lands.

Back home we were living with our heritage and hence the necessity to stress its importance to our children was not warranted. But the situation our children are facing in foreign lands is entirely different. They must be well informed of our rich and ancient heritage of our ancestors , who gave us these ,over a period of nearly 50,000 years as given below:

Tamil language - It is the duty of every Tamil parent to stress the importance of Tamil as our first language (mother tongue). The entire culture and traditions are entwined with our language. Language and culture are two sides of a coin . Here I am giving a few important facts about our ancient and rich language, Tamil.

1. Tamil is the oldest living language in the world. It is thought to have been born around 5000 BC. Our literature collection is very vast.

2. Tamil was declared a classical language by UNESCO in 2004. based on criteria requirements such as antiquity , rich and varied ancient text and original literacy tradition.

3. The word Tamil has several meanings. Apart from being the name of the language Tamil also means things like beauty , sweet and natural.

4. Tamil is the only language that is also personified as God. Located at Karaikudi, Tamil Nadu. is a temple for Tamil Thai (mother) which is a God that is considered deified personification of the Tamil language as a mother..

5. Tamil is actually pronounced as T a m i z h and not t a m i l . It has a special letter zha (ழ) maybe not found in any other language.

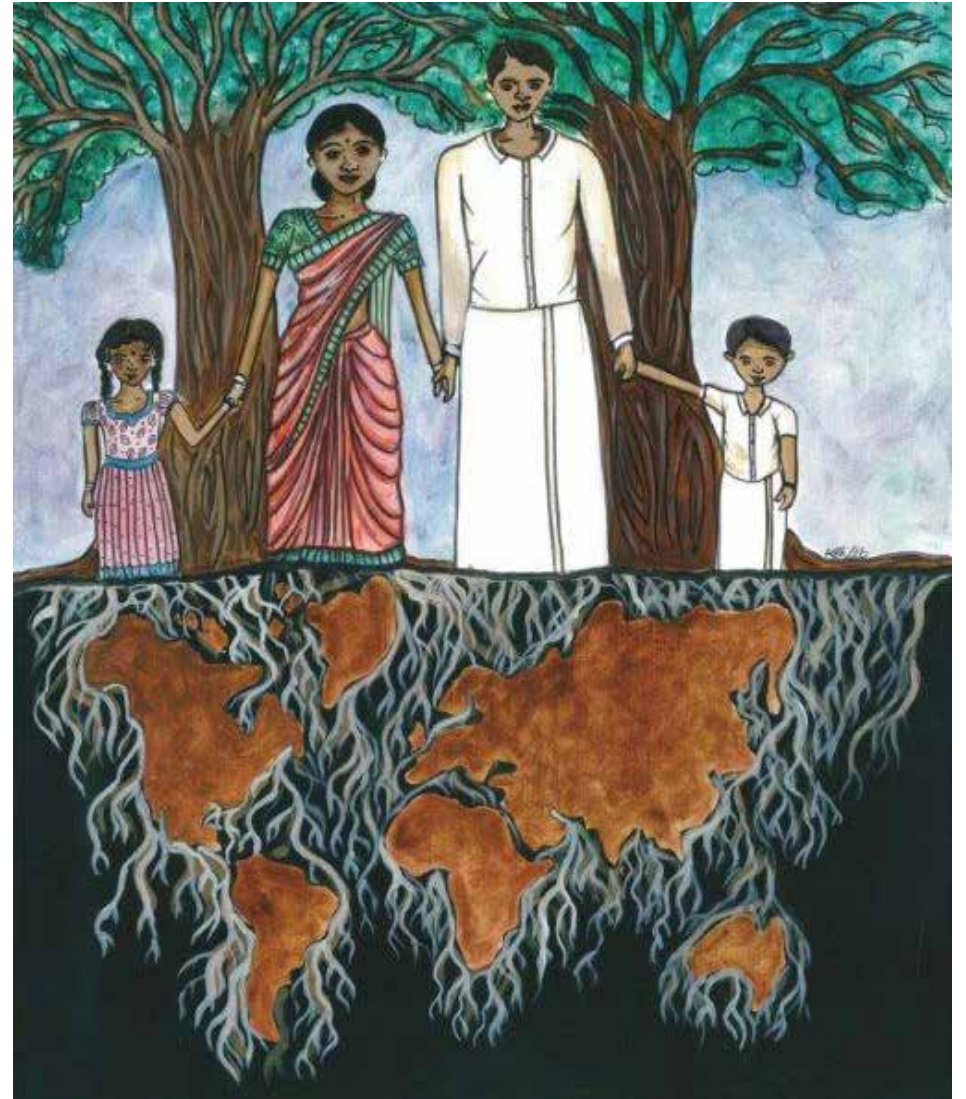
6. Tamil is an official language of Singapore, Sri Lanka, Tamil Nadu and Pondicherry. There are about 75 million Tamil speakers all over the world. (Ref: Encyclopedia Britannica)

The children born in foreign countries are not fully informed of the rich and antiquity of our language and think that it serves no purpose in learning it and hence not interested in learning it. In Canada under the Heritage Language Program, Tamil is taught in schools as an after school program along with so many other languages. The teachers are paid by the provincial government. But it is a pity that many of our children are not making use of the opportunity given to them to learn Tamil. Some of them are learning French, Spanish and Chinese with a view to make money and get better employment opportunities. Partly the parents are to be blamed. You are identified as a community because of your language or your country of birth. Hence you must be proud to say that you are the owner of Tamil, a rich and ancient language.

Every Tamil should be aware of the Tamil sangams held in South India (Tamil Nadu) since 10527 BC. Short details are as follows;

First Tamil sangam- 10527 BC. Founded by Pandian King Kaicina Valuthi at South Madhurai. 4449 poets participated- lasted for 4440 years. Literary works created are Muthunarai, muthukuru and Kalarivavilai - Everything went under the sea during a deluge.

BC 6000 to 3000- **Second Tamil sangam** founded by King Vennter Cheliyan at Kapadapuram- 3700 poets participated. Lasted for 3700 years. Grammatical treatises such as Agaththiyam and Tholkappiyam were made. Only Tholkapi-



Poster - essexpublicschool.com

yam survived another deluge. BC 1915- **Third Tamil sangam** held at Thirupparamkunram - Founded by Mudathirumaran. 449 poets participated- lasted for 1850 years. Many literary books were lost but we are lucky to get the following works:

Eddithokai (8 works), Paththupaddu (10 anthology of poems), 18 literary works, Silappathikaram and Manimekalai and some small epics.

During and after 1st AD, we have many Tamil literary works created by various writers, poets and religious dignitaries like Nayanmars, Alvares and Siththars (Mystics) up to the present day. These are available on websites, so that anyone interested could read them.

Over and above this we have many granite temples with Architectural excellence which baffles the modern architects. King's palaces and beautiful Monuments built by ancient kings are bearing testimony to the artistic skills and techniques used by our forefathers .An excellent example is the temple built by king Raja Raja Cholan who lived 1000 years back in Tamil Nadu, India. The building techniques followed by the architects and builders then are unknown to the present Society. Likewise, we have thousands of temples in India, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Thailand, Cambodia and many Asian countries which are considered as magnificent works of artistic excellence.

Other than this we have a rich Heritage of Fine Arts called Bharatha Natyam and Carnatic music which are standing monuments of our ancestors, which make us proud. Some of our younger generation are learning this art form with much interest, which is an encouraging sign .

January of every year has been declared as Tamil Heritage Month by the government of Canada since 2016. We Tamils have to be thankful to the Canadian government for this magnanimous gesture. During the month of January many festivals and events celebrating Tamil culture and language are held in most of the important cities, where Tamils are living abundantly. In these events the younger generation are eagerly participating, which is an encouraging sign . Similarly, it would be better if other countries where Tamils are living in large numbers to follow suit and declare Tamil Heritage Month. I would like to encourage Sri Lanka and Tamil Nadu to follow the footsteps of Canada. This monumental action will help the future generation to maintain their culture and language ,wherever they are living. If you forget your own language, you will lose your identity and in course of time you will lose your roots as well. Hence it is the prime duty of every Tamil to safeguard their language and their country of birth. Let us all live as proud Tamils.

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SPECIAL FEATURE



SP BALASUBRAHMANYAM:

Legendary Indian singer passes away

Raymond Rajabalan

'I planned to be an engineer. Then music turned the course of my life. I realised not to plan and let things play out for me,' - SPB



Renowned Indian singer SP Balasubrahmanyam, a Guinness world record holder for his more than 40,000 songs over 50 years, passed away late last month at the age of 74.

From romantic hits to popular dance tracks, he sang some of Indian cinema's best-known numbers, spanning 16 languages.

Balasubrahmanyam died on Friday September 25 after spending days in intensive care following a Covid-19 diagnosis.

Balasubrahmanyam was first admitted to hospital in Chennai in early August when he tested positive for Covid-19. He tested negative early in September, but continued to receive life support treatment. The hospital where he was being treated said in a statement that he died of a cardio-respiratory arrest.

SPB, as he was popularly known, began his career in Tamil and Telugu cinema in southern India - and became the first crossover singer who gained great success in Bollywood.

He was a legendary "playback singer" - that is, his voice was pre-recorded for use in films in which actors would lip-sync to the songs. He sang for top composers of his time, including AR Rahman and Ilaiyaraaja.

His breakthrough Bollywood film came in 1981 when he sang for Ek Duuje Ke Liye (We Are Made For Each Other), a romantic tragedy that was one of the year's biggest hits.

He was hailed as a singing sensation and became the 'singing voice' for Bollywood superstars such as Salman Khan.



SPB was hailed as a singing sensation

Born in 1946 into a middle class family from Nellore in Andhra Pradesh, Balasubrahmanyam broke many social norms despite his traditional upbringing.

Although his father was a devotional singer, Balasubrahmanyam did not go through the rigours of learning classical music which was a norm at most homes.

Instead, he moved to the big city of Chennai as a young man and formed a band with his friends. It included Ilaiyaraaja, who would go on to become an acclaimed music composer, as the guitarist and others who played harmonica and percussion.

Balasubrahmanyam dropped out from engineering studies in college to take up singing after he was talent-spotted at a music competition by local film music composers.

"I planned to be an engineer. Then music turned the course of my life. I realised not to plan and let things play out for me," he said in a recent interview.

Balasubrahmanyam's first major breakthrough in southern films came when he sang for Tamil superstar MG Ramachandran in a 1969 film Adimai Penn.

"Singing for a superstar like him changed how the Tamil film world looked at me," he told an interviewer once.



SPB received India's highest civilian awards - Padma Shri and Padma Bhusan

Working in four southern Indian language film industries - Tamil, Telugu, Kannada and Malayalam - kept Balasubrahmanyam busy through the 1970s until the end of the last decade. He became the highest paid singer in southern India.

Balasubrahmanyam hopped from one music studio to another, recording as many as three new songs every day for more than two decades.

At the height of his popularity he once spent 17 hours in a single day recording songs for different composers.

In 1981, Balasubrahmanyam created a record by recording 21 new songs in the Kannada language from morning until night for a film music composer.

When Bollywood demanded work of him, he would fly to Mumbai, record Hindi songs for films and return to Chennai in the evening.

In 1992, he recorded some memorable romantic numbers for Oscar-winning composer AR Rahman for the blockbuster hit, Roja.

His versatile voice lent itself to romantic and classical songs. He was also a flamboyant yodeller and sang bouncy dance tracks.

SPB, as he was popularly known, sang more than 40,000 songs

"Balasubrahmanyam is a phenomenon. He has a fine voice which always sings true. He has a deep awareness and a basic feel for aesthetics of film music. Adding to all this is a raging enthusiasm; a respect for the art, which is his profession, and an open mind," critic VAK Ranga Rao once said.

"I want to stop singing the day I feel cannot," he told an interviewer once.

Balasubrahmanyam received two of India's top civilian honours, Padma Shri in 2001 and Padma Bhushan in 2011

SP Balasubrahmanyam is a veteran singer, who has been associated with the Indian film industry for the past 50 years. Fondly called SPB, he is best known for his versatility, incredible voice range, unique style of singing and a voice with depth. Balasubrahmanyam has sung thousands of songs, in 12 different Indian languages, during his career span. As a singer, he virtually ruled Telugu, Tamil and Kannada film music industry for over four decades and rendered some of the evergreen hits during the period. In addition to being a prolific singer SP Balasubrahmanyam has shown his artistic excellence as a music composer, actor and dubbing artist.

He will be greatly missed by millions of his fans all across the world. SPB is no more but his mesmerizing voice will continue to live for many more years in the hearts and minds of his adoring fans.



SPECIAL FEATURE

THE NILAVELI BEACH AN IDEAL RESORT FOR HOLIDAYING

A peaceful environment to relax and enjoy



Pigeon Island

C. Kamalaharan

During our visit to the eastern province we were hoping to visit two spectacular beaches which were only 16 km away from Trincomalee town. But on arrival we had the option to choose only one of the two beaches as we had only limited time for a single visit. The Nilaveli Beach lies North to the



Cardamon Hotel - Swimming Pool.

Uppuveli Beach and its only 20 minutes drive from one beach to the other. In spite of both the beaches being in close proximity to each other we had to choose the popular Nilaveli Beach owing to the time factor.

The long stretch of Nilaveli Beach is situated in the coastal town of Nilaveli. Lined with palm trees it is a scenic beauty as the calm blue water with coral and marine life gently lashes along the white sandy shore. At daybreak it's a dazzling sight to see the sunrise in the eastern sky. Kept neat and tidy it's an ideal place to relax and enjoy. The sea near the beach is not deep; one can easily walk into the sea. It's always safe for swimmers who venture deep into the sea for surfing and snorkelling owing to the presence of life guards for an emergency. For photographers there are many enchanting picturesque views for clicking their cameras. Visitors arriving at the beach spend their time happily in a peaceful environment away from the hustle and bustle of the crowded city life.

For our stay at Nilaveli Beach we chose the Cardamon Hotel among the many resorts. Besides having all modern facilities and being close to the beach the Cardamon hotel has free WiFi free breakfast and a pool. All the rooms have ocean view balconies for viewing the sparkling sunrise in the morning. Kept spick and span the staff are polite friendly and are always at the beck and call of the tourists who check in.

Most of the time we spent our time loitering along the beach enjoying the sea breeze and the warmth of the sun. Whenever we felt tired owing to the sultry weather we cooled ourselves and quenched our thirst with fresh king coconut water readily available. While the elders either had a long walk along the beach or a bath in the shallow waters the kids played beach games or built sand castles and the toddlers moved about in ecstasy. The Pigeon Island National Park about 2 km into the sea is a suitable place for those who love adventure. There is a boat service to the island. An extended trip to Pigeon Island is a must for visitors arriving at Nilaveli Beach.



Nilaveli beach - view from hotel

Pigeon Island National Park

The name Pigeon Island is derived from a pigeon population settled there. The pigeons are called



Cardamon hotel room

rock pigeons as their habitat itself is rocky. On entering the island tourists can see hundreds of endangered species of rock pigeons nesting and breeding in the rocky area. The Pigeon Island has two islands; the large pigeon island fringed by coral reefs and the small island surrounded by rocky islets. The Pigeon Island is the most suitable habitat for marine life; multicoloured fishes eels turtles sharks sea anemones other animals and plants. The clear shallow water along the sandy beach is ideal for surfing fishing and whale watching. It is best to visit Pigeon Island during off season but it is not advisable to visit during weekends due to overcrowding by the arrival of more tourists.

The Nilaveli Beach has become one of the main tourists' attractions in Sri Lanka. This is the resort where most people arrive to take a break from hectic lives and rejuvenate themselves. The season for arrival of tourists is between May and September during which the whole beach area will be lively with plenty of recreational activities and amusements. The beach too will be fully crowded with people. Unaware of it we had visited the place during off season in February. Yet we thoroughly enjoyed our stay there in spite of less number of people. When we left the beach we took with us pleasant memories of our stay there in the lush green environment and the exotic beach.

SPECIAL FEATURE



A proposal to build a Tamil Community Centre in Toronto is getting closer to being realized



The Steering Committee

Toronto city councillors have approved 311 Staines Road as the designated site for a future Tamil Community Centre. Final approval is expected later in October.

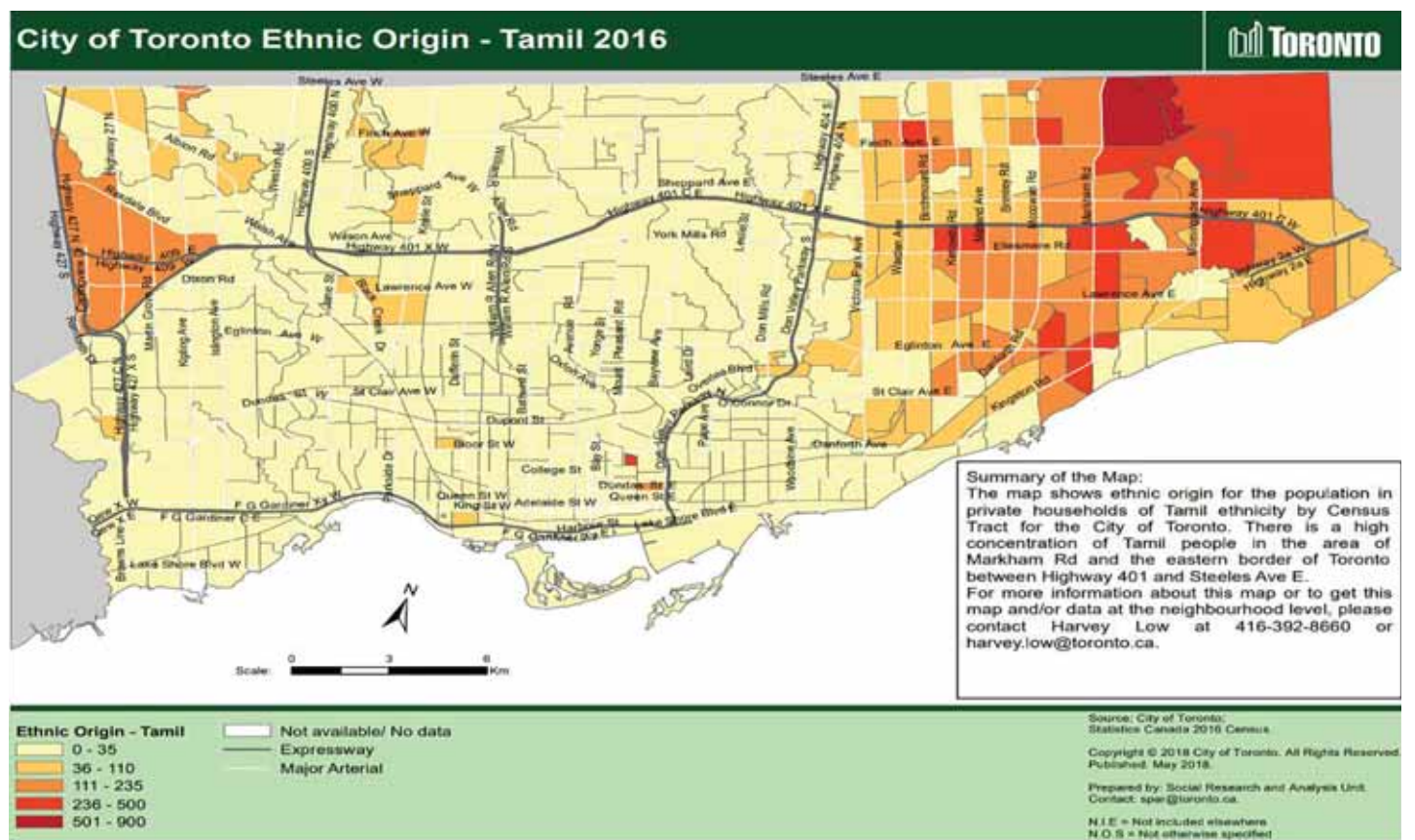
“This has been a long time dream of the Tamil community,” which is excited to see a property identified as a future cultural hub, Sivan Ilanko, president of the Canadian Tamil Congress, said in an interview.

“The site is at the epicentre of the Tamil speaking population within the City of Toronto, and in close proximity to the concentration of Tamil speaking residents living in the Markham and Durham region.

We look forward to the work we still have to do to bring this vision to completion, so we can provide a vibrant space for much needed programming and services not only for the Tamil community, but also Indigenous, Black, Caribbean and other marginalized communities who reside in the area, and who share the same needs.

It’s been a long year, but thanks to the City of Toronto, Mayor John Tory, and Councillor Jennifer McKelvie who have worked closely with us over the past year, this is now an exciting reality!”

“Canadian Tamils have proudly called Canada home since 1960, coming from various parts of South and East Asia, including Sri Lanka, India, Singapore and Malaysia, with their numbers dramatically growing between the late 80s and early 2000s due to the civil war in Sri Lanka. The



90s saw Tamils as the largest growing visible minority group in Canada, and the 2016 census showed Canada to be home to the largest Tamil diaspora outside of South Asia, with a population of 240,851 reporting to be of Tamil descent, heritage and/or culture, of whom 80% currently reside in the GTA. While a large number of these Tamils arrived here as political refugees, they have defied expectations as a refugee population, producing internationally recognized artists and academics, as well as successful students, business people and politicians.

In 2016, January was unanimously declared as Tamil Heritage Month in the House of Commons in recognition of the immense contributions Tamils have made to Canadian society, and of the importance of acknowledging the rich Tamil language and heritage, and their continued preservation through education. Yet, Canadian Tamils remain an underserved community in the GTA. The later waves of refugees arriving in Canada struggled to access services and encountered significant barriers to their progress, including language and the lack of programming

spaces. For close to a decade the community has been making moves toward the creation of a community centre to address the gap in services available to them. Those efforts are culminating in the present project to create a Tamil Community Centre in north east Scarborough to streamline services to the community and the neighbourhoods they inhabit, while also incorporating the needs of the mainstream community that would be able to access and use this facility.”

SOURCE: Tamill Culture

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Short Story

Atonement

SPECIAL FEATURE



By: Kumar Punithavel

Sundar was walking up and down the front porch of his house in Richmond hill. He was in deep thought over a predicament he was facing, while his wife was watching TV inside the house. When he thought of his two grown children have not returned home yet, his chain of thought changed. When he was young, he was supposed to get home before dark, but now the rule of the day is they return before mid night. However, returning to the original thought about his brother Mathavan, whose daughter Maithili, had given a call in the morning and informed that her father is not well. Now his predicament is whether he should go down and see him or not.

Mathavan is few years elder to Sundar, and lives in Ceylon. Sundar after the pogrom of 1983 in Sri Lanka, decided to leave the country for safety of his children and ended up in Canada as a refugee. Whenever he thinks of Mathavan, the scar of his face that comes to his mind and haunt him.

When he was born, Mathavan had no scar in his handsome face. The scar formed because of the punishment he got from his father. That day returning from work, father had taken a shower, and gone to the room to have a drink before dinner. When to took the arrack bottle in his hands, he realized some one has had consumed some of it in his absence. The only person he could think of was his elder son, Mathavan.

He got very angry, holding the bottle in his hand shouted in a loud voice, "Mathavan! From when have you got this habit?" Mathaven was completely at a loss. He did not know what his father is referring to. He asked back, "Dad, what habit are you talking about?"

When he asked innocently, his father got angrier. "What? After doing what you have done, trying to pretend to be innocent saint?". Even to this day when he recollects what happened that day, shivers ran through Sundar. But Mathavan looked straight into dad's face without any fear. Innocence has its fierceness, and it is understandable. I felt coming out of my hiding place and beg for pardon from the father. But it was the fear that kept me not doing so. Loosing his patience Mathavan retorted back, "Dad if you want to scold, least tell me what wrong I did and then scold".

Father lost his composure com-

pletely and shouted, "You drink the arrack and pretend innocent and ask me what you did". But innocent Mathavan held his position and retorted back loud, "Dad what stupidity you are saying. You bring the arrack home and drink keeping in your room, and now you are accusing me because it emptying faster than you wish". With all the fury in the room I ran and hid in a corner near the bed and crawled in the fetal position.

With the effect of arrack, dad swung the rod he had in his hand. It made a big gash in the face of Mathavan and it started bleeding profusely. Immediately father sobered and took Mahtavan in the car to the hospital. When they returned Mathavan had three stiches on the gash. Being young it got healed very fast and went to school after a week. The scar in the face remained.

At that time Mahtavan was studying in GCE Ordinary level, and "Treasure Island" written by R.L. Steveston was the text book. In "Treasure Island", is a villain by the name Billy Bones, had a scare very much like that of what Mathavan had on his face. All his friends started calling him Billy Bones, and the name struck to him permanently. Honestly some friends believed Billy Bones to be his real name.

From that day onwards, Sundar was scared to look at his brother's face. Time healed the pain in the heart of Mathavan, but not the scar. On the other hand, the incident became a permanent scar in Sundar's heart.

That day morning there was a call from Mythili the daughter of Mathavan. She has informed them, that her father is not well and bed-ridden. Finally Sundar

took a decision and went inside the house.

His wife was watching a soap opera, and as he entered, he told her, his decision to go to Ceylon and see his brother. Understandably there was great protest from his wife and the two children. They all objected why he should go when there is a global pandemic Corona. He argued he is not going on a holiday to tour but to see his brother who is sick. Nothing could change his decision, to go and see his brother. He couldn't tell them he is going for atonement! He did not have the courage and conviction even at this stage to share his secret.

He did finally do the trip to Ceylon, and when he reached his brother's house, only his brother and sister-in-law were at home.

Seeing his younger brother, though he was happy, the first question Mathavan asked was, "Hey brother why did you come at this time? Don't you know about the pandemic? How was your trip?" Mathavan kept on piling question after question to his brother. In the mean time the Sister-in-law got up excused her self, leaving the brothers to catch up, while she will prepare tea for both.

The moment S-I-L left Sundar rushed to the feet of his brother crying, soaking his feet with tears and kept on saying 'I am sorry, I am sorry'.

Mathavan was fully confused, and asked him, "Hey what are you doing? Are you mad?"

Sundar did not raise his head. He did not have courage to get up and see his brother's scared face. He kept on saying "Bro forgive me, bro forgive me".

"Wait a moment, what have I got to forgive you for? Say that before you go on rambling for-

give me" said Mathavan.

Having no courage to look at his brother's face he looked with an unfocused eye and said "Bro, it was I who drank the arrack, but you had to face the wrath of Pa. I am a cowered. If I had stepped forward and accepted to crime, you would not have got the blame and this life long scar on your face".

Mathavan smiled and replied, "Hey dude, I knew I did not drink it. Only other two persons in the house were Mother and you. We all know Ma will never ever consume alcohol, so only other person is you. Of course, from the beginning I knew it must be you who must have drank the arrack".

"Bro, why didn't you say that then and there? You could have escaped the punishment and you would not have this scar on your face".

Mathavan said, "Sunthu, I have forgotten that incidence long ago. Now why are you bringing this up? Its time we get on with our life.

"Brother, every time I see the scar in your face I cringe in my heart. My guilt hurts me. Father never knew the truth until his death. Bro, you are a God" said Sundar.

"To tell the truth I never thought of the scar, even when friends call me Billy Bones, I never felt bad. In fact, in some ways I liked it" saying so he caressed his scar.

Sundar got up and walked near his brother and hugged him saying, "Bro, people say Ma and Pa are the first Gods in life, but for me, you are the first God".

At that moment the sister in law walked in with cups of tea for all, and was confused what was happening.





SPECIAL FEATURE

Paths of Goodness - 6

Awaiyaar

By: J. A. Rajah



Awaiyaar - Nature of Wealth

'Ullathu ozhliya oruvarkku oruvar suham,
Kollakkidayathu kuvalayathil-Vellak
Kadalodi meendum karaiyerinal en
Udalodu vaazhlum uyirkku' – *Nazhivali - 6.*

'The wealth that you get is what you deserve,
However hard you may try to earn like others,
You may sail the vast seas to seek your fortune,
Still you would earn only what is destined for you.'

Wealth is not equally distributed. It is a common craze among people to get as rich as others. They are envious and jealous. They always like to compare themselves with others and are always dissatisfied and hence unhappy. Whatever one gets is determined by his destiny. One may earn a lot but will not be able to retain it. We cannot attain any happiness by being worried about the other person's wealth. We cannot gain anything by living with greed. We will be driven to utter misery.

SPECIAL FEATURE



MISORIENTED EDUCATION AND ITS IMPACT ON WESTERN CIVILIZATION



- tomorrowsworld.org

C. New Deviations in Education and nemesis :

The US soon became a hotchpotch of diverse nationalities with the immigrants from varied lands and backgrounds. Education took a radical turn with the introduction of progressive education by John Dewey. He dismissed the religious bias in education and gave more importance to science, evolution, socialism and psychology. He believed that education's main task is to lead one to socialization and accelerate the intellectual movement to change the world. He focused on feelings and experience and downplayed the importance of reading, writing and facts of history. In other words, he insisted that 'education is experience'. From his point of view students must interact with their environment in order to adapt and learn. He believed that one should learn by doing. The spread of cultural Marxism also undermined Christian values of family and morals, individual freedoms and private property. The emergence of multiculturalism cultivated the idea that all cultures are equal and that no culture is superior. New values of tolerance and diversity are introduced, insisting on the acceptance of long-condemned sexual behaviour as normal and even desirable. These insidious ideas have permeated educational institutions in America and the West. In addition to direct attack on Judeo-Christian morality any reference to American history or the benefits of Western civilization were not welcomed by the media or in the classrooms.

D. Acts of Violence and Unrest :

With the spread of the Pandemic and the resultant lockdowns, tensions have accelerated. Rapid spread of the Covid 19 pandemic has been reported in Western countries like the US, U.K, Brazil, Italy, Spain and Russia. US had 3118,168 cases of infection and 133,291 deaths. This continues to increase unabated. Outbreak of violence has increased in Western Countries including Canada. In one-week end alone it was reported that two persons died and several injured in six different shootings. The US protests have intensified inter-communal tensions in Canada too resulting in violent protests against colour discrimination. Human values have taken a turn for the worst in countries like the US and Canada where White Supremacists rallies start to activate. Protesters have vandalized statues of former political icons like Christopher Columbus (beheaded, toppled and burnt), John A Macdonald and Jefferson Davis. Gun-killing erupted in US cities. Even the pandemic lockdown was unable to stop the scourge. At a grocery store, a fight ensued over a matter of \$180/- .One bullet tore into a nearby car, striking the head of a five-year old girl, who subsequently died. Materialism has become the order of the day. In many cases husband and wife no longer connect. They are so exhausted from the pursuit of more things-a big house, private schools for kids, fancy cars-that they are time starved and exhausted. Life is luxurious but unsatisfying and simply no fun. Domestic violence has increased. Vagaries of weather as well as frequent fluctuations of men's minds create chaos in the US as well as in other countries. George Floyd protests in the US has spread to 2000 cities and towns in all 50 states." 'Black lives matter'-slogan has now become a kind of mantra that is driving the protesters to take meaningful action. Police brutality is violently condemned. Differences between the Blacks, the Browns and the whites have become highlighted and led to outbreaks of inter communal clashes as we now find in the US and the U.K. The world needs new thinking and new solutions to combat these challenges to peace and harmony.

By: J A Rajah

A. Modern Trends in human behaviour :

Modern times have witnessed deterioration in culture and social standards in Western countries. Violent crime, increasing incivility, unmanageable debt, abuse of drugs, political corruption, depression and suicide have become very common. People are finding it difficult to face the challenges of modern life and many have lost hope in religion and their social security. Frequent accidents, violent deaths, sexual misconduct and flagrant violations of accepted norms of society have become the order of the day. News reports keep on high lighting these activities in untold numbers, frightening the very state of normal livelihood. Ethnic, religious, political differences have aggravated and accelerated tensions in many countries including the US, UK and Brazil. Modern culture is in crisis as result of increasing lawlessness, loss of economic discipline, weakening traditions, rising immorality, decay of religious belief, decline in the quality of education and the devaluing of human life.

B. American Education and Philosophy :

Education plays a vital role in shaping the thinking of generations of human beings. Alfred North Whitehead, the renowned educationalist asserted that 'education is the acquisition of the art of utilizing knowledge'. Teachers and education are the weapons to radically change the focus and direction of culture.

History reveals that the leaders in early Western educational institutions were believers in religious values and they were part of their education. Students at Harvard were required to pray privately, read scriptures twice a day, study diligently and respect parents, magistrates and tutors. They were taught to avoid profanity, lies and foolish behaviour. The education policy makers believed that religion and morality were inseparable and that public schools were the proper place for religious and moral instruction. Even the text books were written with these values in mind. However, later text-books became more secular and they accommodated America's shifting tastes in education.



What Makes My Culture Unique?



An early 18th century depiction of Devi revered by Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva. Ashmolean Museum/Heritage Images/Getty Image

By: Abhishek Kakolla

Since the beginning of recorded history, Hinduism and my culture has been rich and full of spirituality. For generations, it had been passed down. Today, it is the third largest religion, and it is the oldest one. For thousands of years, my culture has been unique by its traditions and ways of life. It is different in many ways when compared to other cultures. From epic tales and special foods, to festivals and classical music, my culture is special. Furthermore, my culture includes greater spirituality and ways of worship in everyday life.

First of all, it is in my culture to respect people and animals. You would treat them the same way you would want to be treated. For instance, if someone were to come to your house, you would respect them by first bowing your head slightly, placing your hands in a prayer formation, and saying "Namaste". The hosts would then serve you tea or coffee. These are signs of respect and forms of greetings in my culture. Respecting animals, on the other hand, is different. It is in my culture to not eat animals, as it disrupts the "balance of life". However, some Hindus choose to eat certain animals. It is also believed that cows represent a god; therefore, Hindus don't prefer eating beef. It is cultural to keep a plant called "thulasi" as well. The plant represents many great stories about gods and people. These unique cultural ways distinguishes my culture from others.

Second, going to temples and religious buildings is also part of my culture. You would go to a temple to practise your religion or to pray to God. You would also go there to be blessed on your birthday or on a holiday. It is cultural to do this occasionally. Most people choose to go to temples every week. Going to temples may be similar to other cultures, like how Christians and Catholics go to church, but the reasons behind going to these sacred places are different. In my culture, when you go to a temple, you would be served with food called "Prasad". It is believed that the food has been blessed by God. These cultural activity are distinct in my culture as others don't have these spiritual methods.

Lastly, festivals, classical music, and dances are all big activities in my culture. These only take place on important or historical event dates. They lead to huge celebrations and loud music. Other cultures don't include as much festivals as mine, which is what makes it different. The festivals can occur at least once a month as well. There were many events that took place thousands of years ago. This is what gives my culture a very spiritual and historical background. An example of why a festival takes place is the true epic tale of "Rama and Sita." In the tale, a princess named Sita gets captured by a demon. The prince, Rama, saves her. They both return home safely to their kingdom, leading to a huge celebration. That celebration, "Diwali", is still celebrated today. These celebrations and festivals

are what make my culture different from others.

Winner of Essay
Competition
1st
Place
- Intermediate -

Even though my culture and religion encourages idol worship, like other cultures, mine differs in many ways. My religion and culture is "polytheistic", meaning Hindus worship many gods. It is believed that there are thousands of gods. From the uniqueness of my culture; many festivals to special foods, my culture is not very similar when compared to others. My culture includes cultural treasures, cultural activities, special foods, religious festivals, and more. These are the reasons why my religion and culture is distinctive and special. To conclude, it is different in many ways because of its ways of life, worship, and activities.



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COLOUR AFFECTS SLEEP AND WAKEFULNESS

Red, Orange, Yellow, and Green Colours Promotes Sleep While Blue Colour Delays It

By OUE Research Institute



A research team has shown how different colors could affect our ability to sleep. At the same time, they have established that the light-sensitive pigment melanopsin is necessary for the substantial wavelength-dependent effects on sleep. The results point to the need to understand the impact of artificial lighting's different color balances.

A research team from Oxford University has shown how different colors could affect our ability to sleep. The researchers, led by Dr. Stuart Peirson from Oxford's Sleep and Circadian Neuroscience Institute, aimed to understand why exposing mice to bright color light caused two physically incompatible responses.

Dr. Peirson explained that when we expose mice to color light during the night, it causes them to fall asleep (Pilorz et al., 2016). Yet, at the same time, it also increases corticosterone levels, a stress hormone produced by the adrenal gland that causes arousal-wakefulness. We wanted to understand how these two effects were related and how they were linked to a blue light-sensitive pigment called melanopsin, which plays a crucial role in setting our body clock.

Mice exposed to three different colors of light, such as violet, blue, and green. It was a green light that produced rapid sleep onset between 1 and 3 minutes. Blue and violet light delayed sleep - the start of sleep taking between 16 and 19 minutes for blue and between 5 and 10 minutes for violet.

The role of melanopsin was closest to the peak sensitivity of the pigment (around 480nm). The



blue light would suppress sleep like the blue light (470 nm). Dr. Peirson said that the results meant that mice exposed to blue light had less sleep than those exposed to violet and green light. We confirmed the effect by testing mice using green and blue light when they would usually be less active.

To investigate the role of melanopsin, the team performed the same test on mice lacking the pigment. For these mice, the colors had opposite effects - blue caused rapid sleep onset. Simultaneously, green and violet significantly delayed sleep, showing that melanopsin is necessary for the substantial wavelength-dependent effects of light on sleep.

The researchers also found that while exposure to all three colours of light increased corticosterone stress hormone levels in ordinary mice, blue light caused a much higher rise. In mice without melanopsin, the response to blue light was significantly reduced. Blocking the effect of corticosterone reduced the sleep-delaying impact, suggesting that

this hormone's production response to light actively inhibits sleep.

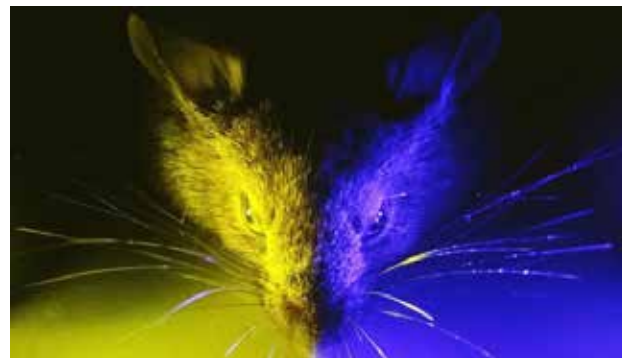
Dr. Peirson said that the study shows different pathways from the eye to the brain. One directly regulating sleep and the other increasing arousal. Melanopsin has a more complex role than previously thought, affecting both pathways. It is the first time that it has been shown to regulate adrenal stress responses.

An obvious caveat of this study is that mice are a nocturnal species active during the night. As such, a green light may be expected to increase wakefulness rather than increasing sleep in humans. Therefore, we would predict that blue light will further enhance the wake-promoting effects of light by elevating adrenal stress hormones.

The effects of the blue light-emitting devices on humans delay sleep. However, as we have shown that different brain pathways by which different colors of light have different effects on sleep or wakefulness, we need to understand how the overall color balance of artificial light could affect people's alertness and sleep.

Blue Colour Keep Awake

Is blue color or light extraordinary? A new study says that exposure to shortwave blue light immediately improves alertness and performance. Researchers at Brigham and Women's Hospital and

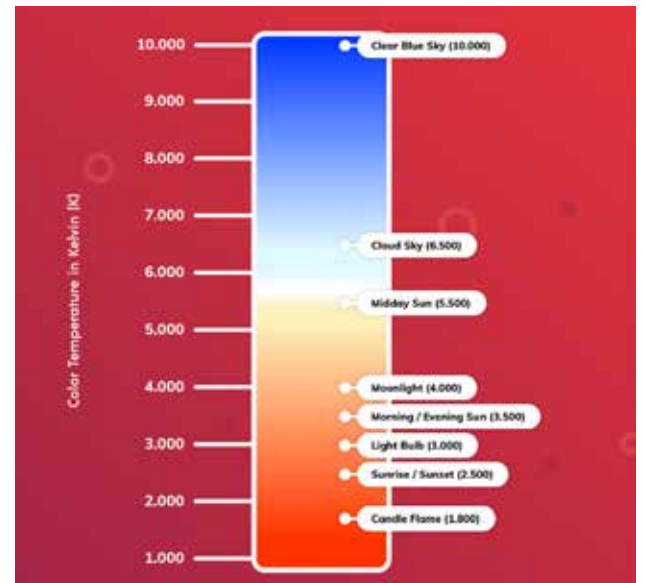


Harvard Medical School compared the effects of blue light and green light on volunteers during the night. Subjects exposed to blue light rated themselves as less sleepy, had quicker reaction times, and had fewer lapses in attention than those exposed to green light. They also had changes in their brain activity patterns that indicated a more alert state (Pilorz et al., 2016).

Researchers say the findings, published in the journal *Sleep*, open up a new range of possibilities for using light to improve people's health. People exposed to blue light were able to sustain a high level of alertness during the night, said Dr. Steven Lockley, the lead author of the study, and a researcher Brigham and Women's Hospital's Division of Sleep Medicine. Dr. Lockley said the results could help those who need to sustain alertness for long periods, such as long-distance drivers, pilots or astronauts, as well as shift workers.

Eye Not Only For Sight

Until recently, it was thought that the eye used to see objects. Brigham and Women's Hospital's researchers and others have shown that it is also used to detect light for other purposes, such as resetting the body clock to the 24-hour day. This photoreceptor system is different from that used in normal vision as it has a different sensitivity to the color of light and is retained in some blind people.



But several sleep specialists say that the therapeutic use of blue light needs more study. "It is of potential interest and may be applicable to shift work and jet lag," said Phyllis C. Zee, director of the Sleep Disorders Centre at North-western University Feinberg School of Medicine. "Because these are preliminary research performed in controlled settings, it is important also to note that further work needs to be performed to determine the safety of prolonged use of short-wavelength light in humans." If misused, blue light can damage the eye, and exposure needs to be monitored, Dr. Lockley said, but this new research holds promise.

Best Colour For Sleep

A new study suggests that the color can make a big difference in how (un)healthy it is if you have a light and the exposed color at night. Though the color blue is believed to have a calming effect, a study involving hamsters found that blue light had the worst effects on mood-related measures, followed closely by white light.

Hamsters exposed to red light at night had significantly less evidence of depressive-like symptoms and changes in the brain linked to depression than those that experienced blue or white light. Total darkness is still the best.

"The findings suggest that we could use red light when appropriate for night-shift workers. It may



not has some of the adverse effects on their health that white light does," said Randy Nelson, co-author of the study and professor of neuroscience and psychology at Ohio State University.

The research examined the role of specialized photosensitive cells in the retina called ipRGCs that don't have a significant role in vision, but detect light and send messages to a part of the brain that helps regulate the body's circadian clock. The body's master clock that helps determine when people feel sleepy and awake.

Other research suggests these light-sensitive cells also send messages to parts of the brain that play a role in mood and emotion. With the advent of new, more controllable lighting technologies, we can begin to develop 'smart' lighting systems designed to maximize the beneficial effects of light for human health. If we have a white color surface wall and ceiling, we can paint with tunable color-changing light based on the need.



Year-end tax reminders and tips

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

To be sure you keep your tax bill as low as possible, tax and financial planning should be a year-round activity. Starting early and being diligent about your tax life is important but it's only one aspect of your total financial life. When you have a complete financial plan in place, it's easier to keep everything on track and on target. That's why consulting with your professional advisor will make sure all your tax-reduction strategies and overall financial objectives are in place and working for you.

Capital gains and losses Tax loss selling is a crucial year-end activity for investors, where we realize capital losses on security positions as a means to partially or fully offset realized capital gains in the current tax year, previous years or simply to carry the losses forward. For those of you who do not make a significant number of changes to the portfolio, the degree of realized gains in any given year may be small; however, gains can creep in unexpectedly, such as through mutual fund distributions. Sell money-losing investments by the December 31 settlement date to offset capital gains. If you plan to repurchase the assets you sold at a loss, don't fall afoul of the superficial loss rules which will remove any tax advantage if you repurchase an identical capital property within 30 days after having disposed of it.

RRSP contributions The contribu-

tion deadline for 2020 is March 1, 2021. RRSP contribution room can be carried forward indefinitely and you may want to consider deferring a deduction to a future year when you'll be in a higher tax bracket. Always make your maximum contribution each year – you'll get the most in immediate tax savings and in long-term growth. How much you can personally contribute can be found on your most recent notice of assessment from the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA). Each year, the Canada Revenue Agency identifies your unused contribution room for the upcoming tax year on your Notice of Assessment. If however, you are unable to locate your Notice of Assessment, a quick call to the Canada Revenue Agency at 1-800-959-8281 or a visit to www.cra.gc.ca can provide the information you need.

RRSP withdrawals If you intend to withdraw cash from your investments held within an RRSP and expect your income to increase significantly next year, consider making the withdrawal before year end. If you turn 71 this year and are required to wind up your RRSPs before December 31, it's tax-advantageous to transfer the funds to investments held within a Registered Retirement Income Fund (RRIF) or annuity. You can also continue to make contributions for your spouse until he or she turns 71.

Income-splitting Save on taxes



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by contributing to investments held within a spousal RRSP, through a pension-income split with a spouse, or by paying a salary to other (eligible) family members.

Home Buyers' Plan (HPB) By delaying a withdrawal from your investments held within an RRSP under HBP until after December 31, you'll extend the time period for purchasing a new home and for the first repayment by an additional year.

Registered Education Savings Plan (RESP) If your child is turning 15 this year and you want to ensure he or she will be eligible for the Canadian Education Savings Grant (CESG) in the years the child turns 16 and 17, by the end of the year you must be able to show that you contributed at least \$2,000 to their investments held within an RESP (with zero withdrawals) or you contributed at least \$100 for you child in any four year period (again, with zero withdrawals).

Tax-Free Savings Account (TFSA)

Make a \$6,000 contribution to your investments held with a TFSA. The contribution isn't tax deductible but the money and interest earned inside your TFSA are tax-free and so are withdrawals, which can be made at any time for any purpose.

Tax Deductions and Tax Credit Take full advantage of all that are available to you and make sure the items you claim were paid in the year they are claimed.

These are just a few opportunities for year-end tax savings. Talk to your professional advisor to make sure you're not missing out on others.

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7 Things You Can Do When You Are Debt Free



Being stuck in a debt trap ties up your money so you can't do all the things you'd like to do with it. Over time, the constant pressure of debt can also damage your work, health, and relationships. Freeing yourself from debt can make your life better in just about every way. In this article, we are going to highlight and expatiate on 7 things you can do when you are Debt Free

1. Start with Alternative Investments

Now that you have more money freed up each month you have the freedom of looking for ways to earn even more. One of these methods could be through alternative investments. Some things to consider include: Investing in Real Estate, Investing in Peer to Peer Lending Learning How to Trade Stocks. Equally important,

be sure to thoroughly research any new investment idea. Learn as much as you can before investing large amounts!

2. Increase Your Savings

If you have been living in a starter emergency fund while paying down your debt then there's no doubt, now is the time to beef it up. If your emergency fund is full you can also consider things like car savings or a house down payment.

3. It is vital to pay off Your Mortgage

The mortgage is usually the last debt to be paid off. Once you pay off your mortgage you will have extra breathing room in your monthly budget. Not only will it free up extra money every month, but it provides added financial security during a housing crisis, allows you to save

more, or even lets you chase down your dreams that needed extra financial backing.

4. Put More toward Retirement

Even increasing your retirement savings by 5 or 10% can go a long way. This is one of the best strategies for reducing the taxes you have to pay before the end of the year.

5. Start a Side Business

When you're saddled with debt taking any type of risk with income can seem scary. Perhaps that debt has held you back from trying out a new side business idea you've been interested in? If so, now is a good time to get your feet wet and give your idea a fair try.

6. Reevaluate Your Income

In this realm, one vital thing to do is reevaluate your income. You've had all of your extra money going toward

your debt payoff and it's now time to redirect the money somewhere else. Furthermore, if you've been working yourself to the bone and pinching pennies over the last several months or years take the time now to figure out how you want to reallocate your income.

7. Keep out of Debt

You have worked so hard to get rid of your debt. Do not let it come back. Keep your cash savings high so that you can cover emergencies and plan for future purchases. Don't rely on your credit cards or personal loans for anything.

In a nutshell, the above ideas are the most suitable things you can do when you are debt-free.

In case of you have credit or debt issues visit www.gtacredit.com or call 416 650 1100



BUSINESS / FINANCE



How entrepreneurs can prepare their business for the challenges ahead

Tips for how small business owners can strengthen their business in the year ahead

Despite the challenges Canadian business owners have faced due to COVID-19 – from operational disruptions and financial concerns and persistent uncertainties – they continue to demonstrate remarkable resilience, optimism and ingenuity. This silver lining comes from RBC's 2020 Small Business Poll, which reveals that the business owners surveyed are more confident than the average Canadian in their ability to remain resilient and weather the storm in challenging times. In fact, when faced with setbacks, nearly 9 out of 10 business owners say they can bounce back, compared to 7 out of 10 for the general population, and are also more confident in their ability to find creative solutions to problems.

Furthermore, the majority (82 per cent) of owners expect their business to ride out the pandemic and nearly a quarter (22 per cent) even expect to prosper in the six months ahead. This optimistic attitude will be critical to

rebuilding, recovering and enduring through the challenging conditions.

The pandemic has brought into sharp focus the value of small businesses to Canadians – and just how much they regularly rely on local shops and services. The survey shows that Canadians feel invested in their success: since the pandemic began, many have rallied behind small business owners with a groundswell of support, with 8 in 10 Canadians saying that the crisis has helped them recognize the value of small businesses in their community.

They also offer suggestions on ways entrepreneurs can strengthen their businesses and engage with customers in the year ahead. Given the ongoing physical distancing guidelines, nine out of ten survey respondents agree that businesses will need to offer an end-to-end digital presence to be successful and increase customer engagement. In addition, online ordering, touchless payment and social media

advertising should be considered less a 'nice-to-do,' but rather a key priority for forward-thinking businesses in the next year.

Other tips from RBC that can help entrepreneurs support their business recovery and growth include:

- Refine your core offerings. Being clear on what your business stands for is important to help refine and streamline your core products or services over the next year. What problem can you solve for customers in this environment? Maximize your core strengths and identify areas where you can cut back or even pivot where it makes sense, to keep your operations lean yet profitable.

- Explore avenues for financial support. Naturally, many small business owners have been focusing on cash flow management and contingency planning now more than ever. For those who need it, there are a number of government resources available, including loans, grants and emer-

gency funding. It's also a good idea to proactively speak with a business advisor at your financial institution to learn more about tailored business and financial solutions that might be available to meet your unique circumstances and longer term business and operational contingency plans.

- Look for services beyond banking. Advisors at your bank are more than just providers of financial capital. They can help you manage and grow your business and connect you with other professionals and services. RBC also recently launched its online Small Business Navigator -- a streamlined, one-stop online hub for entrepreneurs to find relevant tips as they re-open and grow their business, find solutions to help simplify and digitize day-to-day operations, offers to save money, and resources to support employees.

For practical resources, advice, and offers, visit RBC's Small Business Navigator hub at www.rbc.com/smallbusinessnavigator.



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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.

VEG PUFFS

As the weather turns a little cold, these veg puffs will make the perfect afternoon snack. Easy to make ahead of time and you can get really creative with the fillings adding your favourite ingredients as an alternative.

Ingredients:

Puff pastry: Store bought (one roll will make 6 pastries, typically the frozen rolls come in pairs)

Filling: ✓ ¼ cup potatoes, diced ✓ ¼ cup green peas (frozen or fresh) ✓ ¼ cup carrots, diced ✓ 2 tomatoes, chopped ✓ 1 medium onion (Bombay/Ceylon or white), diced ✓ ½ tsp of plain chilli powder ✓ ¼ tsp cumin powder ✓ ½ tsp coriander powder ✓ ¼ tsp garam masala ✓ Pinch of turmeric ✓ 2 tbsp garlic chilli sauce ✓ 2tbsp cooking oil ✓ 1 tbsp cold milk ✓ 1 egg (beaten) or 1 tbsp melted butter ✓ Salt (Makes 12)

Method:

Defrost the puff pastry according to the instructions on the pack. Preheat the oven to 350F/175C.

Steam the potatoes, carrots and peas for 10 mins for the best taste - if not then they can be added and cooked with the next steps too.

Add the oil to a pan and put in the onions. Once soft, add the tomatoes, turmeric powder, chilli powder, cumin and coriander powder and salt and cook till the tomatoes turn mushy. Add your cooked veg- if the vegetables have not been steamed- add the potatoes and carrots into the pan and add ¼ cup water to let them cook. After 10 minutes, add the peas and cook for a further 5 mins (adding a little more water if necessary).

Once the peas have cooked, or if adding steamed vegetables, add the garlic chilli sauce and the garam masala and cook for 5 minutes on a low flame. This mixture can be made in advance and left in the fridge ahead of baking. Allow the mixture to cool before adding to the pastry.

Section the pastry into twelve rectangle pieces and place the vegetable mixture on six, using the other six to cover the mixture and crimp the edges using a fork.

To turn the pastry golden in colour, mix 1 tbsp of cold milk and either 1 beaten egg or 1 tbsp of melted butter and

brush the top of the pastries before putting them in the oven.

In a pan, bake for 15-20 mins.

Add mince lamb/beef/ chicken or tuna to enhance the flavour of this recipe according to your preference.

Try making this recipe this month and

Hashtag #monsoonjournal on Instagram and send us your pics, comments and feedback.

Spread the love (and recipe!)



single food
Traditional

COOKING CLASSES

Online classes through zoom/
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LEARN HOW TO MAKE
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Canada

20 Years Proudly serving Durham

Seniors Care Package FREE

Durham Tamil Association
would like to thank the
Government of Canada for
providing the much needed
Covid funding for our ongoing
Seniors programs in Durham.

Durham Tamil Seniors Register here:

www.durhamtamils.org

905.428.7007

"Unity is Strength"

"ஒற்றுமையே பலம்"



DURHAM TAMIL ASSOCIATION

DTA Celebrates 20 Years



DTA SERVES DURHAM TAMILS DURING UNPRECEDENTED AND CHALLENGING TIMES

During this pandemic period Durham Tamils Association continues to serve the Durham Tamils by providing free virtual chess clubs, free virtual Storytelling, and Read-Along, free virtual pencil/sketch art class, free virtual dance class, Poem Writing Workshop, free Leadership classes, free Virtual Math Class, free All Ages Mat Yoga Class and we ran the Durham Tamils Got Talent show too. DTA's Tamil school also continues to provide virtual Tamil classes for our students.

DTA's Seniors

DTA runs Seniors Chair Yoga Class, Mat Yoga Class, Cooking Classes, Health Seminars, and much more for our seniors. DTA is here to support you in any way. Please register for virtual Seniors programs.

Free Seniors Chair Yoga Class

Every Fridays Time: 10am- 11:30am
Yoga Instructor: Vana Dineshkumar
Please Register online at durhamtamils.org

HUNGER ACTION MONTH!

Feed the need in Durham

DURHAM TAMIL ASSOCIATION PRESENTS
DURHAM TAMILS GOT TALENT!
OPEN CALL FOR ALL AGES!

SUNDAY'S AT 5:30PM
Start Date Sept 20th

Members & International participants Register at durhamtamils.org. Candian Participants must be DTA Members, International participants do not need to be a member..

Acting, Singing, Dancing, Public Speaking, Playing a musical instrument, Arts & Crafts, Cooking, Poetry, Special talent...

Please visit durhamtamils.org for additional details

Best compliments from Josh Suresh, CPA, CMA Consulting CFO josh@consultingcfo.net

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NAVA WILSON

Free Seniors Care Packages

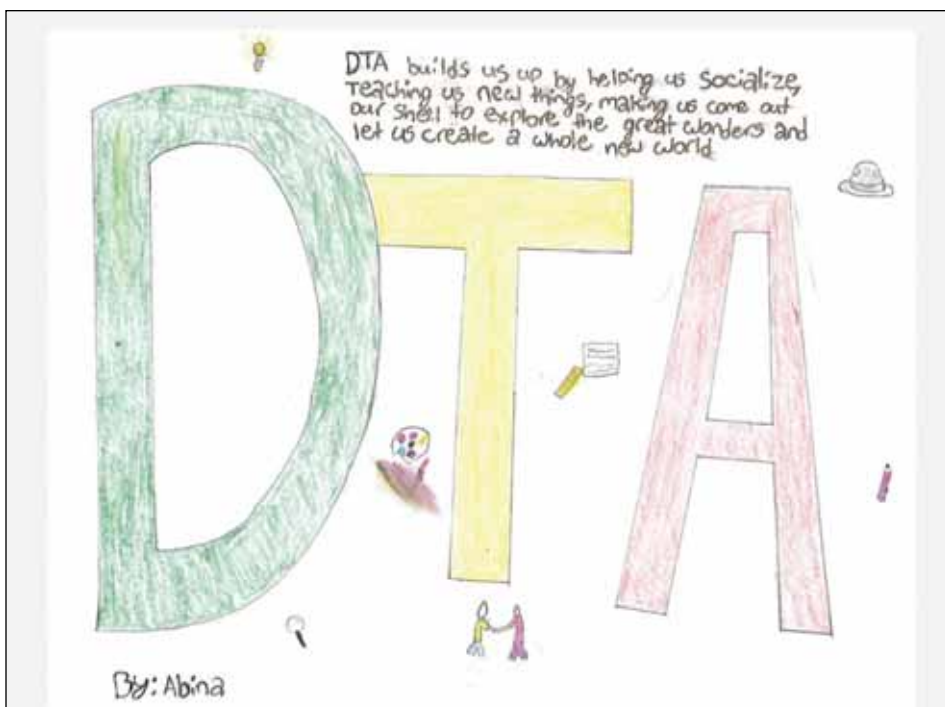
DTA is providing a Senior's Care package for Durham Tamil Seniors with funding from the Government of Canada.

The package consists of the following:

- 50 Masks
- 100 hand gloves
- 473 ml bottle sanitizer,
- Toothbrush and Alcohol wipes.

Please register online at durhamtamils.org to order your package.

Make sure to kindly fill out a short form on the website.



Free - All Ages Mat Yoga Class

Every Sundays 10am-11:30am.
Yoga Instructor: Vana Dineshkumar.
Please Register online at durhamtamils.org

A welcoming place for all. And also a place where all children matter.

It's an amazing place to discover hidden talents and make them stronger.

Durham Tamil Association
Since 2000

What does DTA mean to me, Dieshani ...

I'd also like to say Thank You to DTA!

A safe and friendly environment to meet new people and make new friends.

DTA has grown for 20 years, and I wish to see it grow even more. God bless DTA.

DURHAM TAMIL ASSOCIATION



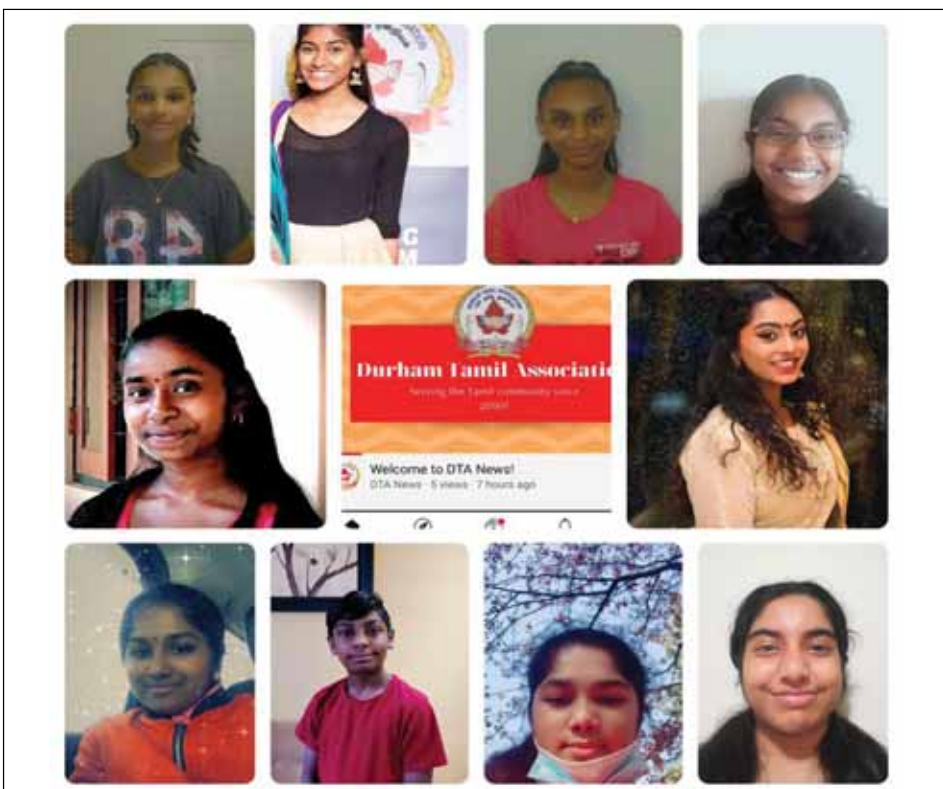
DTA Celebrates 20 Years



DTA News Channel on Youtube

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LIQinT8000o>

DTA is proud to introduce a special project that was created by DTA youth. This team worked tirelessly behind the scenes to create something new and exciting for DTA. Folks, we have officially launched the DTA News Channel via Youtube. This is what we will use to promote our programs, special events, and membership. As you can see from the quality of the 1st video, this is going to be a great way to showcase DTA to the community. Please check out the link, subscribe to the channel, and click the bell sign to be notified about any new videos. Be sure to share this with your network and get as many people connected to DTA as possible.



Tamil Discussion Session

Durham Tamil Association is inviting all Parents, Youth & Grandparents to participate in a Tamil Discussion session. The discussion will be held every Monday at 6 pm. Our younger generation, parents, and seniors will discuss their opinions on this subject.

DURHAM TAMIL ASSOCIATION

COMING SOON!

VIRTUAL YOUTH FESTIVAL

FACEBOOK LIVE | YOUTUBE LIVE | INSTAGRAM |
OR VISIT OUR WEBSITE: WWW.DURHAMTAMILS.ORG

Limited Programs **REGISTRATION OPEN NOW!** Hurry up and Secure your spots!

Additional details please visit
www.durhamtamils.org

Register online www.durhamtamils.org

Durham Tamil Association's Thiyagi Thileepan Memorial Food Drive

A resounding success for Feed The Need In Durham - Hunger Action Month. In memory of Thiyagi Thileepan, DTA collected a whopping 1,142 LBS of non-perishable food items. This was an amazing team effort and thank you to every person who contributed towards this great cause. We made our community stronger and a better place for all. A big thank you to the owners of four pick up store locations in Durham. Also thanks to all the volunteers who helped us pick up the items from the store locations.

- New Spiceland Supermarket (grocery store) 1801 Harwood Ave N, Ajax, ON, L1T 0K8**
- Pillayar Store Pickering, 734 Kingston Rd, Pickering, ON, L1V 1A8**
- Garthy Takeout and Catering, 1204 Simcoe St N, Oshawa, ON, L1G 7W9**
- The pantry, 184 Park Road North, Oshawa**



Congratulations to our graduates

Durham Tamils Got Talent

Durham Association has been Serving Durham Tamil Community Since 2000 (20 years) and is proud to present Durham Tamils Got Talent. There are so many programs and talents to be seen which is why you should check out Durham Tamils Got Talent. Please visit durhamtamils.org for more details.

AGES 7-11
STARTING IN
SEPTEMBER
CLASS TIME
(TBA)

DURHAM TAMIL ASSOCIATION

Free virtual Leadership Classes
(Members Only)

FACILITATORS
Sharmili
Thangarajah &
Pranavie
Premkumar

**Accepting
New
Students**

AGES 12-17
CLASS TIME
Saturdays
5-7 PM

FACILITATOR:
Kathirithamby
Subramaniam

Register Online At durhamtamils.org


COMMUNITY WATCH

DTA Celebrates 20 Years



Congratulations to our graduates

DTA is proud to wish our kids who graduate this year. All the very best for your future. Thank you to our sponsors Mr.Ahilan (Akil) Balachandran, Founder, and CEO, LIFEPLAN Investments for encouraging our kids.

தமிழ் மொழி வகுப்புகள்
ONLINE VIRTUAL ZOOM TAMIL CLASS

இரண்டாவது மொழிக்குரிய கற்பித்தல் முறையில் தமிழ் மொழி வகுப்புகள் ஆரம்பம். இணைந்து கொள்ள விரும்புவோர், தொடர்பு கொள்ளவும்.

NEW TAMIL ONLINE VIRTUAL ZOOM CLASSES ARE STARTING
Register Online website: durhamtamils.org

Fill out the form and provide your information under 'Virtual class registration'
Email: info@durhamtamils.com

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.

Digital Youth Festival 2020

19th Annual youth festival. It will be live-streamed on Facebook and Youtube. We are allowing only a certain number of programs to be presented in the virtual festival so please hurry and register. Social distancing rules will be followed as per the Province of Ontario's laws. We are allowing dances to be choreographed and you can conduct practices with those in your personal bubble as part of the same group. (Siblings, Cousins, and friends).

The deadline to complete the choreographed program is Oct 15th.

We will have the performances recorded by a professional videographer. We will schedule your recording time on Oct 24th & 25th.

Singers (Duet only)

Classical dance. (Minimum 3 people in a group)

Bollywood (Minimum 3 people in a group)

Instrumentals(Minimum 2 people in a group)

Please register online durhamtamils.org

THANK YOU

Thank u Durham Tamil Association
Thank u for providing us with valuable skills
Thank u for providing us with transformative experiences
Thank u for providing us with a sense of culture, history and heritage
"Wit beyond measure, is man's greatest treasure"
So thank u DTA
Thank u, Thank u, Thank u!
Happy 20th Anniversary!
May you continue changing the lives and minds of Tamil youth
And may we be eternally grateful!

Feed the Need in Durham is celebrating success.
12 hrs · 🌍

Thank you to Durham Tamil Association for collecting & sharing 1,142 lbs. of food during #hungeractionmonth!! This is equal to 952 meals!! Amazing!!

Feed
the need in
Durham

Collected
1,142 lbs!!
Thank you!!





CELEBRATING 20 YEARS

of Durham Tamil Association

DTA, Durham Tamil Association, also can be put into three other words, Developing Tamils Actively. Yes, DTA isn't just some sort of organization for the Tamils of Durham, it's also an organization that helps shape the Tamils of our future. Moving forward as a society especially in the 21st century we as tamils need help keeping up our culture, beliefs, and traditions. And DTA is a great organization to help with that. Through classes, events, and programs DTA helps value and showcase the accomplishments and talents of the youth in our community...along with teaching, sharing, and expanding the knowledge of Tamil culture, beliefs and traditions. It has been a great pleasure in being a part of this welcoming, admirable, and humble community. And as we celebrate the milestone of holding 20 years strong as a community I am honored to say that in the past 3 years of my experience here I have had the greatest heaps of opportunities to help and provide for my community. And without DTA I would have not been who I am today.

-LIRSHANI.K

COMMUNITY WATCH



DTA Celebrates 20 Years



Tamil School

Durham Tamil Association's Virtual Tamil school has been running very successfully. As per many requests, we started some additional new Tamil classes.

- Ages 4 & up
- Tamil Credit Course
- Teens & Adults

Please register online at durhamtamils.org

Fill out the form and provide your information under "Virtual class registration".

DTA takes this opportunity to thank the volunteers for their hard work and dedication. Special thanks are due to the annual sponsors Nava Wilson Law, Computek, TSN Express, Chapel Ridge Funeral Home, Showtha Thushijantha - REMAX, Ajax Crematorium, Visitation Ctr, Threat IQ, Elankeeran-DF Credit Solutions, and all other sponsors for their continued support throughout the year

For more information on all DTA Community Support Programs and Sponsor contacts please visit www.durhamtamils.org Tel 905.428.7007



Hi Durham Tamil Association.

Congratulations on your 20 years of service! You are doing a great job in the Tamil community. Your hard work and effort has really helped the young community with their education and their extra curricular during these harsh times. Durham Tamil Association has provided many clubs for the young and for the elder. I would like to appreciate the staff because without them Durham Tamil Association would not be here. Some of the clubs Durham Tamil Association provides are Chess club, virtual storytelling, leadership class, poem writing workshop, yoga class, Tamil class, Pencil / sketch Club and many more. Thank you Durham Tamil Association for all that you do I would like you to continue your service. I would greatly appreciate it.

Yours Truly,
Keerthika Gnaneshan

Durham Tamil Association means a lot to me because I get to meet new people every time there is an event. During the time I have been at DTA, I have learned a lot from a lot of people. Also, it is full of amazing, kind, encouraging and non-judging people.



Durham tamil association is a place to increase your confidence to me. For example my confidence increased by going to durham tamil association classes, dances and meeting new and becoming friends. I was really shy before joining durham tamil association but then I had an opportunity given by them and did a speech about my family and became 3rd place. I kept on increasing my confidence and I started to do dances in front of a big audience and be brave.

Happy 20th Anniversary
Durham Tamil Association!

-Jeshani Konesapillai



What Durham Tamil Association Means to Me!

Durham Tamil Association doesn't only provide programs to the Tamil community. It's a community that also provides a family that unites throughout Durham. This community is a place where we can come together and show the youth and others the principles of Tamil culture and is a promising place for all. I believe it means having a place where I can be myself and get more opportunities to show it to the real world. This group of compassionate people is always encouraging and is a helping hand to those who feel that they are not valued and have fear. The relationship in this society is wealthy and welcoming to one and all. Not only is the Durham Tamil association a helpful and encouraging society, but it is also a community that brings joy to one another. Durham Tamil association brings joy to their community by having many charity funds and drives that help others. This community truly means comfort for everyone. Durham Tamil Association was established in 2000 and has been successfully running for 20 years now. As a part of this family for almost three years I have learned that it is a great pleasure to be a part of this community that has great intentions of changing the world. Durham Tamil association overall means encouraging others and helping one another, and giving back to the community with joy. This family is proof that Unity is strength. I hope this can last for ever and for all future generations.

Yours Truly,
Sayaan Konesapillai

Hello Everyone,

My name is Devia Rajeevan and I'm glad to be celebrating the 20 years of service to the Durham Tamil Community! DTA is a place where many kids come together to cherish many of the different things the Tamil Community celebrate. It's also a place for kids to show off their talents, or even find them! Kids come to DTA and enjoy themselves. The Durham Tamil Association means so much, in so many ways that I hope that it goes on for another 20 years. And as years go by, kids would be able to experience this wonderful place as well! Thank you so much DTA for all the memories I had, and giving me an opportunity to find what I love.



COMMUNITY WATCH

GREAT CONTRIBUTIONS OF ADI SANKARA TO HINDUISM

Compiled by Kidambi Raj

INTRODUCTION

Lord Siva also known as Dhakshinamurthy, who spreads the Universal Truth not by words but by His silence and of His hand which is held in the form of “*Chin Mudra*”.



Adi Sankara

About 2,500 years ago, when the spiritualization of the people greatly reduced, all the Gods and the Rishis went to Kailas and pleaded with Lord Siva to revive the world. Lord Siva agreed with their request and informed them that He will be born in this world. Lord Brahma, Indra and others also agreed to be born in this world to help Lord Siva. In the village now called Kaladi in Ernakulam District in Kerala, India, a learned Nambudri Brahmin, named Sivaguru and his wife Aryambal, spent their life and Pooja and in giving alms to the poor and in other good deeds. The childless couple went to Trichur and performed pooja for 48 days to Lord Vadakunanathan (Lord Siva) and prayed for a son. Lord Siva melted in their absolute devotion and appeared before them and told them “I am extremely happy with your devotion and you will get what you want. But tell me whether you want a number of dull children or a son who is extremely intelligent, who will live for a short period only. *“The couple replied, the decision could not be theirs as the Lord knows what is good for them”*. Lord Dakshinamurthy, pleased with the reply, was born to Aryambal under the star “*Thiruvathirai*”.

As the Lord had already promised that He will be born to do good to this world, the child was named Sankara. “*Sam*” means prosperity and “*Karathy*” means giver. All the visitors stood in awe at the divinity of the child and said “*This is not an ordinary child*”. As Sankara grew up, he attracted everybody with his intelligence and kindness. At the age of three, he was given “*Akshrabhyas*”, i.e. the learning of writing and reading. At the age of four, he lost his father. At the age of five, he was initiated in Brahmacharyam i.e. the holy thread ceremony was conducted and he was sent to Gurukulam for learning the scriptures. As per the practice, the brahmachari has to go from house to house and take the alms and give them to his Guru.

Adi Sankara, is one of the most important philosophers and religious leaders in Indian history and the Hindu Sanatana religion, is widely revered as a religious reformer, the formulator and codifier of the

Advaita Vedanta philosophy based on the Upanishads. He was powerful magnet. His Philosophical and literary contribution are enormous.

SOME SPECIAL EVENTS THAT HAPPENED IN SANKARA'S LIFE

As mentioned earlier, Sri Sankara was born in a very poor Nambudiri brahmin family in 788 A.D. in the village now called Kaladi in Ernakulam District in Kerala, India. It was previously called *Sasalam*. One day Sankara's mother fainted after walking three kilometers for her daily bath in the River Periyar. Feeling helpless, little Sankara prayed to Lord Krishna and moved by his prayers, Lord Krishna appeared to him and blessed him by saying, “*The river will flow where your little feet mark the ground.*” The river took a new course towards the place marked by the little boy's feet. Since then, the town came to be known as *Kaladi*. Translated into English, the word Kaladi means “*foot-print*”. Sankara then installed Lord Krishna in the present temple, and marked the occasion by reciting his famous “*Achutha Ashtakam*”.



Adi Sankara, the poor Lady & Lord Lakshmi

Shower of Gold

One Dwadasi day, when he was going from door to door to take alms, he happened to go the house of a very poor lady and asked for the alms. The lady did not have even a single grain of rice in her house to give. However, she had kept a single *Amla* (Nellikai) fruit for herself as it was Dwadasi day. She unhesitatingly gave that Amla fruit to Sankara as she could not send a Brahmachari empty handed. Sankara was so very much moved by her selflessness and the poverty of the lady, he prayed to Goddess Lakshmi in a beautiful sloka which is called “*Kanaka Dhara Stotram*”. On completion of this stotra, Goddess Lakshmi appeared in person and showered a rain of gold coins on the poor lady's house.

Blessings of his Guru

During a rainy season, the river Narmada was in spate. The flood water rose and was about to enter the cave in which his Guru was sitting, deeply immersed in Samadhi. His disciples did not dare to disturb him, though his life was in danger. Sankara placed his Kamandalam (a vessel a Sanyasi carries) at the entrance to the cave saying

that it would absorb all the waters of the flood. His words came true. The flood water could not disturb Guru's meditation. Guru Govinda Bhagwathpadar blessed him saying “*Just as you contained the flood waters in your Kamandalam, you should write commentaries containing the essence of the Vedantic scriptures. With these works you will gain eternal glory.*”

Entering the path of Sanyasi



Crocodile Releases Adi Sankara

One day, rishis came to him and reminded him of his duty to the land in spreading spiritualism. Sankara agreed and decided that it was time for him to become a Sanyasi and go all over the country to kindle religious fervor. When Sankara started raising the subject of his embracing the Sanyasi way of life, his mother was very reluctant to give him permission and blessings. One day when Sankara was taking bath, a crocodile caught hold of his leg. Sankara called out to his mother. His mother came running and to her horror found her son in the grip of the crocodile and she cried that she did not know how to help her son. Sankara told his mother that his life was nearing to an end, but if he became a Sanyasi, he could start a new life as Sanyasi. Thus, Sankara obtained permission from his mother to become a Sanyasi. To console his mother, he promised her that he would come back to her at the time of her death and perform the last rites.

Sankara after getting the blessings of his mother to become a Sanyasi, went in search of a Guru to be formally initiated as a Sanyasi. So, from the southern state of Kerala, the young Sankara walked about 2,000 kilometres to the banks of Narmada river in the central plains of India. Here was the Ashramam of Govinda Bagawathpadar, the disciple of Gaudapada, the famous author of the *Mandukya Karikas*. Sankara was accepted as a disciple by Govinda Bhagawathpada, who initiated him into the Paramahansa Order of Sanyasa, the highest order of renunciation.

Blessings of his Guru

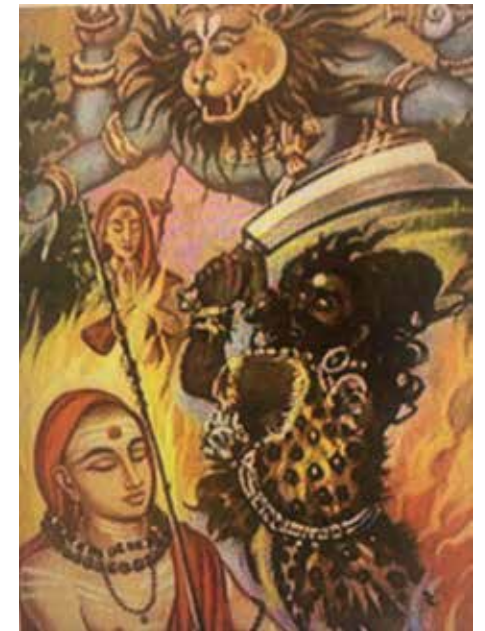
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essence of the Vedantic scriptures. With these works you will gain eternal glory.”

Sankara stayed with Govinda Bhagwathpadar and serving him for four years. His Guru taught all the Vedas to Sankara. During this four year period with his Guru's compassionate guidance, he mastered all the Vedic scriptures.

Seeing the intellectual acumen of his disciple, Guru Govinda Bhagawathpada commanded Sankara to expound the philosophy of Vedanta through commentaries on the principal Upanishads, the Brahma Sutras and the Gita. He also taught him about *Advaita*, the principle that every one in this world is the manifestation of God and that God and Atman are one and the same.

In Sankara's time, there were innumerable sects following their own narrow philosophies and systems of worship. People were totally blind to the underlying common basis of the One God. For their benefit Sankaracharya formulated the six-sect system of worship which brought to the fore the main godheads – Vishnu, Siva, Sakti, Muruga, Ganesa and Surya. He also formulated the rituals and rites to be followed in most of the major temples.



Lord Narasimha about to save Adi Sankara

Sri Sankara's visit to Kasi

Sankara went to Kasi with lots of his disciples and one of them, Sanandhaya, was drying the clothes of his guru and suddenly Sankara called him to the other bank of the river as he needed the clothes urgently. Sanandhaya little realising that he would drown, started walking into the river. However, the Grace of his Guru resulted in a lotus materialising wherever he was keeping his foot. When asked as to how did he cross the river, he said that since it was his Guru who called him, he did not worry about anything. Sankara after this event named him *Padma Padar* (Lotus feet).

When he went another time to Kasi to visit Sri Viswanathar temple, his path was blocked by an untouchable who was accompanied by his wife and four dogs. The disciples of Sankara shouted at him to make way and to keep a distance. *The untouchable smiled and said, according to your principle of Advaita, which you practice, all the Jivatma are same as God. How do you ask me to go? How am I different from your Paramatma? What you say is unreasonable. How can I go away from myself?* Sankara right away realized



that it was not an ordinary person and understood that it was Lord Siva Himself who had come along with His Consort and the Four Vedas. He right away prostrated before the Lord and sang five slokas called **Manisha Panchakam**. Lord Siva presented Himself along with Visalakshi and blessed Sankara.

Sankara's visit to Tirupathi

Sri Sankara visited Tirupathi and recited the sloka "*Vishnu Pathathi Keshanta Stotra*" which describes the Lord from His foot to head. He wanted the people to visit the Lord in great numbers and get His blessings, he established a yantra. From that day on the number of followers of the temple increased and is increasing day by day.

Sri Sankara got the blessings of Vyasa Rishi on his Brahmasutra Bhashyam

When Sankara was sixteen years old, a very old Brahmin of ill health started arguments with him about Brahmasutra Bhashyam which Sankara had written. Sri Sankara was astounded by this old Brahmin's intelligence and arguments and continued the discussion. The arguments continued for days together and the more Sankara argued, his ideas crystallized the old man was none other than Vyasa Maharishi, who was the creator of the Brahmasutra. Sri Sankara told him that he had done a great disrespect to the sage by entering into an argument. Vyasa Maharishi said, "*I fully agree with your Bhashyam and I wanted to establish that yours is correct. I bless that you should live another sixteen years and you should spread this Advaita throughout the country.*"

Final rites for his mother

When Sankara was in Sringeri, he divined by his superior powers that his mother was in her deathbed. As per his promise while taking Sanyasin that he would be by her side when she breathes her last, he reached Kaladi and paid his last respects to his mother. His mother, was happy that her son had come back. Sankara prayed to Lord Venkateswara who appeared in person and blessed Sankara's mother Aryambal. When he tried to arrange the cremation of his mother's body, his relatives refused to help him on the grounds that as a Sanyasi he was not permitted to perform funeral rites. Normally this would have been a serious setback as cremation involves rituals, which would require physical assistance by a few people. So, Sankara performed a miracle. He made a funeral pyre out of plantain stalks. After placing the body on the pyre, he took some water and after chanting a few mantras he sprinkled the water on the pyre. Immediately the pyre caught fire. Thus, he was able to complete the funeral rites without help.

Sri Sankara reduced the fierceness of Goddess Akilandeswari at Thiruvanaikaval

Sri Sankara visited Thiruvanaikaval, near Tiruchi in Tamil Nadu. In this temple, the Goddess Akilandeswari was having fierce power and the people who went to have Her darshan could not stand the fierceness of this Goddess. Sri Sankara therefore created two sets of earrings which are called Tatankam and he presented these to the Goddess. The fierceness of the Goddess reduced. This Tatankam, the earrings, have been maintained over time by the Acharyas of the Kanchi Mutt.

Lord Narsimha saved Sri Sankara from a tribe named Kirakashan

There is forest called Hatakeshwaram, near Srisailam, where no man enters,

because a group of people called Kailas live in the burial grounds and pray to God by giving human and animal sacrifices. Sankara entered this place and did penance for many days. During this time, a Kabalika named Kirakashan appeared before him. Those people were against Advaita which preaches love and affection and shuns violence. He asked Sankara that he should give his body as a human sacrifice to Lord Siva. Sankara was happy to hear this request and agreed. Kirakashan was about to cut off Sankara's head when Lord Narasimha appeared in the form of a lion killed Kirakashan.



Lord Vishnu appearing to Bless Adi Sankara's dying mother

Sri Sankara sets up Sri Badrinarayan Temple

Travelling across the Himalayas, Sri Sankaracharya reached Badrinath, where Lord Vishnu appeared before him and told him and directed him to retrieve an Idol from the Alakananda river bed and install it suitably in a temple. Sri Sankara carried out the direction and the idol of Lord Badinarayana and had the that installed in a temple is now one of the important religious places for Vaishnavites.

Sri Sankara receiving Spatika Lingas from Lord Siva

Sri Sankara reached Kedarnath, where he laid down his mortal body and using his yogic powers, travelled to Kailas with his Sukshama Sarira (spiritual body). He paid obeisance to Lord Siva, who was holding court in Kailas with Goddess Parvati by His side. He sang in praise of Siva's form, from His head to foot and again from foot to head. These verses have come to be known as "*Siva Padadi Kesanta Stotram*" and "*Sri Siva Kesadi Padanta Stotram*". Lord Siva was pleased and gave *Five Spatika (crystal) Lingas* to Sri Sankara.

Sri Sankara descended to earth and assumed his mortal body again. He visited the Pasupathinath temple in Kathmandu, Nepal and established the worship rituals which are being followed even today. He also installed the "*Mukti Linga*", one of the five Spatika Lingas he had been given by Lord Siva Himself.

Back in Kedarnath, Sri Sankara installed therein another Spatika Linga that he had brought from Kailas. His "*Dwadasa Jyotirlinga Stotram*" celebrates the glory of Kedarnath.

Continuing his travel Sankara went to Chidambaram where he installed the "*Moksha Linga*", one of the Panchalingas, and in Sringeri he installed another, the "*Bhogalinga*". He finally reached Kanchipuram where he installed the "*Sri Chakra*" in the temple of Sri Kamakshi. In Kanchi, he established the Kamakoti Matam and kept for his own worship of the last of the Panchalingas, the "*Yogilinga*". This is the same Spatikalinga of Chandramouleswara that is being worshipped at Kanchi Kamko-

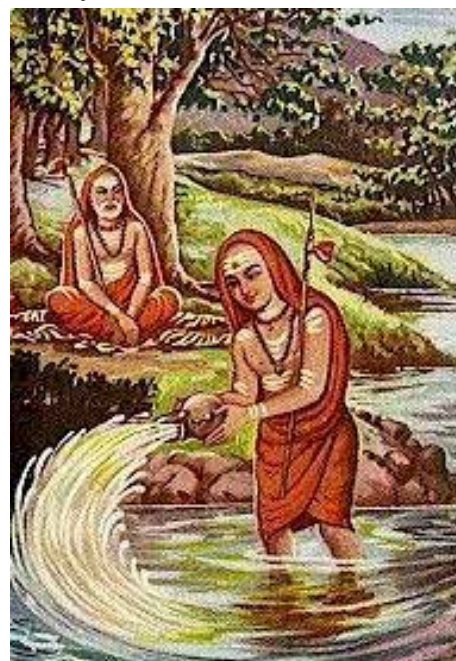
ti Peetram everyday by successive Acharyas even now.

A mysterious thing happened when Sri Sankara visited Thiruvaidaimarudur

Sri Sankara visited Thiruvaidaimarudur in Tanjore District in Tamil Nadu, which is a great religious centre, and the ruling deity at that temple was Lord Siva. The learned Saivites of the temple informed Sri Sankara that Lord Siva is the creator and that they are merely lowly life created by Lord Siva., and if that was so, how does Sri Sankara say that they were one with the Lord? They did not agree with the Advaita principle. So, Sri Sankara asked them to enter the temple. As they reached the Sanctum Sanctorum of the temple, there was a thunderous statement, "Satyam is Advaita". This was repeated thrice and it was followed by a hand which came out of the Linga which confirmed the truth. All the learned persons assembled acknowledged the principle of Advaita and accepted Sri Sankara as their Guru. Even today, there is a Sankara Mutt at Thiruvaidaimarudur and there is a Linga with a hand materialising out of it.

Sri Sankara Visits Chidambaram, Tamil Nadu

Sri Sankara visited Chidambaram renowned as the site where Lord Siva as Nataraja had performed the cosmic dance. He paid homage at the place where his glorious Guru, Gowdapada had received instruction in Sanskrit from Patanjali. He established the Panchakshara and Annakarshana Yantras at the Temple of Lord Nataraja.



Adi Sankara encapsulated the Floods of river in his Kamandalam

Spatika Lingas

Sri Sankara received the Spatika Lingas from Lord Parameswara at Kailas

Ascension of the Sarvajnapitha

Adi Sankara crisscrossed the entire Indian subcontinent by walk, even climbing up the Himalayas to establish Kedarnath and Badrinath shrines, which are among the most revered places of pilgrimage to Hindus.

He also walked his way to North Kashmir, literally thousands of kilometers, to retrieve the Brahma Sutra, composed by Sage Vyasa, which was the essence of all Four Vedas, the ancient Hindu Scriptures. He wrote commentary for it, respectfully called Bhashyam. That was one of the most significant contributions ever made for the survival of Hinduism.

In the course of his travels, Sri Sankara reached Kashmir. There was a temple dedicated to Sarada (Saraswati), the Goddess of learning, which housed the Sarvajnapitha, the Throne of Omniscience. It was a tradi-

tion for philosophers to visit the place and engage in debate. The victorious one would be allowed to ascend the Pitha, till Sankara visited Kashmir and defeated all the others there. He then ascended the Sarvajnapitha with the blessings of Goddess Sarada.

Peetas founded by Sri Adi Sankara

He founded four Sankaracharya Peetas (monasteries), called Matams, in the four corners of India to uphold his spiritual teachings and they are:

1. Sarada Peetam at Sringeri in Karnataka,
2. Kalika Peetam at Dwaraka in Gujarat,
3. Jyothi Peetam at Badrikashramam in Badri, Uttaranchal and
4. Govardhana Peetam in Jagannath in Puri, Orissa.

Great works of Sri Adi Sankara

Adi Sankara's works can be classified under three groups:

1. **Bhashya** Commentary – Commentaries serve to provide a consistent interpretation of the scriptural texts from the perspective of Advaita Vedanta.

He had about 18 commentaries on major scriptural texts including Brahma Sutras, the Bhagavad Gita and twelve major Upanishads,

2. **Prakarana Grantha** (Philosophical Treatise) – Philosophical Treatises provide various methodologies to the student to understand the doctrine. He had close to 20 philosophical treatises, the prominent ones are, Viveka Chudamani, Aatma Bhodha, Vaakya Vritti, Upadesa Sahasri etc.

3. **Stotras** (Devotional Hymns) – Devotional Hymns are rich in poetry and piety, serving to highlight the helplessness of the devotee and the glory of the deity. He had over 70 devotional and meditative hymns like Soundarya Lahari, Sivanand Lahari, Kanakadhaara Stotra, Bhaja Govindam etc.

In addition to writing his own commentaries, Sankara sought out leaders of other schools, in order to engage them in debate. As per the accepted philosophical tradition in India, such debates helped to establish a new philosopher, and also to win disciples and converts from other schools. It was also traditional for the loser in the debate to become disciple of the winner. Thus, Sankara debated with Buddhist philosophers, with followers of Samkhya system and with Purvamimamsas, the followers of Vedic ritualism, and proved more than capable in defeating all his opponents in debate. Sankara then sought out Kumarilabhata, the foremost proponent of the Purvamimamsa in his age, but Kumarilabhata was on his deathbed and directed Sankara to Visvarupa, his disciple. Visvarupa was also called as Mandanamisra and he finally won him over. In his short life span of 32 years, he became one of the greatest teachers of the Vedas. The only weapon he used for this achievement was pure knowledge and spirituality.

His worldly work, now complete, Sri Sankara wanted to be united with *The One*. He worshipped Devi Kamakshi, reciting the "*Tirupurasundari Veda Padastavam*". As the verses ended, Sri Sankara united with Devi Parasakthi.



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Guest Speakers

Sudha Coomarasamy on Developmental Milestones for Children Under the age of Twelve



SUDHA COOMARASAMY IS A REGISTERED PSYCHOTHERAPIST, AND HAS 25 YEARS OF EXPERIENCE PROVIDING MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELLING TO DIVERSE COMMUNITIES, IN ONTARIO. CURRENTLY, SUDHA WORKS WITH FAMILY SERVICES OF YORK REGION. AS COUNSELLOR AT ST. JOSEPH'S WOMEN'S HEALTH CENTRE FOR 17 YEARS, SUDHA PROVIDED TRAUMA INFORMED THERAPY FOR WOMEN DEALING WITH, CHILDHOOD SEXUAL ABUSE, WAR TRAUMA, REFUGEE EXPERIENCE AND PARTNER ABUSE. FOR THE LAST 8 YEARS SUDHA HAS BEEN WORKING WITH INDIVIDUALS, COUPLES AND FAMILIES. SUDHA IS A CERTIFIED TRIPLE P (POSITIVE PARENTING) PRACTITIONER SINCE 2013. SUDHA IS ALSO A TRAINED BEREAVEMENT COUNSELLOR AND IS A VOLUNTEER WITH BEREAVED FAMILIES OF ONTARIO.

Aruna Lambotharan on Children's Physical and Neurological Development

Dr. Aruna Lambotharan is a medical graduate from the University of Jaffna. She was one of the founding members of Shanthiham - The Association for Health and counselling in Jaffna, and was trained there during her undergraduate years. She completed her internship in Castle Street Hospital for Women and the National Hospital of Sri Lanka. Thereafter, she served as a medical officer at the psychiatric hospital in Mullariyawa. She completed her Diploma in Obstetrics and Gynaecology at the University of Otago, New Zealand and completed her GP training in New Zealand. She immigrated to Canada in 2004 to be with her extended family and began working as a Family Physician in Toronto since then. She is also a loving mother of three children and a caring daughter to her mother.



Dr. Nirusha Thavarajah and Mr. Kandeephan Ganeshalingam on Prioritizing Mental Health and Well-Being for our Children – Parents' & Educators' Perspective



Dr. Nirusha Thavarajah and Kandeephan Ganeshalingam are husband and wife and parents of two children. Dr. Thavarajah is a professor at the University of Toronto, and Kandeephan is a Secondary School Principal with the York Region District School Board. They were born in Sri Lanka and spent most of their primary years in Sri Lanka during the Civil War. They completed their Secondary School and Graduate Studies in Canada. Their personal and professional experiences have instilled in them the importance and commitment to cultivating a healthy environment. As individuals, parents, and educators, they always have prioritized mental health and well-being in themselves, their children, and students.

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MONSOON JOURNAL IS NOW ENTERING 15TH YEAR IN CIRCULATION

The days, they pass slowly. The years, however, they fly by.

.....

It feels as though it were only yesterday you and I awaited Harrish's arrival from school at the Lincoln lane bus stop. We often would make one of my favorite sweets, kesari, to pass the time during the school day. I did close to nothing to contribute to the final product, besides constantly pestering you when it was my turn to add, saffron, or what i always called it, "the yellow thing."

After a long day of playing outside (as I did almost every day), I would ask you to massage my legs, and in return, you'd ask me to pull your white hairs, as if that would masterfully halt them from returning. I looked back to this moment often throughout the last month and half.

The seemingly minor moments at the time are the grandest as I reflect. Your soft smiles. Your soundless laughs. Your patience while you waited for me to come home, no matter how late, just to ensure I was okay. There are so many memories with you I remember so vividly. I will hold onto these forever.

You'd often ask me, when i would eventually begin my career, to take you out so we could do a number of things together. It seems fate has decided there was no way for me to repay all that you have done for me.

As of late, I have found myself asking, why was I graced with a mother so devoted to her children, so devoted however that she forgot to take as good of care of herself? Where is the lesson here, life?

The last month and a half have been so difficult mummy. I wanted to share the pain you endured so badly, just to give you a moment of peace each day. And with each day I visited, I had to conjure the courage to face you in your declining condition. The care team would

constantly tell us how dire the situation was, and how you deteriorated each day. This made me pessimistic, although Harrish and dad never chose to believe them, which gave me hope. The attitude was always, no way, not Mummy, she's tough as nails. In 2017, you picked yourself up off the ground. When the care team said you likely would not walk again, given the significant muscle atrophy, given the infections, given the organ failure, you defied the odds, walking with independence like nothing happened. I remember you'd often remind us, "look at where I was, and look at me now."

The last few weeks I began to feel hopeful. You started to speak to me, albeit with confusion, you spoke. Each day was its own battle. I would often come see you and just cry. Just to be alone, you and I. I found solace in that. When I would cry, its almost as if a switch turned on in your head, and you were back to reality. "Enna appu" (what is it appu (term of endearment)), you'd ask, with your arm extending toward me.

Last week you told me, "renda pairem Mummiyoda padungo," referring to your two sons, Harrish and I. (the two of you

sleep with me) I gravely wish i could have. And today, now more than ever, I wish we could lay together, and wake up ready for tomorrow. I will weep in sadness as I continue to grasp with this new reality.

In your last moments, I recalled something you often told me. Neega vayitila irkekka, naan ovrenallum solum thuckali columbum sappiduvan (when you were in my stomach, I ate tomato curry and rice almost every day). Maybe that's what has given me the strength to be the man I am today. Later that night, I ate that exact thing, hoping to feel that much more connected to you, to feel that strength you gave me many times before.

You and dad have given the world to Harrish and I. When I see you again, I will tell you how we changed it.

Until next time, my dearest mummy.

By: Danesh Thirukumaran
Dayton, NJ

.....



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