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## Tamil Nadu Elections 2021

Elections on April 6th and results expected on May 6th

Keen contest between AIADMK and DMK

Actors Kamal Haasan and Kushbu named candidates



Current Chief Minister Edappadi Palanisamy



DMK Leader Stalin



Actor Kamal Haasan



Actress Khushbu

By Siva Sivapragasam

The sixteenth legislative assembly election of Tamil Nadu was held on 6th April 2021, to elect Members of the Legislative Assembly from 234 constituencies in the state of Tamil Nadu in India. The results are expected to be released during the first week of May.

Tamil Nadu is the largest state in India and its population is around fifty million. Tamil Nadu is also the citadel of Tamil culture, music, and dance. The

towering temples in Rameswaram on the southern tip of India, the Madurai Meenatchi Amman temple and the Thanjavur Sivan Temple built by the great Chola King Raja Raja Cholan, and famous for its architecture are testimony of Tamil culture.

The counting of votes is on May 2. A keen contest is expected between AIADMK, which is hoping for a hat-trick and DMK that wants to wrest power after 10 years. This is the first election after the demise of legendary political leaders and

former Chief Ministers Jayalalithaa and M. Karunanidhi.

Cinema actors have entered the election contest this time. Actors Kamal Haasan and Khushbu have been named candidates for the election. Mr. Kamal Haasan is contesting in Coimbatore South. Actors Radhika and husband Sarath Kumar have pledged support for Kamal Haasan and his party.

Tamil Nadu faces a five-cornered battle - The AIADMK led alliance with Edappadi K. Palaniswami as its Chief

Ministerial face is seeking a renewed mandate.

DMK president M.K. Stalin, is heading an alliance and is making a strong pitch to form a government with him as Chief Minister for the first time.

There is also T.T.V. Dhinakaran-led AMMK in alliance with DMDK and AIMIM. Tamil nationalist party Naam Thamilar Katchi and new entrant Kamal Haasan's Makkal Needhi Maiam are also in the fray.

## Ontario faces 28 days of lockdown due to record number of COVID-19 cases fueled by virus strains

Ontario has declared a four-week state of emergency and lockdown after hitting a record for the number of Covid-19 patients in intensive care, driven by virus strains that are more contagious and dangerous.

The provincial government order imposes restrictions on businesses and residents across the Canadian province of 14.7 million people, beginning April 3. Restaurants will not be allowed to open for indoor or patio dining except for take-out orders.

Malls will have limited and restricted capacity for shoppers. Indoor public events are banned, with few exceptions. Supermarkets and pharmacies will operate at 50% capacity and other retailers at 25%.

Open houses are prohibited. Property viewings can take place by appointment only. Gyms, as well as outdoor classes, are closed to the public under shutdown. The province has said that elementary schools, high schools and child-care centres will remain open throughout the shutdown.

Health officials have warned that the situation in Toronto would be much worse if not for its lockdown, because the virus is more contagious than it was earlier in the pandemic.

Although vaccination is proceeding rapidly with more centers opened, there is still a long way to go for a sizeable number of persons to be vaccinated in the province of Ontario.

"The variants of concern are spreading rapidly. This is a new pandemic. We are now fighting a new enemy," Ontario Premier Doug Ford said at a news conference held recently.



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# Ontario Implements Provincewide Emergency Brake

## All 34 Public Health Unit Regions to Move into Shutdown

April 1, 2021

### Office of the Premier

TORONTO —The Ontario government, in consultation with the Chief Medical Officer of Health and other health experts, is imposing a provincewide emergency brake as a result of an alarming surge in case numbers and COVID-19 hospitalizations across the province. The provincewide emergency brake will be effective Saturday, April 3, 2021, at 12:01 a.m. and the government intends to keep this in place for at least four weeks.

Details were provided today by Premier Doug Ford, Christine Elliott, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health, Dr. David Williams, Chief Medical Officer of Health, and Dr. Adalsteinn (Steini) Brown, Co-Chair of the Ontario COVID-19 Science Advisory Table.

“We are facing a serious situation and drastic measures are required to contain the rapid spread of the virus, especially the new variants of concern,” said Premier Ford. “I know pulling the emergency brake will be difficult on many people across the province, but we must try and prevent more people from getting infected and overwhelming our hospitals. Our vaccine rollout is steadily increasing, and I encourage everyone who is eligible to get vaccinated. That is our best protection against this deadly virus.”

Ontario’s key indicators and latest modelling show that additional measures must be taken. From March 26 to 28, 2021, provincial case rates have increased by 7.7 per cent to 101.1 cases per 100,000 people. Current COVID-19 related ICU admissions are already over the peak of wave two and hospitals in regional hotspots will need to further ramp down scheduled surgeries. COVID-19 related ICU admissions are projected to exceed 650 beds in a few weeks. These increases are being driven by COVID-19 variants, which are transmitted easily and result in a higher risk of death and hospitalization, including in younger populations.

The provincewide emergency brake



would put in place time-limited public health and workplace safety measures to help to stop the rapid transmission of COVID-19 variants in communities, protect hospital capacity and save lives. Measures include, but are not limited to:

- Prohibiting indoor organized public events and social gatherings and limiting the capacity for outdoor organized public events or social gatherings to a 5-person maximum, except for gatherings with members of the same household (the people you live with) or gatherings of members of one household and one other person from another household who lives alone.
- Restricting in-person shopping in all retail settings, including a 50 per cent capacity limit for supermarkets, grocery stores, convenience stores, indoor farmers’ markets, other stores that primarily sell food and pharmacies, and 25 per cent for all other retail including big box stores, along with other public health and workplace safety measures;
- Prohibiting personal care services;
- Prohibiting indoor and outdoor dining. Restaurants, bars and other food or drink establishments will be permitted to operate by take-out, drive-through, and delivery only;
- Prohibiting the use of facilities for indoor or outdoor sports and recreational fitness (e.g., gyms) with very limited exceptions;
- Requiring day camps to close; and,

- Limiting capacity at weddings, funerals, and religious services, rites or ceremonies to 15 per cent occupancy per room indoors, and to the number of individuals that can maintain two metres of physical distance outdoors. This does not include social gatherings associated with these services such as receptions, which are not permitted indoors and are limited to five people outdoors.

On the advice of the Chief Medical Officer of Health, all Ontarians are asked to limit trips outside the home to necessities such as food, medication, medical appointments, supporting vulnerable community members, or exercising outdoors with members of their household. Employers in all industries should make every effort to allow employees to work from home.

“Ontario, like many other provinces and jurisdictions around the world, is in the third wave of the COVID-19 pandemic and immediate action is required to help turn the tide,” said Christine Elliott, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health. “Implementing a provincewide emergency brake was not an easy decision to make and is not one we take lightly. As we continue to vaccinate more Ontarians, the end is in sight, but right now these necessary measures will help to stop the spread of variants in our communities, protect capacity in our health care system, and save lives.”

The current COVID-19 Response Framework: Keeping Ontario Safe

and Open, will be paused when the provincewide emergency brake comes into effect. The impacts of these time-limited measures will be evaluated throughout the next four weeks to determine if it is safe to lift any restrictions or if they need to be extended. With more than \$1.6 billion invested to protect against COVID-19, schools remain safe for students and staff. Keeping schools open is critical to the mental health and well-being of Ontario youth. During the emergency shutdown, schools will remain open for in-person learning with strict safety measures in place. The spring break will continue as planned for the week of April 12. In order to support working families, child care will remain open during the shutdown. Child care settings will continue to adhere to stringent health and safety measures so that they remain safe places for children and staff.

“In the last few weeks a significant increase in COVID-19 cases and variants of concern has been observed across Ontario which has put considerable strain on our public health and health care systems,” said Dr. David Williams, Chief Medical Officer of Health. “Implementing a provincewide shutdown is needed to bring the third wave of this pandemic under control so that we can save lives, keep our education system open and allow our vaccination program to take hold.”

Via [news.ontario.ca](https://news.ontario.ca)

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Monsoon Journal Greet readers, advertisers and distribution outlets a Happy April - Spring festival season

APRIL  
4

HAPPY PASSOVER  
HAPPY EASTER

APRIL  
13/14

HAPPY 'PILAVA' VARUDAM  
SINHALA NEW YEAR  
HAPPY UGADI  
HAPPY VAISAKHI

## International Day of Conscience 2021:

*Only Conscience Can Save Our World From Today's Pressing Global Challenges Including the COVID-19 Pandemic*

By Harrish Thirukumar

"Conscience empowers people to tolerate, forgive, and love one another, and thus it shortens the distance between people and between nations." This is a sentiment that is advanced by the Federation of World Peace and Love (FOWPAL). It is also an attitude that is beneficial mentally and emotionally for us all as we live in a society caught in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, social isolation, and extremism. FOWPAL is an international organization dedicated towards striving for peace. It was established by Dr. Hong, Tao-Tze in the United States in 2000. It has visited 101 nations, promoting the ideas of love and peace through various means, such as holding World Leader Summits of Love and Peace, hosting ceremonies of ringing the Bell of World Peace and Love, conducting cultural exchanges, having dialogues with world leaders, as well as initiating and promoting declarations on peace.

On February 5, 2019, Dr. Tao Tze and FOWPAL have campaigned to receive endorsement from the United Nations (UN) for an International Day of Conscience. On July 25, 2019, during its 73rd session, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a draft resolution submitted by the Kingdom of Bahrain in its 73rd session. It was entitled "Promoting the Culture of Peace with Love and Conscience," declaring April 5 the International Day of Conscience. To date, the declaration has been translated into 41 languages and endorsed by people in 185 nations.

From a UN perspective, a job of facilitating a culture of peace needs comprehensive educational, cultural, social and civic action. In this sense, each person has something to learn and something to give and share, which addresses all ages and all groups. It is an open-minded global strategy guided by a specific purpose, namely, to make a culture of peace a

natural aspect of our culture as it is now in order to take root in people's hearts and minds.

Peace is not only the absence of differences and conflicts. It is a positive, dynamic, participatory process linked intrinsically to democracy, justice and development for all by which differences are respected, dialogue is promoted, and conflicts are constantly transformed by non-violent means into new avenues of cooperation.

In terms of the UN's role, it has and continues to strive towards that culture of peace with intercultural dialogue through the work of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). It organizes activities around a culture of peace and non-violence and makes efforts in promoting a culture of peace through a number of practical projects. These can take place in areas of youth, education, media and migration, in collaboration with governments, international organizations, foundations and civil society groups, as well as the media and the private sector.

Upon examining closer to home, there are various non-profit organizations along with governments around the Greater Toronto Area and elsewhere in Ontario that is dedicated towards intercultural dialogue for that culture of peace in various ways. This includes the Government of Ontario, City of Toronto as well as the Mosaic Institute. They are ways that we can facilitate that intercultural dialogue for that culture and conscience of peace. For the second year in this day of observance on April 5, 2021, FOWPAL is encouraging all to share their own meaningful stories of being guided by conscience. You can submit stories to [icday@fowpal.org](mailto:icday@fowpal.org) via writing, video, art or animation.

In line with FOWPAL, only conscience can save our world from today's pressing local and global challenges such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

### Canada Historic Milestones

April 15, 1912

The RMS Titanic sinks off the coast of Newfoundland, a mere five days after leaving on its maiden voyage from Southampton, England.

Some 700 of the 2200 people on board survive; 1500 are lost.

There are more than 20 Canadians aboard the ship when it hits an iceberg, including Charles M. Hays, president of the Grand Trunk Railway, his wife Clara, and his daughter and son-in-law, Orion and Thornton Davidson. Hays and his party are travelling home to Montréal and plan to attend the grand opening of the Château Laurier Hotel in Ottawa on April 26, 1912. The two women survive the sinking, but both men perish.

The RMS Carpathia will bring the survivors to New York City, while many victims will be brought to Halifax, Nova Scotia.



If you want to lift yourself up,  
lift up someone else.

- Booker T. Washington

(April 5, 1856 - November 14, 1915) American educator, author



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

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# Ontario Extends COVID-19 Vaccination Booking to More Age Groups

## Province makes steady progress on vaccine rollout and leads country with doses administered

April 1, 2021

TORONTO — The Ontario government is extending booking for COVID-19 vaccination appointments to more age groups through its provincial booking system in 10 public health units on Friday, April 2, 2021.

As of 8:00 a.m. booking eligibility for COVID-19 vaccination appointments at mass immunization clinics will extend to more Ontarians in the following regions:

Individuals aged 60 and over:

- Toronto Public Health; and
- Peel Public Health.

Individuals aged 70 and over:

- North Bay Parry Sound District;
- Peterborough Public Health;
- Eastern Ontario Health Unit;
- Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge District Health Unit;

• Hastings Prince Edward Public Health;

• Thunder Bay District Health Unit;

• Northwestern Health Unit; and

• Public Health Sudbury and Districts.

The following 10 public health units are already booking individuals aged 70 and over:

- City of Hamilton Public Health Services;
- Grey Bruce Health Unit;
- Kingston, Frontenac and Lennox & Addington Public Health;
- Lambton Public Health;
- Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit;
- Niagara Region Public Health;
- Ottawa Public Health;
- Simcoe-Muskoka District Health Unit;
- Timiskaming Health Unit; and
- York Region Public Health.

As of March 31, 2021, at 8:00 p.m., over 81 per cent of Ontario residents aged 80 and over have received at least one dose of the COVID-19 vaccine and more than half of residents aged 75 to 79 have now received their



first shot.

As the immunization program continues to expand, more Ontarians are gaining a higher level of protection against the virus, which will help to save lives.

Ontario continues to work with public health units to vaccinate remaining Phase One populations. Public health units have been directed to consider accessibility issues in their plans, as well as work with community part-

ners to develop strategies to remove barriers to access and improve uptake in at-risk communities.

Vaccine administration rates are based on local context and may differ as vaccine supply is delivered across the province. For more information on local vaccine rollout, individuals are encouraged to contact their local public health unit.

Via [news.ontario.ca/](https://news.ontario.ca/)

## Ontario Expanding Pharmacy and Primary Care Locations for COVID-19 Vaccinations

### Locations across the province offering AstraZeneca vaccine to individuals aged 55+

April 1, 2021

#### Health

TORONTO — The Ontario government is steadily increasing capacity in its COVID-19 vaccine rollout with the addition of over 350 additional pharmacies and more primary care settings across the province. All of these locations will be offering the AstraZeneca vaccine to individuals aged 55 and over, with some locations to begin offering the vaccine as early as Saturday, April 3, 2021.

“Ontario’s capacity to get needles in arms continues to grow by the day,” said Premier Doug Ford. “Thanks to the determination and commitment of members of Team Ontario we are ahead of schedule and administering more vaccines than all of the other provinces combined. We are ready to dramatically increase the number of vaccines we can administer once we receive a steady and reliable supply from the federal government.”

Earlier this month, Ontario began offering the vaccine to individuals aged 60 and over at pharmacies and primary care settings. With today’s expansion bringing the total number of pharmacies offering the vaccine to nearly 700 locations, it is expected that this number could reach approximately 1,500 by the end of April.

“Thanks to the hard work of our dedicated frontline health care providers, Ontario’s vaccine rollout in primary care settings and pharmacy settings has been a success,” said Christine Elliott, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health. “With more locations coming

on board, these settings will make receiving the COVID-19 vaccine easier and more convenient for eligible

populations across the province. I encourage everyone to sign up when it’s their turn. Until we receive enough vaccines so that the majority of Ontarians can be vaccinated it remains critical for everyone to continue following public health measures we know work and keep us safe.”

The province also continues to work with primary care professionals to offer vaccinations in primary care settings and community locations, such as physician offices, in collaboration with public health units. This initiative is expanding from locations in six public health unit regions to offering the vaccine in every region across the province covering all 34 public health units. Additional pharmacies and primary care settings will continue to join and increase access points for vaccine across the province.

“As we bring more distribution channels on board, we need a consistent and reliable flow of vaccines to ensure all Ontarians who want to be vaccinated will receive that vital shot in their arm,” said Solicitor General Sylvia Jones. “With the increasing spread of variants of concern and case counts in the thousands each day, we encourage everyone who is eligible to get vaccinated and protect yourself and your family. For those still waiting, please be patient as your turn is coming.”

Via [news.ontario.ca/](https://news.ontario.ca/)



## Prime Minister's remarks updating Canadians on COVID-19 vaccine deliveries, public health, and infrastructure investments

March 30, 2021

Hello, everyone.

I am very pleased to be here this morning with ministers Hajdu and Anand, and Drs. Tam and Njoo.

We’ve a lot of ground to cover this morning so let’s get right into it.

I’ll begin with vaccines.

This morning, I visited the vaccination clinic at the Nepean Sportsplex, here in Ottawa.

It was great to see more and more people getting vaccinated.

People were in a good mood. A lot of folks were there with their elderly parents. Everyone was chatty and focused.

But quite frankly, it was the amazing volunteers who were working so hard who really encouraged us all and we saw smiles on everyone’s faces.

I also had the chance to chat with a few of the many healthcare workers who are part of this vaccination effort.

They’re all doing an incredible job during this really tough time.

My job as a politician is usually going around shaking hands so that wasn’t the challenge we got to do. There was a number of older folks who I needed to remind that an elbow bump is the way we do it but we’re all figuring it out how to navigate through this. And the fact that so many people are getting vaccinated is a really good thing. Our frontline workers have given up a lot to stay safe. Last week, I spoke to nurses from the Victoria General Hospital in Winnipeg.

They shared what this past year has been like — caring for isolated patients in serious situations, sometimes being their only point of contact,



and holding an iPad or holding their hands while family members watched through a window.

It was incredibly difficult and incredibly challenging for health-care workers across the country. Even more so, when it comes to the fears that on returning home, they might be bringing home this disease to their families.

It’s been incredibly stressful but they continue to step up every single day. And all of us need to make sure we’re doing the best we can to keep them from getting overwhelmed and overloaded with new cases. But everything they do makes them the heroes of this pandemic.

Right now, our number one priority is to ensure that as many Canadians as possible are vaccinated as quickly as possible. And we are working tirelessly to get there. To date, more than 6 million vaccine doses have been delivered to the provinces and territories. This week, we will be receiving our largest delivery thus far: 3.2 million doses.

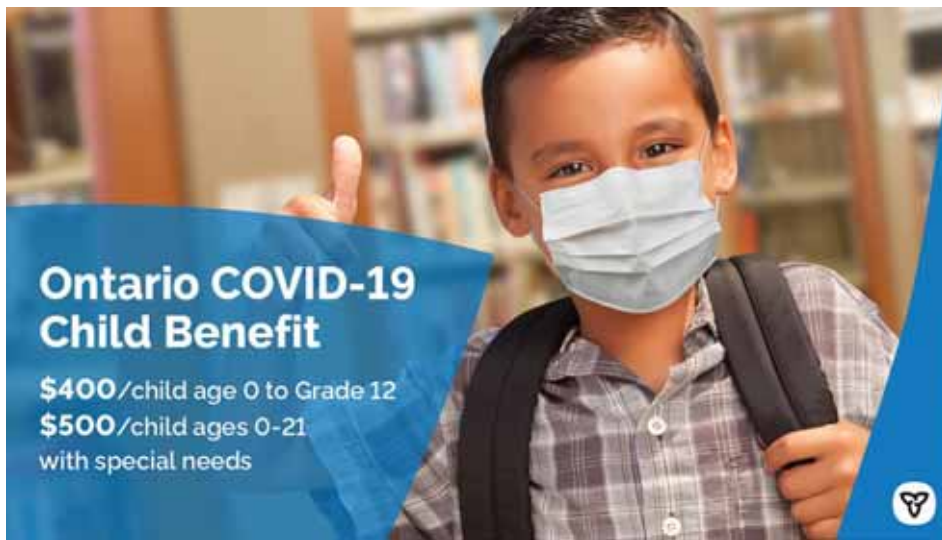
It includes scheduled deliveries from Pfizer and Moderna, as well as 1.5 million vaccine doses from AstraZeneca that will be received today from the United States. **Contd. next page**





# Province Doubles Support for Parents With New Ontario COVID-19 Child Benefit

## \$980 Million Investment Part of 2021 Budget, Ontario's Action Plan



March 31, 2021

### Education

TORONTO — The Ontario government is providing parents with \$980 million in direct support as part of the Ontario COVID-19 Child Benefit. Under this new round of funding, payments will be doubled to \$400 per child and \$500 for a child with special needs to help offset additional learning costs. This investment is part of the 2021 Budget, Ontario's Action Plan: Protecting People's Health and Our Economy.

Details were provided today by Stephen Lecce, Minister of Education, Peter Bethlenfalvy, Minister of Finance and President of the Treasury Board, and Lindsey Park, MPP for Durham.

"Since day one of this pandemic, our government has invested in safe schools, while also providing direct financial relief to hard working moms and dads," said Stephen Lecce, Minister of Education. "With greater access to vaccines, we will defeat this pandemic. Until we get there, our government will continue to step up to support families with additional financial support and child care relief."

The government is automatically providing this round of payments to parents who received Support for Learners payments, and they can expect money to begin flowing on April 26, 2021. Parents who did not apply for or receive the Support for Learners program can apply for the new funding starting May 3 with a deadline of May 17.

Parents will receive \$400 for each child aged 0 to Grade 12 and \$500 for children and youth 21 years old or younger with special needs, doubling the \$200 and \$250 received in the last round. This brings the government's direct support to parents since the start of the pandemic to more than \$1.8 billion.

"Every parent in Ontario has faced new pressures due to COVID-19," said

Minister Bethlenfalvy. "For some, that includes financial challenges caused by the pandemic. For many, it includes new expenses to support virtual learning or child care. And for all, it includes anxiety about their child's future in a world that will look different than it does today. While our government can't make this pressure go away, we can provide a helping hand. By putting more money back into parents' pockets, Ontario families will be stronger. And strong families make a strong province."

In the 2021 Budget, Ontario also announced that, to help parents with the cost of child care and return to the workforce, the government is proposing a 20 per cent enhancement to the Childcare Access and Relief from Expenses (CARE) tax credit for 2021. This would increase support from \$1,250 to \$1,500, on average, providing about \$75 million in additional support for the child care expenses of over 300,000 families. The CARE tax credit gives eligible families the flexibility to pick the child care option that works best for them, including child care provided in centres, homes and camps.

"To fully recover, we know affordable child care will be critical," added Minister Lecce. "While we need the federal government to dramatically step up support for child care — currently supporting only 2.5 per cent of childcare costs in Ontario — our government is taking immediate action to help parents save more on their child care costs."

Healthy people are essential for a healthy economy. With vaccines being distributed, hope is on the horizon. Ontario's Action Plan: Protecting People's Health and Our Economy provides the resources necessary to finish the battle with COVID-19, building on the government's record investments to protect health and jobs during the global pandemic.

Via [news.ontario.ca](http://news.ontario.ca)

## Prime Minister's remarks...

Contd. from page 5

As we've been saying for months — and as we've been planning with provinces and territories since last year — the end of March will be followed by an increase in vaccine supply.

We now have handily exceeded our promised target of 6 million doses delivered before April.

And this week, we begin our ramp-up phase. Throughout April and May, a million doses a week are scheduled to arrive from Pfizer alone — plus Moderna, plus AstraZeneca. And for June, we have good news to share this morning. Pfizer has now confirmed that they will be moving up 5 million doses from later in the summer into June. That will bring our total from 4.6 million to 9.6 million doses for that month alone. Of course, that's in addition to the other doses of the Moderna and AstraZeneca vaccines that we'll also get. A lot of doses being delivered means a lot of people who are able to get their shot.

If you haven't had your vaccine already, it might be your turn or a family member's turn soon. If you want to learn more about vaccine safety and effectiveness, there'll be a Facebook Live event tomorrow where Dr. Tam, Dr. Njoo, and other experts will answer Canadians' questions directly. To attend or get more information, go to the "Healthy Canadians" Facebook page. Today, I also want to talk about where we are with the virus, and what that means going forward.

In some places, cases of COVID-19 are holding steady or even going down. And especially in long-term care homes, vaccination seems to be making a real difference in protecting people from outbreaks. That said, hospitalizations from COVID-19 remain high. And case numbers are going up in many regions here in Canada, and around the world.

Variants of concern — which can spread more easily and make people even sicker — are increasing quickly.

In B.C. — where the number of cases had been under control — they're now having to put in place new restrictions for the next 3 weeks. I want to extend my full support to Premier Horgan, and all Premiers across the country, as they make tough decisions to keep people safe. As we have since day one, the federal government will have their backs and do whatever it takes to save lives, to protect our frontline workers, and to support jobs and businesses until we get through this.

We are just a few days away from the Easter weekend. And Passover started last Saturday.

This is the second year in a row that these celebrations are taking place during the pandemic.

Unfortunately, it means that we must continue to be very careful.

In the last year, we've seen the number of cases increase after holidays, like after Thanksgiving and Christmas. We must do our utmost to avoid an increase after Easter if we want to stay in the best possible position this spring. I know that it's disappointing,

but we must avoid gatherings. This is not the time to travel.

Keep wearing your masks, wash your hands and use the COVID Alert app. Mass vaccination is well underway. Nice weather is coming. But we have to continue our efforts a little longer. With the recent increase in the number of cases in some areas and the new variants, we cannot let our guard down.

While we continue our efforts to protect Canadians, we must not lose sight of the fact that the pandemic has intensified inequalities around the world and has had a more marked impact on vulnerable populations.

Yesterday, with the Secretary General of the United Nations, António Guterres; the Prime Minister of Jamaica, Andrew Holness; and a number of world leaders, we held a third meeting on development funding.

We discussed concrete solutions to help countries the most adversely affected by the current economic crisis, including over-indebtedness and international assistance.

We must tailor our economic systems to meet urgent global issues, such as extreme poverty, inequalities, and of course, climate change.

Canada is still there to listen and take action, and we will certainly raise these issues at future meetings with the IMF, World Bank, the G20 and G7.

As we rebuild from this pandemic, we have to make sure no one gets left behind.

Yesterday, Ministers McKenna and Monsef announced \$250 million for transit in rural and remote communities.

This fund is part of the unprecedented public transit investment we announced last month, and it is the first federal fund dedicated to rural transit.

This is part of our job to create jobs and fight climate change.

And it's also about building more inclusive communities where seniors can get to their doctor's appointments, and where people of every age can get the services they need.

Before I end today, I want to say a few words about Easter and Passover.

Again this year, we won't have the kinds of celebrations we were all hoping for. Because we just can't afford to let our guard down. I know I've said the same thing before every major holiday over the past year. But this time, what's different is that even if the end of the pandemic is in sight, the variants mean the situation is even more serious.

We're entering the final stretch of this crisis. We just need to stay strong a little longer. More and more vaccine doses are coming every week, so there is reason to be hopeful. So, please, keep yourself and your loved ones safe. Now is not the time to travel. Avoid gatherings and parties, and continue to keep your distance. I know it's not easy but together, we will get through this.

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



## Ontario Appoints New Patient Ombudsman Province Continues to Champion the Voices of Patients and Families

Ontario appoints  
Craig Thompson  
as new Patient  
Ombudsman



March 31, 2021

### Health

TORONTO — The Ontario government has appointed Craig Thompson as Ontario's new Patient Ombudsman to help improve the quality of care and supports patients and their families receive in hospitals, long-term care homes, and select home and community care settings.

"Craig Thompson brings over 30 years of leadership experience in the health care sector and community, including at the Office of the Patient Ombudsman," said Christine Elliott, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health. "As a community leader, he has been a passionate advocate for the voices of patients and caregivers because he knows they can be a powerful catalyst of change. Craig's experience will be invaluable as Patient Ombudsman as Ontario continues to protect the health and safety of individuals and families during COVID-19 and beyond. I have full confidence that Craig will be a great partner in helping to ensure better, connected patient care for all Ontarians."

The Patient Ombudsman investigates and facilitates the resolution of complaints from patients and caregivers concerning public hospitals, long-term care homes and home and community care services that are provided or coordinated through the Local Health Inte-

gration Networks (LHINs). The Patient Ombudsman also makes recommendations to health sector organizations and provides reports to the Minister of Health which inform provincewide health system quality improvement.

The Patient Ombudsman's Office has been operating under Mr. Thompson's leadership as Executive Director for over four years. As the Patient Ombudsman, Mr. Thompson will oversee the Office's work and will continue to advance the current investigation into the experiences of residents and caregivers in long-term care homes during COVID-19. This work will complement the government's independent commission into Ontario's long-term care system which began in July 2020.

"Being appointed Ontario's Patient Ombudsman is a great honour and a tremendous responsibility," said Craig Thompson. "I've always believed in the power of the complaint to uncover unique insights and perspectives that get to what really matters to patients and caregivers. Which is why it is now more important than ever to actively encourage and seek out a diversity of voices so that people from all walks of life and every community in the province are represented and heard. We all deserve a fair and equitable healthcare system and it is my responsibility and the role of this office to make sure it happens."

Via [news.ontario.ca](http://news.ontario.ca)

## Ontario Expands Domestic Vaccine Manufacturing Capacity and Improves Pandemic Preparedness By Investing in Sanofi Province Will Create Hundreds Of Jobs and Increase R&D

March 31, 2021

### Office of the Premier

TORONTO — The Ontario government is partnering with the federal government, the City of Toronto and Sanofi, a leading global biopharmaceutical and vaccines company, to expand its Ontario facility to meet growing demand for flu vaccines, boost Canada's preparedness for future pandemics and create 300 high-quality jobs.

Ontario is investing \$55 million through a performance-based loan, toward construction of Sanofi's \$925 million state-of-art vaccine facility to meet growing demand for flu vaccines, specifically for populations at greater risk of influenza. The company is also committing to an average of \$79 million a year in research and development in Ontario or more than a half a billion dollars over the life of the agreement. Sanofi will also be leveraging leading scientists in the province giving them the industrial R&D experience that is valuable to companies.

"This is a critical investment as it will create 300 high quality jobs and push Ontario toward becoming less reliant on others for the production of flu and potentially other vaccines," said Premier Ford. "By supporting companies like Sanofi we will continue to strengthen our excellent pharmaceutical sector and ensure we are prepared for future public health events with Made in Ontario products."

The investment will enable Sanofi to bulk manufacture Fluzone® High-Dose Quadrivalent Influenza Vaccine, a flu vaccine approved for people 65 years and older, at its historic Connaught site in Toronto. The facility will include industrial scale Formulation, Filling and Packaging, a key requirement for pandemic preparedness.



The project will result in the production of more flu shots in Canada, while strengthening Ontario's biopharmaceutical industry, making the province a strong candidate for future vaccine production. Through this investment, research and development activities will continue at Sanofi's Toronto location and there will be expanded opportunities for the agricultural industry value chain.

"It is critical, now more than ever, that we build the capacity to supply Ontario and all of Canada with flu vaccines," said Vic Fedeli, Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade. "The support we provide Sanofi will build on this province's bio-manufacturing capacity, save lives and help prepare us for any future pandemic emergency."

This new facility is a second large manufacturing mandate for Sanofi at this site. In 2018, Ontario and Sanofi announced another large bulk vaccine manufacturing facility focused on doubling the site's capacity to produce childhood vaccines.

Sanofi Pasteur, a subsidiary of French headquartered Sanofi, is Ontario's largest brand name biopharmaceutical company with a full spectrum of R&D, manufacturing, clinical trials, regulatory and quality affairs and distribution operations.

Via [news.ontario.ca](http://news.ontario.ca)

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## WORLD NEWS

### India donates 200,000 vaccines to protect UN blue helmets against COVID



#### Serum Institute of India

India's gift of COVID Vaccines to UN Peacekeeping departed from Mumbai Airport on Saturday.

27 March 2021

#### Health

India shipped out 200,000 doses of COVID-19 vaccines on Saturday to inoculate UN blue helmets serving in peacekeeping missions.

The donated AstraZeneca vaccines left Mumbai for the Danish capital of Copenhagen, where they will be safely stored and distributed to UN peacekeepers serving in various missions.

Lauding India as "a longstanding and steadfast supporter of peacekeeping", UN peacekeeping chief Jean-Pierre Lacroix said, "an effective roll-out of the COVID-19 vaccine to all peacekeepers is a key priority for the United Nations in order to protect our personnel and their capacity to continue their crucial work, help protect vulnerable communities and deliver on their mandates".

He thanked the Government and people of India for their generous donation to safeguard peacekeeping personnel and "enable them to continue their life-saving work in a safe manner."

#### Vaccinating peacekeepers

The head of UN Operational Support, AtulKhare, said the "important

donation" will ensure that UN peacekeepers remain healthy and "deliver in some of the most difficult environments in the world without relying on already stretched national health systems or ongoing COVAX efforts".

We thank India...[and] remain engaged with our troop and police contributing countries to ensure that wherever possible, uniformed personnel are vaccinated through their national systems prior to deployment".

At the same time, Mr. Khare's department is leading UN system-wide arrangements to support national efforts in vaccinating UN civilian personnel and family members.

India has long played an important role in peacekeeping, particularly through its contribution of troops. Currently, more than 95 thousand UN peacekeepers are deployed in 12 missions.

Meanwhile, the UN Resident Coordinator in India, Renata Desalien, "heartily" thanked India for its "generous gesture of solidarity and support".

"This step, especially for the United Nations, reflects India's strong commitment to global peace and multilateralism", she said.

Via [news.un.org](https://news.un.org)

### Indians Gather for Holi Celebrations as Virus Cases Surge

By Associated Press

March 29, 2021 12:03 PM

NEW DELHI - Hindus

threw colored powder and sprayed water in massive Holi celebrations Monday despite many Indian states restricting gatherings to try to contain a coronavirus resurgence rippling across the country.

Holi marks the advent of spring and is widely celebrated throughout Hindu-majority India. Most years, millions of people throw colored powder at each other in outdoor celebrations. But for the second consecutive year, people were encouraged to stay at home to avoid turning the festivities into superspreader events amid the latest virus surge.

India's confirmed infections have exceeded 60,000 daily over the past



Indians smeared in color participate in Holi festival celebrations in Gauhati, India, March 29, 2021, when Hindus threw colored powder and sprayed water in massive celebrations. Many Indian states restricted to contain a rippling coronavirus resurgence.

week from a low of about 10,000 in February. On Monday, the health ministry reported 68,020 new cases, the sharpest daily rise since October last year. It took the nationwide tally to more than 12 million.

### India Confirms More Than 80,000 New Daily COVID Cases



Hajira, a Kashmiri woman, receives a vaccine for COVID-19 at a primary health center in Srinagar, Indian-controlled Kashmir, April 1, 2021

By VOA News

April 02, 2021 03:58 AM

India's health ministry Friday reported 81,466 new COVID cases in the previous 24-hour period. The new tally is the South Asian country's highest daily count in six months. The western state of Maharashtra has more than half of the new cases with 43,183.

India has 12.3 million COVID infections. Only the U.S and Brazil have more cases, with 30.5 million and 12.8 million respectively, according to Johns Hopkins Coronavirus Resource Center. Hopkins reports there are more than 129.6 million global infections.

In Brazil's largest city, gravediggers are exhuming bodies from old graves to make way for the latest victims of the coronavirus. Gravediggers in hazmat suits are working diligently in Sao Paulo's Vila Nova Cachoeirinha cemetery to accommodate the growing number of bodies.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration said Thursday that vaccine manufacturer Moderna will be allowed to place 15 doses of its COVID vaccine in the same size vial that the pharmaceutical company has been using to contain 10 doses.

Moderna said in a statement on its

website that "the 15-dose vials will begin shipping in the coming weeks."

Chris Whitty, England's chief medical officer, said recently during a Royal Society of Medicine webinar that the coronavirus "is not going to go away." He said, "We are going to have to manage it rather like we manage the flu. ... We have to accept that."

The World Health Organization says Europe's COVID-19 vaccination efforts are "unacceptably slow" in the face of a new surge of the virus and new, more contagious variants.

Dr. Hans Kluge, WHO's European director, issued a statement Thursday urging the continent's leaders to "speed up the process by ramping up manufacturing, reducing barriers to administering vaccines, and using every single vial we have in stock, now."

The number of new infections across Europe had fallen below 1 million just five weeks ago, but the global health agency says those numbers have since surged to 1.6 million new cases, with nearly 24,000 deaths.

Kluge said barely 10% of people across Europe have received at least one dose of a vaccine, with just 4% fully vaccinated.

Via [voanews.com](https://voanews.com)

Daily deaths rose by 291 and the virus has so far killed 161,843 people in the country. The latest surge is centered in the western state of Maharashtra where authorities have tightened travel restrictions and imposed night curfews. It is considering a strict lockdown.

Cases are also rising in the capital New Delhi and states of Punjab, Karnataka, Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, Haryana and Madhya Pradesh.

The surge coincides with multi-stage state elections marked by large gatherings and roadshows, and the Kumbh Mela, or pitcher festival, celebrated in northern Haridwar city, where tens of thousands of Hindu devotees daily take a holy dip into the Ganges river.

Health experts worry that unchecked gatherings can lead to clus-

ters, adding the situation can be controlled if vaccination is opened up for more people and COVID-19 protocols are strictly followed.

India, with a population of more than 1.3 billion, has vaccinated around 60 million people, of which only 9 million have received both doses of vaccine so far.

However, more than 60 million doses manufactured in India have been exported abroad, prompting widespread criticism that domestic needs should be catered to first.

The government said last week that there would be no immediate increase in exports. It said vaccines will be given to everyone over 45 starting April 1.

Via [voanews.com](https://voanews.com)





# Human Rights Council strengthens rights office probe into Sri Lanka's long civil war

23 March 2021

## Human Rights

The United Nations Human Rights Council has been given a mandate to collect and preserve information and evidence of crimes related to Sri Lanka's 37-year long civil war that ended in 2009.

The 47-member council on Tuesday adopted a resolution on Tuesday, brought by Britain on behalf of a group of countries, boosting UN rights chief, Michelle Bachelet's staff and powers, with a view to future prosecutions.

22 countries voted in favour of the text, 11 opposed and 14 abstained, including Sri Lanka's neighbours, India and Nepal and most Muslim majority countries, except for Pakistan, Bangladesh and Uzbekistan, who voted against the motion.

### 'Deteriorating situation'

In the resolution the Human Rights Council expressed "deep concern" at the "deteriorating situation" in Sri Lanka, and criticised the erosion of judicial independence, marginalisation



UN Photo / Violaine Martin  
43rd session of the Human Rights Council.

of minorities and impunity.

The text pointed to trends emerging over the past year, which according to Elisabeth Tichy-Fisslberger, speaking on behalf of the European Union, represent clear early "warning signs of a deteriorating human rights situation in Sri Lanka"

In his introductory comments, UK Representative to the UN in Geneva, Julian Braithwaite, warned of trends which "threaten to reverse the limited gains made in recent years and risked the recurrence of policies and practices that gave rise to the grave violations

of the past."

Tichy-Fisslberger highlighted the "accelerating militarisation of civilian government functions, "the erosion of the independence of the judiciary", and "increased marginalisation" of Tamil and Muslim minorities, which has been "exacerbated" by the island's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, such as the reported prevention of Muslims, and members of other religions, from practicing their own religious burial rites.

### Terror law reform

The resolution also called on the Sri

Lankan government to revise the law on the prevention of terrorism which rights groups have warned is being used as a weapon targeting dissidents and minorities in the country.

Under the PTA, it is permitted to detain anyone suspected of causing "acts of violence or religious, racial or communal disharmony".

Representative for the Philippines, Evan P. Garcia, said the text was "driven by simplistic generalisations of complex conditions on the ground", whilst Pakistan's spokesperson, Khalil-ur-Rahman Hashmi argued that the draft resolution "fails to acknowledge the long struggle of the Sri Lankan people and government against LTTE (Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam)," and "shies away from a call for accountability of the LTTE and its sponsors and financiers".

Sri Lanka's ambassador, C.A. Chandraprema, rejected the text as "unhelpful and divisive". He argued it would "polarise Sri Lankan society and adversely affect economic development, peace and harmony."

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

## With Eye on China, India and US Pledge Deeper Strategic Partnership

By Anjana Pasricha

March 20, 2021 10:52 AM

NEW DELHI - India and the United States have pledged to work together to deepen their strategic partnership during a visit by U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin to New Delhi.

The first visit by a top official of the Biden administration to the Indian capital comes as Washington moves ahead to form an alliance of countries that can act as a counterweight to Beijing and India embraces closer ties with the U.S. amid its own growing concerns about Chinese assertiveness.

The two countries agreed to deepen defense cooperation, intelligence sharing and logistics at a meeting Saturday between Austin and his Indian counterpart, Rajnath Singh.

Austin called the Indo-U.S. relationship a "stronghold of a free and open Indo-Pacific region."

"India, in particular, is an increasingly important partner among today's rapidly shifting international dynamics," the U.S. defense secretary said after his discussions with Singh. "I reaffirm our commitment to a comprehensive forward-looking defense partnership with India as a central pillar of our approach to the Indo-Pacific region."

He said the two had discussed opportunities to elevate the U.S.-India major defense partnership, which he called "a priority" of the Biden-Harris administration. "And we'll do that through regional security cooperation



Indian Defense Minister Rajnath Singh walks with visiting U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin before reviewing an honor guard in New Delhi, March 20, 2021.

and military to military interactions and defense trade."

Indian Defense Minister Singh said the talks had focused on expanding military-to-military engagement. "We are determined to realize the full potential of comprehensive global strategic partnership," he said. He also urged U.S. industry to invest in India's defense sector.

Austin's visit to New Delhi comes a week after the leaders of the United States, India, Australia and Japan pledged to work together in the face of challenges from China at the first summit meeting of the grouping known as the Quad.

India is strategically situated in the Indo-Pacific region, which is emerging as an area of concern for countries

worried about China's assertiveness. Last November, New Delhi hosted joint naval drills between the four Quad countries in the Indian Ocean.

In New Delhi, a nine-month-long military standoff with China in the Himalayas sparked by deadly clashes last June along their disputed border has heightened tensions with its Asian neighbor. Although the two have pulled back troops, the deep strain in ties with China has prompted New Delhi to accelerate the pace of strengthening ties with the United States and other Quad partners.

Austin also met with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Following the meeting, the Indian leader said on Twitter that "India and U.S. are committed to our strategic partnership

that is a force for global good."

Prior to his India visit, Austin had visited Japan and South Korea, two of America's most important allies in the Asia-Pacific region.

Analysts in New Delhi say Austin's stop in India is significant.

"It underscores that the Biden administration is continuing to focus on China," according to Rajeswari Pillai Rajagopalan, a distinguished fellow at New Delhi's Observer Research Foundation. "And the fact that India is part of his first overseas visit means that New Delhi is an important element in the web of security partnerships that the Biden administration will be looking to nurture in this part of the world."

Via [voanews.com](http://voanews.com)





## WORLD NEWS

### Sri Lanka Minister of Foreign Minister, Dinesh Gunawardena states the Government will safeguard human rights while ensuring the economic and political stability



March 25:

In simple terms, Minister Gunawardena said that Sri Lanka is a sovereign state and the Government will protect that sovereignty.

The Foreign Minister asserted this at the Parliament today (25) while delivering a special statement regarding the UNHRC resolution.

The Minister pointed out that that the Government has rejected the resolution and had already informed its withdrawal from an earlier document

tabled at the Council co-sponsored by the former Government.

He said the Sri Lankan Government will address accountability issues in Sri Lanka through a domestic mechanism.

The Foreign Minister reiterated that Sri Lanka will continue engaging with United Nations agencies, despite the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) adopting a resolution on Sri Lanka.

- news.lk

### South Indian Actor Rajinikanth to receive prestigious Dada Saheb Phalke award



**The Government of India has announced that the popular South Indian actor Rajinikanth will be the recipient of the prestigious Dadasaheb Phalke Award for his contributions as an actor, producer, and screenwriter.**

Announcing the decision in Delhi, Information and Broadcasting Minister Prakash Javadekar said, "For the last 50 years, Rajinikanth has been ruling the film industry. His work is like the sun. Through his talent and hard work, he has made a space for himself in the hearts of millions of people." He will be conferred the award on May 3, a day after the results of the Assembly elections are announced.

Instituted in 1969, the Dadasaheb Phalke Award is India's highest award in cinema. It is presented annually at the National Film Awards Ceremony by the Directorate of Film Festivals,

an organization of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting.

Reacting to the news of him being honoured with the 51st Dadasaheb Phalke Award, Rajinikanth thanked Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and several other friends, family members and mentors for the award.

He further added, "I dedicate this award to my friend, bus driver Raj Bahadur, for recognizing my acting ability and providing encouragement, my brother Thiru Sathyanarayana Rao Gaikwad for making many sacrifices to help me follow my dreams even when we lived in poverty, my mentor K Balachander for giving me my first break and making me Rajinikanth, all my film producers, directors, technicians distributors, theatre owners, the media, the Tamil people who have helped me thrive, and my fans all over the world."

### "Polls will prove wrong myth that BJP has no place in TN"

Bengaluru, Apr 5:

As Tamil Nadu goes for polls on April 6, BJP national general secretary C T Ravi, the party in-charge of the state, on Monday said the election would prove wrong the myth that the saffron party has no place in Dravidian land.

The MLA from Karnataka said the BJP has put in the efforts needed to win all the 20 seats it is contesting. "April 6 polls will be significant for BJP in South, especially Tamil Nadu.

The myth that the BJP has no place in Dravida land will be proved wrong," Ravi told reporters here. April 6 is also BJP's Foundation Day and the lotus would bloom in Tamil Nadu, he said.

"The AIADMK-led NDA will come back to power, and the ground reality is in favour of NDA," he said. As part of its alliance with the AIADMK, the BJP has fielded its candidates in 20

seats.

Ravi said though the BJP has contested only in 20 seats, it has taken the election seriously. "I feel there is a wave in our favour, there is expectation of good results," he said. Noting that AIADMK was the natural partner for the BJP in Tamil Nadu as there is no dynasty politics in the party, Ravi said the DMK is a family enterprise run by Karunanidhi and Maran families, and it would be rejected by the people.

Though it may look like it is a fight between the AIADMK and the DMK, it is the BJP that has set the agenda for the whole election, he said. Despite being the minor party in the alliance through "Vetrivel Yatra", "Namma Ooru Pongal" and "jallikattu", among other things, the BJP set the agenda, he added.

- PTI

### First Lady of the United States, Dr. Jill Biden, presents Ranitha Gnanarajah with the International Women of Courage award

First Lady of the United States Dr. Jill Biden and Secretary of State Antony Blinken on March 8th honored Ranitha Gnanarajah as an International Women of Courage (IWOC) award winner for her commitment to justice, accountability, and women's rights in Sri Lanka. A lawyer, Ms. Gnanarajah advocates for Sri Lanka's most vulnerable populations, including families affected by enforced disappearances, survivors of gender-based violence, and religious and ethnic minorities.

The Secretary of State's IWOC award was established in 2007 to commend women around the globe who demonstrate exceptional bravery and leadership in advocating for peace, human rights, and women's empowerment.

Ms. Gnanarajah has dedicated her career to the pursuit of justice for marginalized communities in Sri Lanka, covering a broad spectrum of human rights issues. She provides free legal aid to prisoners detained without charge under Sri Lanka's Prevention of Terrorism Act and to families seeking to learn the fate of relatives believed to have been victims of enforced disappearances. Her leadership and advocacy for a victim-centered approach has supported dozens of victims' families throughout the country. She has also worked tirelessly to build the capacity of grassroots organizations that confront gender-based violence and advocate for women's equal rights to land and property. For example, Ms. Gnanarajah's domestic violence research identified deficiencies at police stations that impeded women's ability to seek protection from abuse and harassment. She also leads awareness campaigns that have increased access to women's shelters, counseling services, and medical care for survivors of domestic violence.

U.S. Ambassador to Sri Lanka and Maldives, Alaina B. Teplitz, said "Ms.



Dr. Jill Biden



Ms. Ranitha Gnanarajah

Gnanarajah has demonstrated a tremendous commitment to justice on behalf of all her fellow citizens. She's helped her country's most vulnerable people avail themselves of their rights and in doing so is a model of courage in Sri Lanka and around the world."

Ms. Gnanarajah was among TBC women recognized for their enormous contributions to their communities and countries. Afterwards, these extraordinary women will participate in International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP) virtual exchanges to connect with American universities, businesses, and non-profit organizations. Over the last 15 years, the U.S. Department of State has recognized more than 155 International Women of Courage from over 75 countries. - via US Embassy, Colombo, Sri Lanka



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*Phyllis Diller*



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CONDOMINIUM





# Heroes delivering hope

## at Scarborough vaccine clinics



Scarborough COVID-19 Vaccine Clinic set up - Centennial Interior

The arrival of the COVID-19 vaccine has been like sunshine breaking through the dark veil of the pandemic, bringing warmth and hope to our community. Thanks to the multidisciplinary group of SHN staff and physicians, Centennial College, and community organizations, Scarborough's vaccination clinics are set to play their part in bringing on brighter days.

SHN's COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution Team forged the path to create a brand new vaccine clinic at Centenary Hospital. The team – made up of pharmacy, purchasing, professional practice, project management, facilities, support services, information management, information technology, registration, and communications staff, as well as physicians – transformed the recently vacated volunteer office into a brand new vaccine clinic within a few short days. Simultaneously, they coordinated the shipment and storage of the vaccine, investing in new state-of-the-art equipment like ultra-cold freezers.

Opening on December 24, the team began vaccinating the vulnerable long-term care (LTC) population. Since then, the clinic has gone through several renovations and process flow changes to support as many as 500 clients each day. Here, SHN is proud to offer vaccinations to its own staff and medical staff, using a prioritization matrix provided by the Ministry of Health.

With this proven blueprint in place, SHN was ready to welcome fellow Scarborough Anchor Institution Centennial College and the Centennial College Student Association on board as vaccine clinic partners, working together to increase access to COVID-19 vaccinations in Scarborough for the next several months. "Centennial College has been an indelible part of Scarborough since 1966, and this endeavor is very much in keeping

with the work we have done throughout this past year to support the community and our hospitals," said Dr. Craig Stephenson, President and CEO, Centennial College. "Part of our pandemic response is to reach out beyond the classroom and into the community to ensure we can be as supportive as possible. We're all in this together."

A state-of-the-art COVID-19 Vaccine Clinic, with capacity for up to 2,000 vaccinations per day is now open at the Athletic and Wellness Centre at the Progress Campus. The fully accessible space is ideal for welcoming the large numbers of elderly and vulnerable local residents who require the COVID-19 vaccine.

Its modular design means the space can adapt within 24 hours to accommodate multiple combinations of flow to meet various client needs and demand. A large waiting area allows for indoor queues and vaccine stations ensure a seamless, efficient flow. Stations are well-stocked with a ready supply of vaccines, thanks to an innovative two-bin replenishment system that minimizes waste. Finally, the clinic also features accessible stations where recipients can receive their vaccinations and complete observation from a single point of care.

The Centennial COVID-19 Vaccine Clinic saw a successful pilot run on March 8, with vaccinations administered to eligible health care workers and individuals 80-plus years of age. Special guests Premier Doug Ford and health minister Christine Elliot were among the first to tour what some might consider to be Ontario's flagship COVID-19 Vaccine Clinic.

Thanks to the tremendous efforts of SHN and Centennial College's exceptional teams and many frontline heroes, Scarborough has two of the best clinics to stop COVID-19 in its tracks. Building on our support to LTC residents and staff through vaccine clinics and

mobile teams, SHN was also among the first to vaccinate personal support workers from home and community care providers serving Scarborough, as well as local First Nations and Métis communities.

To date, SHN has administered approximately 63,000 vaccine doses to a very diverse population from across Scarborough, including about 21,000 doses at Centennial College alone (as of April 1, 2021). The light streaming in through the huge windows at the Centennial College location is outshone only by the smiling faces of patients leaving the clinic with a newfound peace of mind.

"Today, as we anticipate the roll out of more COVID-19 vaccination clinics in Scarborough, we reflect with pride on the model foundations that the Centenary Hospital and Centennial College COVID-19 Vaccine Clinics provided for this work," said Elizabeth Buller, President and CEO, SHN. "All of the dedicated teams and resources that went into ensuring this success not only serves the community today, but '...will be one of the defining moments of our generation,' as (retired) General Rick Hillier has notably remarked."

Thank you to everyone who is doing their part to support the vaccine roll out, while also rolling up their sleeves to receive it. These vaccinations will protect lives and help Canada recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. We have so much to be proud of. #CelebrateScarborough

*SHN is responsible for the operation of the Progress Campus vaccine clinic. Please do not contact Centennial College to inquire about an appointment. For updates regarding upcoming groups that will be invited to the campus vaccination site, please refer to the Scarborough COVID-19 Vaccination Clinic website.*





## HEALTH & WELLNESS

### BUILDING CONFIDENCE IN THE COVID-19 VACCINE:

## WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW WITH SHN'S DR. REENA LOVINSKY

Dr. Reena Lovinsky is an expert in infection prevention and is an Infectious Diseases Specialist & Medical Director of Infection Prevention and Control at SHN's General and Birchmount Hospitals.

Vaccines have been around for decades and are among the most significant advances in modern medicine. They prevent millions of infections every year and have eliminated diseases like smallpox globally and polio in Canada.

New vaccines are constantly being developed and then approved by Health Canada. Some newer vaccines prevent common mild childhood infections like chickenpox (Varicella vaccine), some prevent severe but rare infections like brain infections (MenC), and some even prevent cancer (the HPV vaccine prevents cervical cancer).

#### The COVID-19 Vaccine

When talking about the COVID-19 vaccine, you may have heard about vaccine efficacy and vaccine effectiveness. Vaccine efficacy is how well the vaccine works in a study, and effectiveness is how well it works in real life. In countries with high COVID-19 vaccination rates like Israel, they have seen a 94% decrease in people with COVID-19 infections and a 92% decrease in people with COVID-19 requiring hospitalization in people who have had their COVID vaccinations.

Both the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines require two doses. They are effective across gender and race and have shown up to 95% efficacy. They are both mRNA vaccines, and the technology to make mRNA vaccines has been around for decades.

The mRNA vaccine does not contain the COVID-19 virus. Instead, it includes a recipe for our bodies to create a protein that replicates the spike protein in the COVID-19 virus. Once we receive the vaccine, our bodies make an army of antibodies as "soldiers" to prevent future infection of COVID-19.

The COVID-19 vaccine was developed more rapidly than traditional vaccines due in large part to:

- New technology available;
- A large amount of financial support; and,
- Extensive studies during the pandemic while there was a high risk of COVID-19 exposure.

As of February 28, 2021, over 240 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines have been administered in 103 countries. That number will continue to grow as more vaccines become available.

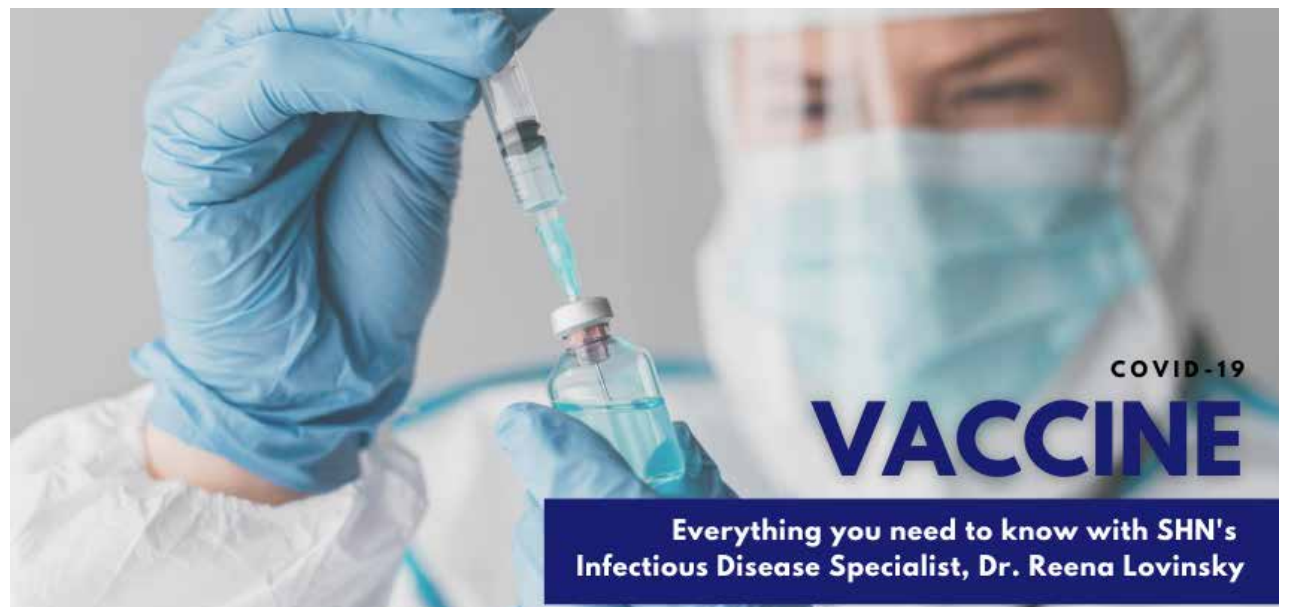
Health Canada has now approved two other vaccines – the Astra Zeneca and Johnson & Johnson vaccines. These vaccines are viral vector vaccines, which means they contain a modified adenovirus (a virus that causes the common cold) that can no longer cause infection in humans. The viral vector acts as a transport system to carry a genetic code from the virus that causes COVID-19. This code allows the human body to create its mRNA, which is the spike protein recipe on the COVID-19 virus. Then, just like the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines, our bodies make antibodies to prevent a COVID-19 infection.

**All these vaccines have 100% efficacy of preventing hospitalizations and 100% efficacy of preventing death from COVID-19.**

#### Building Confidence in the COVID-19 Vaccine

Three main factors contribute to vaccine hesitancy: confidence, complacency, and convenience.

Confidence in the COVID-19 vaccine is critical. One of the biggest fears is having a severe allergic



reaction to the vaccine (anaphylaxis), which is proven to be incredibly rare. Out of over 9.9 million doses of the Pfizer vaccine in the USA, only 4.7 people out of 1 million experienced an anaphylactic reaction. Out of over 7.5 million doses of the Moderna vaccine, only 2.5 people out of 1 million experienced anaphylaxis. Over 80% of those who had an adverse reaction had a history of allergies to other vaccines or medications. The

were excluded from the studies and clinical trials for the vaccines. However, the American Society of Maternal-Fetal Medicine advises, "Health care professionals should counsel their patients that the theoretical risk of fetal harm from mRNA vaccines is very low."

If you are pregnant or thinking about becoming pregnant, please talk to your health care provider and consider the following:

- The high level of COVID-19 community transmission in Scarborough;
- Your risk based on work and your lifestyle;
- The risks of COVID-19 to you and your baby;
- The efficacy of the vaccine (95%);
- The potential side effects of the vaccine (fever, sore arm, muscle aches, headache, fatigue); and,
- The lack of data available about the vaccine during pregnancy.

Why you should get the COVID-19 vaccine

Once the COVID-19 vaccine is available to your region and age group, we highly recommend getting it for four main reasons:

- Protect yourself;
- Protect your family;
- Protect your community; and,

• **For your life to go back to normal.** Once enough people are vaccinated against COVID-19 in our community, life will be able to return to normal.

However, because a small portion of Canadians is vaccinated, you must still follow Public Health guidelines once you receive your vaccine. This includes wearing a mask, maintaining 6 feet of social distance, and avoiding unnecessary travel.

#### Conclusion

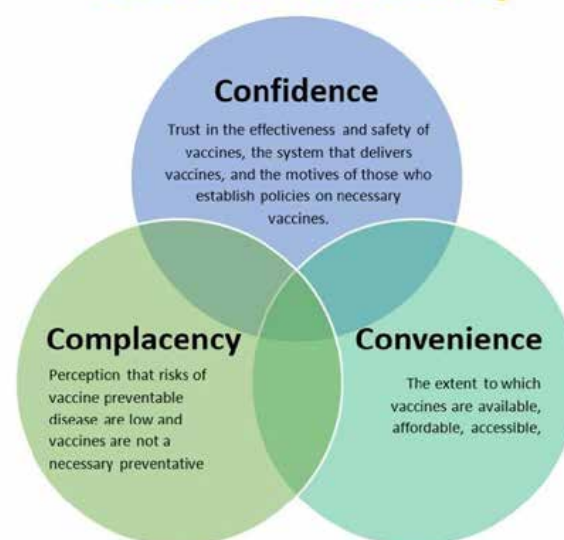
We have been battling the COVID-19 pandemic for one year, and there is finally hope on the horizon as more people receive their vaccination. If you are worried about the COVID-19 vaccine, please visit the reliable sources below for more information.

To find out if you are eligible to receive your vaccination in Scarborough, visit [ScarboroughCovidVaccineClinic.ca](https://ScarboroughCovidVaccineClinic.ca) or [SHN.ca/COVID-19-Vaccine-Info](https://SHN.ca/COVID-19-Vaccine-Info).

#### COVID-19 Vaccine Confidence Library

- NACI (Canadian): National Advisory Committee on Immunizations
- FNHA: First Nations Health Authority (British Columbia)
- IDSA (USA): Infectious Disease Society of America
- Public Health Ontario

### Vaccine Hesitancy



**Figure 1:** A diagram of determinants of vaccine hesitancy from <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/25896383/> majority of these severe allergic reactions took place in the first 10 minutes after the vaccine was given. That is why you will be observed for 15 minutes after your vaccine is given to ensure you do not have any immediate allergic reaction. If you have a history of severe allergies, you will be observed for 30 minutes as an extra precaution. If you have any history of allergies, be sure to speak to your family doctor to see if you should see an allergist before making your vaccine appointment. People who have a severe allergy to any of the vaccine ingredients should not get the COVID-19 vaccine.

#### COVID-19 Vaccine & Pregnancy

The COVID-19 vaccine is not a live vaccine, which is the only kind not allowed during pregnancy. Some vaccines, like the flu shot, are specifically recommended during pregnancy. While pregnant women are not at higher risk of getting COVID-19 than the general public, if they get the virus when pregnant, they could suffer complications that include premature labor, stillbirth, leg and lung clots, or need more critical care. The potential risks of mRNA vaccines to pregnant women and the fetus are currently unknown because pregnant women



## HEALTH &amp; WELLNESS



# 5 Questions With...



## Dr. Paul Tam, SHN Nephrologist

With some of the highest rates of chronic kidney disease (CKD) and diabetes in Ontario, Scarborough is home to a “diabetes hotspot.” SHN’s Nephrology department is the largest in Ontario, with some of the most highly regarded nephrologists and health care teams caring for our patients.

March is National Kidney Month, so we caught up with Dr. Paul Tam, the Corporate Chief and Medical Director of our Nephrology department, to discuss why our kidneys are so important and how you can celebrate National Kidney Month.

### 1. March is National Kidney Month, and World Kidney Day is on March 11. What makes our kidneys so important, and why is it critical to take good care of them?

The kidney is a very smart organ. It performs many functions in our bodies like getting rid of waste and excess fluid in our bodies, creating certain hormones, controlling our blood pressure, and overall keeping our bodies in a state of homeostasis. Homeostasis means keeping our entire bodies in balance and keeping the status quo – that’s what our kidneys do.

Because of all the functions, when something goes wrong in the kidneys, it can also affect other parts of our bodies. One important example is our kidneys’ function to remove salt from what we ingest, so it doesn’t collect in our bloodstream. When we have a diet that’s high in salt, our kidneys cannot remove it all, so it collects in the bloodstream and can lead to high blood pressure, kidney disease, or diabetes.

The biggest cause of kidney failure is diabetes. Near to 60% of patients we see in our nephrology department already have diabetes. Diabetes, unfortunately, goes hand in hand with high blood pressure. High blood pressure, when left untreated, can eventually cause heart attacks and strokes. That’s why it’s so important to take good care of your body and your kidneys!

### 2. SHN is home to the largest nephrology department in Ontario. Scarborough is at the centre of a “diabetes hotspot.” What types of factors make Scarborough vulnerable to chronic kidney disease (CKD) and other chronic diseases like diabetes?

Scarborough has the second-highest number of diabetes patients per capita in Ontario. A large contributing factor is that we have a high number of new Canadians who come from backgrounds that are genetically predisposed to diabetes, such as South Asians and African Americans.

We have also observed that eating more processed foods high in calories – but not necessarily nutritious – can be a huge factor in putting you at risk for diabetes or chronic kidney disease. Unfortunately, since Scarborough has a large number of people living in low socioeconomic status, they don’t have as much access to nutritious, fresh, whole foods, leading to a diet high in fast or processed food.

The combination of genetic predisposition to diabetes, co-morbid issues like high blood pressure and an unhealthy lifestyle, and low income are some of the largest contributing factors to the high instances of diabetes and CKD in Scarborough.

### 3. Nephrologists aren’t perhaps the most well-known type of doctors. Can you tell us a little bit about what you do and what inspired you to become a nephrologist?

When I was an intern in medical school in Hong Kong, I looked after a young man who was exactly my age suffering from kidney disease during my nephrology rotation. At the time, treatment for kidney failure was expensive and new, so it wasn’t a luxury afforded to everyone. Since this man was young with no dependents, he wasn’t considered a high priority for treatment, so he got what we called intermittent peritoneal dialysis. This means that only when his kidneys failed to the point where he couldn’t breathe or walk, we would admit him and do this type of dialysis that removes excess fluid through the abdomen and get rid of the waste that his kidneys couldn’t.

Then, once he recovered enough to breathe and walk, we sent him home. Only for his condition to worsen enough to need treatment, and the cycle would continue until he eventually passed away.

This young man made an impression on me, and I thought it was terrible that he couldn’t receive continuous treatment. I thought this is something very worthwhile to do. When I finished my medical training in Toronto, I specialized in nephrology and performing kidney transplants. Back then, I thought kidney transplants were the ultimate treatment because you get a brand-new kidney! However, now we’re focused more on prevention and treatment, so kidney transplants are a last resort. I feel very lucky to have been a part of SHN’s dialysis program launch in 1996, to now leading the largest nephrology department in Ontario.

### 4. SHN offers hemodialysis and dialysis for patients with CKD, and the need for these treatments is only growing within Scarborough. How has the COVID-19 pandemic impacted access to these treatments?

There’s been a strain on dialysis availability ever since I started working in Scarborough nearly 40 years ago. Our community’s need has unfortunately always been higher than what our small and aging facilities can provide, resulting in crowded areas. Since our launch in 1996, we have been continuously petitioning to expand our capacity to treat our community. I am excited that we are finally able to expand our dialysis and CKD programs significantly.

COVID-19 luckily didn’t affect our patients’ ability to receive treatment. However, we faced challenges because Scarborough saw some of the highest COVID-19 cases in Ontario during wave one and wave two. We would have vulnerable dialysis patients coming back and forth into the hospital, which sometimes saw COVID-19 outbreaks. This experience highlighted our need for appropriate dialysis isolation units. Now we’re on our way to prepare for the future as we work to expand our dialysis units.

### 5. You’ve been with SHN for close to 40 years now. What’s your favorite part of Scarborough Health Network and the diverse community that we serve?

Working at SHN, I’ve been extremely lucky to have open-minded and receptive Senior Leadership Teams through the years. They’re always receptive to new and innovative ideas about how we can better treat our patients and change the health tangent in Scarborough.

As for Scarborough – I’ve always seen us as the underdogs, the ones no one thinks about. But we have shown time and again that we are a resilient, passionate community who will always stand up for one another. I am thankful to have worked in this community for as long as I have and for the team at Scarborough Health Network, who supports our work in caring for our patients.

To learn more about National Kidney Month visit [kidney.ca](http://kidney.ca). To support Dr. Tam and dialysis & diabetes care at SHN, visit [SHNFoundation.ca/Donate](http://SHNFoundation.ca/Donate).



## The Slight Family Foundation steps up in support of mental health in Scarborough

A \$1-million pledge to help create a new Community Mental Health Hub in the heart of Scarborough

SCARBOROUGH (March 10, 2021) – As part of a recently announced \$30-million Mental Health Initiative, the Slight Family Foundation has pledged \$1-million to Scarborough Health Network (SHN) to support the future of community-based mental health care in Scarborough. The initiative, which supports 19 organizations total, aims to provide new or enhanced mental health support and services to address Canada’s growing mental health needs.

The donation will support SHN in creating a new Community Mental Health Hub in a centralized location in Scarborough that will combine all of SHN’s adult outpatient mental health services into one safe and accessible site. The health network’s new purpose-designed Hub will centralize all adult mental health outpatient services in a central location serving young adults aged 18 to 24, adults and seniors. It will offer programs and resources to manage and treat mental health challenges.

“SHN operates the second-largest community hospital-based mental health and addictions program in Ontario,” said Elizabeth Buller, President, and CEO, SHN. “The Hub will contribute to an exceptional patient experience by making mental health services accessible to the more than 10,000 patients referred to our mental health programs each year. This is a real win for Scarborough, and I extend sincere thanks to the Slight Family Foundation for helping us create better access to specialized care that meets the unique needs of our community.”

“One of the biggest barriers facing individuals with mental health and addiction needs is timely access to the right evidence-based treatment to help them recover quickly,” says Dr. Ilan Fischler, Chief of Psychiatry at SHN. “The Community Mental Health Hub will have a “One Door Team” who will receive all referrals for mental health and addictions services at SHN – whether through a primary care provider, emergency department, or inpatient unit. Patients being referred will not have to wait for a full psychiatric assessment to get the service they need. The idea is that no one is left behind, and we promote quick and accessible treatment for the Scarborough community. We are so grateful to the Slight Family Foundation for their commitment to this project.”

Specifically, this gift will create The Slight Family Foundation Cultural Psychiatry Clinic within the Hub, providing accessible and culturally safe mental health care for our vibrant and diverse population. The first-of-its-kind in Ontario will offer treatment by expert psychiatrists in over five languages who will treat a variety of mental health challenges. The new Hub is currently slated to become operational by 2021.

“During my tenure with SHN over the last year and a half, this is the second time the Slight Family Foundation has supported health care in Scarborough,” says Alicia Vandermeer, President & CEO of SHN Foundation. “We cannot thank the Slight Family enough for their continued generosity, support, and commitment to building a brighter, healthier future for all of Scarborough.”

## SHN to offer COVID-19 Bereavement Support Group

### Are you grieving the loss of a family member, friend, or loved one from COVID-19?

Scarborough Health Network (SHN) invites you to participate in this free, six-week bereavement support group. Led by SHN’s Spiritual and Religious Care

department, participants will meet virtually every week to explore the grief process and learn useful coping skills, while supporting one another in their healing journey.

**DETAILS : April 6 to May 11, 2021,  
Tuesdays, 4 to 5:30 p.m.**

Group admission is limited to 10 per group. For more details or to reserve your spot, please contact the Spiritual Care department at [spiritualcare@shn.ca](mailto:spiritualcare@shn.ca) or call **416 438 2911** ext. 6425.

A Zoom meeting link will be provided upon confirmation.





## SPECIAL FEATURE

# Understanding and Tackling COVID-19 Misinformation in South Asian and other Diverse Communities in Canada

By: **Harrish Thirukumar**

Eleven months after the COVID-19 disease became recognized as a global pandemic in March 2020, the number of Canadians diagnosed with the virus increased daily or have been in high figures. A multitude of factors have been blamed for this steady increase. Throughout this time, the health situation has led to many of us following a set of public health guidelines and orders as one of many efforts to control and combat the disease. These include physical distancing with individuals not part of your immediate household and staying at home as much as possible.

More recently, however, attention has been focused on Canada's South Asian community, in relation to high COVID-19 case numbers in the Greater Toronto Area and elsewhere in Canada. In Peel Region, where South Asians represent half of its total visible minority population (Statistics Canada, 2017), the community represents nearly half of all confirmed COVID-19 cases in the area. This is something that has affected me personally and generated my own curiosity as a Canadian who has South Asian ancestry, prompting me to write this article to understand this issue and to hopefully educate others on it.

In Peel Region in the Province of Ontario, it was announced that to address the apparent transmission of COVID-19 among South Asian communities, a group of physicians, lawyers, healthcare professionals, business leaders, and volunteers from all backgrounds and faiths have come together to launch the Canadian South Asian COVID-19 Taskforce (Subhan, 2020). This seems to be a solution that has emerged in response to growing public/media debate as to how or whether the behaviour of South Asian communities has enabled them to be at higher risk of contracting and transmitting the virus.

Some have argued that COVID-19 outbreaks in Canada have been associated with South Asian events, such as weddings, and recently, Diwali. There is also a strong sense of family, especially multigenerational families living in the same household, along with hospitality and social gatherings with others that contribute to infections spreading from one family member to others (Chagla et al. 2020, Amato 2020). On the other side of things, these claims have been dismissed as racist against the community and is reminiscent of the blame directed at East Asian communities in Canada and elsewhere for the virus' spread based on stereotypes like their eating habits (Paradkar, 2020). These arguments are scapegoating South Asians; for example, in Calgary, Alberta, others, such as anti-masker rallies,

have contributed more to spreading the virus than South Asians in the city (Amato, 2020). While there may be some in the South Asian community that may socialize irresponsibly or believe themselves impervious to the virus (Paradkar 2020), it is imperative to look beyond just culture and values of the community and towards other factors that may play a more critical role including income levels, unemployment or underemployment, and precarious employment.

The role of income in the spread of COVID-19 is not because it discourages people from obtaining COVID testing, but that it is one of the primary motivations that members of the South Asian community are forced to risk exposure to the virus as part of their frontline jobs in Tim Hortons, Uber or other companies in the service industry and gig economy (Shafiq, 2020).

Regarding the claims that have been circulating against South Asian communities spreading COVID-19 through special occasions like Diwali, then this should have readily applied to the community and others with the Christmas and the holiday season at the end of 2020 in terms of obeying physical distancing guidelines. Indeed, Dr. Priyank Bhatnagar, a Resident Physician in Emergency Medicine at the University of Toronto, stated in an interview that while inviting family for parties and dinners is a cherished tradition in South Asian families during this time of the year, the rising COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations have deemed holiday gatherings as simply too risky (P. Bhatnagar, personal communication, December 24, 2020). Furthermore, the weather this time of year does not permit a safe mode of outdoor gathering, and we know that even with 6-foot distancing, COVID-19 easily and quickly spreads indoors. (P. Bhatnagar, personal communication, December 24, 2020). Accordingly, he urges that these communities in need of celebration during the holiday season should do so virtually with family and friends. (P. Bhatnagar, personal communication, December 24, 2020).

While also agreeing that some people in the South Asian community have broken the rules to host social events, with some testing positive for COVID as a direct result and the efforts of the South Asian COVID-19 task force and various healthcare leaders, Dr. Bhatnagar also agrees that other multiple social and economic factors have caused higher cases of COVID-19 among this community as others in the media have similarly commented. (P. Bhatnagar, personal communication, December 24, 2020). He also adds that to tackle the misinformation about COVID-19 and South Asian communities in Ontario and Canada, we must call out these

“  
**Racialized minorities were being stigmatized and that's wrong.**  
 If anything, I think that there should have been a level of appreciation across Canada for these pandemic heroes ... They have been going to work at the risk to their own health to serve Canada's supply chain.  
 — **INTERVIEW WITH MAYOR PATRICK BROWN**  
*Understanding and Tackling COVID-19 Misinformation in South Asian and other Diverse Communities in Canada*  
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false articles circulating in our social groups online such as Facebook and WhatsApp and share articles from reputable sources such as Health Canada, Public Health Ontario, CBC, or the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). (P. Bhatnagar, personal communication, December 24, 2020). The Office of the Mayor of Brampton was reached out to for an interview with Mayor Patrick Brown to comment on this issue of COVID-19 and South Asian communities in Brampton and Canada.

### Interview with Mayor of Brampton, Patrick Brown on the COVID-19 pandemic and South Asian communities

Q. A task force was recently established that is dedicated towards promoting health and safety among South Asian communities in the Region of Peel around COVID-19. It has also been reported that Brampton has emerged as a COVID-19 hotspot, with 58 percent of Peel's cases being in Brampton from February 2020 to September 2020. As the Mayor of Brampton, what are your thoughts on this taskforce and the role that Brampton could possibly play in promoting health and safety among South Asian communities in the pandemic?

“I think it's great that we have some grassroots efforts whether it's a South Asian task force or the Muslim task force. There's a variety of grassroots COVID-19-focused task forces that are looking at ways to help and any help that supplements public health's efforts is a positive. I would underline though that where we are seeing the transmission is not because people are having parties, it's because of the nature of the work. You know, we have our largest two sectors in Brampton in transportation logistics and food

processing. We have a large warehouse sector too, fulfillment centres, and they are considered essential, so when there are lockdowns, they are not affected. If anything, they actually have to increase the workload because they are so busy. So, all these sectors are hiring, they're buzzing with activity right now, and it is amongst these industrial settings where we have seen the number one source of transmission, according to Public Health and Peel Region.”

Q. There have been issues of racism against East Asian communities in Canada regarding COVID-19 based on their eating habits and others. With the high case numbers in Peel, South Asian communities are being increasingly stigmatized as transmitting the virus due to their socializing habits whether through weddings, visiting places of worship or multigenerational homes. However, others in the media have claimed these issues are due to issues like inequities in healthcare services and delivery in the area and how South Asians are largely precariously employed or essential workers.

Given that South Asians represent half of Peel Region's total population based on the 2016 StatsCan census, what do you think Brampton and Peel Region needs to do to prevent this newfound risk of COVID-19 racism directed at South Asians and address credible gaps to enhance public health around COVID-19?

“Well, I think that initially in the pandemic, there have been issues of stigmatization of racialized minority communities. We know that the South Asian community and Afro-Caribbean community were being hit harder in the pandemic in Brampton and Peel Region. Racialized minorities were being stigmatized and that's wrong. It's



## SPECIAL FEATURE



vulgar and it's repulsive. If anything, I think that there should have been a level of appreciation across Canada for these pandemic heroes because if you order off Amazon anywhere in the country, you need to thank someone in the fulfillment sector in Brampton despite the fact there have been a number of outbreaks. They have been going to work at the risk to their own health to serve Canada's supply chain."

Q. There is discussion about enhancing race-based data collection to better address health inequities among South Asian and other racialized communities in policy efforts towards combating COVID-19. Is Brampton or Peel Region open to engaging in race-based data collection to inform a better COVID-19 response among these communities?

"So, Peel Public Health does have race-based data collection to make sure that they have a better response, and, frankly, so they can inform those at the provincial health table of these inequities. And I can tell you when it comes to inequities, I am constantly in the media talking about it and let me give you one because you talked previously about health inequities that existed in Peel Region. In Brampton, we have 0.96 hospital beds for every 1,000 residents. The provincial average is 2.19, which means we have less than 50% of the hospital beds per capita that is the provincial average. And that in itself when you look at the hospital being at capacity, of course it's going to be at capacity. We were at capacity for the last five years in a row. We were at capacity before the pandemic even started and the pandemic has only laid bare the healthcare inequalities that exist in our province. Why should someone in Brampton, in a city that is very diversified have a lower standard of healthcare than a city like Vaughan or London (Ontario). It just doesn't wash."

Q. Since you touched on that capacity issue for Brampton, do you believe

that the pandemic would be a catalyst towards increasing funding towards healthcare access in Brampton to address not only the health and wellbeing of South Asian communities, but all other communities as well?

"It should be. Absolutely, it should be. And you know we declared a healthcare emergency even before the health pandemic began because we saw these inequities, and I hope that this pandemic has laid bare some of the shortfalls in our healthcare system. It's not universal healthcare when you have one standard in a growing diverse community and another standard in the rest of the country. You know, there has to be some form of equality. And I hope this pandemic has been a wakeup call on those funding bodies."

Q. Along with sick benefits for essential and frontline workers, I understand that in your capacity as Mayor of Brampton, you have been advocating for an isolation centre in northeast Brampton based on a significant case count originating there. What benefits do you believe this could bring to South Asian communities living in the city in relation to COVID-19?

"So, we got some good news from the provincial government on Christmas Eve. We got a letter from the provincial government saying that they would be funding three isolation centres for Brampton. We had asked the federal government about their funding for isolation centres in Mississauga and Toronto, and we were surprised that they would not do one in Brampton. So, we were really encouraged that the provincial government agreed to do so. So, this is going to help because it protects those who do not have the ability to safely isolate and there is many who live in crowded living conditions who can't possibly afford a hotel room for 14 days by having a hotel nearby, which they can go and self-isolate. It's a protective mechanism. Voluntary public health is there to assist in testing or to inform

if you are no longer contagious to your family and it has proved to be very effective in other countries."

These views from the Mayor are enlightening and should contribute to clarifying the relationship between South Asian communities, other diverse communities and COVID-19. Moreover, his perspective on setbacks in Brampton's healthcare system should not only re-open public policy debates on the intricacies of universal healthcare or publicly funded healthcare there, but Canada generally as well now and once COVID-19 is under control. As boldly expressed by Mayor Brown, the pandemic has laid bare to the fact that "it's not universal healthcare where there is one standard for a growing diverse community, and another standard in another part of the country." Also, it should be noted that his comments have also illustrated that in a way we should enhance the employment situations for essential and frontline workers who are members of South Asian and other diverse communities with actions like paid sick days for their brave contributions during these uncertain times.

Currently, it is encouraging to learn that the Ontario government recently announced on January 21, 2021 that COVID-19 isolation centres are opening during that week in Oshawa and Brampton, demonstrating the urgency of the health situation there and the need for advocacy. This announcement is part of the Province's investment of up to \$42 million under the High Priority Communities Strategy to help people in some of the hardest hit neighborhoods to self-isolate and keep their families and communities safe (Government of Ontario, 2021). As additional help to assist the South Asian community and other diverse communities, Ontario's High Priority Communities Strategy, to date, has more than 160 Community Ambassadors that have been engaged and over 225 more will be hired to deliver targeted outreach and messages to community

members in multiple languages (Government of Ontario, 2021).

Overall, while some in the South Asian community may be blatantly flouting public health guidelines similar to individuals from other communities, it should be recognized that there may be certain luxuries that this community cannot afford or benefit from in order to properly protect themselves from COVID-19. Two factors contributing to this outlook include employment in essential work and living in multigenerational homes. Furthermore, now that we are at the end of the holiday season, it is important to pay equal attention and call out all those who may have disobeyed public health guidelines and rules unnecessarily and better protect diverse communities, like South Asians, from stigmatization during these current times and in future health pandemics. In other words, as done in this article, we must take the time to continue understanding and tackling misinformation on the COVID-19 pandemic directed at the South Asian community and other diverse communities to address it appropriately.

*(Harrish Thirukumaran holds a Master of Public Policy from the University of Toronto's Munk School of Global Affairs and Public Policy. He also holds an Honours Bachelor of Arts in Political Science with a concentration in Public Administration from Brock University. He has policy interests in international affairs, policy innovation, urban policy, as well as mental health policy and how they impact communities and stakeholders.)*

*This article first appeared on the Mosaic Institute's Blog, "What's New" on March 5, 2021. The Mosaic Institute is a think-and-do tank which brings together people, communities, and nations to advance pluralism and reduce conflict. It operates through Track II diplomacy; people-to-people engagement to foster mutual understanding and to create strategies for peaceful coexistence.)*

## 4 ways to reduce your risk of heart disease

Heart disease affects over 2.5 million Canadians each year and is the second-leading cause of death in Canada. Luckily, healthy lifestyle choices – like diet modifications and exercise – are an excellent way to combat heart disease. Other strategies that involve medication reviews and lowering salt intake can also help reduce your risk.

### Modify your diet to reduce cholesterol

The Portfolio diet is a plant-based diet that consists of four cholesterol-lowering foods: nuts, plant-based proteins, soluble fiber, and plant sterols. In combination with a National Cholesterol Education Program Step II diet, the Portfolio diet can reduce "bad cholesterol" and other types of fat found in the blood, inflammation, blood pressure, and the ten-year risk of coronary heart disease.

### Make exercise part of your dai-

### ly routine.

Living an active lifestyle can decrease your risk of developing chronic conditions such as heart disease. Many effective exercise forms vary in intensity: from walking, aquatic exercise, and yoga to high-intensity interval training and strength training. Whatever your preference may be, consider incorporating some form of fitness into your everyday routine to benefit your long-term health and well-being.

### Be aware of hidden heart risks in your medicine cabinet

Millions of people have nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs), such as Advil, Aleve, Anaprox, Celebrex, Motrin, and Voltaren, sitting in their bathroom cabinet, and many people will pop one or two casually at the slightest pain. However, NSAIDs



can increase the risk of heart attack, with the level of risk tied to the type of NSAID, how much is taken, and for how long. This does not mean you should stop taking them altogether, but understanding their risk is important when assessing whether they are needed.

### Lower your salt intake

Salt is a significant source of dietary sodium and consuming too much sodium increases the risk of stroke, heart disease, and high blood pressure. Affecting more than 4.5 million Canadians, high blood pressure is known as 'the silent killer' because it often develops without symptoms. When left uncontrolled, it can lead to heart attacks, heart failure, aneurysms, and metabolic syndrome. Sodium reduction is now recognized as an important way to prevent major chronic diseases.

You can do many things to contrib-



ute to better overall heart health. Start small by making subtle changes to your diet and incorporating some form of physical activity – whether it be a walk or Yoga class at home – into your routine. Being mindful of the medications you take and your salt intake can also help. To learn more about each of these elements, read through our featured resources below.

**(Courtesy: McMaster University)**





SPECIAL FEATURE

Words of Peace

# Quieting the Noise

You actually get to create your own internal playlist.  
What do you want to hear?



MC: Something that we've had a couple of questions about, and something that really spoke to me from what you said, was "the noise"—that chatter that is constantly there. And I wondered, "What's the best strategy for coping with it? How do we quieten it down, the noise?"

PremRawat: So, the question is, where does this noise come from? I mean, who is the perpetrator of this noise; who is the generator of this noise, and where is the stage that it ultimately plays out on?

So, the stage where it ultimately plays out on is you! But where does it come from? Well, it is something that started a long, long time ago, right from your parents.

Because, whose voices are there? They are included too, and the friends are included, and the boss, and the friends, and the friends of the friends, and the, everybody who has two-cents-worth of advice, and it just gets recorded,

But then the question becomes, "Why did it get recorded? Who had the record button pushed in?" Right? And we allow this to happen. We don't think we have a choice. Because we don't live our lives by that tactile feel.

I was watching a show where they were showing this person

Are you aware of the voice in your own head? Is it coming from you or from other people's voices that you have been hearing your whole life?

who was challenged with the sight. And as he moved around the room, he had to feel everything—and where it was and how it was—and there were no assumptions.

And we, the ones who have eyes, are most likely to have that chair pulled out from underneath us or even miss the chair. But not this man, because he knows he has to have that feel. Every step that he takes in his life is taken deliberately. Not just, "Uh, let me see what's over there." Do we live our lives like that?

You know, and maybe the noise is a consequence of living a very unconscious life. That if there was a conscious life, then you would say, "Okay! Since I have a tape recorder...." Don't fault the tape recorder, by the way. That's really good that you have a tape recorder. It's the content of the tape recorder that's bad.

"So, can I put in nice stuff? If I'm going to have noise, let me have some really lovely noise, something that inspires me, something that gives me courage...." Because we all need courage. That's why courage is there—hmm—because we need

it!

Because in life, the mountains that you have to sometimes cross, that we have created for ourselves, are no ordinary hills. Mind you, they are indeed mountains of extraordinary proportions, and it requires nothing shy of courage to even take on the challenge to do so.

So, you know, this is, in a way, what I do. Because, you look at the Peace Education Program—and when it goes to the prisons, their voice, their tape recorder is going, "I am here, and it's the fault of that person, and that person, and that person."

And they go through the Peace Education Program, and they start to realize, "Hey, look at yourself." And when they do, then they realize that they are standing at a threshold where they can change.

And it is no mistake or an accident that people who go through the Peace Education Program—at least, the inmates who go through the Peace Education Program—have the lowest rate of return back into the prisons.

So, we're not inmates, are we?

I mean, we're not in a prison system, are we? The prison system you are currently in.... The other prison system, they'll get out after two years, three years, four years, five years. The prison system you are in, you don't get to get out till you die—sorry. Huh! You're in for life.

Folks, it's really time to start creating your heaven, because there are no options here. The wall is there—and there are no options! And getting rid of that noise and putting the this noise and keeps: "Ah, push play again, please." nice noise on is up to you. It truly is—because you're the one who is doing it: who's buying into And, you know, and has it on "repeat," so it just keeps repeating and repeating and repeating and repeating.

Life has the possibility of creating your own playlist—your playlist that you like. Do you want to accept that challenge? You know, the issue isn't just the noise. We can replace it with something beautiful, something wonderful, something you like. Not what I like—you like! Because I want to create my playlist of something I like. You create your playlist, something you like.

**PremRawat**

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# Canadian Census 2021: The Need for Data Specificity in Heritage Ancestry

by Arul S. Aruliah

Post-Second World War Canada is a treasure house of the world population. The object of the Census is to count them all correctly on a given date, like taking a snapshot of the nation, and then analyzing it for social and economic composition, including that for parliamentary seats allocation where warranted. Canada's population in 2016 was 34.5 million and is currently at 37.5 million.

Census is taken by Statistics Canada every five years, and the next data collection is scheduled to be on Tuesday, May 11, 2021. Census information is the basis for making informed decisions about the local community as well as Canada as a whole. Filing of the completed Census form is a legal requirement and privacy of the personal data is protected. The information is made available to Library and Archives Canada (LAC) 92 years after the Census Year, so that it will be available for 'family members, genealogists, historical researchers, academics and journalists.' Statistics Canada is not interested in the residency status of a person nor does it share any private information with any other departments. But all must be counted in the completed form.

## Learning From 2016 Census Data

The Last Census was held in 2016. People in Canada have identified themselves in about 280 ethnic identities. Some elect to go to microlevel identity, or they are unable to pinpoint to a specific ethnicity as they are the products of 300 years of cross interactions. It will be interesting to note that 13,700 people in Nova Scotia declared their ethnicity as Nova Scotians, same as what 3,925 Ontarians did, while 194,560 had identified themselves as Quebecois. And it happens with every ethnic identity. It is not that only some of them are Nova Scotians, just that they could not identify with any specific heritage after the nth generation.

There are about 130 language groups in the Census, commencing with 19.5 million (m) people with English as their First Language and mere 90 Alaskan and Western Canada native people identifying Tlingit as their First Language.

The total South Asian population in the 2016 Census is about two million, inclusive of 1.35m East Indians, 0.22m Pakistanis and 0.15m Sri Lankans. Chinese population is 1.77m out of 3.1million East Asians in Canada, inclusive of 0.84m Filipinos, 0.24m Vietnamese and 0.2m Koreans.

It is imperative that accurate data is submitted when completing the census form. It is a challenge for Statistics Canada to compile accurate ethnicity data unless the data providers are specific when providing the information. Census forms used to guide the people in the past about ethnicity, not anymore. As noted earlier, no personal data will be identified for 92 years after the Census

Day, at that time it may become useful if and when your great grandchildren search for their roots.

## People of Origins with Tamil Heritage

The focus of this article is on people with origins in Ceylon/Sri Lanka and Tamil language. Tamil community is one of the largest single ethnic groups in Canada within the last four decades, with over 90% of them with origin in Ceylon/Sri Lanka. Country's name was changed from Ceylon to Sri Lanka in 1972 and immigration from Ceylon has been since the 1950s.

The ethnic composition of people with origins in Sri Lanka from the 2016 Census is shown in Table\_1 and the Census data by language spoken at home is shown in Table\_2. The data shown in both Tables illustrate how ethnicity and heritage data have been interchanged in the data providers' mind. 171,470 persons have identified Tamil as their language at home that appears to be within range with Sri Lankan and part of Tamils total in Table\_1. Children from mixed marriages shall identify both of their heritages. However, multi-ethnicity identified in the Table appears to be too significant for a relatively new community and may require further analysis.

Table 1: 2016 Census: Ethnicity - Ceylon/Sri Lanka

	Total	Male	Female	By Ethnicity		*Multi-Ethnicity
				single	Multi	
Sri Lankan	152,595	75,010	77,585	114,120	38,475	25%
Tamil	48,670	24,845	23,825	22,150	26,525	54%
Sinhalese	7,285	3,605	3,685	4,355	2,925	40%
Other South Asian origins, not included elsewhere.	76,400	38,815	37,585	55,450	20,955	27%

Note: This is a total population estimate. The sum of the ethnic groups in this table is greater than the total population estimate because a person may report more than one ethnic origin in the census.

\*Persons from intercultural (other than within the same ethnicity) marriage for both groups in Canada are very significant, an interesting positive expression in a multicultural society. [asa](#)

It should be noted that a significant amount of data does get merged in other categories. For instance, a Tamil born England who had migrated to Canada might select Britain for his parents' place and his first language as English, and he/she would not be counted in Table 1 and might get collated into Other South Asian Origins from other data points in the Census.

Table 2: 2016 Census - By Language Spoken at Home

	Total	Single Resp.	Multi Resp.
Tamil	171,470	52,230	119,245
Malayalam	32,315	6,605	25,710
Telugu	19,210	2,885	16,325
Sinhalese	18,205	3,030	15,170
Kannada	4,605	485	4,115
Smaller ethnic	515	80	430
S. India/Sri Lanka	246,320	65,315	180,995

Source: Statcan

This is illustrated by the sharp difference for the Sinhalese population in the two Tables. 18,205 persons have identified Sinhala as the language spoken in home while less than half of that number have identified as Sinhalese by ethnicity. It is more than likely that the heritage selected was Sri Lankan rather than the specific ethnicity. Ceylonese

or Sri Lankan is not an ethnicity but a nationality.

Similarly, a Tamil child born in Canada, who has grown up with English as the first language in a second-generation home, may not include Tamil as the language spoken at home and may not include Tamil for heritage as well. Again, that person's census data is unlikely to be collated in the above categories. The essence being that the data shown above is as good as the data input by the data provider. Yet, the available data provides a good snapshot.

Tamil population according to Census Canada, and allowing for dispersion of data as explained above, shall be around 180,000 in 2016. That appears to be in line with an estimate of Tamil population by the author in 1994, a total rounded to 68,000 as shown in Table 3, published by the Centre for Refugee Studies at York University, in Refuge, V14, 4 (1994).

## 2021 Census Forms

It is therefore important to file Census forms accurately without any

strated that children who are fluent in more than one language are adept at good learning, and this is unwittingly captured in Q19 – 23 in the Long Form for Language and Ethnicity, and of these, Q22 and Q23 are important. Q22: Even those who can understand but cannot speak will be advised to include other home languages. Q23 refers to a person's ancestors, that is heritage, that is always a linguistic heritage and not that of a country.

Within Canadian or other western nations context where Tamils are a relatively recent migrants heritage needs

Table 3: Tamil Population in Canada, Sept. 1994

Source	Population
Landings from 1964 to 1993	51,631
CR awaiting landing (approx. up to '93)	12,000
Natural net increase (est. up to '94)	6,000
<b>Total Sri Lankans admitted to Canada</b>	<b>69,631</b>
1994 Overseas admissions (est.)	4,000
C-55 Rejected cases under various appeals ('93)	1,744
<b>Total Sri Lankan in Canada (est.)</b>	<b>75,375</b>
Share of Tamil population (approx. 90% of Total)	67,837
Total Tamils population with origins in India, and other countries (est.)	5,000
<b>Total Tamil population in Canada (est.)</b>	<b>72,837</b>
<b>Population in Metro Toronto and the surrounding regions (est. at 90%)</b>	<b>65,553</b>

Sources: Immigration and Citizenship Canada, and Immigration and Refugee Board, Ottawa.

to be identified as simply Tamil irrespective of their country of heritage origins, Sri Lanka, India, or any other country. It is pertinent to note, however, that even the much earlier settlers in Malaysia or Singapore had continued to identify themselves as either Ceylon Tamils or Indian Tamils, the two components of the Tamil culture. Both identities will eventually merge into simply Tamil in countries like Canada and other western nations. A good evidence of that evolution is that Canadian Tamil Chamber of Commerce that was previously founded as Canadian Ceylon Tamil Chamber of Commerce.

Ceylon Tamils and Upcountry Tamils are now known as Sri Lankan Tamils with Ceylon Tamil being a heritage identity, while Sri Lankan Tamil is the nationality. For Tamil people irrespective of their origins, the language is Tamil, and the ethnicity as well is Tamil. If Ceylon Tamil is used in the Census Form, it may get collected under South Asians.

## Census Data Analysis

Initial analysis of Census data by Statistics Canada takes about a year for preliminary data summary and much longer for detailed analysis. Census information will be available in a few languages, including Tamil, and many indigenous languages. However, the data needs to be submitted in English or French by online or by paper. The 2016 Census was about 90% online and this year it is likely to be near total contactless Census data gathering.

Do visit Census Canada website <https://tinyurl.com/yfsv9bnu>

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## SPECIAL FEATURE

**Good Friday,** also called **Holy Friday,** is the Friday preceding Easter Sunday. It commemorates the Crucifixion of Jesus Christ and his death at Calvary.

*As the centuries pass, the evidence accumulates that, measured by His effect on history, he is the most influential life ever lived on this plane.*

- Historian **Kenneth Scott Latourette**

# GOOD FRIDAY



By: **Raymond Rajabalan**

Here is a man born in an obscure village, the Child of a peasant woman. He worked in a carpenter shop until He was thirty, and then for three years, He was an itinerant preacher. He never wrote a book. He never held an office. He never owned a home. He never had a family. He never went to college.

He never did one of the things that usually accompany greatness. He had no credentials but Himself. He had nothing to do with this world except the power of His Divine manhood. While still a young man, the tide of popular opinion turned against Him. He was turned over to His enemies. He went through the mockery of a trial. He was nailed to a cross between two thieves. His executioners gambled for the only piece of property He had on earth while He was dying—and that was His Event Viewer (Local) coat. When He was dead, He was taken down and laid in a borrowed grave through the pity of a friend. Such was His human life—Yet, He rose from the dead.

Twenty wide centuries have come and gone since a historical event in the Palestinian region of the Middle East. Today He is the centerpiece of the human race and the Leader of the column of progress. Of all the armies that ever marched, and all the navies that ever were built, and all the parliaments that ever sat, and all the kings that ever reigned, put together, have not affected the life of man upon this earth as powerfully as has that One Solitary Life.

The crucifixion of Jesus created a vast impact in the history of mankind and resulted in a variety of social changes. The birth of the only son of God almighty brought in a ray of hope to humanity stained by sins.

What was considered an ordinary event at that time later turned out to be of great historical significance? The fact that the time of birth of Jesus was the basis for world history to be divided into Before Christ (B.C) and after Christ (A.D) emphasizes this epoch's tremendous significance.

The only begotten son of God who had the power of being born in a palace with all the comforts and glory chose to be born in a manger, depicting the greatness of humility. After 33 years of his life in this world, when he sacrificed by himself on the Cross on Mount Calvary on a

Friday, he once again humbled himself.

His selfless sacrifice, offering his life to redeem sinful humanity, was the starting point of salvation for humanity.

**If there was one whose birth and death and his life between the two ends of the human life cycle were of great historical significance, it was only the life of Jesus Christ and no one else.**

There are 52 Fridays in each calendar year. Yet, why only Good Friday has gained significance worldwide?

- It was the day when the Almighty Jesus hung on the Cross and gave his life for the salvation of the humankind

- It was on that day, the sinless son of God volunteered to carry the weight of our sins, bled profusely, underwent untold agony, and breathed his last on the Cross.

- Good Friday was the day on which God showed the depth of His Love for humanity to the world.

When Jesus was born in Bethlehem, a star was the guiding factor to the three wise men and helped them reach the place where the infant Jesus was lying in the manger. Similarly, the Cross, the identifying symbol of every Christian, has become a permanent fixture in the history of mankind as a symbol of salvation and Redemption. It must be remembered that the death of Jesus, his supreme sacrifice for the entire world, was not just for Christians alone but everyone.

How the Cross did become a symbol of Redemption?

With the crucifixion of Christ, the Cross, which was considered a symbol of disgrace and humiliation, has come to be accepted as a Redemption symbol.

In those days, only the worst criminals were crucified under Roman rule. Those who were offended by the teachings of Christ, those Jewish leaders whose hypocrisy was exposed constantly schemed to lay false charges on Him and somehow or other get him crucified. When their self-interests were affected, those opposed to the teachings enticed Judas Iscariot, one of the disciples of Jesus, paying him 30 pieces of silver to help Jesus arrested.

Judas betrayed Jesus 2000 years ago, but it is

painful to note that betrayal incidences continue to this very day. A few great men dare to be the guiding light for the oppressed people from time to time, but their noble intentions continue to be blocked by traitors who want to safeguard their interests at any cost. There have been numerous such instances throughout history, but as always, in the end, the truth will prevail.

The enemies of Jesus Christ scored a temporary victory by crucifying Him to death. However, what they considered to be their victory finally proved to be a massive victory for Jesus over death. The death of Christ on a Friday turned out to be the day of victory over sins, and that is why we can consider it to be a Good Friday since it has brought so much good to humanity. On the third day, when Jesus rose to life, Jesus, the King of Kings He had victory over death. To the disappointment of the jubilant high priests, Jesus rose to life to the joy of the sorrowing poor, to the delight of the frightened disciples.

He rose to life to be with us. He rose to us, counsel us, leads us out of difficult situations, fulfills our needs, and wipe our tears. Of course, one may have to undergo unbearable pain and great sacrifice before seeing the light at the end of the tunnel. The death of Jesus very clearly proves this to us.

Many of our Saviour's most profound teachings are counterintuitive. "Love your enemies" is an example. Our minds are prone to develop solutions that are often different from those the Lord would have us pursue. "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord" (Isaiah55:8).

When we encounter roadblocks in our efforts, it is usual to lose hope, but if we accept the fact that God's thoughts and plans are different from ours, it will give us strength to bear the present agonies with the hope of a bright future.

**The struggle for justice and freedom from oppression cannot be stopped by crosses, torture, and horrific killings. This has been proved over and over again throughout history. All the sacrifices of any suffering people in every part of this world have always ended as a great uprising resulting in great freedom. This is the lesson that the death of Jesus teaches us.**





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## SPECIAL FEATURE

# Cultural factors associated with Hindu and Tamil New Year

Hindu Tamils in Sri Lanka are mostly connected to the South Indian festive culture and traditions. Each Hindu year has a particular name from ancient times. The total number of the Hindu Year is 60. The different 60 years routinely follow one after the other in the Hindu Panchaangam calendar (Hindu almanac.) Hindu Tamils from time immemorial have closely associated themselves with Astronomy and Astrology. Each New Year of the Hindu calendar is repeated after 60 years with the same name.

Weeks before the New Year, people clean, whitewash, and polish their houses and household items.

The Hindu New Year falls typically around the 13th or 14th of April of every year. The month of April is known as Chithirai in Tamil. That's why the New Year is known as the Tamil New Year, which is commonly known in Tamil as "Chithirai Puthu Varudaperappu," "Chithirai Varuda-

bringing prosperity to the world.

There is a particular period before and following the auspicious birth-time of the New Year, known as "Vishu Punniya Kaalam." During this time, people are supposed to observe specific well-defined traditional observations, such as a Maruththu Neer head bath. Especially after the birth of the traditional New Year, the people are supposed to take a conventional bath by applying Maruththu Neer (a variety of herbal and divine water). Maruththu Neer is prepared and distributed only at Hindu temples. It is made of numerous herbs, leaves, selected flowers, and saffron. Such sacred and especially made water could be obtained only from Hindu temples. The temple authorities make Maruth-

By Dr. Subashini Pathmanathan

(Dr. Subashini Pathmanathan is a freelance Journalist, Writer, Researcher, and Author of several books. More than thirty-five years experience in the field of Bharatha Natyam as a performing artist)

colour Kolam powder. In the middle of the Kolam, Lord Ganesha's effigy is placed.

Lord Ganesha's idol is traditionally made out of turmeric powder and Arugham grass. In ancient times, Lord Ganesha's idol was made out of cow dung. Even today, in villages, the Lord's effigy is still made out of cow dung. Keeping the idol of Lord Ganesha at the house entrance is to seek the blessing and protection of the residence from all the evil effects and bring happiness to the house.

To welcome the traditional New Year, they place a Purnakumpam at the house's main entrance. It is a Hindu tradition to keep the Purnakumpam at the house's main entrance. It is placed on a table and traditional



and herbal water).

Nowadays, instead of Panneer water, artificially flavored rose water is used in urban areas. Another tray has to be arranged for betel leaves with three, five, or seven areca nuts with one ripe yellow lemon fruit. Another tray has to be kept with fresh flowers of different colors and various fruits. All the practices are observed to welcome the traditional New Year in a Hindu customary manner.

The door's front entrance upper frame has to be decorated with seven or nine fresh mango leaves. But, instead of fresh mango leaves, people prefer to use plastic mango leaves, which are freely available in urban shops.

After finishing the socio-cultural formalities, the hearth has to be lit to cook the sweet milk rice (Pongal) and offer it to the Sun God and invoke its blessings. After the offering, all the family members participate in a joint prayer in the shrine room. The traditional worship is performed with a lighted oil lamp in the shrine room with camphor Deepam, Sambrani smoke, and incense sticks. They provide a divine atmosphere to the house.

After finishing their prayers and other ritual formalities, the family's head offers Kaiveshaham to all family members. Kaiveshaham contains a currency note, a coin, a few raw rice grains, lime fruit, fresh flower, red Kumkum, and holy ashes kept on a fresh betel leaf. It implies the first money transaction between family members at home on the prescribed time of the auspicious day. It implies that the head of the family gives Kaiveshaham in the form of blessings to all of his family members for economic and financial prosperity of the New Year's forthcoming days and months.

All the traditional activities of the New Year include:

Taking the first bath.

Lighting the hearth.

Exchanging the Kaiveshaham.

Visiting temples, houses of friends, and neighbours.

Work has to be performed according to the traditional Panchaanga calendar guidelines.



perappu," or "Puthuvarudam." Among the planets in Hindu Astronomy and Astrology, the movements of the Sun occupy a significant role. This is when the Sun moves from Pisces (Meena) to Aries (Makara) in the Hindu calendar. That means the movement from the last house to the Zodiac's first house in the Hindu calendar. According to Hindu astrology, there are 12 Rasis or signs. They are Aries, Taurus, Gemini, Cancer, Leo, Virgo, Libra, Scorpio, Sagittarius, Capricorn, Aquarius, and Pisces.

The New Year is believed to be Sun God's dawn (Surya Bhavan) to the earth. According to Hinduism, Sun God regulates and determines the universe's seasons. In other words, it is believed that it is a day to express gratitude to Sun God, whose cyclic movements determine and control the seasons in the universe, ultimately

thu Neer with certain flowers and divine leaves used for Pujas, Abhishek, and Archana. Fresh lotus flowers, pomegranate fruits, Arugham grass, Vilva leaves, Thulasi leaves, saffron, and Thipilli, are used to prepare the sacred Maruththu Neer.

The people add Maruththu Neer water in their bathing water and take a bath to believe that the herbal water purifies their bodies and induces good health, refreshes the mind, and generates positive thoughts. After taking the traditional Maruththu Neer head bath, they wear new clothes, the colour of which is suggested by the Hindu auspicious calendar popularly known as "Panchaangam."

The head of the house's female member cleans the front portion of the floor with turmeric water and draws the traditional Kolam with pure rice flour. But at present, people use artificial

lighted silver or brass Kuthuvilakus (traditional Hindu oil lamps). The Kuthuvillakus are kept on both sides of Purnakumpam (brass or silver pot filled with water, and top of the pot's mouth, a coconut is kept). Around the coconut, five, seven, or nine mango leaves are decorated. Purnakumpam is always placed on the front edge of the banana leaf on which redraw rice is spread.

The Kuthuvilakus (traditional cultural oil lamps in brass or silver-plated lamps) are always used for the traditional occasion. Besides, to mark the traditional New Year in an auspicious manner, three to four trays are kept for different purposes. One tray contains:

Vibuthi (holy ashes).

Auspicious red Kumkum powder and sandalwood paste.

Panneer water (a particular incense



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# SPRING – THE MOST DELIGHTFUL SEASON

C. Kamalaharan

**S**pring is the season for refreshing  
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 It's most welcome as it succeeds winter  
 And precedes the hottest season summer  
 In spring the landscape turns green  
 While the atmosphere remains clean  
 Leaves of plants begin to sprout  
 After severe periods of drought  
 Flowers too begin to blossom  
 Presenting a sight so awesome  
 The warm weather's vitalizing  
 And the gentle breeze's soothing  
 Account for the main reason  
 Spring to be a delightful season  
 Birds flocking about twittering  
 Bumble bees busy buzzing  
 Frogs in ponds croaking

Birds on twigs chirping  
 And ducks in lakes quaking  
 Are the time pieces of nature  
 Awakening us from slumber  
 To spring out of bed  
 And face the task ahead  
 Early in the morning  
 While we were dozing.







## SPECIAL FEATURE

# FORBEARANCE



By: J.A. Rajah

Just as the earth which supports the men who dig it, men of virtue bear with those who heap scorn on them. It is essential to encounter the wrongs with forbearance, but better still to forget them altogether. Robert Browning reflects the same idea in his words: 'Good to forgive, best to forget'. It is worst of poverty to have an unfed guest, while the best in strength is to bear with a fool. If a man aspires to the fullness of virtue, he should cherish the practice of forbearance. Knowing that people will not esteem those who are keen on revenge, they will value the quality of forbearance as gold.

*'Orutharkku orunarI inbam,  
poruntharkku,  
Ponrum thunayum puharI'*

Retaliation gives but a day's joy, forbearance brings glory all the time. Jesus Christ and then later Mahathma Gandhi have demonstrated forbearance effectively. Even if a wrong is done to one, and though badly hurt, it is not good to retaliate with evil. Jesus wonderfully displayed this noble quality, when he prayed for his persecutors while hanging on the cross. Pride leads a man to do wrong, but this could be overcome by the greater pride of one's forbearance. The householder who practices forbearance in the face of insult is purer than the ascetic himself. Jesus gave a sterling explanation of forgiveness when he told his disciple Peter that one must forgive not just seven times but seventy times seven. Great saints/ascetics do penance without food, but forbearance in the face of insults is greater than penance.

*'Unnathu notpar periyar pirar sollum,  
Innach chol notparin pin'.*

(Kural: 151-160)



Valluvar's Views







# Google - Magic Machine for Democratization of Information



By: J.A. Rajah

## A. Major Features:

Google is a multifaceted mechanism for gathering information that is immensely valuable for people in all parts of the world. Google was founded by Larry Page and Sergey Brin while they were Ph.D. students at Stanford University in California. Google is the most visited website in the world. Several other Google services also figure in the hundred most websites, including YouTube and Blogger. Google handles more than 6 billion searches per day. To handle this workload, Google built 11 data centers around the world with several thousand servers in each. The data centers enabled Google to handle the ever-changing workload efficiently.

Google indexes billions of web pages to allow users to search for the information they desire through the use of keywords and operators. Google search is the dominant search engine in the US market with a share of 65.6 percent. It enabled a personal element in search letting users for content in Google account's various services,

including e-mail messages and photos from Google photos. Google's news service (2002), an automated service, summarizes news articles from various websites. Google also hosts Google Books, a service that searches the text found in books in its database and shows limited previews in the full book where allowed.

Google has a variety of features that gallantly displays its role as a magic information mechanism. Google News presents a continuous flow of articles organized by thousands of publishers and magazines. It is available as an app on Android, iOS, and the Web. The service offers news in 35 languages including Tamil. On December 1st, 2009, it allowed only five articles per day (per language) to protect publishers from abuse.

## B. Major Applications:

Google Books is a source from Google Inc. It searches the texts of books and magazines that Google has scanned and converted to text using optical character recognition and stored in its database. Books are provided either by publishers

and authors Google Books Partner Program or by Google's Library Project. Additionally, Google has participated with several magazine publishers to digitalize their archives. Google Books initiative has been hailed for its potential to offer unprecedented access to what may become the largest online body of human knowledge and promoting of democratization of knowledge. Google Messenger supports smart replies for text and emoji. Messages for the web let you send and receive texts from a computer. It works with text, emoji, images, and stickers. Google offers eleven communication apps and services. Alphabetically they are Allo, Chat, G-mail, Hangouts, Inbox, Messenger, Duo, Project Fi, and Voice. Google plus is a social networking platform. The Google+ design team sought to replicate the way people interact more closely than in the case of other social networking servers like Facebook and Twitter. The project's slogan is 'Real-life sharing rethought for the web. It helps to share your photos, update posts, and so on. Inbox by Gmail is an e-mail service developed by Gmail. It bundles gathered emails

of the same topics together, highlights surface key details from messages, reminds, assists, and snooze functionality users to control when specific information appears. Messenger is Google's best way to do text messaging. Messenger has a great interface and supports pictures, GIFS, emoji, and group texts.

## C. Capacity for Innovation:

Google is always innovative. The Google company accepts the inevitability of failures and continues renovating it until they get things right. Google is the wonder machine of the Millennium. It provides information and explanation about anything and everything that the world needs. It provides immense resources essential for learners, unparalleled in human history for its in-depth analysis, and immaculate picturesque explanations. It keeps on renovating itself to perform better- to provide excellent service. Google is a veritable encyclopedia where one could find anything and everything one needs to know about the world and its peopling.





## The Importance of Time Management

By: Agshayaa Suresh



*"All we have to decide is what to do with the time that is given us"*

– J.R.R. Tolkien

Learning how to budget your time properly is something that students need in order to succeed in school. Many people say that students learning how to budget their time properly is an important skill, but just how important is it? Well, learning how to budget your time is very critical because it can reduce stress, produce better work, and allow greater efficiency. Budgeting your time also means good time management. Time management means the ability to use one's time effectively or productively, especially at work. There are many different ways in which a person can learn how to budget their time.

Learning how to budget your time can help reduce stress. When there is a full list of tasks to accomplish for both work and personal matters, anxiety can start to creep up on you. This can be very bad for your mental health. Good time management can help you prioritize your to-do list and set aside the time needed for your most important tasks. Prioritizing your tasks and giving yourself enough time to accomplish them can help reduce your stress levels. According to research, students who know how to manage their time wisely experience less stress. When you manage your time properly and successfully meet your deadlines, you will feel a sense of accomplishment and confidence in your abilities.

Budgeting your time wisely produces better work. When you are not constantly racing to meet the

deadline, you can put more effort and thought into your work. Time management helps you sequence your tasks to make sure you have enough time available to complete every project. Many people use time management to allow themselves several days to complete a project or finish it ahead of the due date. If you properly schedule the time needed to complete your work, you will be able to hit your school deadlines every time. Time management can help you focus on just the essential tasks ahead of you and avoid time consuming distractions. The quality of your work will be much better when you are not rushing last minute.

When you budget your time, you become more efficient. This means you can become more focused at work, which allows you to accomplish even more things with the time you have. Efficiency can be achieved by creating a schedule or to-do list. Even if you have just ten minutes of free time, it is possible to accomplish a small task. When you have a lot of free time, you can finish even bigger projects. You can create a schedule in your notebook, bullet journal, whiteboard or a bulletin board. You can buy a planner and create a time table that can help you achieve your goals and meet deadlines.

In conclusion, knowing how to budget your time is definitely beneficial to anyone who wants to maximize their time and efficiency. It can help reduce your stress, produce better work, and allow you to become more efficient with your work habits in the long run.



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# CELEBRATE THE NIGHT WITH INTERNATIONAL DARK SKY WEEK

## Light Pollution is a Severe Hazard for Human Health and Wildlife

By OUE Research Institute



International Dark-Sky Week 2021 is rapidly approaching. International Dark-Sky Association (IDA) invites everyone to discover the night during the week of April 5-12, 2021. Every year, IDA hosts International Dark Sky Week (IDSW) to raise awareness about light pollution's many adverse effects. It is always held when the sky is darkest and the stars most visible. This annual event was created in 2003 by a high-school student, Jennifer Barlow. Since then, International Dark Sky Week has grown to become a worldwide event and a key component of Global Astronomy Month.

Thousands of years ago, the ancient Greeks looked up at the mass of stars that stretched across our sky and, believing it looked like flowing milk across



the darkness, called it galaxies kuklos, meaning the "milky circle." Later the Romans called it via lactea, meaning the "milky road."

However, look upon a given night and, if you are like two-thirds of the population, you will wonder just what it was those Greeks and Romans were looking at. The reason we don't see the stars is due to light pollution. The artificial light has led to longer working hours and has changed the black sky of the night to one with a dull orange glow, devoid of stars.

### Light Pollution & Impacts



Light may have its place, but what concerns many astronomers and scientists is precisely how that lighting is being used. Light pollution can be over lighting, light trespass, clutter, glare, sky glow. The sky glow reduces people's ability to see the sky, which lights up the countryside to harm wildlife.



The consequences are far-reaching. Many studies have shown that light pollution affects both humans and animals. From sleepless nights to depression in humans to driving off species from their natural environment, the results have been seen worldwide.

Beyond the night sky's impact, many forms of light pollution impact the environment in various ways. There are significant impacts just from light at night to insects to migratory birds that fly at night, both of which can be thrown off in navigation. When there are tall illuminated structures, birds will fly directly into them at night and crash. Another effect has



been observed on sea turtles. Several studies have found that newly-hatched sea turtles use brightness cues — precisely the water's reflectivity — to orient themselves to the ocean's safety. But lighting near beaches can confuse the newborns, ultimately leading to their death. Rather than head toward the sea, they may head toward parking lots or buildings.

Eliminating light pollution is important because it is a type of pollution that changes the environment. The natural environment is one that all lifeforms have adapted to live. Once we change that environment, and by lighting up the night, we fundamentally change that environment.

### Light Pollution & Cancer Risk

Not all artificial light has the same effect on humans; the most concern is blue light. Our eyes have something called intrinsically photosensitive retinal ganglion cells (ipRGC). The ipRGCs are sensitive to blue light and are believed to be connected to our circadian rhythm, regulating our

day and night cycles. Blue means daylight, which tells the brain that we are supposed to stay up. But, with the advent of electric light, our detectors get confused, never resting, always with some low-level light flowing in through the night.

A 1999 health study on nurses found that they had a 60 percent greater chance of developing breast cancer. They work night shifts when the body should be sleeping. If you are on shift work, you are up all night, and not only that but your eyes are bathed by the white fluorescent or LED light of a hospital corridor. Your melatonin does not get released either because these twilight detectors keep telling your brain, no, no, you can't go to sleep yet because it is still daytime. Twilight indicates that Sun is below the horizon because of the gradual decline of light. Melatonin hormone combats the developing cancer cells. Therefore, they did not benefit from the natural mechanism in their body to fight cancer.

Humans need a high level of light before seeing the high level of melatonin suppressed. That is why people worry about working shift work. There is considerable circumstantial evidence that the blue component in white light at night that you see more and more is hazardous.

### Adapting the Night Life

Though the IDA was started by two astronomers 25 years ago with the idea of trying to take back the night for stargazing, it has since developed into a worldwide organization aimed at promoting better lighting options for humans' benefit wildlife health.

Billboard lighting, parking lot, car dealerships, street lighting that travels up rather than down to its intended area also trouble both the IDA and the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada (RASC). They encourage municipalities to use more "effective" lighting. That may mean full cut-off light fixtures, which reduce glare and direct lights to the area they need to illuminate, and no over-illumination. The IDA's message is not about turning off all the lights and plunges everyone into darkness and turmoil but using them more efficiently. We should be far more careful and thoughtful about designing and manipulating light at night.

There are ways that homeowners can do their part. The first thing is to check any lights that you can control. Dark skies are not just beautiful to watch with the naked eye, but there are additional benefits. By limiting light pollution, we conserve energy, save wildlife that is confused by bright lights, and positively impact human health. In short, we are at a loss by the disappearance of the stars from our life.

During the week, dark sky defenders worldwide connect over a shared goal to protect the night. Everyone is invited to join International Dark Sky Week 2021.







# Invest like a business owner - Take the emotion out of Investing



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

Here's what an emotional investor does: Checks the market constantly, worries about every uptick and downtick, rapidly realigns his or her portfolio at the first sign of a stock or market downturn, tends to jump into and out of the market chasing hot stocks and dumping down stocks. And here's one other thing an emotional investor does: Severely limits his or her chances for long-term financial success.

Rational investors know that the best approach is to take the emotion out of investing. Many of them are business-owners and replace emotional investing with a business-owner approach. They have found success in incorporating these business-owner principles into their investment plans.

**Clear investment goals** Rational investors set goals and have the discipline to stick to them. Yes, they want to make money, but they put their return objectives against clear short- and long-term goals. Goals give you direction, a purpose for the way you spend your money, and the way you live. Goals motivate and encourage you. They help you use your money to do important things for you. The first step in financial planning is to think about your goals and then work with a qualified financial advisor to determine how much you will need to save to achieve your goals.

**Know when to delegate** Successful business-owners to realize they can't do everything themselves, so they hire capable people with the

talent and ability to enhance their business. Similarly, rational investors delegate their investment decisions to professionals who have the skill and ability to help them achieve and sustain their financial goals. The best way to achieve your financial goals is to have access to sound financial advice grounded in a comprehensive financial plan. Advisors perform tasks vital in their clients' financial lives, including improved financial literacy, developing a culture of savings and investments, developing and executing a financial plan, selecting appropriate financial vehicles and products, and enhancing investment decision-making.

**Be risk-averse** Both rational business owners and rational investors want to create wealth, but they also understand the need for wealth protection. That's why their portfolios are carefully crafted and well-diversified to reduce risk and provide more stable returns over the long term. Investors are increasingly looking for options to minimize risk within their equity portfolios without necessarily sacrificing returns. One option for investors is to consider investing in lower volatility equities. When market volatility occurs, recovering from a decline in a portfolio value takes time—the more significant the decline, the greater the market gain that must occur to break even again. Since the market declines of 2008, many investors look to reduce risk in their investment portfolios but realize that moving to bonds may not achieve their desired returns. A

low volatility strategy is designed to participate in stock market growth but limits the downside risk compared to the broad market

**Just the facts** Rational investors make investment decisions based on facts, not on feelings. They do not get caught up in "the investment flavor of the moment" and are careful to keep their emotions out of investment choices. All investors love the prospect of a rising stock market; however, once the trend starts downward and prices approach historic lows, many investors feel the need to be defensive and retreat to the security of cash or money market instruments. While no one likes a turbulent market, those investors who can focus on the long-term and stay invested stand to gain.

The diversification of your investments across asset classes, investment management styles, and geographic regions is crucial to control risk and volatility.

**In the know** Rational business-owners keep a daily watch on investment news and consider its implications. Still, like rational investors,

they also keep their focus on long-term trends, not day-to-day fluctuations.

**Seize opportunity** Rational individuals, business owners and investors alike, trust their intelligence. They actively seek money-making opportunities – especially in a volatile market --by hedging, shorting, and using other investment strategies to pick up assets at bargain prices. If an unemotional business-owner approach to investing appeals to you – and it should because it's often a better path to financial success – then talk to your professional advisor about the investment strategies that work best for you.

*Disclaimer:*

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# What Happens to a Financed or Leased Car in Bankruptcy?

Fighting with your financial resources is tough enough; however, deciphering what debt solutions are available to you, as well as which of your properties, if any, are protected, call for expert suggestions. A lot of people that owe cash can really feel overwhelmed. Thankfully, some organizations can use financial debt help across Canada.

One alternative, depending on your situation, is filing for personal bankruptcy or a consumer proposition. In such situations, only unsafe financial debts are usually impacted, i.e., lending not attached to certain properties. The safety and security of your protected financial debts, on the other hand, is primarily based on whether you can afford to keep making payments on them.

#### ► Secured financial debt versus unsecured debt

Unsafe financial debts normally include such items as credit cards, individual loans,

earnings tax obligations, etc. On the other hand, guaranteed financial obligations are those where the financial debt is tied to an asset, such as a mortgage, real estate, a vehicle loan, or auto lease, which is safeguarded by your automobiles.

If you are leasing a car as well as you submit a customer proposition or for bankruptcy, you can technically hang on to it if you are continuing in making the payments. When you cannot, or you do not want to maintain the vehicle, you can do two things, voluntarily surrender the vehicle or start foreclosure.

#### ► Your choices as well as what occurs next.

Leasing a car suggests you are paying for it and will utilize it up until the lease is up. Even if you declare insolvency, if you depend on day on your settlements for the leased vehicle and you can pay to continue making them, you are legitimately qualified to keep it as per the terms of the lease. You should

additionally keep the insurance coverage in full force.

When speaking with an accredited bankruptcy trustee who can offer financial debt assistance, it is necessary to allow him/her to learn about your automobile lease upfront. Typically, the leasing company and the loan providers would choose that you remain to make the auto settlements.

#### ► Needing insurance policy as well as a LIT

Regardless of what you choose to do with the leased automobile after filing a customer proposition or insolvency, always preserve insurance coverage on the automobile till it is no longer in your belongings. If something should take place to it before you have returned it, as well as you are not insured, you will likely be called to pay. Also, without insurance, car accidents can impact your motorist's license.

**Any questions please visit [gtacredit.com](http://gtacredit.com) or call 416-650-1100**




**COMMUNITY WATCH**

# Canadian Tamils donate bicycles to deserving students in Batticaloa, Sri Lanka

Canadian Tamils have donated ten bicycles for deserving students in the Batticaloa district of Sri Lanka. These ten beneficiary students were selected based on the long-distance they walk daily to their schools, their academic performance, and their higher poverty levels at their homes.

This donation was supported and implemented by the Canadian Tamil Congress (CTC), Canadian Tamils Humanitarian Association (CTHA), NEED Centre, and Chanakiyan Rasamanickam MP.

Earlier on February 21st, 2021, 17 bicycles were donated by Canadian Tamils to deserving students in the Batticaloa district. More such bicycle donations for the student are planned for April 2021 in Amparai and Vavuniya districts' vulnerable communities.

If you like to make a bicycle donation (CAD \$150) to a deserving student in the war-affected Northern or Eastern provinces of Sri Lanka, please contact the Canadian Tamil Congress by phone at 416-240-0078 or by email at [info@canadiantamilcongress.ca](mailto:info@canadiantamilcongress.ca)



# Nanthavanam Foundation International Women Achievers 2021

## Indrani Nagenthiram, Founder of Elders Home "Villa Karuna" one of the recipients

The power of recognition in leadership is energizing. While leaders inspire the whole team members to deliver superior results, it is also essential to appraise their leadership qualities to make them feel valued.

We take this opportunity to thank the organizers of the award committee of "Nanthavanam Foundation's International Women Achievers 2021", for choosing Mrs. Indrani Nagenthiram as one of their recipients. I want to congratulate Mrs. Indrani Nagenthiram for the significant moment of engagement with Villa Karuna Home for Seniors. We greatly appreciate her dedicated years of service and loyalty to Villa Karuna.

We appreciate everything that Mrs. Indrani Nagenthiram has done over the past several years since she established Villa Karuna's home for seniors. The endless hours that she spent working there and the professionalism that she has shown have motivated the entire staff team and Board immensely. We pride ourselves as Villa Karuna Board on Mrs. Indrani Nagenthiram's hard work and dedication, making every critical project a great success. As always, we are counting on her to go the extra mile.

We value her sacrifices to help seniors through Villa Karuna grow to where it is today. This recipient award reflects a genuine appreciation for her dedicated years of service and symbolizes her personal and professional achievements.

The success of Villa Karuna Home for Seniors in the Tamil community is a direct result of her efforts and dedication. Mrs. Indrani Nagenthiram's commitment to quality and personal and professional integrity in the seniors' sector is the highlighting factor.

Once again, hearty congratulations!  
**Augustine Jegasothy**

President – Villa Karuna Home for Seniors



விம்ரா பேக்ஸ் பிரவே! விமிடெட் வழங்கும்  
நந்தவனம் பலன்டேசன்  
சாதனைப் பெண் 2021 விருது பெறுவோர்  
International Woman Achiever 2021

 MYTHILY SAMBATH Secunderabad	 INDU RAVEENTHIRA Germany	 THUSHANTHI DINUSHAN Sri Lanka	 KAVITHA ILAYARAJA USA America	 Dr. VANAJA VAITHIYARATHAN Puducherry
 SHIRANI UTHAYAKUMAR Germany	 DEEKSHA KARUPPASAMY Coimbatore	 RANJANA SATHA UK London	 SASIKA KARAGASABAI France	 RAJANI JESURASA London
 GEETHA GUNALAN Coimbatore	 GOMATHY SANKARAN Malaysia	 PADMA RAHULAN London	 PUSHPA CHRISTY Canada	 SUBATHRA RAJENDRAN Singapore
 NAACHIYAR ARUL Africa	 INDRANI NAGENTHIRAM Canada	 NILANTHI SASIKUMAR Sri Lanka	 THAMIZHANANDU SUBRAMANIAM Thiruvananthapuram	 SOORAYARANI VITHAYALASINGAM Sri Lanka



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## Maundy Thursday and the World Dimension of Christianity



By: J A Rajah

Maundy Thursday is the day prior to Good Friday. It was the day when Jesus had supper with his disciples and commanded them to love one another and take his message of love to all parts of the earth. Maundy means command. It was the initial act of Jesus that enabled Christianity to spread throughout the world. Now Christianity has more followers than any other religion in the world. There are 2 billion Christians and 37 million Churches in the world today.

On Maundy Thursday, Judas Iscariot who also had supper with Jesus betrayed him to Jesus's enemies, who falsely accused him and later put him to death. Pastor Jos Stevens of the TCCC identified three types of human sins after scrutinizing the character

of three persons associated with the crucifixion of Jesus. The three persons were Judas, Peter and Pilate. Judas was paid thirty pieces of silver for betraying Christ. This character represents the love of possessions, position and privileges. Peter who denied Christ three times represents the human weakness of selfishness. He was more worried of saving himself though he was near and dear to Jesus. Pilate, the Roman governor wanted to please the crowd and that is why he listened to the accusers of Jesus. He represents the human sin of wanting to please others and not stand for justice.

Martin Luther King (Junior) said "We must stand for justice in times of change, challenge and conflicts not just in times of convenience".

*In loving memory of  
Mrs. Catherine Navamani Suntharalingam  
(Aug 1937 - Feb 2021)  
Teacher at Urumpirai Hindu College &  
Vembadi Girls high School. Jaffna.*

MY angel is in heaven  
My angel Ranees is up in heaven,  
I wanted everyone to know,  
I feel that you watching over me,  
Everywhere I go.  
I wish you were here with me,  
But that can never be.  
Memories of you in my heart  
That only I can see.  
My angel wife up in heaven  
I hope you understand,  
That I would give anything  
If I could touch your hand.  
I'd hold you oh so tightly  
And never let you go  
And all the love inside of me  
To you I would show.  
My angel up in heaven  
For now we are apart,  
You will always live inside of me,  
Deep in my heart.



- Kingsley -





## 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.

# Sundakkai kuzhambu (turkey berry curry)



Even during the midst of this pandemic, we're still able to get imported vegetables like fresh sundakkai. Typically available sundried, they are a seasonal treat that must be taken advantage of.

### Ingredients:

- ✓ 200g fresh sundakkai
- ✓ 2 tbsp coconut oil or gingelly oil
- ✓ 2 dried red chillies
- ✓ 4 cloves of garlic, chopped (optional)
- ✓ 1 tsp of ghee (optional)
- ✓ 1 sprig of curry leaves
- ✓ 1 tsp ginger/garlic paste
- ✓ 1 Bombay/Ceylon onion, diced
- ✓ 100ml thin tamarind water (or ½ tsp paste)
- ✓ 1 tbsp Jaffna/masala curry powder
- ✓ 1 tsp coriander powder
- ✓ ½ tsp cumin powder
- ✓ ½ tsp turmeric powder
- ✓ 1 cup of water
- ✓ Salt

### Method:

Pound turkey berries lightly in a mortar and pestle, rinse and set aside. In a pan heat oil and add onions and red chillies with curry leaves. Let the onions brown and add ginger and garlic paste. Once this has cooked for 2-3 minutes, add all the powders (coriander, cumin, masala and turmeric), mix with the onions and add the turkey berries along with 1 cup of water and

salt, to taste. Let this all simmer for 10 minutes with a lid on the pan. Add in tamarind water and cook the curry for a further 10 minutes with the lid on. Once you see the oil rise to the surface, the curry is ready.

An added final option is to heat ghee in a small pan and add chopped garlic. Add this tempering to the curry and enjoy this nutritious and healthy dish.

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

## 2021 COOKING CLASSES

Interactive group cooking classes



- 2 Jan Sambhar
- 10 Jan \* Sweet and savory pongal
- 16 Jan Rasam
- 30 Jan Salmon and chicken sambal
- 13 Feb Nasi Goreng
- 27 Feb Chicken curry
- 13 Mar Chicken Biryani
- 27 Mar Kurma
- 10 Apr Puliyodharai
- 24 Apr Mango curry

Email: [Tamilfoodclasses@gmail.com](mailto:Tamilfoodclasses@gmail.com) to book a spot

Classes are CAD \$30-\$40/ GBP £20-£30 per session | Limited spaces only

Classes will be morning sessions conducted online

\*This will be an afternoon session (3-5pm EST)





**MARRIAGE BUREAU**  
(CHRISTIAN NON R.C.) (Sri Lanka)

There are so many Christian parents who are living in sorrow that their children are unable to get their partners in life and that their marriageable age has passed. Some have even left their spiritual faith due to this reason. By the grace of God there is a good opportunity for you to select the partners through this Marriage Bureau (International). This is only an introducing Christian ministry. This is being handled with extreme confidentiality by one person only. Therefore, if you want to find a suitable partner, contact the number given below or send an email to obtain an application form.

**Mrs. Swarna Edwards**

Mobile No: 0775561219 (Whatsapp no)  
e-mail: lifepartner7112001@gmail.com

# BUYING OR SELLING YOUR HOME?



**ROYALAN** TEAM



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**Raghu Thillainathan**  
**416-629-5800**





New Year Message from the President of Durham Tamil Association

We would like to wish all  
Monsoon Journal Readers  
a Happy Tamil New Year

Durham Tamil Association is grateful for the support of Monsoon Journal and for its long-standing support to all community organizations.

Please join us in Durham Tamil Association celebrating 20 years of service of Durham Region in Ontario as an award-winning community organization.

Best wishes,  
Rajaratnam Thayanandan (Sasi)  
President – Durham Tamil Association  
[www.DurhamTamils.Org](http://www.DurhamTamils.Org)







## ACHIEVEMENTS

*March is Women's History Month*

### *Lawyer Ranitha Gnanarajah has been honored with the International Women of Courage (IWOC) Award*

Lawyer Ranitha Gnanarajah has been honored with the International Women of Courage (IWOC) award in recognition of her outstanding contributions to democracy and human rights in Sri Lanka.

She has been honoured by the first Lady of the United States Dr. Jill Biden and Secretary of State Antony Blinken, the US Embassy in Sri Lanka said.

"A lawyer, Ms. Gnanarajah advocates for Sri Lanka's most vulnerable populations, including families affected by enforced disappearances, survivors of gender-based violence, and religious and ethnic minorities," the statement said.

U.S. Ambassador to Sri Lanka and Maldives, Alaina B. Teplitz, said "Ms. Gnanarajah has demonstrated a tremendous commitment to justice on behalf of all her fellow citizens. She's helped her country's most vulnerable people avail themselves of their rights and in doing so is a model of courage in Sri Lanka and around the world."

Born and brought up in Mannar, Ranitha went to St. Xavier's Girls' National College and left the island only when she got the opportunity to study law at the Colombo University.

A grandfather who was president of the citizens' committee of the island inspired Ranitha to be a human rights activist and lawyer. "He helped a lot of families affected by the violation of human rights- arrest, detention, disappearance, torture."

Ms. Gnanarajah was among TBC women recognized for their enormous contributions to their communities and countries. These extraordinary women will participate in the International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP) virtual exchange.



### *Kasturi Chellaraja receives Trailblazer of the Year Award 2021 by Women in Management (Sri Lanka)*

Kasturi Chellaraja who is the first female Group CEO of a Public Quoted Conglomerate in Sri Lanka (Hemas Holdings PLC) is the recipient of the Trailblazer of the Year Award 2021 by Women in Management (Sri Lanka). In 2019, she was recognized as one of the twelve 'Top Women Change-Makers in the Country' by the Parliament of Sri Lanka and USAID.

She is the first female to be elected as President of the Sri Lanka Chamber of the Pharmaceutical Industry (SLCPI) and is an Executive Director of HEMAS Holdings PLC. She is a Non-Executive Director of Capital Alliance Limited and a Non-Executive Director of Morison PLC. She was also a Non-Executive Director of the American Chamber of Commerce in Sri Lanka, and a Non-Executive Director of the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants (CIMA), Sri Lanka.

She is an alumna of Holy Family Convent, Sri Lanka and successfully completed the Senior Executive Leadership Program at Harvard Business School in 2018. She is a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants (CIMA).



## Quotable Quotes - 2020

By: Siva Sivapragasam

## “They said it”



“Ultimately, this is about who we are as a nation,”. Asians “have the right to be recognized as American – not as the ‘other,’ not as ‘them,’ but as ‘us.’”

- Kamala Harris, US Vice-President on Racism



“Yet, as the months have gone by, I have also witnessed the remarkable courage, strength, and generosity demonstrated by Canadians. Through it all, it is the incredible support that Canadians have shown for one another that has impressed me the most”

- Dr. Theresa Tam, Canada's Chief Public Officer on COVID 19



“We are vaccinating thousands of people a day in the city, but we now have the capacity for more. We need you to respond now.”

- Toronto Mayor John Tory's request to Seniors to get vaccinated



“We have got a war against an invisible enemy. This is what responsible Governments do”

- Ontario Finance Minister Peter Bethlenfalvy on the Ontario Province's Budget.



“I am excited to announce that our team of experts, working in close collaboration with the Suez Canal Authority, successfully refloated the Ever Given...thereby making free passage through the Suez Canal possible again”

- Peter Berdowski, CEO of Boskalis





# DURHAM TAMIL ASSOCIATION

## Durham Tamils Association Serving Our Community



### DTA SERVING DURHAM TAMILS DURING THESE UNPRECEDENTED AND CHALLENGING TIMES

Durham Tamils Association is always looking for ways to help our members, youth, and our seniors. During this pandemic period and this winter, we are continuing to provide free virtual activities almost every day. Thank you to our fantastic volunteers who do not expect anything and are serving the community voluntarily. DTA is grateful for your continued support. Also, DTA's Tamil school continues to provide virtual Tamil classes for our students.

#### DTA's Seniors

DTA is keeping our seniors fully occupied with multiple free virtual classes and programs. DTA runs Seniors Chair Yoga Class, Mind Exercises, Mat Yoga Class, Cooking Classes, Health Seminars, Chess Club, Virtual Game Nights, Travel Around the World from Armchair, Crafting Classes (including free craft items), and much more for our seniors. DTA is here to support you in any way.

If you want to participate in our programs, please check our monthly calendars. Please register for virtual Seniors programs at [durhamtamils.org](http://durhamtamils.org)

**DURHAM TAMIL ASSOCIATION**  
**Free Virtual**  
**FRIDAYS SENIORS GAME Night**  
**7 P M**  
 Biruntha Baskaran  
 Mayuri Gnanendran  
 Register online : [durhamtamils.org](http://durhamtamils.org)

#### High School Career Fair

**HIGH SCHOOL MEET THE YOUNG PROFESSIONALS CAREER FAIR**  
**REGISTER ONLINE WWW.DURHAMTAMILS.ORG**

**BENIFITS**

- + A DAY ON THE JOB (FROM A PROFESSIONAL POINT OF VIEW)
- + BENEFITS OF DIFFERENT POST-SECONDARY OPTIONS
- + CAREER OPTIONS
- + DETAILS ABOUT DIFFERENT UNIVERSITIES/COLLEGES
- + SCHOLARSHIPS AND BURSARIES
- + FINANCING AND BUDGETING FOR YOUR FUTURE
- + RESUMES AND COVER LETTERS

Do you believe that you're prepared for the transition after high school?  
 Which career cluster/subject interests you the most?  
 Which path are you considering after high school?

DOCTOR ENGINEER LAWYER  
 TEACHER BUILDER  
 ARTIST BANKER  
 MECHANIC ACCOUNTANT

DURHAMTAMILS.ORG

All High school youth please complete the survey and share it widely with your friends and encourage them to complete and register.

This career fair will be beneficial for high schoolers.

Do you believe that you are prepared for the transition after high school?

Which career cluster/subject interests you the most?

Which path are you considering after high school?

#### BENEFITS OF ATTENDING THE HIGH SCHOOL CAREER FAIR

-A Day on the Job (From a Professional Point of View)

-Benefits of different post-secondary options

Career Options

-Details about different Universities/Colleges

-Scholarships and Bursaries

-Financing and Budgeting for Your Future

-Resumes and Cover Letters

Are you a high school student? Complete the Career Fair Survey!

At <https://www.durhamtamils.org/high-school-career-survey.html>

Please register online at [durhamtamils.org](http://durhamtamils.org)

#### DTA's Free Drop-in Virtual Homework Club

**DURHAM TAMIL ASSOCIATION**  
**DROP IN FREE VIRTUAL HOMEWORK PLUS TUTORING HELP!**

SCIENCE | MATH | FRENCH | LANGUAGE ARTS  
 REGISTER ON LINE [www.durhamtamils.org](http://www.durhamtamils.org)  
 HISTORY | JK, SK and Grade 1 - 8  
 Monday To Friday  
 one on one coaching will be available as needed

Mon - 5:30-6:30pm Thu - 4:30-5:30pm  
 Tue - 7:30-8:30pm Fri - 6:00-7:00pm  
 Wed 7:30-8:30pm

JK, SK & Grade 1-8

subjects: Math, Language Arts, French, Science, History Etc...

Drop-In Time: Monday to Friday (time may wearable)

This session is not limited to Homework help, but also for additional help on other subjects that volunteers may help with. A big thank you to our youth volunteers.

Register online: [durhamtamils.org](http://durhamtamils.org)





## COMMUNITY WATCH



## Durham Tamils Association Serving Our Community



## DTA SERVING DURHAM TAMILS DURING THESE UNPRECEDENTED AND CHALLENGING TIMES

**DURHAM TAMIL ASSOCIATION**

**Free Virtual Chair Yoga For seniors**

**Mrs. Vana Dineshkumar**  
Experienced and well-known Yoga Teacher

**Fridays 10:00-11:30**

- REGISTER @ [DURHAMTAMILS.ORG](http://DURHAMTAMILS.ORG)

## DTA Presents

## ESL classes For Adults

English as a second language  
Register Online: [durhamtamils.org](http://durhamtamils.org)  
Instructor : Abirami Srichandradas  
Register ASAP and classes will begin soon.

## 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](http://durhamtamils.org)

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

## Thank you to DTA's Annual Sponsors

DTA thanks our annual sponsors Nava Wilson Law, Computek, TSN Express, Chapel Ridge Funeral Home, Showtha Thushijanthan-RE/MAX, Ajax Crematorium, and Visitation Ctr, Threat IQ, and all our sponsors for your continued support throughout the year.

For more information on all DTA's Community Support Programs and Sponsor contacts please visit [www.DurhamTamils.Org](http://www.DurhamTamils.Org)

Tel: 905.428.7007

DTA News Channel on Youtube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LIQinT8OO0o>

**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](http://durhamtamils.org)  
Fill out the form and provide your information under "Virtual class registration"  
Email: [info@durhamtamils.com](mailto: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.

டறம் தமிழ் ஒன்றியம் வழங்கும் திருக்குறள் நேரம்

மெய்நிகர் வழியாக

Meeting ID: 891 9783 7270  
Passcode: 701656

ஒவ்வொரு வெள்ளிக் கிழமை மாலை நேரம் 6-7pm Free/ இலவசம்

திருக்குறளைக் கற்போம்!! தித்திக்கும் எம் தாய்மொழியைக் காப்போம்!!

Jothy Jeyakumar (Sivasothy) RJ at CMR |ThamilFM  
வள்ளுவர் வழி இணையப்பள்ளி ஆசிரியர்

DURHAM TAMIL ASSOCIATION

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SATURDAYS 10:00- 11:00 AM

REGISTER @ [DURHAMTAMILS.ORG](http://DURHAMTAMILS.ORG)

டறம் தமிழ் ஒன்றியம் வழங்கும்

கலந்துரையாடல் - புதன்கிழமைகளில் மாலை 6:00 மணிக்கு மற்றுமொரு புதிய கதையாடல் நிகழ்ச்சி

அனுபவமிக்க தமிழாசிரியரும் மரபுசார் கலைத்தேடல் கொண்டவரும் வானொலி அறிவிப்பாளருமான திரு.பேராதரன் பாலசிங்கம் அவர்கள் நிகழ்ச்சியைத் தொகுத்து வழங்கவுள்ளார்.

கலந்து பயன்பெறுங்கள் !

Wednesdays 6pm - 7:00am

திரு.பேராதரன் பாலசிங்கம்,

புதிய கதையாடல் நிகழ்ச்சி

Website: [durhamtamil.org](http://durhamtamil.org) Meeting ID: 841 6661 5028  
Passcode: 825667





## SPECIAL FEATURE



# THIRUKKURAL :

## Life Lessons Short, Crisp and Simplified

Compiled by : **KIDAMBI RAJ**

### INTRODUCTION

Thirukkural, written by Thiruvalluvar, is one of the most notable literary and ethical treatises in the Indian languages. There is a consensus among the historians and academic authorities that Thirukkural was written around 2,000 years ago. Thirukkural is one of the few literary works that have survived over the past 2,000 years and is regarded as relevant. Thirukkural aims at guiding human beings to lead a moral, ethical, and valuable life in this world. According to Thiruvalluvar, “One who lives an ideal life in this world will be ranked amongst the Gods in heaven.” Thirukkural deals with certain essential but permanent aspects of life in an ever-changing world, such as morality, ethics, politics, and romance. Well-known philosophers like Buddha, Confucius, Socrates, Plato, and Machiavelli have generally dealt with selected aspects of human values and experience. But Thiruvalluvar covers the whole spectrum of human experiences very comprehensively. In its essence, Thirukkural is a treatise par excellence on the art of living. Kural is considered one of the most widely translated non-religious works in the world. As of 2014, this work has been translated into about 82 world languages. English language alone has about 57 versions available so far.

### ABOUT THIRUVALLUVAR



- Thiruvalluvar Statue at Kanyakumari

**Thiruvalluvar**, popularly and affectionately called **Valluvar**, is the author of the great Tamil literary work, Thirukkural. According to one legend, he was born in Mylapore, a part of the present-day Chennai in Tamil Nadu, but moved to Madurai to submit the Thirukkural for the then Pandian King and his college of poets. He is sometimes called **Theiva Pulavar** (Divine Poet), **Valluvar**, **Poyyamozhi Pulavar**, **Senna Pothar**, **Gnana Vettiyan**, and **Ayyan**. Literary accounts indicate that he was a weaver by profession. There are various claims as to who he was – A Jain. Whoever he was, his thoughts have been addressing universal values. Jains claim

that he might have been influenced at least with the tenets of Jainism, like **Ahimsa** (non-violence), **Asteya** (virtue of self-restraint), and **Aparigraha** (non-possessiveness). But these tenets are drawn from a yogic concept developed by ancient Rishis and Munis and cannot be narrowed down to a subset of universal philosophies.

The **Thirukkural**, also called **Kural**, is a collection of 1,330 couplets organized into 133 chapters. This literature belongs to the Sanga Tamil period. Kural consists of three main groups called **Aram** (Dharma/Ethics), **Porul** (Wealth), and **Inbam** (Love). Each of these groups has multiple sections that are called **Iyal**, and each of those has several chapters called **Adhikarams**. Each chapter has ten couplets, and each couplet has two lines. The first line has four (4) words, and the second line has three (3) terms.

The **first group Aram** or virtue has four chapters **Praising God**, **The Importance of Rain**, **Greatness of Renunciation**, and **Asserting Virtue**. These four concepts are a foundation to the whole work and not just the book on virtue. In the first four introductory chapters, Valluvar acknowledges **God's Primordial** and places his values in the context of the whole So. For example, he says on learning and limits of rationalism:

What has learning profited a man if it has not led him to worship the good feet of him who is pure knowledge itself. He says of the concept of **good** vs. **evil** and that these opposites are illusionary, and one may transcend these opposites by meditating on that which is immutable. Valluvar makes the non-sectarian references to **God** referred to as «infinity, the immutable, worshipful one.»

Having sent in place the limitations of reason, good, evil. So on, the weaver focuses on the importance of the ecology and man's relations to it: “It is the unfailing fall of rain that sustains the world; therefore, look upon rain as the nectar of life.”

“Rain produces man's wholesome food, and rain itself forms part of his food besides.”

Emphasizing the cyclical destructive and creative powers of nature, he says: “It is rain that ruins and rain again that raises those it has ruined.”

On man's reliance on nature and the importance of nature relative to human functions such as charity and spirituality: “Unless the heavens grant their gifts, neither the giver's generosity nor the ascetic's detachment will grace this wide world.”

The importance of the primal spirit and nature is the qualities and significance of spiritual leaders or renunciates. This echoes the ancient Tamil belief that the world is sustained not just by the forces of the physical plane (i.e., the power of nature such as rain) and by spiritual forces; an imbalance in either could lead to the destruction of the world. As with the rest of the Kural, which is a secular work, the chapter does not refer to organized or institutionalized religion, merely noting by way of definition of

#### ARAM (RIGHTEOUSNESS – DHARMA)

Chapters 1-4:  
Prayer

Chapters 4-24: Domestic  
Virtues  
Family  
Spouse  
Love  
Kindness  
Discipline & conduct  
Charity

Chapters 25-38:  
Ascetic Virtues

Compassion  
Non-killing  
Penance  
Banishing Anger  
Avoiding meat  
Renunciation  
Consciousness of Truth

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#### PORUL (WEALTH – ARTHA)

Chapters 39-63:  
Politics & Governance  
Leadership  
Education  
Wisdom  
Good governance  
Espionage

Chapters 64-73:  
Cabinet Governance  
Ministering  
Eloquence  
Purity of Action  
Fearlessness

Chapters 74-78:  
Country & Security

Chapters 79-95:  
Friendship & Alliance

Chapters 96-108:  
Miscellaneous

#### INBAM (LOVE – KAMA)

Chapters 109-115:  
Pre-Marital Love  
Signs of Love  
Joy of Union  
Praise of Love's Ecstasy  
Clamour and Gossip

Chapters 116-133:  
Post-Marital Love  
Pangs of Separation  
Sweet Solace of Dreams  
Longing for Lover  
Symptoms of Love  
Pouting



- Chart of Organisation of the Kural

spirituality that:

“Pious men are called the priestly ones for, they are clothed in robes of compassion for all life.” The final introductory theme is the nature of virtue, outlined in broad brush strokes across the ten couplets in this chapter. For example, the alternative interpretations of virtue include: “Virtue is living in such a way that one does not fall into these four: envy, anger, greed and unsavory speech” and “Virtue is merely that which should be done in life and vice merely that which should be avoided.” The body of the book of virtue, following on from the introduction, is structured into the following themes:

“the way of the householder,” “the way of the renunciate,” and “destiny.”

The **second group Porul** (wealth), has the following themes: «Reality,» «Ministers,» «Qualities of a Country or State,» and a general section on the qualities of people and various other aspects of wealth.

While “The way of the householder” is a description of Tamil culture's core personal values, the book on wealth addresses themes of leadership and group structures.



- Tirukural in French on a train in France

Thus, on what it takes to be a “householder,” the Kural says:

“He alone may be called a householder who supports students, elders, and renunciates pursuing their good paths.” By way of example, in discussing the functions of a householder, the Kural has an entire chapter on hospitality, that most familiar of Tamil verse:

“The whole purpose of earning wealth and maintaining a home is to provide hospitality to guests.”

“When a guest is in the home, it is improper to



## SPECIAL FEATURE



hoard one's meal, even if it happens to be the nectar of immortality." "Charity's merit cannot be measured by gifts given. It is measured by the measuring the receiver's merits".

The *third group Inbam* (Love), deals with the subject matter of love, including pre-marital love and post-marital love. There are no instructions here, nor any guidelines. Thiruvalluvar simply exhibits the poet in him at his best, a must-read for any human (above a certain age! The age limit is to understand the nuances dealt in here and not because of explicit sexual content, another common misconception about this book).

## ANECDOTAL

*Karkka kasadara karpavai katrapin  
Nirka atharkku thaga!*

The above-quoted famous Thirukkural couplet provides a moral compass for living for the Tamils. It tells them:

*"Let a man/woman learn thoroughly whatever he/she may learn, and let his/her conduct be worthy of his/her learning."*

If learning the couplet doesn't come easy for Tamils, *Laura Brent Frederiksen, a Grade 9 student from Denmark*, presented quite a challenge. Yet, she and her fellow students from *Odsherreds Efterskole School in Faarevejle, Denmark*, were able to learn and recite the above Kural and other couplets and explain their meanings. These students from Denmark, who was in Chennai on an exchange program, recited several couplets of Thirukkural and explained their intentions to Tamil Govt. Minister for Tamil Official Language and Tamil Culture, Mr. K. Pandian, and his staff at the Secretariat campus. The Minister presented all the exchange students with copies of *Thirukkural* and *Ponniyin Selvan*.

## QUOTES OF WESTERN SCHOLARS ON THIRUKKURAL

1. **Dr. Albert Schweitzer - French-German Theologian, philosopher, Physician & Nobel Peace Prize Winner** while Bhagavad Gita in a forced and chilly manner gives as a motive for remaining inactive life that it is in accordance with the order of the universe, the *Kural* justifies it – what an advance! - by the idea of ethical activity. Work and profit place a man in a position to do good. On the varied questions concerning the conduct of man to himself and the world., Thirukkural's utterances are characterized by nobility and good sense. There hardly exists in the literature of the world a collection of maxims in which we find so much lofty wisdom. Earth and life negation are located in the thought of Jesus in so far as he did not assume that the Kingdom of God would be realized in this natural world. On the contrary, Valluvar believed that the liberated man could find his heaven in this very real world and said that perfect bliss could be attained by an individual in this natural world itself, and it is unnecessary to wait indefinitely for the transformation of the world to transform oneself. Thus, he took life and world affirmation to a loftier plane than Christ did.

2. **Rev. Dr. J. Lazaas - One of the authors of a commentary in English on Thirukkural.** The *Kural* is composed in the purest Tamil. In about 12,000 words that the poet has employed to convey his thoughts, there is scarcely fifty Sanskrit origin. No known Tamil work can even approach the purity of Kural. It is a standing rebuke to the modern Tamil.

3. **Alexander Phtigorsky - Greatest Philosopher of Russia in the 20th & 21st centuries; a Philologist, well-versed in Russian, Latin, English, German, Italian, French, Tamil, Sanskrit Pali, and Tibetan. He joined Moscow's Institute of Oriental Studies to study Tamil and Hinduism. He compiled the first Russian-Tamil dictionary in 1960.** The *Kural* is rightly considered a Chefs



- Valluvar Kottam in Chennai

d'oeuvre of Indian and world literature. This is due not only to the great artistic merit of the work but also to the lofty humane ideas permeating it, which are equally precious to people worldwide, of all periods and countries.

4. **Arno Lehman - 19th-century Dravidologist** The style of the Kural was matchless comparable only with the perfection of the manner in Greek; the Kural was to Gaul; the *peerless of pearls in this old and rich classical literature of the Tamilians* - as also in our time the Kural was called 'the greatest masterpiece of Tamil literature and according to our learned editor, embodying the nationalization and synthesis of the wisdom and ideas of the earlier Tamil literature.

5. **Leigh Lisker - (from the Encyclopedia Americana Vol. XV – Page 26** The third type of



- Statue of Thiruvalluvar at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) at Russell Square in London

early writing is exemplified by the *Kural* (literally couplet), perhaps the most widely known Tamil classic. This is a work of didactic morality whose 1330 couplets are remarkable for their economy and clarity of style, for the wide range of human situations for which they provide guidance, and their unique blend of worldly wisdom and idealistic ethics.

6. **Brother Lucien - Durban, South Africa** Large numbers of people in the West are hopefully thirsting to know what ancient India has to contribute to the philosophy of life. The *Thirukkural* stands with distinction amongst those Eastern literature treasures that go to make their hopes well-founded.

7. **Kamil Zvelabil - A Czechoslovakian Tamil Scholar – Tamil Culture Vol. V, No. 4.** Thirukkural is a contribution of the Tamil creative genius to the world's cultural treasure and should be familiar to the whole world and admired and beloved by all in the same way as the poems of Homer, dramas of Shakespeare, the picture of Rembrandt, the Cathedral of France and the sculptures of Greece. The kural is one of the world's most excellent books, one of those singular emanations of human heart

and spirit that preach positive love and forgiveness and peace.

8. **John Murdoch - 19th Century Christian Missionary in Ceylon and India.** Indeed, it is generally acknowledged that no treatise is equal to the *Kural* in any Indian language.

9. **Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948) - Father of Indian Nation, Philosopher, and Writer.** I wanted to learn Tamil, only to enable me to study Valluvar's *Thirukkural* through his mother tongue itself. No one has given such treasure of wisdom like him.

10. **Rev. George U. Pope - One of the early Christian Missionaries to Tamil Nadu and translated Kural to English** Thiruvalluvar's poem is by no means a long one. However, in value, it far outweighs the whole of the remaining Tamil literature and is one of the select numbers of great works that have entered into the very soul of a whole people and can never die. Complete in itself, the sole work of its author has come down the esteem of ages uninjured; hardly a single various reading of any importance is found. Thirukkural is an integral painting of a civilization that is harmonious in itself and which possesses a recognizable unity.

## Memorials

1. **Valluvar Kottam in Chennai, Tamil Nadu** A temple-like memorial to Thiruvalluvar, Valluvar Kottam, was built in Chennai in 1976. This monument complex consists of structures usually found in Dravidian temples, including a temple carved from three people. Of granite and a shallow rectangular pond. The auditorium adjoining this memorial is relatively large and can seat up to 4,000.

2. **Statue at Kanyakumari, Tamil Nadu,** There is a 133 feet tall statue of Thiruvalluvar erected at Kanyakumari at the southern tip of the Indian subcontinent, where the Arabian Sea, the Bay of Bengal and the Indian Ocean converge. The 133 feet denote Thirukkural's 133 chapters or *athikarams*, and the show of his three fingers represents the three themes *Aram*, *Porul*, and *Inbam*. They are the three sections on Morals, Wealth, and Love. The statue was designed by V. Ganapathi Sthapati, a temple architect from Tamil Nadu.

3. **Statue at Russell Square in London, England** There is also a statue of Thiruvalluvar outside the School of Oriental and African Studies in Russell Square, London.

4. **Thirukkural couplets displayed in French in trains in France** We know that Thirukkural couplets are displayed in Tamil Nadu State buses. A French translation of couplets has been seen on trains in France.



# Meritus Bishop of Mannar Rev. Rayappu Joseph passes away



**By: Raymond Rajabalan**

The sudden demise of Rt. Rev. Dr. Rayappu Joseph, retired Bishop of Mannar Diocese on April 1st has caused great pain and grief among the Tamil community in Sri Lanka and around the globe.

Dr. Rayappu Joseph, the Beacon of Human Rights was born in the island of Delft on April 1940. He had his primary education at the Roman Catholic school in his place of birth followed by his studies at Murungan Maha Vidyalayam. He then joined Jaffna St. Patrick's college where he continued his secondary education simultaneously beginning his religious studies at St. Martin's seminary, Jaffna. He then proceeded to continue his priestly studies at St. Paul's seminary, Trichy after which he returned to Sri Lanka to complete his studies at the National Seminary, Ampitiya.

He was ordained a priest by the then Bishop of Jaffna Rt. Rev. Jerome Emilianuspillai on Dec 13, 1967 at St. Mary's Cathedral, Jaffna.

After a few years of serving in various parishes in Jaffna diocese he proceeded to Rome where he completed his Doctoral studies in Canon Law at the Urban University for Pontifical studies. On his return to Sri Lanka he was appointed a Professor at St. Xavier's seminary, Jaffna.

A few years later he was consecrated Bishop of Mannar at the Holy shrine of Our Lady of Madhu in 1992 by his predecessor, the then Bishop of Jaffna Dr. Thomas Savundranayagam.

Bishop Rayappu then continued to provide great service for the Tamil

community until his sudden illness in 2015. He retired from active service in early 2016 after which Emeritus Bishop of Trincomalee-Batticola Rt. Rev. Dr. Kingsley Swampillai was appointed by Pope Francis as Apostolic Administrator. A few months later, Rt. Rev. Dr. Fidelis Lionel Fernando, who had been serving as Auxiliary bishop of the Archdiocese of Colombo was appointed the next Bishop of Mannar in November 2017.

Rev. Bishop Rayappu Joseph will be long remembered for his dedicated service to the legitimate aspirations of the Tamils and the humanitarian services he carried out to aid the desperate people until his last breath. Instilling confidence in people left abandoned, he looked after several war-affected orphans and widows in dedicated homes. In the interest of rendering service to the community, he worked for the liberation of oppressed people, transcending the limitations that his religious position bound him to.

The late Bishop always advocated the right to self-determination and justice for the Tamils. He was a champion, a legend who pursued human rights, justice, dignity and freedom for his people", reflecting his remarkable nature.

The late Bishop was very open on his views during the civil war in the country. He was mostly seen as being a critic of the military's conduct during the long drawn out civil war.

Bishop Rayappu worked in close collaboration with the Vatican, international Caritas agencies and countries of the European Union to promote peace in Sri Lanka.

# South Australia Ganesha Temple former President Siva Selva passes away

*Former President and current Vice-President of South Australia's Ganesha Temple in Adelaide Siva Selva passed away after a brief illness last month.*



The Hindu Society of South Australia has lost a passionate visionary who loved the Temple and translated his love into service. He was a public figure who raised the profile of the Hindu Society and the Temple.

Siva was born in Jaffna on 18 October 1939. His father passed away when he was only six years old and endured hardship in his childhood. His mother, Rasamma, took the role of both father and mother.

Siva finished his education in Jaffna with very good grades and secured a scholarship to study woodwork technology in the United Kingdom. He was awarded a Higher National Certificate in 1967 and a Diploma in Mechanical Engineering in 1968 from the Salford Technology College, Manchester. After his studies in the UK, he joined a well-known British woodworking machinery firm based in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia as a factory representative. He moved on to become Managing Director of the company, and he established and managed the entire East Asian network. He was married to beautiful Sivanes and had two sons Siva Junior and Suren.

He migrated to Australia on a business visa in 1988 and began importing timber from Malaysia. He then established a wine rack manufacturing business titled Bordeaux Wine Racks Australia Ptv Ltd.

Even as he was running a successful business, he also made it his business to see that Adelaide's small Hindu community got a place of worship. He tirelessly worked towards that goal with the support of friends Dr. Ravindran, Dr. Iswaran, Mr. Dilip

Chirmulle, Dr. Jagdish Saraf, and several other devotees. They progressed the vision of converting and renovating the existing Shri Ganesha Temple to be a traditional Hindu temple. Day after day, with other committee members, they, spanning 20 years, knocked on hundreds of doors and raised more than \$800,000 to have the Temple built.

He had a unique capacity to rub shoulders with politicians. He established good relations with South Australia's major political parties, which has helped the Hindu Society. He had a knack for making friends with people of all ranks that helped the cause of the Temple in various ways, including receiving grants and gaining a Heritage status within 13 years of its construction. Our State Governor would call him 'Uncle Selva,' and our Premiers of both political persuasions had high regard for him. In 2011, he received OAM on Australia Day, a fitting recognition of his service to the community.

Siva Selva had been the Hindu Society's guiding hand as President for two decades. That position aside, he would tend the roses and trim the hedges in the Temple courtyard every week while his wife Sivanes ensured the inside cleanliness and order. He assured that all festivals and celebrations in the Temple were held to the traditional model.

Siva Selva is survived by his wife, Sivanes, who has stood by him in every step of his service to the community and Temple, and his two sons Siva Junior and Suren.

(Hindu Society of South Australia- Edited version)



# Manimekalai

By: Kumar Punithavel

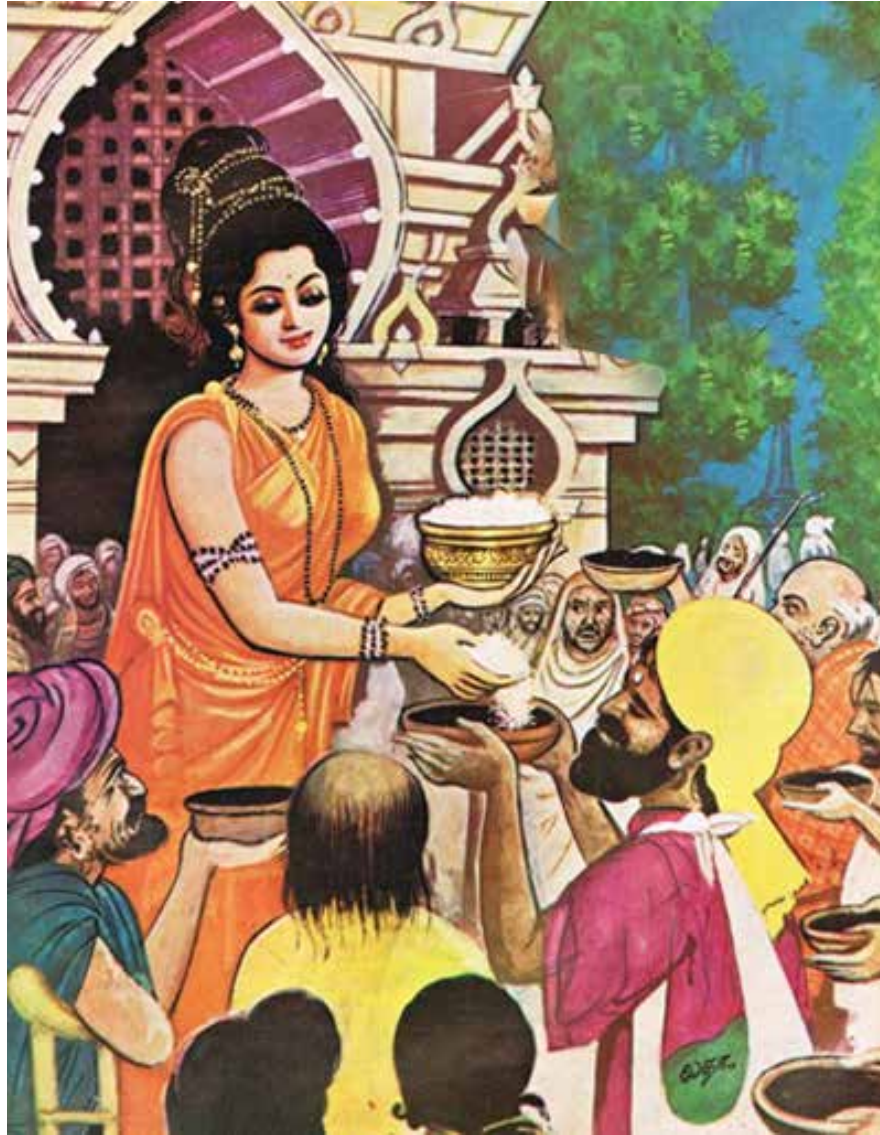
The heroine of the Epic Manimekalai is the daughter of Madhavi and Kovalan of Chilapathikaram. There are five classical epics in Tamil which are jointly referred as Aymperumkapiyam. Others being Chivagacinthamani, Valaiapathi, and Kundalakesi. Of these Manimekalai and Chilapathikaram are referred to as twin epics as the characters of these stories are interwoven. Manimekalai was authored by Seethalai Sathanar, a great poet of that time, whereas Chilapathikaram by Illangovadikal. Both of them led a recluse life. Seethalai Sathanar was a Buddhist monk, whereas Illangovadikal was a Jain monk.

Though coming from a clan of dancers, Madhavi fell in love with Kovalan and lived together with him. They had a beautiful baby girl whom the parents named as Manimekalai, the Goddesses name. When Kovalan deserted Madhavi, she after grieving for some time decided to live a life of recluse to take care of her daughter. However, she brought up her daughter to be a chaste woman too. Manimekalai, whose father Kovalan had deserted her mother Madhavi and her, wanted to follow the path of her mother to become a recluse person. She continued living her life without any carnal desires. She had a close female-friend Sutamathi. Both friends had common desire to become Buddhist nuns.

The crown prince Uthayakumaran was deeply attracted by Manimekalai's enchanting beauty and started bothering her for attention. Cornered in a difficult position, help came to her in the form of Goddess Manimekalai her guardian deity. The Goddess charms her to deep sleep, and takes her to Manipallavam island, so that she could take the path of spirituality. Following this, the Goddess appears in Sutamathi's dream and tells her what has happened so that she could inform Manimekalai's mother Madhavi.

Left alone in the island, confused Manimekalai, started roaming until she came across the site of a foot print in Pathapangaja Malai meaning lotus foot mountain, the present name of which is believed to be Sivanolipatha Malai. The foot print is hallowed as that of her chosen teacher Buddha. There is a legend that Buddha had come down and settled the feud between two Naga's princes for the gem-set throne of their ancestors.

It is worthy of note that Buddha's visit to an island called Nagadeepa, where he preached the sermon of reconciliation to the original inhabitants, mentioned in the Pali chonical Mahavamsa too. In a village named Maravanpilavu, in Jaffna peninsula, there are many Naga deity images, and also some folk lore that Buddha came and settled the quarrel between the two Naga royal brothers. The word Maravanpulavu in Tamil means warriors' land. In the same chonical Mahavamsa, the visit of Gajabahu to Chera kingdom, for conscription of the Image of Kannaki by the Chera emperor Chenkootuvan too is mentioned. On circumambulating the holy seat, and prostrating herself before it, brought herself miraculously the memories of her past life. She also got three boons from Goddess Manimekalai. She got the power to change her identity, dispel hunger and travel in the sky. It saved Manimekalai from many difficult times.



She obtains the enchanted vessel called Amuthasurabi. The food in Amuthasurabi replenished each time the food is taken out to feed the poor. She was given divine instruction that she should use it to feed the hungry. On her return home she told her experiences to her mother and her girl friend. Following that she uses her Amuthasurabi to feed the hunger of starving people.

Hearing her arrival, the prince Uthayakumaran once again started bothering her. In order to escape the harassment of the prince, with her magic power she took the form of Kayasandikai the wife of Vidyadhara, and escapes the prince's pursuits.

Manimekalai in her new appearance continues her charity and feeding the poor with the help of her enchanted bowl. She finally reaches the prison where she not only did preach but also persuaded the king to make the prison into a monastery.

While pursuing her desire of charity, the crown prince gets to know that Kayasandikai is none other than Manimekalai. In the meantime, Vidyadhara the husband of real Kayasandikai too comes down to see her before the prince. Manimekalai unable to recognize him, frowns and refuses his affections. In the meantime, when the prince arrived, Manimekalai recognizes him, and realizing her camouflage has failed, she smiles at him. This angered Vidyadhara, thinking his wife is smiling at the prince, he pulls out the sword and cuts the prince, who instantly dies.

Following this Manimekalai who was in the form of Kayasandikai was arrested and put in prison. The queen later seeing the charitable doings of Manimekalai and further informed by Madhavi how innocent her daughter was, got her released. Manimekalai then continued with her religious pursuit and charity. Finally, she ended up in Chola city Thanjai which was the hub of Buddhist studies at that time.

There were many other details about rebirth, reincarnation etc. which is not included in this brief of the epic. The author of the epic was a Buddhist monk, and much about Buddha's teachings are expressed in this epic too.

One cannot fail to see the resolute of Madhavi and her daughter Manimekalai both of whom chose to live a life of recluse, and lived a Bhikkuni (Buddhist-nun) to the last.

Even to this day when women are still struggling for equal rights, nearly two thousand years ago, in that male chauvinistic society, Manimekalai the heroine of the epic fought her life alone which is a herculean task. She was not only a Bhikkuni, who quenched the spiritual thirst and also fed the hungry. She shines like a polar star guiding the world to this day.

While we praise Kannaki, who exonerated the guilt from her husband, and burnt the city by her great virtue of chastity, we can't but venerate Madhavi too. Though born in a clan of dancers, and in those days the women folk of those clan tend to lead a promiscuous life, she out of frustration of her lover's betrayal on her, continued living recluse celibate life and raised the child as a single mother two thousand years ago. When heard her lover Kovalan was given capital punishment and killed, out of frustration of all that happened around her in the world she renounced the world, but not the child she had with her lover, continued to live for the sake of the child, making a righteous woman out of her. One can wonder is it the enslavement of women in the days gone by or the virtuous characters of Madhavi and Manimekalai?

Manimekalai had many unanswered questions in her mind like why a righteous woman like her mother should suffer? Or why she who had done no hurt to any one should suffer so much? There were thousands of questions in her young mind, and she went around seeking answer from various religious heads in quest to find the truth. Truth being an uncharted path she went to the extent to seek answer from a Bhutavadi (or ulagavādi) which means an agnostic, and he replied;

When asked an agnostic for explanation;

"Jaggery mixed with 'athi' flower and other ingredients will harvest liquor, Likewise, when elements join, they produce senses, When senses perish the elements separates as entities, When drum beat stops sounds wane away, Likewise, the elements with life, when life extinct Senseless elements too would extinct".

புத வாதியைப் புகல்நீ என்னத்  
தாதகிப் பூவும் கட்டியும் இட்டு  
மற்றும் கூட்ட மதுக்களி பிறந்து  
ஆங்கு, உற்றிடும் புதத்து உணர்வு தோன்றிடும்  
அவ்வுணர்வு அவ்வப் புதத்து அழிவுகளின்  
வெவ்வேறு பிரியும்  
பறைஓ சையில்லெகும்  
உயிரொடும் கூட்டிய உணர்வுடைப் புதமும்  
உயிர்இல் லாத உணர்வுஇல் புதமும்





BY THULASI MUTTULINGAM



## Patted themselves on the back:

As most skilled people will tell you, it's not a good idea to become overconfident of your skills. It's never a good idea to be complacent either - you have to keep improving if you want to retain what you achieved.

Overconfidence and complacency gives one a false sense of security which keeps you from improving. Keep at it and you'll be the hare waking up from your nap to see the tortoise at the finish line.

I am sure you all know individual examples of this but these days I am looking at the entire community.

Jaffna's community have for generations patted themselves on the back for being extraordinarily

intelligent. I'll leave you to do the math on what that might mean for us as a community.

Value system for education is still intact.

But over reliance on bookish rote learning, contempt for art, creativity and social sciences, lack of awareness on emotional intelligence, an over inflated opinion of our IQ which is indeed widely touted as running in our genes, shutting down critical thinking in children and youths instead of fostering it, refusal to change with the times or adapt - all give rise to a toxically unintelligent culture even if it is full of doctors, engineers and academics.

A community that has no respect

for social sciences; history, sociology, psychology etc will give rise to such behaviour. Those are necessary fields of learning - but due to the contempt exhibited for studying them, we do not progress much.

The parents over enthusiastically direct actually- in all the wrong ways. That's the main problem.

Over time we've lost the wood for the trees on what constitutes good education and how best to develop it.

As for perfect English, the current generation of students are taught by teachers who do not know English themselves.

We've lost it steadily over every generation from 1956 onwards - I wouldn't blame individuals for that.



Now to build it up again the government needs to invest heavily and bring in overseas teachers. We don't have enough local teachers capable of teaching English in a meaningful manner.

## March 8:

This women's day  
I spoke of women  
arising at 4.00 am  
toiling till 12.00 pm  
with nary a time to dawdle  
Dawdle?  
A word used to shame women  
taking time for themselves  
Husbands don't dawdle you'll notice?  
They relax  
And if you dawdle  
They cannot relax  
The poor things  
So women do 'nothing at home' re housework  
a.k.a cook and clean and wash and polish  
Get the kids all ready for school, then college  
while their worthy husbands moan and groan  
and crib and rip on all the things wrong with the  
progeny of Adam's rib So crooked, so narrow, so  
silly, so tweaked Oh, why do they have to put up  
with it?  
Then you rush to work at office too  
to hear your boss crib on how you don't earn  
your keep Coming in at 9.00 and leaving at 4.00  
Not at all responsible like the men who can stay  
on till 5.30 or 6.00  
Women are a liability, why do they come to  
work if they can't deliver the hours over and  
beyond those stipulated by labour laws  
And so he cribs on and on  
Now he's also angry that employing women  
is an added liability because they take to labour  
tribunals if he makes off colour jokes  
or 'accidentally' brushes his hands against their

## International Women's Day

[ˌɪn-tər-'næʃ-nəl 'wi-mənz deɪ]

noun

1. A time to celebrate and reflect on progress made on women's rights.

2. A day to call for an end to gender inequality.



breast accidents happen don't you know  
This is why he doesn't like women's day  
or Feminists. Don't you dare be one.  
Then at 5.00pm despite the boss's glower  
Women rush back home amidst the mad traffic  
hour to make hubby his tea or he'll unleash his  
male power  
Then on to make dinner, clear up and put the  
kids to bed  
Lay out tasks for next day, rinse and repeat  
All this while hubby who can't so much as boil  
water  
Still cribs you didn't bring him enough dower  
You didn't pay enough for his wonderful self  
If he hadn't married you, you'd have been left  
upon the shelf  
Aren't you lucky?

You get to hold your head up in society  
Just by his mere presence in your life  
Count your blessings that you got to be his wife.  
After all if you lose his presence  
Whether he leaves your for another woman or  
dies  
It is you who will suffer  
As a 'characterless woman'; His character will  
remain intact  
You'll be once more upon the shelf  
What a plight that would be  
Or is it?  
As someone long left on the shelf  
dawdling as I please and working as I please  
I watch goings on and wonder  
Why I am considered the unlucky one here?  
Ladies the shelf is not a bad place to be  
It's nicer to be on the shelf consuming yourself  
than being consumed for someone else's benefit  
Try it and see.  
Happy Women's Day All  
May you produce a society  
Better for your daughters  
AND your sons  
Sons who can't cook or clean or form bonds with  
their wife and kids  
Are not a happy lot either.  
Enable them to be more functional and  
productive  
Fix the broken wheel of society  
Instead of lugging it forward  
Just 'cos that's what our forebears did  
Your forebears and your descendants  
Are not the same.

## Wake up:

Women and girls around the world, please wake up and fight for your rights.  
A frighteningly powerful lobby is dismantling hard won women's rights, which we won with so much cost over the last century - with just a few slogans like "Trans women are women."  
Seemingly innocuous and inclusive on the outside, but effectively takes away all women's sex based rights from the inside.  
Behind the scenes, they have also effectively captured institutions such as the media, governments, non government organizations, the private sector, the judiciary - pretty much every powerful institutional mechanism out there we formed to protect our rights - to shut us down even as they take us down.  
Worse they are shutting down the voices of women campaigning against this via physical threats, maligning their character and targeting their job security. Many people campaigning against this have lost their jobs due to employers being bombarded with complaints for employing 'transphobes' and 'bigots'.  
Their effective propaganda and misinformation have also influenced many naive, well meaning people including liberal feminists to campaign for their cause in the name of trans rights. While shutting down the radical feminists rightly calling this out, as TERFS and bigots.  
This isn't trans rights and calling it out isn't transphobia.  
Please realize the damage being done to women's rights and how dangerous it is for all of us collectively

## Common societal phenomenon:

Behaving incredibly badly while fancying yourself in the right, and those you tread upon as in the wrong, is nothing new.  
Operating in gangs is nothing new.  
Lynch mobs are nothing new. Just that in recent decades, I thought people had made good progress in understanding that behaviour like this is unacceptable and never in the right.  
After all that, how did we end up with the woke mob?  
Just observing a common societal phenomenon sweeping the globe.  
More visible on Twitter- our elite Colombo circles are part of

the phenomenon.  
Even if she had been wrong, that abuse was wrong, but as it happens I think she is right. And that thread is one of many, attacking that kid.  
I am appalled by my generation of woke millennials. Looks like they want crusading kudos points but are too spineless or clueless to address real issues. So just armchair activist keyboard warriors setting up strawmen to destroy; then fancying themselves as brave and brilliant.  
A sign of their mass delusion that they think behaviour like that is acceptable.



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