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## Rajeef Koneswaran, owner of RE/MAX Community Realty Inc Brokerage donates \$25,000 to Scarborough Health Network

By Siva Sivapragasam

Rajeef Koneswaran who is the owner of RE/MAX Community Realty Inc., Brokerage passionately believes that a part of the money you make should flow back to the community for the betterment of people's lives. He made this belief into realty when he donated \$25,000 recently to the Scarborough Health Network to provide excellent treatment and better care for patients.

Rajeef says that the reason for his donation was the inspiration arising from the care provided by the SHN and other hospitals to his family. His eldest son was born in the Scarborough General Hospital while his younger son was born at the Rouge Centenary Hospital.

Medical care was also provided to his parents and other relatives in the same Hospital network. When the pandemic broke out, the SHN and frontline workers were working harder than ever to help and save countless lives. What came to Rajeev's mind was that a monetary donation would be put to better use in the hands of a hospital to save lives.

As a deep-rooted resident of Scarborough, he takes

"My donation is my gratitude for what the Hospital has done for me and my family" - Rajeef

pride in the fact that he has lived and worked in Scarborough for a good part of his life. His Brokerage RE/MAX Community Realty Inc is also based in Scarborough.

When the pandemic began, the SHN and front-line workers were working harder than ever to save lives. Rajeef thought that his donation would be put to better use by a hospital to save people's lives.

Situated in one of the most diverse communities in Canada, Scarborough Health Network (SHN) Foundation inspires the support necessary to improve patients' lives through exceptional care at Scarborough Health Network across three hospitals and eight satellite sites.

Rajeev Koneswaran's contribution to the Scarborough Health Network does not end with this donation. He is determined to carry forward his commitment in the future too.



Rajeef Koneswaran with his wife, parents and Ryan Baillie (Vice-President, Community Development - SHN Foundation) at the donation event

### Tamil Nadu Elections 2021

## DMK stages comeback to rule Tamil Nadu

By Siva Sivapragasam

Voters in Tamil Nadu gave a massive mandate with a comfortable majority to the DMK in the recently held elections that made former five times Chief Minister Muthuvel Karunanidhi's son Mu Ka Stalin the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu.

Tamil Nadu is one of the largest states in India with a population of around fifty million. Tamil Nadu is also the citadel of Tamil culture, music, and dance. The towering temples in Rameswaram on the southern tip

**Former CM Karunanidhi's son Mu Ka Stalin becomes Chief Minister**



of India, Madurai Meenatchi Amman temple and the Thanjavur Sivan Temple built by the great Chola King Raja Raja Cholan represent the region's culture, architecture, and cuisine.

The Tamil Nadu Assembly elections results showed that the votes were mostly split between the DMK and AIADMK led alliances which left little space for others. The defeat of film stars like Kamal Hassan and Khushbu also revealed that their success in Chief Minister Mu Ka Stalin with his Late father and DMK Patriarch Kalaigarnar Karunanidhi

films cannot be translated into electoral victories.

Stalin spoke to reporters after the election results were announced and promised that his party would work for the fulfillment of people's aspirations and election promises. Mr. Stalin spoke to the Media after paying floral tributes in the mausoleum of his father and late DMK Patriarch Kalaigarnar Karunanidhi at the Marina Beach.

The defeat of actors Kamal Haasan and Khushbu proved that popular cinema actors are not that popular in Tamil Nadu politics now.

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# Ontario Expands COVID-19 Vaccination Booking for More People

## Individuals Aged 18 and Over in Hotspots Eligible to Book as of May 3

May 02, 2021

### Health

TORONTO — Due to a stable and reliable increase in vaccine supply, this week, the Ontario government will further expand booking eligibility for COVID-19 vaccination appointments across the province.

As of Monday, May 3, 2021, at 8:00 a.m., individuals who are 18 and over in 2021 and live in one of the 114 hot spot communities will be eligible to book a COVID-19 vaccine appointment at a mass immunization clinic through the provincial online booking system or directly through public health units that use their own booking system. This expansion of eligibility will support the government's strategy of allocating 50 per cent of vaccine allocations to hot spots the weeks of May 3rd and 10th.

"With additional supply our government is increasing access to the COVID-19 vaccines in the communities hardest hit by COVID-19," said Christine Elliott, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health. "Continuing to focus on getting vaccines in the arms of those most at risk will help to stop the spread of COVID-19 in these communities, protect our hospital capacity and save lives. I continue to urge everyone to sign up to receive the vaccine as soon as it's your turn."

In addition, beginning Thursday, May 6, 2021, at 8:00 a.m. the following groups throughout the province will be eligible to book a COVID-19 vaccine appointment, through the provincial online booking system and call centre or directly through public health units that use their own booking system:

- Individuals turning 50 and over in

2021;

- Individuals with high-risk health conditions;
- People who cannot work from home who fall under Group One (including remaining elementary and secondary school workers); and
- First Nations, Inuit and Métis individuals in addition to the other channels previously available to book their appointment.

In addition, priority populations who have been only able to book via the provincial call centre will now also be able to book online, including individuals with the highest risk health conditions, child care workers in licenced child care settings and education workers who provide direct support to students with special education needs.

"With access to more vaccine supply, we are able to expand eligibility and

increase the speed and scale of vaccine delivery in communities where it is needed most and will have the greatest impact," said Solicitor General Sylvia Jones. "I urge everyone who is eligible to book their appointment, to do so as soon as possible. Every vaccine administered is a step toward reducing COVID-19 transmission and will help save lives."

Ontarians who are now eligible to book their vaccine appointment are asked to be patient, as it could take time to receive their vaccination. Public health units are responsible for managing and overseeing the distribution and administration of vaccines for their entire region, and public health units may have different vaccine administration rates based on local context.

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

## Annual Chinese Radiothon raises more than \$410,000 for Scarborough's hospitals during COVID-19's intense third wave

The event surpassed its fundraising goal to support the highest priority needs at Scarborough Health Network

### SCARBOROUGH (May 4, 2021)

— More than \$410,000 was raised for Scarborough's community hospitals on Thursday, April 22 as Scarborough Health Network (SHN) Foundation once again hit the airwaves for the annual Chinese Radiothon event. Live-to-air on Sing Tao A1 Chinese Radio AM 1540, the all-day event invited listeners to hear unique stories from SHN patients, physicians, nurses, staff, and volunteers and to help shape the future of health care in Scarborough through their donations.

This year's event supports SHN's highest priority needs, including the purchase of urgently needed medical equipment across our three hospitals — Birchmount, Centenary and General — which helps keep our hospital teams and patients safe and healthy. With an initial goal of \$250,000, support came pouring in throughout the day with both online and telephone donations. Thanks to the incredible generosity of our community, donors, volunteers and sponsors, including presenting sponsor Prime+Care Health Centre, a final fundraising total of \$410,000 was reached by the event's end.

SHN Foundation's annual Chinese Radiothon has become a signature event within the Chinese community in Scarborough and across our neighbouring communities. This important event has

raised valuable funds every year that directly impacts the SHN hospitals, as well as the patients and families that use and benefit from their services. Last year's Radiothon event alone raised a record-breaking \$500,000 for SHN's COVID-19 Emergency Fund, which supported urgent needs across the Health Network in response to the ongoing pandemic.

### Elizabeth Buller, President & CEO, SHN

"We continue to be comforted and humbled by the outpouring of support from our donors and community, especially as we battle this third wave of COVID-19. Their unwavering generosity is truly inspiring and these donations enable Scarborough Health Network to provide the highest level of care for our patients and their families, right here in Scarborough."

### Dr. Norman Chu, Chief & Medical Director of Emergency Medicine, SHN

"This support is simply amazing. As a frontline health care worker, it warms my heart that the community is behind us. Not only does it energize us, but the important donations for equipment allows all of our doctors and staff to do their best work. Thank you."

### Alicia Vandermeer, President & CEO, SHN Foundation

"Our Scarborough hospitals face a huge gap between the exceptional quality of care we provide and the outdated facilities in which our teams provide that



care. These funds will not only support our frontline heroes as they battle the third wave of COVID-19, but will help to close this gap give our talented health care teams the tools and equipment they need to continue caring for Scarborough long into the future."

### David Maung, President, Floors At Work and SHN Foundation Donor

"I'm honoured to support the Radiothon every year and the care that SHN provides. I always say we should help thy neighbour, and I know that by supporting Scarborough's hospitals I am supporting my neighbour."

### Ryan Baillie, Vice President, Community Development, SHN Foundation

"We are incredibly grateful to the donors, sponsors, speakers and listeners who made this year's Radiothon a huge success. As our hospitals and frontline staff continue to navigate the intense challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic's third wave, it is encouraging to know our

community is continuing to support our health care heroes."

### About Scarborough Health Network Foundation

Situated in one of Canada's most diverse communities, Scarborough Health Network (SHN) Foundation inspires the support necessary to improve patients' lives through exceptional care at Scarborough Health Network across three hospitals and eight satellite sites. Since its inception, the Foundation has worked with generous donors, volunteers and community members to raise funds needed to build state-of-the-art infrastructure and purchase the latest medical technology, supporting the SHN's vision to be Canada's leading community teaching health network.

### About Scarborough Health Network

Across our three hospitals and eight satellite sites, Scarborough Health Network (SHN) is shaping the future of care. Our many programs and services are designed around the needs of one of Canada's most vibrant and diverse communities. We are home to North America's largest nephrology program, as well as the designated cardiac care and spine centre for Scarborough and surrounding communities to the east. We are proud to be a community-affiliated teaching site for the University of Toronto and partner with a number of other universities and colleges, helping to train the next generation of health care professionals. Learn more at [shn.ca](http://shn.ca).

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## PUBLISHER'S DESK

### PUBLISHING TEAM

Managing Editor & Publisher	: Logan Velumailum, B. Sc. - editor4mj@gmail.com
Editorial & Marketing Consultant	: Siva Sivapragasam - tsivapragasam31@gmail.com
Executive Editorial Board	: Tashvir Narine - tashvir.narine@gmail.com Krishni Narine - krishni31@gmail.com K. Thirukumar
Graphics & Layout Design	: Santosh Kumar - kasantosh@gmail.com
Graphic Support	: Suren Rasadurai
Photo Journalists	: Gnane B. Gnanendran - digitalgnane@yahoo.ca, Rudy Ruthran - rudy@ruthran.com
Health & Care	: Jeavana Sritharan, Andrea Shanmugarajah, Dr. Nuwan Fonseka, Dr. Shiyam Loganathan, Dr. Harshini Sriskanda
Special Feature	: Raymond Rajabalan, J.J. Atputharajah, C. Kamalaharan, Sivanesan Sinniah, Kumar Punithavel, Nate Velumailum, Harrish Thirukumar
Business & Finance	: David Joseph - David.joseph@investorsgroup.com
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In Tribute & Remembrance  
of Mullivaikkal  
Lives Lost Thru May 2009

Monsoon Journal  
Greets readers, advertisers and  
distribution outlets a Happy  
May - Spring festival season  
Happy Mother's Day  
Sunday,  
May 9, 2021

## United Nations (UN) Global Road Safety Week 2021:

*As We Make Our Communities Safe and Healthy in Terms Of Moving Beyond The COVID-19 Pandemic, Let's Do The Same For Road Safety and Liveable Streets*

By Harrish Thirukumar

During the week of May 17, Ontario along with the rest of the globe will be observing United Nations (UN) Global Road Safety Week. It is commemorated on a biennial basis. This event has been held since 2007 after the UN General Assembly mandated the World Health Organization (WHO) and the UN regional commissions to plan and host periodic UN Global Road Safety Weeks. Accordingly, the #Love30 campaign of this year's and 6th UN Global Road Safety Week advocates for Streets for Life by making 30 km/h (20 mph) speed limits the norm for cities worldwide in places where people mix with traffic.

It will be an opportunity to obtain policy commitments at both the national and local levels to deliver 30 km/h speed limits in urban areas. Another aim is to generate local support for such low-speed measures to create safe, healthy, green and liveable cities. More generally, this week is unique from previous commemorations in that it will officially launch the Decade of Action for Road Safety 2021-2030. The Global Plan that accompanies it will be advanced as well.

Global Road Safety Week will also highlight the links between 30 km/h speed limits and attainment of a number of Sustainable Development Goals, including those on health, education, infrastructure, sustainable cities, climate action and partnerships. The years ranging from now of 2021 to 2030 were proclaimed as the Decade of Action for Road Safety 2021-2030 by the UNGA. It was adopted through resolution 74/299 "Improving global road safety, with the ambitious target of preventing at least 50% of road traffic deaths and injuries by 2030.

For this upcoming #Love30 campaign, the UN is advocating all global communities and citizens to sign its open letter that urge our leaders to advance liveable streets and low speeds. For example, this enhances public health by making walking and cycling safer and more accessible, enabling and encouraging healthy lifestyles. Liveable streets are especially important as we reside at home in our communities as part of local, national and global responses to COVID-19. Also, it contributes to social and racial equity because lower income and minority communities are often these ones most exposed to high-speed traffic, and the road danger, environmental hazard and social exclusion it causes.

To get involved in this campaign, you can sign the open letter located at this website to enable 30 km/h speed limits in urban areas: <https://www.unroadsafetyweek.org/en/get-involved#read>. Next, you can send this letter to our decision-makers for their support. This includes your city councillor, Member of Provincial of Parliament, Member of Parliament, or others within our system of government here in Canada. In turn, our decision-makers can act on this policy commitment to make your community safer. A toolkit has also been made available by the UN to continue spreading this message and mobilizing your community towards pushing this issue forward through strategies such as petitions. That resource is available at this website link: <https://www.unroadsafetyweek.org/en/get-involved#three>.

As we make our communities healthy and safe in terms of moving beyond the COVID-19 pandemic, let's do the same for road safety and liveable streets.

### Canada Historic Milestones

May 10, 1990

The Canadian Space Agency is created by an Act of Parliament. Although active in the aerospace field for many decades, Canada did not have an official space agency until 1990. Since then, Canada has recruited six astronauts, three of whom have flown in space: Chris Hadfield, Dave Williams and Julie Payette.

Before the Canadian Space Agency was created, Canadian astronauts such as Marc Garneau and Roberta Bondar were invited by NASA to participate in space missions.



One day, in retrospect, the years of struggle will strike you as the most beautiful.

- Sigmund Freud  
- (6 May 1856 - 23 September 1939) Austrian Neurologist



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

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# Ontario Donating Critical Lifesaving Medical Equipment to India

April 30, 2021

## Office of the Premier

TORONTO — Today, Premier Doug Ford issued the following statement:

“The COVID-19 pandemic has strained health care systems around the world. While our province is facing a challenging third wave of COVID-19 driven by new, more-contagious variants, we continue to be committed to helping our friends and partners.

In response to a call for help from the High Commissioner to Canada and Consul General in Toronto, Ontario will donate 3,000 ventilators to the Indian Red Cross.

The Ontario government will also help coordinate the transportation

of approved medical equipment that is being put together for the Indian Red Cross by the Indian diaspora and friends of India in Ontario.

While we remain very concerned about the challenges facing our hospitals here at home as more patients require intensive care, we have taken decisive action to add more hospital beds than ever before.

Doing so will allow us to safely support our friends and allies in desperate need of help while never sacrificing our ability to care for Ontarians.

The made-in-Ontario e700 Transport ventilators are manufactured by O-Two Medical Technologies, a company based in Brampton, with support from the Ontario Together

Fund. This partnership is another example of Team Ontario working together during this pandemic to support those in need, both here at home and abroad.

We stand shoulder-to-shoulder with the people of India during these difficult times.

Our government will keep working closely with His Excellency, Ajay Bisaria, High Commissioner of India and Apoorva Srivastava, Consul General of India to Toronto and stand ready to assist further with India's urgent needs, for as long as we are able to. We are all in this together and we will all overcome this together.”

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



# Ontario Extends Freeze on College and University Tuitions

## Initiative provides families and students with more financial relief during COVID-19

April 30, 2021

### Colleges & Universities

TORONTO — The Ontario government is extending the current one-year tuition freeze for colleges and universities by an additional year, providing more financial relief and predictability for families and students seeking access to affordable postsecondary education.

“Students and their families make significant sacrifices to attend college and university,” said Ross Romano, Minister of Colleges and Universities. “The financial uncertainty due to the COVID-19 pandemic further underscores the need to keep college and university programs affordable. By freezing tuition our government is continuing to reduce the financial strain on families' pocketbooks.”

The one-year tuition freeze for Ontario residents builds on Ontario's historic 10 per cent reduction in tuition in 2019-20, and one-year tuition freeze in 2020-21, making postsecondary education more affordable for Ontario students and their families. These reductions represent the first of their kind in Ontario's history. The government's action to reduce and



freeze tuition has provided students with tuition relief of approximately \$450 million annually when compared to tuition costs in 2018-19.

“It is critical to the economic recovery of Ontario that today's students, and tomorrow's leaders, innovators and workers can obtain the skills they need to succeed in a highly competitive global economy,” said Minister Romano. “The extended tuition freeze will ensure Ontarians have affordable access to our first-class postsecondary education system and will provide financial relief to our families.”

In addition to the freeze, the tuition framework for domestic out-of-province students will return to a system similar to the previous framework with the option for a three per cent increase in 2021-22.

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

# Investing in young Canadians

April 28, 2021

## Ottawa, Ontario

Young Canadians have been among the most impacted by the global COVID-19 pandemic. They have experienced the highest job losses and the worst mental health decline of any age group. They have sacrificed a lot to protect their parents and grandparents, and they need our support to recover and rebuild from the pandemic. By making life more affordable, and by creating new opportunities and jobs for young Canadians today, the Government of Canada is investing in their future success and the long-term prosperity of our country.

The Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau, today spoke to young Canadians across the country and highlighted measures in Budget 2021 that will help them pursue and complete their education, make student debt easier to pay down, and create new training and work opportunities.

The Government of Canada intends to invest \$5.7 billion over five years in measures to support students and young Canadians. These include:

- Creating 215,000 new training and work opportunities for young Canadians, so they can gain valuable skills and experience in the workforce
- Waiving interest on student loans for an additional year, which would help about 1.5 million Canadians who are repaying student loans
- Providing more flexibility for the



repayment of federal student loans, so no one has to make a payment they cannot afford

- Doubling the Canada Student Grants for two more years to help over 580,000 students cover the cost of their tuition, school supplies, and living expenses

- Expanding access to supports, grants, and repayment assistance for students with disabilities.

Budget 2021 builds on the work we have been doing to support young Canadians through this crisis. This includes supporting close to 200,000 new work opportunities and experiences, providing income support to over 700,000 students through the Canada Emergency Student Benefit, creating a six-month moratorium on student loan payments, and doubling the Canada Student Grants for the 2020-21 school year. Together, these measures will create new opportunities for young Canadians, and help put them at the centre of our country's recovery. This is part of the Government of Canada's plan to make life more affordable for everyone, create jobs, strengthen our economy, and grow the middle class.

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

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# Prime Minister's remarks on the COVID-19 situation, border measures, and Budget 2021

April 30, 2021

Ottawa, Ontario

Hello, everyone.

I am pleased to be here today with Deputy Prime Minister Freeland, Minister Anand, Dr. Tam, and Dr. Njoo.

As we fight this third wave, our top priority continues to be everyone's safety.

Yesterday, we held the 30th meeting with provincial and territorial premiers since the beginning of the pandemic.

My message to the premiers was clear: the federal government is here to support you.

Our meeting was productive.

We talked about vaccines, testing, and what we can do to beat this third wave.

We also talked at length about borders.

Premier Ford asked that we suspend the arrival of international students.

Because at this time Ontario is the only province requesting this, we're happy to work more narrowly with them.

We'll be reaching out to their officials today to formalize that request.

Again, I want to be clear. This is not the right time to travel.

On land borders, as a reminder: anyone who comes to the U.S. land border has already been tested in the U.S. in the last three days.

Then, they have to get tested again and everyone has to quarantine for two weeks and do another test on day 8.

We're enforcing very severe consequences for anyone breaking these rules.

Yesterday, in addition to all of this, Deputy Prime Minister Freeland provided an update on the budget as well.

I also took the opportunity to congratulate Premier Silver of Yukon on his re-election.

I look forward to continuing to work with him on everything from the fight against climate change and creating affordable child care, to our commitment on building a stronger relationship with Indigenous peoples.

In fact, I'll be calling Sandy later today so we can discuss these priorities further. As I told everyone around the table last night, it's vital that we keep working together.

We're following the situation with this third wave closely, especially in places that are hardest hit.

Yesterday, Alberta reported their highest single-day total since the beginning of the pandemic.

Premier Kenney announced new restrictions to slow the spread of the virus, and our government is ready to work with the province to provide support.

For Ontario, medical teams from the Canadian Armed Forces began arriving in Toronto on Tuesday night,



including critical care nurses who will work in ICUs.

This first deployment of 55 members of the Forces will be providing assistance to Sunnybrook Hospital and its mobile units.

On Tuesday as well, a health care team from Newfoundland and Labrador arrived in Ontario.

They are helping at Toronto General Hospital.

Like I said before, we are actively working with the Government of Ontario to determine how else we can support them.

For Nova Scotia, where cases are also high, we've deployed 60 Canadian Armed Forces members to testing centres to help stop the spread of the virus.

And for New Brunswick, we've approved the province's request for assistance for long-term care homes.

The Red Cross will assist in up to three facilities until the end of June.

Nunavut has also requested additional support to deal with their current outbreaks.

We're moving quickly to keep people safe by sending more PPE and health equipment, and by providing support for households in isolation who need food or mental health services.

We're also engaging with other provinces that are hit hard by this third wave to see how we can help.

We're ready to send any resources needed to protect you and your family.

And, of course, we're continuing to deliver PPE, rapid tests, and vaccines.

So far, we've distributed more than 15 million doses of vaccines, right across the country.

Wednesday, almost a million doses arrived in Canada, including our first shipment of the single-dose Janssen vaccine.

Starting next week, we will be receiving 2 million doses a week just from Pfizer alone.

This will mark another major ramp up.

We will continue to work with provinces and territories to get these doses to Canadians as quickly as possible.

More and more people have been vaccinated.

In several provinces, vaccination will be open to the general population very soon.

This is encouraging news.

Over the past year, we have often repeated that every action counts.

Every action helps to protect our health care workers, our families, our neighbours, and all Canadians.

By wearing a mask, by keeping our distance, by staying home: we are helping to save lives.

This is also true of getting vaccinated.

Every vaccine dose counts.

As soon as it's your turn, I encourage you to make an appointment to get your vaccine.

It's important to protect yourselves, and to protect others.

Only by getting vaccinated will we be able to get through this pandemic and get back a little to the life we had before.

At the beginning of the crisis, we promised families, workers, and small businesses that our government would be there for them.

We are doing everything we can to ensure our economic recovery is as robust and fast as possible.

Just a few minutes ago, Finance Minister Freeland introduced the Budget Implementation Act in the House of Commons.

This is the next step forward on the plan we laid out in last week's budget – a plan to get through the pandemic, create jobs, and make sure our economy comes roaring back.

This bill includes extensions of support programs that have been a lifeline for millions of Canadians, from the wage subsidy and the rent subsidy, to the Canada Recovery Benefit and the Canada Recovery Caregiving Benefit.

We're facing a very serious third wave.

So, we need to make sure we can deliver support to the workers and businesses who rely on these programs.

Of course, that's not all this plan lays out.

With this legislation, we're also setting the foundation for strong economic growth, with funding for

early learning and child care, support for students, a \$15 federal minimum wage, and much more.

I'll let the Finance Minister go into more detail in a moment, but here's the bottom line:

These measures will help you get through what is hopefully the last stretch of this pandemic.

This is about how we set ourselves up for a stronger, faster recovery that includes everyone.

So, all parties need to work together to get this support through the House of Commons, to Canadians as soon as possible.

In closing, as announced this morning, I want to mention that Isabelle Hudon, currently the Ambassador of Canada to France, has agreed to become the next CEO of the bank for Canadian entrepreneurs, that is, the Business Development Bank of Canada (BDC).

Her business career, both in Canada and internationally, has made her the ideal candidate for this role.

She will be the first woman to head the BDC and will continue its crucial work for the economic recovery to help our SMEs grow.

In her current role, Ambassador Hudon has led a number of economic diplomacy initiatives and, between 2017 and 2020, trade between Canada and France increased by 30 per cent.

Our fight against COVID-19 is not over yet.

But there is reason to hope.

With more people getting their shot, and more vaccines on the way, we will get through this.

And as we do, we're going to keep working together to rebuild a safer, healthier Canada, and a stronger, more resilient economy that leaves no one behind.

Before I pass it over to Deputy Prime Minister Freeland, I want to extend my deepest condolences to the families, friends, and victims of the tragedy at Mount Meron.

Canada stands with the people of Israel and the Jewish community.

Thank you.

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



# City Council approves Brampton's first Off-Grid Organic Food Shed

Wednesday, May 05 2021

BRAMPTON, ON (May 5, 2021) – Today, City Council has approved an Off-Grid Organic Food Shed, a self-sustaining, regenerative food system that will produce food for many families in Brampton. The food shed will be located at and supported by Brampton Fire Station 212, at 8220 Mississauga Road, for a six-month pilot beginning this summer

The Off-Grid Organic Food Shed will be provided by Nature Harmony and is a zero-energy greenhouse structure that will grow produce from the food shed and be donated to Regeneration Outreach Community to feed families in Brampton, as part of the 2021 Backyard Garden Program.

This innovative technology contains its own ecosystem, using a combination of automated soil, hydroponics, and aquaponics systems to grow edible organic fruits and vegetables, and even edible fish. The shed is zero-waste and carbon negative, powered by solar and wind renewable energy, and it is built to withstand harsh



winters.

The sustainable indoor farm also includes a tablet with a suite of educational activities and experiments, and all necessary materials, to encourage interactive learning for people

of all ages. Brampton's Community Gardens Program advances the goals of the Brampton Grow Green Environmental Master Plan, which cited urban agriculture as an opportunity for the City. Brampton Fire and Emer-

gency Services also participated in the Backyard Garden Program in 2020, where the team grew and helped facilitate a significant amount of produce donations in the community.

Via [brampton.ca](http://brampton.ca)

## Brampton Fire and Emergency Services partners with what3words to enhance community safety

Wednesday, May 05 2021

BRAMPTON, ON (May 5, 2021) – Brampton Fire and Emergency Services has partnered with what3words, a free mobile app for iOS and Android that has divided the world into 3m squares, each with a unique 3 word address.

The City of Brampton is a Healthy and Safe City dedicated to the wellbeing of its community. what3words will allow Brampton Fire and Emergency Services to respond to emergency calls with more precise location identification, enabling quicker dispatch to the incident site, which is crucial in emergencies. It supports life-saving services by helping to find people who are lost or in need of support and describing exactly where help is needed in an emergency.

### What is what3words?

what3words is a really simple way to talk about location. It has divided the world into 3m squares, each with a unique 3 word address. It means that everyone, everywhere can refer to any precise location – from a specific building entrance to a point on a hiking trail or a remote spot in a field – using just 3 words.

If someone is in an emergency situ-

ation and struggling to describe their location, they can use what3words to provide their location details easily and accurately. A person can find the what3words address for their current location by opening the what3words app. what3words will display the 3 words for that 3m square location and the caller can provide them to Fire dispatch, who can enter them into the

what3words map in the control room in order to identify the precise location for dispatch.

If someone has the what3words app installed on their phone – it works offline, so they can discover their 3 word address without Wi-Fi or mobile data. The map might not download but the 3 word address will still be shown.

what3words does not track the loca-

tion of its users, it provides a method for users to choose to share their location. what3words keeps a record of the searches made within its mobile app and map site, and it will know the town or city from which those searches were made, but it does not hold location data at an individual level.

Via [brampton.ca](http://brampton.ca)



## WORLD NEWS

# First Person: Panic as COVID-19 'tsunami' hits India

29 April 2021

### Health

A UN staff member in India has described the huge upsurge in COVID-19 infections in her country in recent days as a "tsunami", and has spoken of the "panic" she felt, as her immediate family became infected with the virus.

The number of new infections in India is tipping over 300,000 per day and more than 200,000 have died from the infection, although many there believe the figure could be a lot higher.

Anshu Sharma, works for the UN News Hindi service and has filed this personal account, from her base in

due to a delay in treatment caused by an overwhelmed and panic-stricken health service. It was a desperately sad and surreal time for my family as we consoled each other in lockdown.

Around this time, my cousin was stranded in Nigeria; we had been trying to bring him home for months and in July we succeeded and suddenly, we had a ray of hope amidst the gloom.

**But really testing times were yet to come**

He began quarantine in a hotel for 14-days, as per the rules, but developed a fever and was rushed to hospital. Before the doctors could diagnose his condition, he passed away due to

Fearing the worst during this period, I used to wake up at night to check on everyone. Each day felt like a struggle and I experienced endless anxiety. The only relief was that we did recover in home quarantine and none of us had to be hospitalized.

**Vicious mind game**

I can now say that due to the uncertainties involved, COVID-19 played havoc with my mental, more than physical, health. It is a vicious mind game!

**Precautions were still being observed on a large scale, but people were beginning to get careless. This was the lull before the storm!**

the virus, and my heart sank.

I went through a range of emotions. At first, I was angry with myself for throwing caution to the wind in the last few weeks and letting my guard down. I experienced extreme helplessness in the face of the virus and was anxious to know if antibodies from my previous infection would protect me from reinfection?

**Condolence messages**

Today, many states and cities in India are under curfew and health workers are working day and night to contain the spread while the mainstream and social media, is dominated by tragic COVID-19 stories. My hands



UNICEF/Ruhani Kaur / India begun the world's biggest COVID-19 vaccination programme in January 2021.



UN News / Anshu Sharma of UN News Hindi pictured on a pre-pandemic visit to UN Headquarters in New York.



WHO India / In January 2021, India launched its COVID-19 vaccination programme

New Delhi, about living in the shadow of the pandemic.

"When COVID-19 began spreading in India in March 2020, no one really understood the gravity of the situation, but today, more than a year later the pandemic has taken an ugly turn impacting all of us, not least my own family.

As a reporter for UN News, I began as a detached observer charting the impact of COVID-19 across South Asia. But that changed when a member of my family passed away

multiple organ failure. We learnt later that he had died of malaria. Though indirectly, once again, coronavirus had snatched another member of my family.

But really testing times were yet to come.

A few months later, in September, I went to visit my elderly mother and brother in another city and despite taking all possible precautions my worst fears came true; we all tested positive for the virus and spent two weeks battling the daunting infection.

This period has absolutely changed my perspective and now I understand the real value of life. It is important to live life to the fullest and spend time with your loved ones.

Towards the end of 2020, COVID-19 cases started declining and it looked as though India had conquered the pandemic. And while the world was praising India for its victory over the virus, the country was preparing to start the world's largest vaccination campaign.

It looked as if the end of pandemic was in sight and life was returning to normal. The markets and malls were buzzing with activity.

and heart are tired of writing condolence messages.

The healthcare system is overwhelmed. Desperate pleas for medicines, ICU beds in hospitals, oxygen cylinders and injections, are everywhere on social media.

This pandemic has brought this country of 1.3 billion people to its knees.

**Stories of compassion**

My personal struggle with COVID-19 seems meaningless compared to what my compatriots are experiencing, but there are some positives.

Initially, COVID-19 patients were treated as untouchables and society shunned them. But now, people are helping each other.

There is a sense of solidarity and I have heard plenty of stories of compassion involving friends, neighbours and strangers.

Neighbours are supporting each other, shopkeepers are delivering goods to those in need, places of worship are being converted into isolation centers to meet the shortage of hospital beds, and local community halls are collecting money and arranging oxygen concentrators.

**There is a sense of solidarity and I have heard plenty of stories of compassion involving friends, neighbours and strangers.**

The first wave separated loved ones, and although the second has brought people together, there is not a single home in India where COVID-19 has not cast its oppressive and ominous shadow.

As individuals and as a country, we are still looking for that light at the end of the tunnel".

**Via news.un.org**



Sandeep Datta / India's first nationwide lockdown was in March 2020





# UN providing equipment and supplies to help India fight rapid COVID-19 surge

28 April 2021

## Health

The United Nations is supporting India as the country battles a major surge in COVID-19 cases which on Wednesday saw the overall reported death toll top 201,000, according to latest World Health Organization (WHO) figures. Confirmed cases stand at just under 18 million nationwide.

"In India's time of need, the UN is doing everything it can to rapidly provide critical equipment and supplies to central and state governments", said Resident Coordinator Renata Lok Dessallien.

WHO and sister agency the UN Children's Fund, UNICEF, are procuring equipment and supplies, including 7,000 oxygen concentrators and 500 nasal devices for oxygen supply, in addition to oxygen generating plants, COVID-19 testing machines, and personal protective kits.

"The current rapid surge of



© UNICEF/Sujay Reddy

In New Delhi India, a poster plays a role in dispelling myths about the COVID-19 vaccine.

COVID-19 cases has put immense pressure on the health systems, already overburdened since the start of the pandemic. We need to act with speed, expand hospital capacities and equip them with medical supplies, most needed to save lives", said Dr Poonam Khetrapal Singh, Regional Director for WHO in South-East Asia.

The region has led the world in COVID-19 infections for a third straight week, mainly due to the situation in India, which has recorded 2.17

million new cases, or a 52 per cent increase.

### Mobile field hospitals

WHO is helping India to scale-up additional hospital beds by procuring mobile field hospitals which could be set up in the most affected areas. The field hospitals have a capacity of 20 to 30 beds but can be increased to a maximum of 50, if needed.

The agency is also providing for laboratories to meet the huge demand for testing, and over 2,600 staff have

been redeployed from programmes for polio and neglected tropical diseases to support pandemic response.

Meanwhile, in the western state of Maharashtra, the second most populous in the country, UNICEF has engaged experts to work on risk governance.

### In it together

India this week completed a 100-day COVID-19 vaccination drive, with 145 million doses administered. Dr Khetrapal Singh said efforts to ramp up vaccination coverage are needed.

She also stressed the need to continue key public health measures, such as testing and contact tracing, along with physical distancing, proper hand washing and use of masks, to curtail virus transmission.

Dr Khetrapal Singh underlined WHO's commitment to continue working with health authorities at all levels, saying "Together we must do all we can to halt the current COVID-19 surge".

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

# India Pummeled Anew by COVID Deaths and Infections

Updated May 02, 2021

India continues to be pummeled by the coronavirus pandemic, documenting a new national record Sunday of nearly 3,700 deaths in the last 24 hours and more than 390,000 new infections.

Even so, India began counting votes for state elections, although the Madras High Court assailed the country's Election Commission for not stopping political rallies that flouted COVID-19 restrictions. Chief Justice Sanjib Banerjee called the commission "singularly responsible" for the surge in new cases. COVID-19 is the disease caused by the coronavirus.

While India is home to the world's largest vaccine manufacturer, the Serum Institute of India, only 2% of the country's 1.3 billion people have so far been vaccinated, according to reports.

The country expanded its vaccine eligibility Saturday to anyone 18 and older, but many locations reported that they did not have any vaccines. Many in India have blamed Adar Poonawalla, Serum Institute's chief executive officer, for the gap.

But he pushed back against the attacks.

"The level of expectation and aggression is really unprecedented," he told Britain's The Times in an interview Sunday. "I'm staying here an extended time because I don't want to go back to that situation."

"Everything falls on my shoulders, but I can't do it alone," he said. "I don't think even God could have forecast it was going to get this bad."

But after scathing criticism on



FILE - Adar Poonawalla, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Serum Institute of India poses for a picture at the Serum Institute of India, Pune, India, Nov. 30, 2020.

social media Saturday, the 40-year-old billionaire posted on Twitter that he would return to India: "Had an excellent meeting with all our partners & stakeholders in the U.K. Meanwhile, pleased to state that COVISHIELD's [an Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine made in India] production is in full swing in Pune. I look forward to reviewing operations upon my return in a few days."

The New York Times reported that India's government had completed a threat assessment and announced that the Serum Institute chief would receive police protection.

Poonawalla also announced on Twitter that, "As a philanthropic gesture," the Serum Institute would cut prices of its vaccine, which he said would "enable more vaccinations and save countless lives."

### US assistance

In the United States, President Joe Biden's chief of staff, Ron Klain, told CBS's "Face the Nation" show, "We



Relatives react to heat emitting from the multiple funeral pyres of COVID-19 victims at a crematorium in the outskirts of New Delhi, India, Apr. 29, 2021.

are rushing aid to India." But the White House also said Friday that starting Tuesday, the U.S. will stop incoming flights from India to prevent the spread of the infections.

The U.S. has dispatched two Air Force transport planes carrying oxygen cylinders, N95 masks and rapid diagnostic tests, the first of several planned shipments. Taiwan says it has sent much-needed oxygen supplies.

### Brazil

Elsewhere, in Brazil, thousands of people ignored their own coronavirus surge Saturday to march in the streets of Brasilia, Sao Paulo and Rio de Janeiro in support of President Jair Bolsonaro.

The South American country has recorded more than 406,000 deaths, including more than 2,600 on Saturday. It is second only to the United States in COVID-19 deaths. The U.S. has more than 576,700 deaths, according to the Johns Hopkins Coronavirus Resource Center.

Bolsonaro, who opposes pandemic

restrictions put in place by governors and mayors, recently said the army "could take to the street one day, to ensure... freedom to come and go." Some of Saturday's banners called for a "military intervention" and bolstering Bolsonaro's powers.

### Music festival in Wuhan

Meanwhile in Wuhan, the epicenter of China's coronavirus outbreak, thousands attended a two-day Strawberry Music Festival that opened Saturday.

The festival was forced to go online due to the pandemic a year ago. Although barriers were set separating the crowd and security personnel enforcing restrictions, about 11,000 people danced and sang along with their favorite bands on three stages, as some attendees wore masks while many did not, according to the Reuters news agency.

More than 152 million global COVID infections have been reported, according to Johns Hopkins. The U.S. has 32.3 million, while India has 19.5 million and Brazil has 14.7 million.

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



## WORLD NEWS

### Fauci Recommends Lockdown for India



COVID-19 patients receive oxygen outside a Gurdwara, a Sikh house of worship, in New Delhi, India, May 1, 2021

By VOA News

Updated May 02, 2021 03:20 AM

India set a record Saturday, for the first time surpassing 400,000 confirmed cases of COVID-19, the disease caused by the coronavirus.

The new infections count for the previous 24-hour period was a record 401,993 cases, according to India's health ministry. Public health officials believe the actual count may be at least five times higher.

"This virus has shown us that if left to its own devices, it will explode in society," top U.S. infectious disease expert Anthony Fauci said in an interview with Indian Express newspaper. "If you don't respect its ability to cause serious damage, you are going to get into trouble."

Fauci recommended a lockdown for India.

"Literally, lock down so that you wind up having less spread. No one likes to lock down the country. ... But if you do it just for a few weeks, you could have a significant impact on the dynamics of the outbreak."

Overall, India has 19,164,969 coronavirus infections and 211,853 deaths, the Johns Hopkins Coronavirus Resource Center said Saturday. The U.S. has the most cases in the world, with more than 32 million, according to Johns Hopkins. There are more than 151 million global infections.

In New Delhi, 12 patients died Saturday when their hospital ran out of oxygen for 80 minutes.

A charred hospital bed is seen at a ward of the Welfare Hospital after a fire broke out overnight, in Bharuch, some 190 kms from Ahmedabad, India, May 1, 2021.

Also Saturday, 18 others people died when a fire erupted in a COVID-19 ward at a hospital in western India. Authorities say 30 patients were

rescued from the ground floor fire at the Welfare Hospital in Bharuch, in Gujarat state.

It was not immediately clear what caused the fire, officials said. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi posted on Twitter that he was "Pained by the loss of lives due to a fire" at the hospital. "Condolences to the bereaved families," he added.

India expanded its vaccine eligibility Saturday to anyone 18 and older, but many locations are saying that they just do not have any vaccines.

The country did receive some good news Saturday: Its first shipment of Sputnik V vaccine arrived from Russia, which is to send 125 million doses in all.

Only 2% of India's 1.3 billion people have been vaccinated.

In Brazil, thousands of people ignored their own coronavirus surge Saturday to march in the streets of Brasilia, Sao Paulo and Rio de Janeiro in support of President Jair Bolsonaro.

The South American country has recorded more than 400,000 deaths, including more than 2,600 on Saturday. It is second only to the U.S. in COVID-19 deaths. The U.S. has more than 576,600 deaths, according to Johns Hopkins.

Bolsonaro, who opposes pandemic restrictions put in place by governors and mayors, recently said the army "could take to the street one day, to ensure ... freedom to come and go." Some of Saturday's banners called for a "military intervention" and bolstering Bolsonaro's powers.

In Wuhan, China, the two-day Wuhan Strawberry Music Festival opened Saturday. About 11,000 people danced and sang along with their favorite bands on three stages, with the crowds at each limited.

Via voanews.com



A charred hospital bed is seen at a ward of the Welfare Hospital after a fire broke out overnight, in Bharuch, some 190 kms from Ahmedabad, India, May 1, 2021.

### Sri Lanka hopes to develop as a regional aviation hub



April 22, 2021:

Tourism Minister Prasanna Ranatunga stated that the Government has planned to develop Sri Lanka as a regional aviation hub.

The Minister said that the current Government intends to uplift the aviation service and frequency of flights that experienced severe repercussions due to the Covid-19 pandemic. He said this attending the commencement of duties after the Sinhala and Tamil New Year of the State Ministry of Civil Aviation and Export Zone Development.

Minister Ranatunga highlighted that both tourism as well as aviation

industries which were collapsed as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic will take a considerable period of time for recovery. However, the Government has already taken necessary steps to develop these industries by initiating many programs, and accordingly the Government's focus is currently on developing Katunayake, Mattala, Ratmalana, Jaffna and Batticaloa airports.

The Secretary to the Tourism Ministry, S. Hettiarachchi, Secretary to the State Ministry Madhawa Devasuren-dra and many other officials were present at this occasion.

Via news.lk

### Sri Lanka bans travellers from India with immediate effect

Colombo, May 6: Sri Lanka on Thursday announced that all arrivals from India will be banned with immediate effect due to the record rise in COVID-19 cases in the neighbouring country.

Several countries like the UK, the UAE, Australia and Singapore have already banned travellers from India as well as other South Asian countries.

The Civil Aviation Authority on Thursday said that travellers from India will not be allowed to disembark in Sri Lanka. The decision has been taken as the coronavirus continues to spread rapidly in India.

The Director General Civil aviation in a letter to the CEO of the national carrier Srilankan Airlines has said, "in accordance with instructions received from health authorities of Sri Lanka due to the COVID-19 pandemic situation, it is hereby directed that passengers travelling from India will not be permitted to disembark in Sri Lanka with immediate effect."

Sri Lanka is currently experiencing a surge in COVID-19 cases, nearly 2,000 new cases have been reported during each of the last 5 days up from average 200 per day up until mid April.

Described as the New Year cluster coming from the traditional New Year festivities mid April, the current wave is from the fast spreading UK variant,

the health authorities said.

Sri Lanka had functioned as a transit hub for Indians visiting other destinations like West Asia and Singapore prior to which they needed to be quarantined for 14 days. This was an arrangement by the Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority.

The Sri Lankan tourism authorities were to continue receiving Indian tourists under a travel bubble for which special facilities were set up. This was despite the current difficult situation in India.

However, Tourism Minister Prasanna Ranatunga said that President Gotabaya Rajapaksa has issued instructions to allow Sri Lankan migrant workers to return to the country.

Last week the Sri Lankan Navy announced as a COVID containment measure that they had increased surveillance of north and northeastern seas to check the possibility of infected Indian fishermen crossing the international waters and making contacts with the locals.

New coronavirus cases and deaths in India hit a record daily high with 4,12,262 new infections and 3,980 fatalities being reported, taking the total tally of COVID-19 cases to 2,10,77,410 and the death toll to 2,30,168, according to the Union Health Ministry data updated on Thursday.

- PTI

“A smile is a curve that sets everything straight.”

*Phyllis Diller*



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# Rev. Fr. Maria Xavier, a devoted priest who promoted Peace and Reconciliation through the medium of Arts

This great priest once defined ARTS as stated below:

*Art is gentle, diversified,  
Unified, genuine and is also divine.*



Rev. Fr. Maria Xavier who dedicated his entire life for Arts transforming it into divine service has been called to rest on April 01, 2021

## S. Raymond Rajanalan

B.Sc (Hons) Cey,  
Diploma in Accounting (Canada)

### Development of Father Xavier's personality

Rev. Father Nicholopillai Maria Xavier was born on 03.12.1939 in Ilaivalai, Jaffna. He had his early education at St Henry's College Ilaivalai after which he continued his secondary studies at St. Patrick's College, Jaffna. While at Patrick's college he joined St. Martyn's Junior Seminary to begin his priestly studies. During his secondary education he was awarded double promotion twice because of his superior level of intelligence. He then joined the National Seminary, Ampitiya where he completed his Theological studies. He then proceeded to Rome where he completed his Advanced Theological studies at the age of 22. Soon after that he got a special permission from Pope and was ordained as priest in Rome. Thus Father Xavier became one of the youngest Catholic priests in the world.

On his return to Sri Lanka he joined his Alma Mater St. Patrick's College where he served as a teacher for a brief period simultaneously functioning as the Head of the Department of Religious studies. Meanwhile since he was deeply focused on developing Art to a higher level he successfully translated an Italian movie "The Secret of Confession" into Tamil.

Later he proceeded to Tamil Nadu for further studies in Theology where he became influenced by the rhyming speeches and the various plays staged by the members of Karunanithy-Led DMK party. As a result he soon developed himself as a great speaker and was able to contribute to greater understanding between the various communities in Sri Lanka.

He soon began to serve in Mannar district where he staged various plays and dramas winning the hearts of the people irrespective of religious differences. Meanwhile in order to make effective use of his popularity among the youth Fr. Xavier wrote the script for the scenes of Crucifixion in Tamil. He was the first ever to stage Passion play in Tamil and was welcomed by the general public from various communities.

He was appointed Parish priest of Urumpirai in 1966 and during that period he developed an idea that the Art of Drama can be used to develop

greater unification among the people of different religions and social levels. The resourceful priest thus broke the traditional belief that catholic priests must not handle the staging of plays. He soon succeeded in staging a number of plays transforming the society to a great extent. Thus father Xavier soon realised that he was on the correct path to guide the people and began his journey of Arts which he continued successfully for six decades.

*"Art is gentle, diversified, unified, genuine and is also divine"*

### Multi-linguistic Personality and deep - rooted passion for developing the art of Drama

Travelling around the globe a number of times to promote Arts Father Xavier achieved fluency in various languages including German, Greek, Latin, Sinhala, English and Hebrew. He was so empowered by Drama; one can easily conclude that there was no one else in Sri Lanka who developed such deep interest in the field of Drama. It was really the manifestation of his intense interest that this great priest who had never followed any special course of studies about Drama could stage such high quality plays.

### Inauguration of Thirumarai Kalamamram

A centre for performing Arts known in Tamil as Thirumarai Kalamamram was founded by Father Xavier in Urumpirai in 1966 with the hope and long range vision of promoting the value of Dramas and stage plays. Within the past several decades a number of branches of this organization has been established in many countries including Canada, Switzerland, Norway, London and Germany.

Nearly 90 books have been released by this organization under the guidance of this great priest. In addition nearly 70 issues of a quarterly Tamil Journal named Kalai Mugam has also been produced with Fr. Xavier as its editor. Apart from these cultural activities this great priest has also released many issues of an English magazine named Journal of Saiva Sidhanda studies.

Fr. Xavier also established Kalait-hoothu Aesthetic College and an Art institute named Kalaamutram. A number of talented artistes have been moulded by Fr. Xavier through these organizations and they have been able to exhibit their expertise around the globe. Further, the Jaffna - based



**Fr. Maria Xavier**

B.Th., L.Th. (Rome), Vidvan/Pulavar (Madurai), M.A., PhD (London),  
D.Th. (Passau/Germany), Ph.D. hc. (University of Jaffna)

Centre for Performing Arts has linked with a University in Tamil Nadu and has been able to provide a number of Degree programs.

The centre for Performing Arts has also been able to stage nearly 20 dance Arangetrams as well as some Miruthanga Arangetrams. All these cultural events were possible only due to the tireless efforts of Fr. Xavier.

### Laying the foundation for Fr.Xavier's interest in Arts

In 1971 Fr. Xavier staged a Passion play titled Anbil Malarantha Kaviyam (An epic that flowered out of Love) within the premises of Jaffna Fort with a cast of more than 300. The following year he travelled to Trichy, South India with a cast of 22 and successfully staged a similar play.

In 2003 he travelled to US to attend an International conference about Children and staged a wordless play titled in the Cradle of War that was warmly welcomed by the delegates. Apart from this he successfully handled the technique of inserting some symbolic scenes from Tamil literature alternating them with contemporary events prevailing in the country.

Also in 1971 for the very first time he staged a Dance based drama titled Grace and Darkness, amidst the very difficult challenges that prevailed in the country during that turbulent period.

During 1960's Father Xavier introduced the practice of celebrating Thai Pongal festival. In various parts of the country He is hailed as a great visionary responsible for celebrating this festival irrespective of any religious differences.

His broad minded approach was due

to his fluency in various languages and deep appreciation of the plays staged in those languages that was what led him to introduce novel stage techniques in the plays staged by him.

### Holder of three Doctoral Degrees

This talented priest had obtained Doctorate of Philosophy thrice. He first obtained a Ph. D in History in London. He was then awarded another doctoral degree in Germany for his research in the field of Saiva sithanda. Later he was awarded an honorary Ph. D Degree by the University of Jaffna.

### Recognition of his great talent

In 2019 Jaffna- based Dan Television Group honoured him with a special award as a great Tamil attiste. Apart from this various religious and social organizations have also honoured him on various occasions for his great contribution for the development of Arts.

A few years ago he embarked on a bold venture making use of the talents of Tamil as well as Sinhala artistes. His courageous venture in promoting peace and reconciliation was warmly welcomed by peace lovers from all the communities. His sincere efforts were recognised by the Government of Sri Lanka which honoured him with the highest award for promoting Peace and Reconciliation.

*This article is based on a speech delivered by S.Lalisan, President of Jaffna Tamil Sangam in 2019 It has recently been revised by the author.*



## HEALTH & WELLNESS

# SCARBOROUGH CONNECTIONS LED TO A \$125,000 PLEDGE FROM THE UNIFOR SOCIAL JUSTICE FUND

When Jerry Dias's family immigrated to Canada from Guyana 65 years ago, they had no idea that Scarborough would become a lot more than just their address.

Jerry, the National President of Unifor, has a solid connection to Scarborough. Jerry and his three sisters grew up surrounded by the vibrant and diverse community, and when they needed stitches after a hockey game, they went to their local Scarborough hospital.

"I've always felt an attachment to Scarborough," Jerry tells us. "The whole makeup of Scarborough is in my blood. There's such a sense of community and of giving back to those who have helped you, and I'm tremendously grateful for everything Scarborough has done for my family and me."

Because of this connection, Jerry wanted to give back to the community that supported him. As the National President of Unifor, Jerry decided to make a \$125,000 donation from the Unifor Social Justice Fund to the Scarborough Health Network (SHN) to help us in the fight against COVID-19 and create a brighter, healthier future for Scarborough.

"Unifor is dedicated to improving the lives of workers and their families in Canada and around the world," Jerry said. "The Fund promotes and supports the role of unions and workers groups in their efforts to strengthen democracy, promote equitable development, and contribute to poverty reduction, social justice, education reform, and health care for everyone."

Disproportionately impacted by COVID-19, Scarborough has recently seen the highest number of admissions to our hospitals since the pandemic began. With several Scarborough residents working as essential workers on the frontlines, Jerry knew it was critical to support his members in a meaningful way.

"We represent workers in all industries – from personal support workers to dieticians and laundry



staff to transit workers," says Jerry. "Our members are truly the heroes of COVID-19, and we wanted to give back to the community where so many of them live and work."

By supporting SHN, Jerry and Unifor recognize not only the courageous frontline health care workers but all of the essential workers who have put themselves at risk throughout the pandemic.

"Unifor has tens of thousands of members that work and live in Scarborough, and thousands of them are in the health care sector," Jerry continues. "We understand firsthand what our members have been going through during this pandemic, and we wanted to show them that we're part of the solution and are supporting them in the important work they're doing."

Unifor believes that investing in health care in Scarborough, it leads to a healthier community that can stay resilient and come out on the other

side of these challenging times. "There are a lot of people from Scarborough who have become very successful," Jerry tells us. "I'm challenging them to give back to the community that gave them so much and not to forget their roots. I'm tremendously thankful for everything Scarborough has done for my family and me, and I encourage others who share my story to think about where they started."

Unifor's gift of \$125,000 will be instrumental in ensuring our Scarborough hospitals can continue to provide exceptional care to our vibrant community. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to Jerry, the Unifor Social Justice Fund, and the entire Unifor organization for their support during these difficult times and for recognizing our courageous staff who continue to keep our community safe.

If you would like to join Jerry and the Unifor Social Justice Fund and support your local hospitals, visit [SHNFoundation.ca/donate](https://shn.ca/donate) to make a donation.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF BUILDING CHARITABLE GIVING INTO YOUR ESTATE PLAN

People value and appreciate the excellent health care and services they or their family members have received. This is especially true during the COVID-19 pandemic when our health care heroes are on the frontlines continuing to care for our community. They want such excellence to continue; they want to show their appreciation but feel limited beyond their annual donation.

May is Leave a Legacy Month, and remembering Scarborough Health Network Foundation in your will is one way you can make a significant gift to the hospitals. It is a way to give more than most of us could manage during our lifetime. It is a way to make a difference.

Legacy giving can take the form of cash or donating shares, mutual funds or life insurance. If you donate shares or other securities "in-kind" (i.e., electronically transferring the shares versus selling them and donating the cash proceeds) to charities, you even get a tax break on the capital gains.

Many people default to cash when it comes to planning bequests, but it may be more tax-efficient to give stocks, bonds or mutual funds in kind to charity. Not only does this eliminate capital gains taxation, but it also gives the estate a charitable donation receipt for the fair market value of the shares. This could produce significant



tax savings for an estate, depending on the situation, while providing the same benefit for the charity. Whether you are motivated by generosity or a desire to reduce your tax bill, the benefit to the charities you support is significant. As well, you create a legacy that will be remembered

for generations to come. If you are interested in learning more about leaving a gift to SHN in your will, please visit [SHNFoundation.ca/Ways-to-give/legacy-giving/](https://shn.ca/Ways-to-give/legacy-giving/) or contact Verna Chen, Associate Vice President, Donor Engagement, at [vchen@shn.ca](mailto:vchen@shn.ca).





## 5 Questions With...



# TOM JACKSON, DIRECTOR OF DIAGNOSTIC IMAGING AT SHN

Scarborough Health Network offers a variety of diagnostic and medical imaging services to diagnose and treat patients. Performing over 350,000 procedures each year, it is a vital part of our health care system and a crucial first step in identifying the cause of disease or illness. We spoke to Tom Jackson, director of medical imaging at General hospital, about the importance of their work and the new Medical Imaging and Vascular Centre currently under construction.

### 1. SHN provides medical imaging across our three hospitals. What are some of the most common reasons that people coming into our hospitals require these services?

Patients attend diagnostic imaging for a variety of reasons, and the majority of the work we do is diagnostic in nature. It could be performed in response to an injury suffered by a patient, investigation for or follow-up on various cancers, cardiac studies and screening programs (e.g. breast cancer screening).

We perform minimally invasive interventional procedures such as biopsies and studies of the vascular system and therapeutic interventions, including non-cardiac angioplasty, vascular stenting, embolizations and thyroid ablation therapy.

Patients come from anywhere within the hospital, including the emergency department, inpatient units or outpatient clinics. We also see several patients referred from their primary care health care provider who attend

DI directly from the community.

### 2. Right now, SHN's medical imaging and vascular services are scattered across five different locations at the General hospital. What does this mean from a care point of view, and how can we improve this experience?

Having the department fragmented across the building can be confusing and frustrating for our patients. Depending on the type of procedure they are coming for, it can mean going from one end of the building to the other, from the basement to the 5th floor of the tower. If they have multiple tests in the same visit, they may have to move between exams. Patients can be anxious when they visit the hospital for a test, and adding any additional challenges is not ideal.

The new Medical Imaging and Vascular Centre in the General hospital will bring the services together in one location, making it much easier for patients to navigate. It will also address many shortcomings of our current facilities such as private change areas, accessible washrooms, monitored sub-waiting rooms and simply present a much more comfortable and aesthetically pleasing experience.

### 3. What are the next steps in making the new Medical Imaging and Vascular Centre a reality?

Right now, we are in the fourth out of five stages of the project. The final construction drawings are now in development, and once finalized and

approved by the Ministry of Health, construction will begin. Space is currently sitting vacant in General for where the new concourse will be, so once the plans are approved, things will move quickly.

The Foundation is working with generous donors and supporters to raise the amount of funds necessary to outfit the space, purchase updated technology and bring all of our medical imaging services into one location.

The state-of-the-art Centre will increase capacity, reduce wait times in certain areas like interventional radiology, modernize our technology, and enhance care delivery to our patients.

### 4. You've been with SHN for almost 35 years. What inspires you the most about the community we serve?

I'm most inspired by the dedication and commitment of our diagnostic imaging team. Day in and day out, they come to work and focus on providing the best care and experience they can for our patients. Technology advances very quickly in our field, so we're always learning and adapting to new equipment, techniques and protocols.

Across our three hospitals, we perform over 350,000 procedures each year. Our services are always in demand with the needs continually growing, so managing the ever-increasing volumes of patients and ensuring they receive compassionate care is something our team excels in.

As for the Scarborough community,

diversity and resilience is something that has always inspired me. Our SHN staff truly reflect our community's diversity, and I think that is important when treating patients. When you can treat them in their own language and be mindful of their cultural needs, it leads to a better experience.

### 5. We rely on donors to purchase life-saving equipment and technology, like medical imaging machines. What would you say to encourage people to give to SHN so we can continue delivering exceptional care?

Diagnostic imaging equipment is expensive, and the technology advances quickly. We want to have the latest technology available to provide answers to our patient's health concerns and provide their physicians with the answers they need to develop a treatment plan.

Donor support is crucial – that's where the majority of funds for new equipment come from. Maintaining state-of-the-art technology not only has a profound impact on our patients but also ensures we can attract and retain talented staff and physicians. By providing them with up-to-date equipment and facilities, they can do their job better and give the patients of Scarborough the world-class care they need and deserve.

To learn more about SHN's diagnostic imaging services visit [SHN.ca/Diagnostic-Imaging](http://SHN.ca/Diagnostic-Imaging). To support the new state-of-the-art Medical Imaging and Vascular Centre at SHN, visit [SHNFoundation.ca/Donate](http://SHNFoundation.ca/Donate).

## SHN's Stroke Centre of Excellence celebrates its one-year anniversary

SHN's Stroke Centre of Excellence celebrated its first anniversary on April 8, 2021, and looks back fondly on the obstacles and triumphs throughout their first year. The centre allows our incredible health care teams to offer access to seamless stroke care services, improved outcomes, and provide a better health care experience to all of Scarborough.

"This Stroke Centre of Excellence is committed to following evidence-based practice guidelines and leads to the best possible outcomes for our patients," says Jemini Abraham, manager of the stroke program. "The timely access to care, intervention and management means our patients are quickly put on a road to recovery, and will hopefully regain as close to their previous functional status, so they can reintegrate into their normal lives."

SHN's Stroke Centre of Excellence has excelled through its transition and is performing very close to provincial benchmarks and targets in its quality indicators. The next step for this dedicated team is to apply for the Stroke Distinction Program by Accreditation Canada, a highly specialized quality improvement program developed in partnership with the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada. With this designation, they will stand out as a leader in stroke care across the country.

"Stroke is a devastating diagnosis, with a sudden change from being fully independent to totally dependent on others," Jemini continues. "Because of the makeup of our diverse and vibrant Scarborough community, we have high rates of hypertension and diabetes – and hypertension is the number one risk factor for stroke."

Due to the high prevalence of diabetes, hypertension and chronic disease in our community, many patients leave these illnesses untreated; this



can be due to lack of awareness, lack of education and resources, or barriers to care because of socio-economic status. And when ignored, the risk of experiencing a stroke is increased.

"I was a stroke nurse practitioner a number of years at downtown hospitals," Jemini tells us. "When I came to SHN, my goal was to give back to my community through the knowledge and expertise I had gained from one of the top stroke centres in the city. Now, we can provide the best possible care to our Scarborough community and give them the most optimal outcomes and recovery."

Despite the pandemic, the team has continued to provide high quality care to every patient that has come through the unit. As they prepare for their Stroke Distinction Program with Accreditation Canada, it's clear that SHN is poised to be a leader in stroke care not only in the GTA but across the country.

To learn more about the incredible work of the program leadership and the entire integrated stroke care team, read the inspirational story of Frank Wu, the Stroke Centre of Excellence's very first patient.



## SPECIAL FEATURE

# A SHOCKING DIVORCE NEWS

# Bill and Melinda Gates Dropped a Bombshell

By: T. Ratna

Bill Gates has often been regarded as a stand-up guy. He got out of the game early to settle down and give away his billions to charity. The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation projected an image of philanthropic—and marital—stability, America's technocrat aunt and uncle who were always ready to sweep in, drop surprising amounts of cash. A couple years ago, Bill tweeted a photo of the couple on the occasion of their 25th anniversary, with a note: "I can't wait to spend 25 more years laughing together."

This is why it seemed like such a shock when Bill and Melinda dropped a bombshell on Monday, May 3, 2021. They will divorce after 27 years of marriage. This wasn't supposed to happen. True, their onetime fellow tech power couple Jeff Bezos and Mackenzie Scott set a precedent with their breakup a few years ago, but Bill did not give off the sort of alpha, wild card energy of a Bezos recent years. Instead, Bill and Melinda seemed like Al and Tipper Gore, or Tim Robbins and Susan Sarandon, or any other couple who seemed so ingrained in the culture that you might not even actually remember them splitting up.

marriage constitute a personal failing. But already, it seems like Melinda Gates is on track to be lifted up as something of a feminist folk hero, never mind the inherent contradiction of a billionaire folk hero. After the divorce was announced, jokes immediately starting flying about how Melinda was getting out of the marriage just in time: She and Mackenzie Scott could team up for hot girl summer. Either that or to end climate change.

### Dating with Melinda

Prior to this week, Melinda Gates has not held an especially big pop cultural footprint. She was best known as one half of the foundation. Like the former Bezos's, Bill and Melinda met at work. In their case, it was at Microsoft in 1987, when she was a recent college grad and he was the CEO, a dynamic that would likely earn more raised eyebrows today than it did at the time. But with a degree in computer science and an MBA, Melinda was no crown wife. And besides, Bill was not her first boyfriend with a boldface name: At Duke, Melinda dated Chewing gum heir William Wrigley Jr., the Seattle Times once reported.

When Bill first asked Melinda out, she turned him down: She didn't like that he tried to schedule the date two



Maybe some of us erroneously thought the Lindy effect applied: Once you're together that long, you're probably just going to stay together.

### Hate Man Leadership

Accordingly, America has processed this news with some timelessness, and some very 2021, priorities: First of all, how will they split their wealth, reported to be around \$124 billion? There is no prenup. What will happen to their foundation, with an endowment of \$50 billion? They are expected to continue to run it together. The most pressing of all: Is Melinda ready for a hot vax summer? Some media personal said, 'it is another woman who refuses to let her man lead.'

It really is Melinda everyone seems to have questions about. A divorce doesn't automatically render Bill as another Bezos, nor does the end of a

weeks in advance. They ended up going out soon after, but didn't become serious for a few years, and they tried to keep their romance a secret early on. All the while, Melinda was working and developing a good reputation at Microsoft. Before they decided to tie the knot, Melinda found a marriage pros and cons list Bill had made on a whiteboard, she remembered, laughing, in a recent documentary. The two did get married eventually, in a million-dollar secret Hawaiian ceremony in 1994. Melinda kept her job until 1996 (where she used her maiden name, French), at which point she left to focus on starting a family. The couple raised three children together, the youngest of whom is now 18 and the oldest of whom is 25. Famously, the children will not inherit the lion's

share of the Gates' fortune, which will instead go to the foundation (though each kid will get a few mill).

### Charitable Activities

As Bill has stepped back from Microsoft over the years, his charity work has taken on a more significant profile. Still, over the past decade, Melinda has also assumed a more public-facing role in the foundation's work, positioning herself as an advocate for bettering women's lives. In 2019, she released a book, *The Moment of Lift: How Empowering Women Changed the World*, and made an accompanying media attack. Both the book and the promotion cycle drew heavily from stories of the Gates' marriage. But, of course, some of these bits that made for neatly packaged stories in, say, a Nicholas Kristof column, read a bit differently now: For a few years, they fought over who got

to write the foundation's annual letter, which he had been doing without her input, one story went, but eventually they found balance. Did they, though?

There is speculation about how Melinda's charitable activities could change once she is no longer tied to Bill. "You could imagine Melinda Gates being a much more progressive giver on her own," one philanthropy-world source told the New York Times. But, of course, Gates's divorce doesn't have to turn into a First Wives Club. It really will be as equitable a divorce as they say their marriage was. But the Mackenzie Scott template, a proxy battle where progressive causes stand to reap the benefits, is fun to imagine, too: Ugh, I swear, I don't think anyone should be allowed to be a billionaire. But girl power, right? Yes, Melinda, you out-donate his ass.

## SPECIAL FEATURE



### Marriage irretrievably broken

According to documents obtained by several US media outlets, Bill and Melinda filed for divorce at Seattle court on Monday. "This marriage is irretrievably broken," the request for divorce states. "We ask the court to dissolve our marriage." In addition, it says the property, business interests, and assets should be divided "as outlined in our separation contract." That contract, however, has not been made public.

Each has hired three lawyers to represent them. The lawyers for Melinda, 56, include Robert Cohen, who has previously worked for clients such as Ivana Trump, Michael Bloomberg, and Chris Rock. Bill, meanwhile, has hired three lawyers based in Los Angeles. The pair announced their divorce in joint statements posted on Twitter on Monday, saying, "We no longer believe we can grow together as a couple." "After a great deal of thought and a lot of work on our relationship, we have decided to end our marriage," they said.

### How did they connect?

Melinda joined Microsoft as a product manager in 1987, and the two sat together at a business dinner that year in New York. They began dating, but as Bill later told a Netflix documentary: "We cared a lot for each other, and there were only two possibilities: either, we were going to break up, or we were going to get married." Melinda said she found Bill writing a list on a whiteboard with the "pros and the cons of getting married." They were married in 1994 on the Hawaiian island of Lanai, reportedly hiring all the local helicopters to stop unwanted

guests flying over. Bill stepped down from Microsoft's board last year to focus on his philanthropic activities.

### What is the Gates Foundation?

The couple established the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation in 2000 in Seattle. The foundation focuses primarily on public health, education, and climate change. Its grants included some \$1.75 billion to vaccine initiatives and research during the Covid-19 pandemic. In 2019, the foundation had net assets of more than \$43 billion. Bill and Melinda Gates pumped more than \$36 billion into the foundation between 1994 and 2018.

Melinda is from a middle-class family. Before meeting Bill, she had a boyfriend; As soon as she found out that Bill is a successful businessman, and agreed to marry him. Based on several media reports and interviews, couples said they had a happy married life with three children for more than 27 years. Couple love more than anything in the world and enjoyed all the wealth, reputation, and luxury life. But, now, they are prepared to divorce in the time of need for each other love and care. Melinda did not want Bill in her life anymore and made it clear that the marriage is dead, but she wants his money. She sucked everything from him over the last 27 years, and all children are grown up. She does not need him anymore. She does not have empathy or any moral or ethical value. It is called betrayal and backstabbing. Especially when a man gets older, he needs to have good mental, emotional, spiritual, and physical health. Divorce will impact every area of life and significantly impact health, well-being, and quality of life.



# The Most Convenient Place

The heart of every human being requires peace. It doesn't matter what their culture, religion, or politics may be, everyone on the face of this earth wants to have peace.

Maybe on the outside, the color of our skin is different, or our faces don't look alike. But lift the skin, and instantly the difference disappears. It could be anyone from any culture, any religion, any background. The difference is this extremely thin layer of epidermis. What we perceive as differences in people are, in fact, similarities, because ultimately everyone is looking for peace, for fulfillment, for joy—for the ultimate satisfaction in their life.

In this journey of life, it doesn't matter where we are, the wants are the same. Even though so much has

changed in my life, nothing has changed. I have the same thirst for the same joy, for the same satisfaction, for the same contentment, that I have always had.

I want to open my eyes and admire the beauty of my existence, the simplicity of the being that I am, because it is here that the unfolding of the most magnificent is taking place. I want to play the instrument of life that has been given to me and hear what sounds it produces.

So many people listen to me, hoping I'll give them something magical—a word they can speak and suddenly their car that hasn't started for 15 years will start. It isn't a coincidence that the story of Aladdin and the magic lamp is told in every culture in its own way. How wonderful it would be if we could just rub a lamp, a ge-

nie would appear, we could say, "Do this," and it would be done.

But I tell people: You have something more than a genie in a bottle because you have a peace that is dancing on the stage of your heart, a joy waiting to embrace you. The ultimate wish has been fulfilled, because that ultimate wish is for peace, for joy. If you look at your existence, this has already taken place. I'm talking about a peace that is not just an absence of war, but is a state of being.

wherever we go. If we could only understand what we have been given, our thirst could truly be fulfilled. The message, "What you are looking for is within you," is a very old message. So many have said that. Look through the eyes of simplicity, not complication. Life is fascinating because of its simplicity,

not because of its complexity.

When it comes to peace, people say, "Just sit down and think beautiful thoughts. That's all you need." What if you are hungry and go to a restaurant and order food, and the waiter says, "You don't need to actually eat anything. Just think of the most exquisite dishes you'd like, and your hunger will go away"? No, we have to be practical.

We need to feel peace every single day. And if we want to feel peace, we can turn within. We need air, and air has been supplied. We need peace, and peace has been supplied. We need joy, and joy has been supplied. And peace and joy are in the most convenient place possible: within us, wherever we go.

**PremRawat**

[www.timelesstoday.com](http://www.timelesstoday.com)

## SPECIAL FEATURE

## VALAYAPATHY

By: Kumar Punithavel

Valayapathy is one of the five epics that adorn the ancient Tamil literature. Others being Chilapathikaram, Manimekalai, Kundalakesi and Seevakachinthamany. The first mention of the five epics is found in the late 18th/early 19th century literary work Thiruthanikai Ulaa. Tamil Vidu thoothu, an earlier poetic work from 17th century refers to the epics as Panchakaviyams. According to Vaiyapuripillai, a great Tamil research scholar, Valayapathy can be traced back to early 10th century common era.

The author of this epic is not known yet. However, this epic is aligned to Jain religion. The full book is also not available in modern times. Only 72 stanzas have been found. There is no clear understanding about the story of the epic either. Of the 72 stanzas, 66 stanzas were got from 14th century literary work Purathiratu, 3 from the commentary by Adiarku Nallar on Chilapathikaram and so on. However, there is an accepted agreement among the academics that this is a Jain epic.

The story and plot of the epic goes as follows. In the city of Puhar, lived a very wealthy businessman called Navakoodi Narayanan. He was a Saivite. He had two wives. The first was of his own clan, but the second was from a different clan. Because he married a different clan woman, his own people started to agitate, antagonize, and scared him that he will be renounced by the clan. Frightened of the repercussion, he separated from his second wife. At the time of parting, the wife was pregnant.

Shortly after separation he traveled out of the country to do trading. On his return he joined his first wife and lived happily. The second wife prayed to Kali Devi to redeem her sufferings. She bore a beautiful son after a few months of separation and brought him up as a good child. All the play mates of the young boy used to tease him as boy with a no-name father. One day he came home and complained to his mother and asked for his father's name. Without any way out of the predicament she mentioned the name of his father. Hearing that, he went up to his father and ask him to officially tell everyone that he was his father.

However, afraid of the repercussions from his clan members Navakoodi Narayanan refused to accept him as his son. The mother with the guidance and help of Kali Devi establishes her chastity to the Chetty clan people. Finally, Narayanan had to accept the boy as his son and named him Veeravaanipan and lived together.

Throughout the story of this epic, it is pock marked with many Jain religious ethics mentioned in various places, but there could be no place for the worship of Ma Kali, of Hindu religion one could observe. Until the whole epic is found it would be futile to make any final stand on the origin and ethic of this epic.

Let us take two stanzas of this epic and see how great this epic would have been. After all isn't it the norm to check a grain of rice from the pot to check whether the rice it is properly cooked!

The first stanza is the invocation of the blessings of the almighty. That aside let's see the second stanza which was obtained from Purathiratu which goes as follows.

One should be aware the Jain religion greatly stresses the effects of Karma. Due to various actions on the previous births a person gets different forms,

- By the previous actions' different births and bodies, one takes,

வினைபல வலியி னாலே வேறுவேறு யாக்கை யாகி

In those many births taken, the soul suffers through living and performing the deeds of living, and suffers life through and go on living,

- By taking those forms soul suffers on, for its good life,

நனிபல பிறவி தன்னுள் துன்புறாஉம் நல்லு யிர்க்கு

Among the infinite number of living beings, to gain the human form, is rare and difficult. Even if they get the human birth to enjoy the pleasures is futile.

- To have such birth to be human is rare indeed, even if so,



மனிதரின் அரியதாகும் தோன்றுதல் தோன்றி னாலும்

They need wealth to enjoy life, which too is also difficult like human birth. One has to struggle to gain it if the birth is to be a pleasurable experience

- To enjoy the pleasures gaining wealth likewise difficult too.

இனியவை நுகர எய்தும் செல்வமும் அன்ன தேயாம்

Let us look at the second stanza lines together,

- By the previous actions' different births and bodies, one takes,  
By taking those forms soul suffers, for its good life,  
To have such birth to be human is rare indeed, even if so,  
To enjoy the pleasures gaining wealth likewise difficult too.

வினைபல வலியி னாலே வேறுவேறு யாக்கை யாகி

நனிபல பிறவி தன்னுள் துன்புறாஉம் நல்லு யிர்க்கு

மனிதரின் அரியதாகும் தோன்றுதல் தோன்றி னாலும்

இனியவை நுகர எய்தும் செல்வமும் அன்ன தேயாம்

When one reads through the stanza cannot miss the deep meaning of the karma theory subtlety spelt out in it. It clearly mentions our action decides what type of birth our next birth will be. The stanza suggest that wealth is needed to succeed in life and enjoy, but also subtlety warns, one must be careful how the wealth is gained. Any wealth wrongly gained will sure to make the next birth a difficult one.

Indeed, this reflects the theory of Karma as mentioned in Thirukkural couplet # 754. Let's look at the couplet which is very relevant. It is also note worthy to mention that Thiruvalluvar the bard who composed Thirukkural is also Jain.

- The blameless wealth from fairest means,

Brings good virtue and bliss.

அறன்னும் இன்பமும் ஈனும் திறனறிந்து

த்தின்று வந்த பொருள் #754

Let's take a close look at the next available stanza of Valayapathy to have a better understanding.

The next stanza as got from Purathiratu, which is in the form as some one having conversation with his friend,

To be born in an esteemed family, at the same time to be born without deformities like blindness nor deaf etc.

- To be born in an esteemed family with faultless form,

உயர்குடி நனிகள் தோன்றல் ஊனமில் யாக்கை ஆதல்

It is the appropriate knowledge that makes a person to see through the fake to make them

cleaver and smart. A person may be a great nuclear scientist, but that knowledge will be of no use if he gets capsized in the middle of the Ganges river. Always the knowledge must be appropriate for the living.

- To be a person of fault free knowledge and be great,

மயர்வறு கல்வி கேள்வித் தன்மையால் வல்லர் ஆதல்

Like wise to be a person with great appropriate knowledge and also lead a virtuous life is a rare one. Those who got these rare ones can be respected as human being. Meaning all others are of human form but not human being.

- To poses great appropriate seek great virtue they say,

பெரிதுணர் அறிவே யாதல் பேரறம் கோடல் என்றாங்கு

- Rare these to gain, but those got are called human.

அரிதிவை பெறுக லோடே பெற்றவர் மக்கள் என்பார்.

Let us now see the whole stanza together,

- To be born in an esteemed family with faultless form,

To be a person of fault free knowledge and be great

To poses great appropriate seek great virtue they say,

Rare these to gain, but those got are called human.

உயர்குடி நனிகள் தோன்றல் ஊனமில் யாக்கை ஆதல்

மயர்வறு கல்வி கேள்வித் தன்மையால் வல்லர் ஆதல்

பெரிதுணர் அறிவே யாதல் பேரறம் கோடல் என்றாங்கு

அரிதிவை பெறுக லோடே பெற்றவர் மக்கள் என்பார்

It is interesting to note what another Jain bard of international fame Thiruvalluvar has this to say

- What matters subtle study deep,

Levels of innate wisdom-keep.

நுண்ணிய நூல்பல கற்பினும் மற்றுந்தன்

உண்மை யறிவே மிகும் #373

The above couplet is from the famed book Thirukkural number 373, meaning a person could learn many books, but it is the wisdom that will gain the success and not knowledge. The difference between knowledge and wisdom, is as follows. Knowledge is to know tomato is a fruit, and wisdom is to know it is not to be added in fruit salad.

The ancient Tamil literatures are treasure trove for us to dive in and collect the booty.



## SPECIAL FEATURE

# Mills & Mills begins an ongoing conversation on how Canadian Tamil community non-profits and charities can navigate the legal landscape on COVID-19 and other challenges to improve lives in Sri Lanka

By **HarrishThirukumar**

This seminar hosted by Mills & Mills is a great start for charitable and non-profit organizations serving and representing the Tamil community in Canada. It was a sentiment expressed by Chief Nishan (Nish) Duraiappah, Chief of Peel Regional Police, who was a special guest. On April 8, 2021, Mills & Mills LLP hosted their Tamil Non-Profits and Charities legal seminar event for the first time in the firm's history. As a past volunteer in both Tamil and non-Tamil charities and non-profits and member of Mills & Mills' Diversity and Inclusion committee, Nathaniel Balakumaran has turned this passion into an interest in the Charities and Non-Profit sector in Canada. He advanced this seminar initiative and moderated it via Zoom. Mills & Mills LLP is a full-service law firm in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. It was founded in 1884 when George Gordon Mills opened the first office at the corner of Church and Front Street in downtown Toronto.

Another key panel speaker from the

Canadian Tamil community was Dr. V. Santhakumar, a physician and chair of the Eekai Foundation. It is a non-profit organization with an objective of becoming a hub for the many Canadian Tamil organizations and individuals providing assistance to northern and eastern Sri Lanka. The country has experienced struggles from ethnic and political divides between the majority and minority, with the Tamil community comprising the latter. Since becoming a community in Canada, he has been grateful for the opportunities afforded to the community to establish non-profit and charitable organizations. It thereby builds their capacity to serve Tamil and other minority communities in need in Sri Lanka to improve their lives.

Dr. Santhakumar also noted his gratitude for this seminar hosted by Mills and Mills. He went on to explain that a seminar like this one on April 8 can help empower many existing Canadian Tamil organizations to properly utilize facilities in Canada and government support that is available as part of a collective path towards improving lives in Sri Lanka. The



first Mills and Mills seminar speaker, Reshma Kishnani, Senior Litigation Associate addressed "Employment Law during COVID-19." Key considerations here for charities and non-profits include having up to date health and safety protocols for employees in response to COVID-19.

The final Mills and Mills panel speaker was Taras Kulish, a Senior Charities Associate on "Good Governance in Bad Times." Based on his own experiences working in charities and law, he presented seven governance tips for many non-profit and charitable organizations in Canada including

in the Tamil community.

First, respect members. Second, avoid splits on a board. Third, avoid conflicts of interest. Fourth, find new directors. Fifth, provide guidance to directors. Sixth, become familiar with the legislation. Seventh, provide vision.

Overall, this seminar begins an ongoing conversation on how Canadian Tamil community non-profits and charities can navigate the legal landscape on challenges like COVID-19. In turn, it can contribute to better meeting their goals of improving prosperity for people in Sri Lanka.

## NEWS RELEASE



APRIL 22, 2021

### Eye-catching Eid stamp issued to mark Islamic celebrations



**TORONTO**—Canada Post joins more than a million Muslims in Canada and many others around the world in celebrating the festivals of Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha with the release of an eye-catching Eid stamp. The issue is the third in an ongoing series celebrating the two important Islamic holidays, which begin this year around May 12 and July 9, respectively, and can last for several days.

#### About Eid festivals

Eid festivals are greeted with celebration, as they coincide with the completion of two practices of religious and cultural significance – Eid al-Fitr heralds the end of the fast held during the holy month of Ramadan, and Eid al-Adha follows the annual Hadj pilgrimage to the holy Kaaba shrine in Mecca. Gratitude and appreciation for community and greater humanity are central to both events. Thanks are expressed through communal prayers and feasts, family visits, and acts of kindness and charity to others – particularly the less fortunate.

#### About the stamp

A luminous night sky viewed through a latticed window is the focus of this year's design by Context Creative. The crescent moon, a highly recognizable symbol of Islam, alludes to the fact that both festivals begin with the sighting of a new moon. Printed by Lowe-Martin, the domestic rate Permanent™ stamp is available in a booklet of 10 and on an Official First Day Cover, which are available at [canadapost.ca/shop](https://canadapost.ca/shop).

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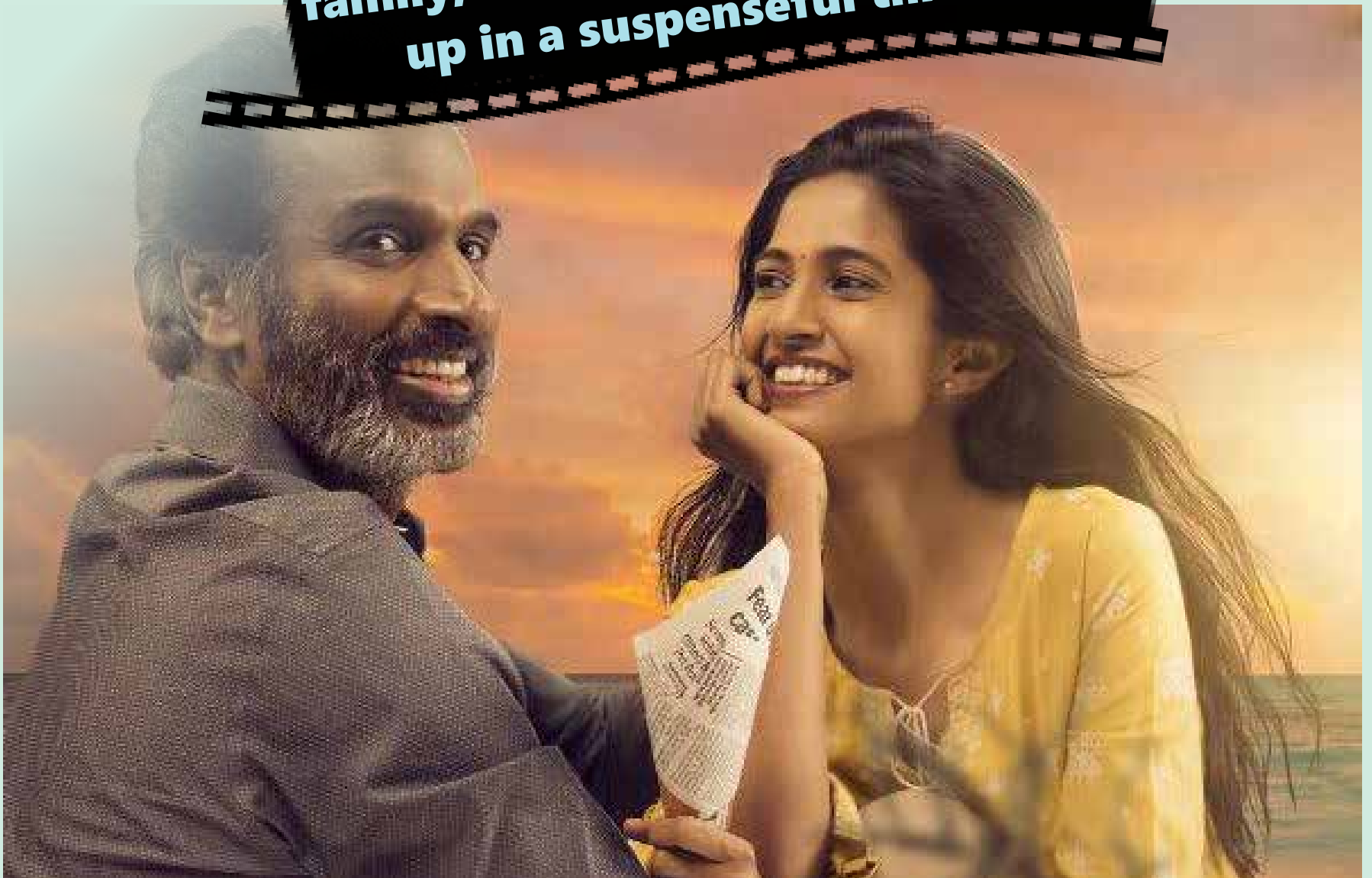
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## SPECIAL FEATURE

**Anbirkinyal** is a film focused on family, love and kindness wrapped up in a suspenseful thriller



By Harrish Thirukumar

In the Tamil language, Anbirkinyal roughly translates into lovable, sweet person. These are two highly desirable traits that we hope to see in others and strive to cultivate in ourselves. It is the title of a suspenseful thriller Tamil film released this year that I recently took pleasure in viewing as we all see what's good on TV in socially isolating during the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. It is based on a true story. The main character, played by Keerthi Pandian, also bears this term as their name. She portrays a young woman who is the daughter, both on screen and in real life, to Indian actor, Arun Pandian's character, Sivam. She is nicknamed Anbu.

While the film is a bit slow at first, it is clearly meant to introduce Anbu and setup the sort of person she is. On the one hand, she is an ambitious and intelligent young woman who is hoping to pursue her dream of a being a nurse by earning a degree in the field in Canada. At the same time, she works a part-time job at a chicken restaurant across scenes that display settings evoking the subtle workings of globalization as well as the Indian work culture. A characteristic that represents modern India or India in 2021. Anbu's efforts are focused on paying off debts for her home and father in Tamil Nadu and caring for him overall. They both share a warm and affectionate father-daughter relationship that shows how Anbu truly emanates the name she was given. The film also elegantly displays how Anbu shares these traits amongst her neighbours, friends



and other acquaintances whom she helps out with her witty attitude and intelligence.

However, things take a turn for the worst as the film's main plot takes hold once Anbu and her boyfriend, Charles, played by Praveen Raja are taken to a police station. They are pulled over once one of the police officers on patrol notices that Charles was drunk as he drove Anbu home. Consequently, Sivam, who once showered Anbu with af-



fection and love, begins acting coldly toward her for one mistake she made despite her obvious care for him.

This strain on her relationship with her father reaches a point where she can't bear to call her father or return home from her part-time job. It proves nearly fatal as she is accidentally locked in a freezer from working too late where she is forced to survive the cold through her intelligence and wit. As her father, boyfriend and other people in her life frantically search for her whereabouts, it is the security guard at the mall where Anbu's part time job is located that leads them to her. A man whom she can't help but be sweet towards by looking up, smiling and saying hello. It is interesting as the security guard notes that this is in stark contrast to the many Indian mall shoppers glued to their smartphone screens. It is an indictment of Indian society now both pre and maybe during the pandemic as we increasingly migrate online to stay personally connected. Afterwards, she is reunited with her father, Charles and others where she remains the lovable, sweet person that Sivam always saw her as once she is released from the locked freezer. I would recommend this film especially with its subtle message of family, kindness and love throughout the dramatic thriller elements. It is something highly relevant. This is the case since we should hold onto this as a form of hope that we can and will move beyond these online interactions because of the pandemic towards doing so in person.





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# REMINISCENCES OF A RETIRED TEACHER

C. Kamalaharan



It was on the first of January 1966 assumed duty as teacher at Dickwella a coastal town 29 kms beyond Matara. Within Dickwella is the village Yonagapura where a Tamil speaking Muslim community had settled permanently for ages and Minhath Maha Vidyalaya is the only school where the Muslim students attend. Arriving there on the first day of the academic year Mr. A. R. Mohamed the principal a diminutive but an able administrator received me warmly. While perusing my appointment letter he requested a student to go and fetch his pen. I was baffled to hear the way he spoke Tamil and presumed that I was assuming duty in a Southern town where the dialect and even the vocabulary spoken were going to be unfamiliar to me. His request to the attendant in Tamil was to bring his pen from his sac. It took a few moments to realise that sac meant pocket referring to his coat pocket.

After assuming duty I was in for another surprise. When the bell rang for the short interval at 11 am all the students dashed out of the classrooms and out through the main gate without permission from the teachers. I intercepted a student and asked, "Why are you all rushing out in such a hurry." He hurriedly replied, "Ovil Sir" and took off. I thought they were going to kovil (temple). On inquiry from a member of the staff I was told that it was a new word coined by the students from the original word interval. At the beginning they pronounced interval as intorval, later as intovil and finally shortened it as ovil. I further asked,

"Why the students rush out in such a hurry." The answer he gave was quite interesting. Most students come to school in the morning around 7.45 am without answering the call of nature and so when the bell rings they rush home to ease themselves and have breakfast.

During my service at Dickwella more than 50 years ago Yonagapura was an undeveloped village without even the basic facilities; no electricity or water supply and drinking water had to be bought from vendors who transported drinking water in bullock drawn water carts. The school built on a hillock had to be reached after a strenuous climb about 50 steps. I occupied one of the double rooms that were for name sake the staff quarters with a dilapidated pit toilet half way beside the stairs. Water for washing purpose had to be carried to my room and fill the tub by some loyal students who were always at the beck and call of the teachers. The following year Mr. N. Thanikasalampillai from Jaffna joined me to enliven my spirit.

In the evening both of us had to walk a mile to Walasgala carrying bucket towel and clothing for a bath at an open well. As there were no restaurants or eateries nearby we prepared tea or coffee and for breakfast we had bread butter and jam. For lunch and dinner rice meal was provided by a Muslim family in the neighbourhood. The only recreation for us was a stroll along the expansive beach in the evenings. We rarely patronized a tent cinema which screened 'third run' Tamil movies. Kathirkamam Murugan temple being

65 miles away from Dickwella we visited the hallowed shrine during weekends whenever we felt the urge to charge ourselves spiritually.

In spite of Dickwella being 375 miles away from Jaffna and the hardship we faced our stay there was memorable mainly due to the hospitality extended to us by the Muslim community. With a deep sense of gratitude they always recall the selfless service rendered to their community by teachers from Jaffna. They had great respect for us and faithfully attended to our needs. We were received as special guests at weddings and other functions along with the other VIPs of the area.

But however much our stay there was satisfactory travelling between Jaffna and Dickwella was gruelling and backbreaking. When we applied for transfer after serving there for four years the principal's endorsement, "Can be released with suitable replacement" shattered our hope of moving out of Dickwella. Later on hearing that a Tamil accountant from Jaffna came on transfer to the Matara education department we were at his office the following evening. After listening patiently to our woes he dropped a bombshell, "I feel extremely sorry for both of you" and added "As finding suitable replacements for both of you is not possible I think you can move out of Dickwella only after you retire and get your pension." This statement had shattered all our hopes of moving out of Dickwella.

A few months later we received news that the accountant had gone on transfer and another accountant from Jaffna had replaced him. We were

there at his office one afternoon after school. Feeling happy to meet both of us from Jaffna but on hearing our plight he felt sad. We made an earnest request to him to get us transfers not necessarily to Jaffna but to a much closer district. We suggested to him to replace us with teachers passing out of Teachers College and graduates from the University. He gave a patient hearing and said, "I'll try but don't fully depend on me."

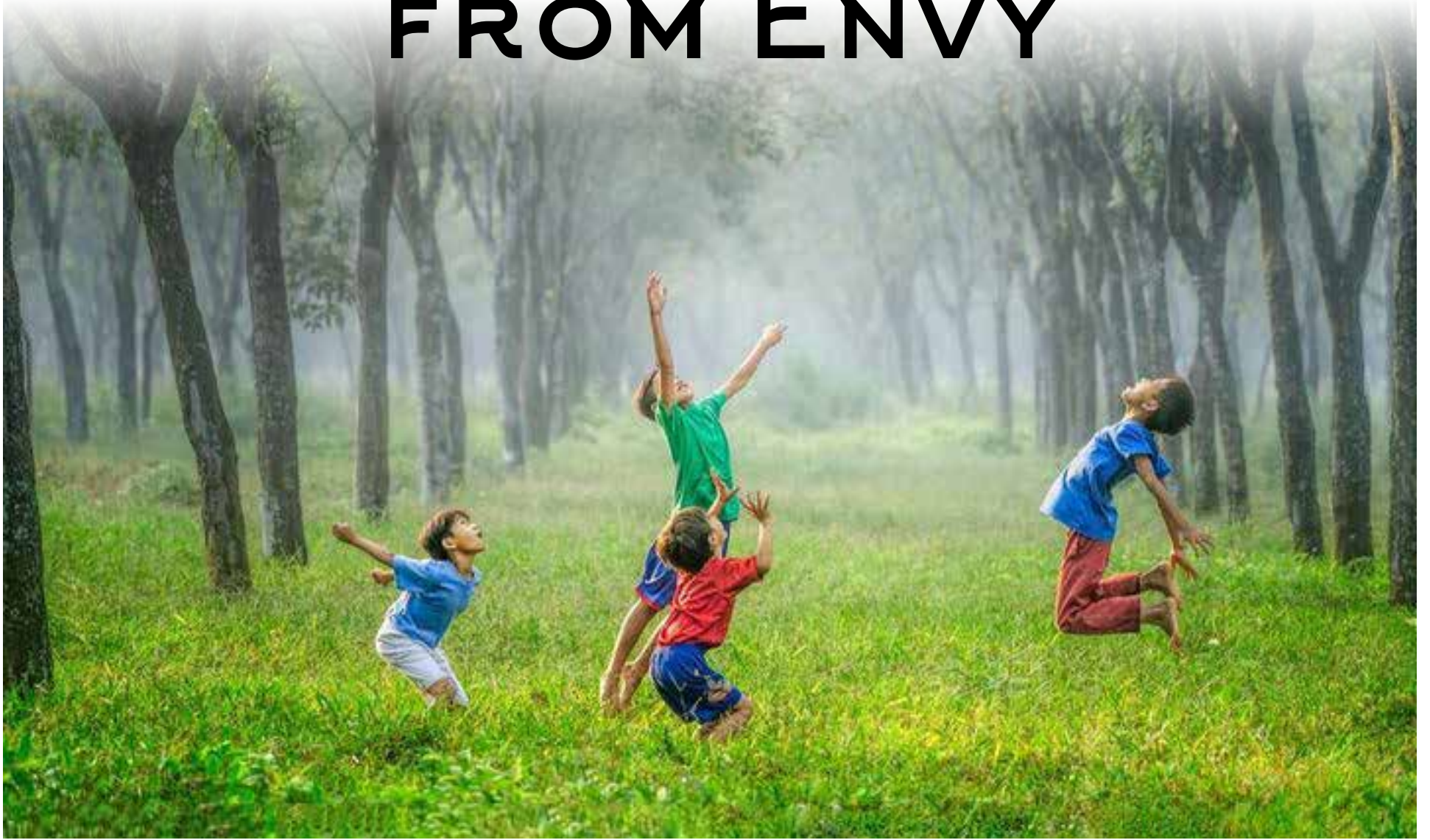
One day quite unexpectedly I received my transfer order to Gampola and few months later Thanikasalampillai too received his transfer order to Veyangoda. It was like winning a bumper prize in a sweep as we will be able to live in a much more conducive environment closer to Jaffna. But leaving a community that made our stay comfortable and treated us as members of their community was the most painful parting.

Now after more than fifty years I was delighted to read and view images of Yonagapura particularly the school that had undergone tremendous changes and upgraded as Minhath National School with all facilities. The students' performance in public examinations and in extra-curricular activities too was exemplary according to the statistical report I read. Most students who excelled in studies and passed out of the universities are holding lucrative positions in public life according to the information I gathered in my iPad. As a former teacher of the school I feel extremely delighted and proud.



## SPECIAL FEATURE

# FREEDOM FROM ENVY



- republicworld.com

By: J.A. Rajah

Freedom from envious thoughts is to be taken as the most righteous conduct. Envy is the attitude of mind, of not being able to bear the progress and well-being of others. If a man learns not to be envious of others, he does not need any greater wealth. A man who envies another's wealth is the man who could never aspire for virtue and wealth himself. Thiumoolar referred to the same attitude when he said, "*Yan petta inpam peruha iv vayyaham*. It means 'let all the world share with me the material wealth and spiritual wealth that I have got'. Those who know the harm that comes of deeds and envy, will shun all evil arising from it. Even without external enemies, envy is productive of evil; his own envy is enough to ruin a man.

*"Koduupathu alukkaruppan chuttam  
uduppathuum,  
Unpathoom inrik kedum".*

The man whose envy puts him in the way of other's charity, will go to ruin without food and clothes. The Goddess of good fortune cannot bear the sight of envious people. She will turn over them to the Goddess of misfortune (Muudhevi). The evil genius of envy will entail the loss of all fortune, and render one liable to hell-fire. If an envious man accumulates wealth, and a virtuous man comes by misfortune, both these needs scrutiny. None has grown richer by envying and no one has lost by not envying.

*"Allukarru ahanrarum illai ahuthu illar,  
Perukkathil thherntharu il.*

(Kural: 161-170)



Valluvar's Views





# Places of Interest in Jaffna- Sri Lanka

By: J.A. Rajah

The region is an area of land where a homogenous way of life exists. The Jaffna region underlaid by limestone rocks has a landscape determined by the nature of limestone. Most of its natural landscape is shaped by the bedrock.

## 1. The Keerimalai Tank:



It is found along the sea-coast but is fed with fresh waters by underground springs. It is a natural spring next to the sea with only a wall separating the two. It is believed to have curative properties. This was found adjacent to the Keerimalai Naguleswaran Temple dedicated to Lord Siva. The traditional belief is that a mongoose faced man got back his normal face by bathing in this tank. It is believed to be holy waters. It has since become a favorite place for bathing and many tourists do not forget to visit this spot. Subsequently, eateries and lodges have been established in its vicinity.

## 2. The Tholagatty Farm:



It is run by catholic nuns. They grow Vine Creepers from which they get grapefruits to prepare wines. They supply communion wines to churches. Grape based drinks are also sold in the market for public consumption. It is said that the Catholic nuns do not talk much among themselves but work on the farm with prayer and meditation. It is a favorite spot for student groups to go and visit the farm when they go on educational tours.

## 3. The Bottomless Well at Puttur:



The bottomless well is a geographical phenomenon. It is connected by underground channels to water sources. It is a boon to farmers to irrigate their fields. Water is drawn out through electric pumps to provide water for farmlands. Since rainfall is scarce in the Jaffna Region, the availability of this vast resource of water is a great help to the farmers during seasons of drought. It is located in the Navakiri area in Vlligamam East. The dimensions of the well are 25feet in length and 40 feet in width. The flight of steps leading to the water

level is 14 feet below the surface level. It is believed that the water source is connected to the Keerimalai freshwater pool which is 10 km away from the well.

## 4. Nallur Kandasamy Temple:



It is a famous Hindu Temple located in Nallur. Several devotees from all over the world come to attend the special festivals held in July and September. The most noted festivals are Manjam, Kailasa Vaganam, Sapparam, Ther, Theertham and Poongavanam. The idols are carried in chariots around the temple and a large number of people go round it saying prayers and singing devotional songs. Some devotees carry 'kavadees' and they come from several parts of the peninsula. The temple festivals are a time for sight-seeing and shopping. They put stalls in the roadsides around the temple. Special items sold at these stalls are grams, toys, bangles, bracelets, figures of idols, and several other essential commodities.

## 5. Selvachchannathi Temple:



It is another Hindu Temple found near the Thondamanaru River. The Sannathi festivals follow immediately after the Nallur Temple festivals. The Sannathi is auspicious for its special blessings on devotees and devotees attend the festivals with great dedication and regularity. It has a free non-agamic environment conducive for worship. It is found beside the Thondamanaru, where freshwater flows into the sea past the site. It is a Murugan Temple, where devotees congregate for 'dharsan' of vel installed at the site.

## 6. Elephant-Pass Salterns:



Salterns situated in the Jaffna Lagoon near Elephant Pass is well suited for the production of salt. The shallow waters with plenty of sunshine are conducive to the collection of salt. It is the Island's largest salt field. The saltern is spread over 1946 acres. It has the capacity to produce 70,000-80,000 metric tons of salt eliminating the need for Sri Lanka to import sort. The salt is mainly used for home consumption and was also very useful to Paranthan Chemicals when it was in operation.

## 7. Periya Kovil:

This is the biggest Catholic Church situated in the heart of Jaffna Town. It is known as St. Mary's Cathedral, located in Gurunagar, a suburb of Jaffna. It was built in 1794 and the first parish priest was Rev.Fr. Rebeiro. The Novena festival held here is attended by a large number of Catholics. In April during the Lent season, the pascal dramas are enacted portraying the sufferings of Christ on the cross. The songs depicting the story of the cross is sung through the loud-speakers and the sound of the songs are heard throughout the length and breadth of the Jaffna Peninsula. They have well-assembled costumes and accessories to create a spectacular display of the incidents surrounding the passion of Christ.

## 8. Hindu/Buddhist Temple at Ninativu:



Ninativu is a sacred place for the Hindus and the Buddhists. The Hindu Temple holds special festivals where a large number of Hindus congregate to worship their Gods-especially Nagapooshani Amman. Buddhists have their own temple built entirely of gold. The place is reported to be a place visited by Gautama Buddha, five years after he attained enlightenment. He went there to settle a dispute between two Naga kings. The Buddhists travel to Nagadipa throughout the year on pilgrimage. There are several stalls put up around the temples selling flowers and eatables.

## 9. Katkovalam Ship Festival:

Katkovalam is found in the east of the town of Point Pedro. It is a coastal area with shallow waters conducive for safe bathing. They have an annual festival called the 'Kappat Thiruvizhila' when a large number of people come together to enjoy the ship festival. Several people dressed like the Portuguese come in ships towards the coast commemorating the advent of the first Western nation to Sri Lanka. This is also a great occasion for people to purchase things in the small shops installed along the beach.

## 10. The Subramaniam Park:



This is situated in front of the Municipal Town Hall in Jaffna. The park is filled with flower plants, bushes, and shady trees. It has also a tower with a radio playing all twenty-four hours for people to sit in the park and enjoy listening. Many people visit the park in the evenings with their children. After the civil commotion resulting from government conflict with the Liberation Tigers, the park was severely damaged and became

dysfunctional. Now attempts are being made to restore it to its pristine functionality.

## 11. The Old Park at Chundikuli:

The Old Park is situated near the Jaffna Kachcheri. It occupies more than 27 acres of land with large shady trees like mahogany, nedun, ironwood, bamboo, and lignumvitae. It was the place where the Government Agent's residence is situated. It was built in the 19th century. The last British Government Agent P.J.Hudson lived here. Now it is maintained as a sightseeing spot.

## 12. The Cement Factory at K.K.S:

The cement factory at K.K.S was established by the Sri Lankan government when G.G.Ponnampalam was the Minister of Industries and Fisheries in the first UNP government under F.R.Senanayake. It was an ideal location for the industry since the raw material-limestone is found in the immediate area itself. Besides K.K.S enjoyed excellent transport facilities both rail, road, and sea. With the rise of political conflicts, the factory was later abandoned and another factory was established at Puttalam. The clinker made at K.K.K was taken to Puttalam and the cement was produced there. Later even that part of the industry was stopped. Now the new government should re-establish the industry to inject opportunities for the people of the area.

## 13. The Casuarina Beach or Senthan Kulam:

The beach gets its name from Casuarina trees found along the beach. It is a high-light of Sri Lankan tourism. It is clean and well maintained by authorities and is about 20 km from the Jaffna town. The JICCF camp house is located near the beach.

## 14. The Jaffna Public Library:



The Library is run by the Jaffna Municipal Council. It was built in 1933 and burnt down in 1981. It is one of the biggest libraries in Asia consisting of 97,000 books and manuscripts. It was rebuilt in 2001 with new books but the old books and manuscripts were not replaced. The building's classical and beautiful proportions (Taj-Mahal appearance) make it stand out architecturally. It contains lush gardens and has been modernized with new facilities such as free WIFI that was added in 2016.

Jaffna Peninsula set on limestone bed-rock with subterranean channels and water springs provides the natural landscape for the Jaffna man who has developed agricultural practices that have enabled him to produce a variety of vegetables fruits and cereals to feed its peopling. Its markets like Chunnakam, Chavakachcheri and Tinneveli abound in agricultural products. With his inborn talent and educational institutions /expertise provided by imperial rulers in the historical past had made the Jaffna flag flying over these years not only within Sri Lanka but in many parts of the world.



## Negative Impacts of the Media

By: Mithusha Partheepan



- sysomos.com

Technology has become a big part of everyone's life. As technology evolved, so did our fascination with it as well. Many of us have become addicted to its many features, including social media, TV shows, and other web content. These forms of media influence us in big ways and have an even bigger impact on younger generations who are much more impressionable. These influences can be both positive and negative. However, watching too much television or using any other devices can cause more harm than good. It can have detrimental physical and psychological effects. In today's society, many people struggle with their mental health. A lot of it correlates with the media. The media can impact our thinking, behaviour and emotions in a negative way. Research shows that the brain of an individual who is more focused on watching television is more abnormal than someone who manages their time wisely between activities and the media. The media contributes to mental illness through the exaggerated and inaccurate portrayal of reality. People from different communities, such as the Black, First Nations, or LGBTQ+ community are often misrepresented. People who spend most of their time online find it harder to distinguish the reality of the living world with the expectations of the virtual world. By this, I mean they perceive the real world as per the imagery, principles, and portrayals depicted on the screen. For example, the media consistently portrays people with mental illnesses as violent and murderous, which are misrepresentations of reality and are untrue. This has resulted

in the majority of the population believing these perceptions, leading to discrimination against the victims.

Psychological problems are not the only impacts of too much exposure to media. Physical challenges also arise as many advertisements continue to portray unrealistic beauty standards. Beauty standards often lead the public to believe that a certain weight, look, attire and diet is the golden standard. However, advertisements are not the only culprits. Influencers, celebrities, and others contribute to this problem a lot by holding judgement against people's lifestyles, physical features, and mistakes. This negativity can affect an individual's life when they become too focused on social media and the luxuries that someone else may have. This could lead to resentment towards themselves for not having what others appear to have through their phone screens. Things, such as body image, money, and clothing are things that many people often find themselves chasing after. The expectations the media sets on body image has led many people to develop eating disorders and unbalanced exercising routines. On the other hand, there are also those who are absorbed in movies and video games. People who fit into this category find themselves sitting in front of a screen for extended periods of time in a day and do not get much exercise at all. This contributes to the growing rate of obesity. With obesity comes many other health complications, such as high cholesterol levels and heart complications.

As technology continues to advance the human race, we must

consider the negative impacts of its use. Mainstream media must be more accountable for representing what it portrays to avoid creating skewed perspectives, stereotypes, and unhealthy expectations.

In order to ensure we reap the benefits of technology while minimizing harm, we must all do our due diligence and be aware of the negative impacts it can have on us and find a healthy balance.



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# THE SUNLIGHT, HUMAN AND NITROGEN UNION

## How the Changing Nitrogen Cycle Affects Humans and Ecosystems

By OUE Research Institute

Plants and trees need nitrogen (N) and sunlight to be healthy. Nitrogen allows leaves packed with chlorophyll to absorb the sun's energy and ultimately turn CO<sub>2</sub> into sugar. Nitrogen also stimulates growth and the quality of light impacts turf health. The effects of N and sunlight on turf health are apparent, but there is another sun and nitrogen connection affecting turf health that is not always considered. As a result, people are ready to plant what they intended to do during the Spring.

Turfgrass roots primarily use up nitrate (NO<sub>3</sub><sup>-</sup>) because it is commonly available in the soil than ammonium (NH<sub>4</sub><sup>+</sup>). Even ammonium-based fertilizers are quickly transformed from NH<sub>4</sub><sup>+</sup> to NO<sub>3</sub><sup>-</sup> by soil microbes. That soluble soil NO<sub>3</sub><sup>-</sup> moves to the turf roots via mass flow, the process of water being drawn toward the roots as the leaves transpire. The NO<sub>3</sub><sup>-</sup> then is taken up by proteins on the turf roots and moved up to the leaves. It

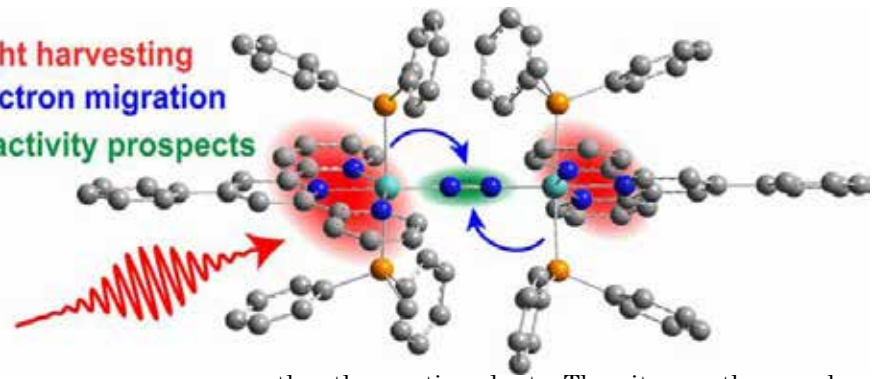
nitrate to ammonium and protein. Nitrogen helps the plants' repair damage caused by light pressure.

### Sunlight and Nitrogen

Sunlight energizes electrons and break nitrogen and form ammonia. The schematic figure shows the planned activation of a nitrogen molecule held in the middle of the catalyst. Light is harvested and electrons migrate to ultimately make the nitrogen receptive to bonding with hydrogen and potentially forming ammonia, a vital part of commercial fertilizer.

Soybean and peanut plants take in nitrogen and hydrogen from the air and turn it into ammonia, which helps the plants grow. The reactions to produce ammonia are driven by natural catalysts, which lower the energy necessary to make the reactions happen. Inspired by these catalysts, scientists uncovered how sunlight can kick start the functionalization of nitrogen molecules. They built a complex that harvests sunlight. The added energy causes electrons to shift and makes the nitrogen molecules receptive to bonding with hydrogen and, thus, on the pathway to making ammonia. Farmers need nitrogen-rich fertilizer. The researchers are striving to unlock the highly efficient production of nitrogen-containing ammonia. A complex's binding

Light harvesting  
Electron migration  
Reactivity prospects

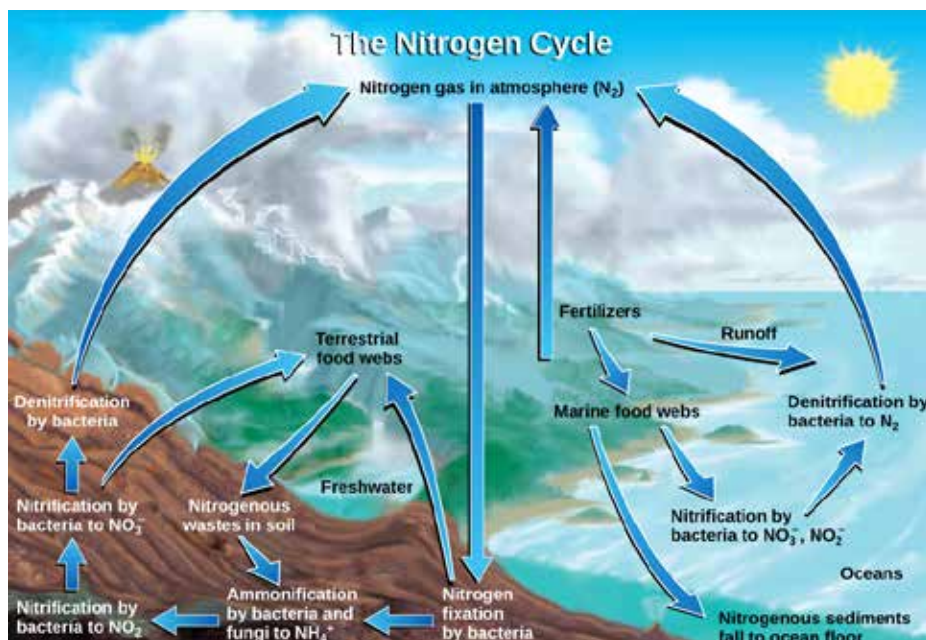


rather than native plants. The nitrogen then washes into waterways, causing a surplus of nutrients, a situation called eutrophication. In freshwater lakes, rivers, and streams, eutrophication causes aquatic weeds to grow unchecked. They sometimes fill entire lakes, rivers, or streams. The algae grow and reproduce very quickly when nitrogen in the water. As the vast amounts of algae die and decompose, oxygen in the water is used up, and animals can not survive. So they flee to another part of the ocean, or they die.

### Nitrogen Pollutants

Nitric oxide (NO) and nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) molecules form during combustion in car engines, power plants, and factories. They can contribute to smog when combined with oxygen molecules and the fumes from paint and gasoline. In addition, they can contribute to acid rain if mixed with water vapor, turning into nitric acid. Nitrogen dioxide will break apart in sunlight, and the free oxygen atoms latch onto oxygen molecules, forming dangerous ground-level ozone.

Nitrous oxide (N<sub>2</sub>O) is a greenhouse gas. It is also known as "laughing gas" because it makes people laugh when given to medical patients to numb pain. The amount of nitrous oxide in the atmosphere has increased since the beginning of the Industrial Revolution, as Earth's climate has gotten warmer. Nitrous oxide forms during combustion, just like nitrogen dioxide. is also released into



is where the sun/nitrogen connection is essential. Light energy from the sun is used to reduce or change the NO<sub>3</sub><sup>-</sup> back to NH<sub>4</sub><sup>+</sup> before it can finally be used to make protein.

This is applicable because sunlight drives transpiration and mass flow of N to the roots and is required to reduce or transform the NO<sub>3</sub><sup>-</sup> into a form the plant can use for growth. Shade, low clouds, and constant rain reduce the solar intensity, slow turf green-up following N fertilization. We saw this at our plots during cloudy and rainy weather. Nitrate fertilizer also can help with too much light. This occurs on dry and sunny days or during stress in cool-season turf. Warm-season turf also can obtain too much light when it is cool and bright.

The plants absorb light faster than they can use the energy. Excess energy can escape and damages the plant through oxidative stress. Many turf products (from fungicides to pigments) are marketed to reduce oxidative stress, and some can positively affect plant health. Products such as Turf Screen can minimize oxidative stress. It led to improved quality and higher levels of chlorophyll in the leaves. Fertilizers containing nitrate can also help with this stress because some excess solar energy can reduce

of nitrogen changes as it is excited by sunlight. The resulting insights could lead to reactants that efficiently move electrons to produce ammonia using less energy. Also, the insights could lead to catalysts that use renewable sources of hydrogen rather than natural gas.

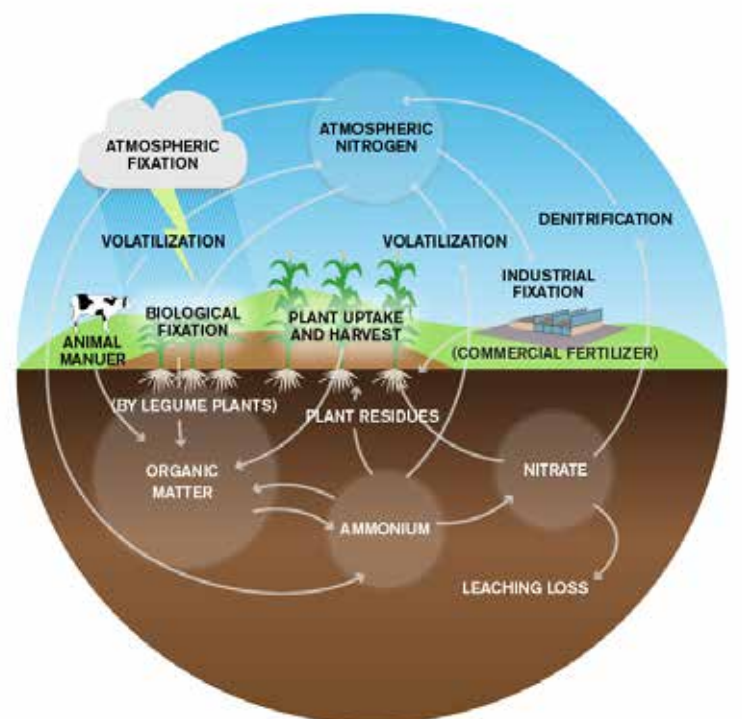
Ammonia in fertilizer is vital to growing crops. However, producing ammonia for fertilizer is an energy-demanding process that requires natural gas to provide the needed hydrogen. Scientists have long struggled to synthesize a metal-based catalyst that can efficiently produce ammonia with a minimal carbon footprint because nitrogen is notoriously nonreactive. The goal is to develop energy-efficient processes that pump out ammonia using hydrogen from renewable sources. Researchers propose how a molybdenum-based compound can effectively use sunlight to make nitrogen reactive and susceptible to forming the necessary bonds to create ammonia.

### Changing Nitrogen Cycle

The eighty percent of nitrogen molecules in the air (two atoms of nitrogen bonded together). Nitrogen is found all over the planet. It is in living things, water, air, animal waste. It travels between living and non-living parts via a process called the nitrogen cycle, which is one of the Earth's biogeochemical cycles. The recent changes in the nitrogen cycle are causing a very noticeable effect on natural environments and human health. Lakes are clogged with aquatic weeds. Dead zones have formed in the oceans where animals can not persist. Air contains nitrogen pollutants that decrease air quality, and greenhouse gases containing nitrogen are becoming more common.

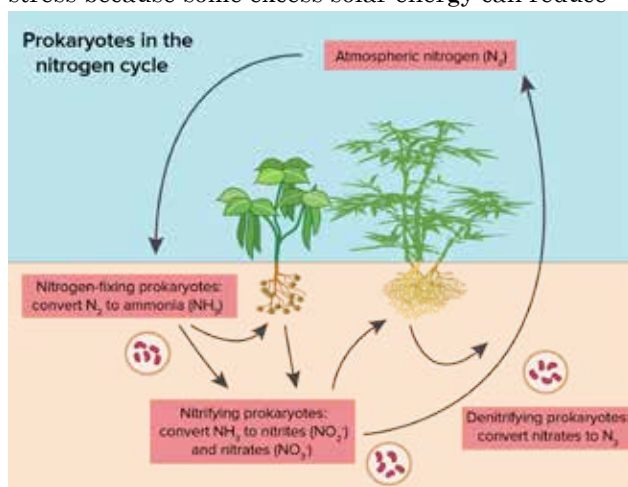
Nitrogen from fertilizers sinks into soils, often creating conditions that favor the growth of weeds

### NITROGEN CYCLE



the atmosphere from farm animals, sewage, and fertilizers. There are natural ways that nitrous oxide gets into the atmosphere, too, including tiny microbes that alter nitrogen in the soils of tropical forests.

A nitrate radical (NO<sub>x</sub>) compound which is destroyed by sunlight, build up in the night sky every night, compensating nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) and ozone (O<sub>3</sub>), and cleansing the air. The light pollution destroys this nitrate radical, reducing the nighttime purification, and leaving high concentrations of pollutants in the atmosphere, which worsens smog the next day. It create air pollution as well in the atmosphere.





## Wow! A tax refund! - spend or save?

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

It's great to get a tax refund, isn't it? (Maybe not – but more on that later.) So, what are you going to do with it? You could spend it but then, it would just be ... gone. In the interest of a long-term improvement to your personal financial picture, here are a few alternative tax refund uses to explore.

**RRSP it** Make your 2021 RRSP contribution right now and you'll get the benefit of nearly an extra year of potential long-term tax-deferred growth and a tax deduction against next year's taxes. If you have made less than your maximum annual RRSP contribution in the past, a lump sum could allow you to catch up. You are allowed to make up for unused contribution room that you've accumulated from past years—which can also generate a healthy tax benefit.

**TFSA it** Every Canadian over the age of 18 is eligible to save in a TFSA and the investments held within the TFSA grow on a tax-free basis. TFSA withdrawals can be made at any time for any reason – and the withdrawn money is tax-free. You are allowed to Contribute up to \$6,000 a year in

a Tax-Free Savings Account (TFSA). Your contributions are not tax-deductible but you will not be taxed on a cent of the investment income generated by your TFSA and you can re-contribute any of your tax-free withdrawals in a future year.

**Invest it** If your RRSP and TFSA are topped up, consider adding to your non-registered investments. It's a sound strategy to hold stocks and equity mutual funds outside an RRSP or TFSA because these types of investments are taxed at a more favorable capital gains inclusion rate and Canadian investments qualify for the dividend tax credit.

**Learn from it** Set up Registered Education Savings Plans (RESPs) to fund future education costs for your kids. RESP contributions are not tax-deductible but their growth is tax-deferred and they qualify for Canada Education Savings Grants (CESG) of up to 20 per cent of your contribution.

**Take interest in it** Pay down costly credit debt with interest rates that can range from 15 to 29 per cent and then

pay down non-deductible debt such as your mortgage – a single prepayment can chop months or even years off your repayment schedule and potentially save hundreds or thousands of dollars in interest payments.

**Park it** Got a large refund? Why not park some cash in a short-term investment that you can access without penalty. You'll have a ready source of cash for a rainy day or maybe a new car without having to borrow or use your credit card. (You can also use a TFSA as a rainy day fund.)

**Eliminate it** Here's why getting a tax refund isn't the greatest: That refund cheque is not a gift from the government. It is money you overpaid

during the year and are now getting back without interest. Put more money in your pocket each pay period by applying to lower your withholding tax.

A tax refund is great – a comprehensive tax-reducing, life-goal-achieving financial plan is much better. Your professional advisor can help make it all work for you.

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David Joseph, M.A., CFP®, CLU

Financial Consultant

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

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# It is Important to Protect Your Credit Rating

When you have a great credit score, it's crucial to your total economic health and wellness to protect it. Below are a few things you ought to be doing to make sure your terrific credit history remains in this way.

- **Get new credit scores when you need it**

Getting a new credit rating influences the FICO score in a negative method. Ten percent of the rating is made from "new credit," which takes in account the total number of times the credit was inspected by loan providers, in addition to how many of your accounts are new.

One more 15% of your score is comprised of the length of your credit report. To name a few points, this category takes into consideration the typical age of your credit accounts and the ordinary decreases when you add a new account into the mix.

- **Don't be a cosigner.**

Be extremely mindful concerning cosigning a lending for somebody else, even your children or partner. If they miss any payment or can no more pay, it will show up on your credit score record as

well as can ravage your credit score. As a general rule of thumb, don't guarantee anything for any individual unless you are willing, as well as able to take on the repayment on your own if you have to.

- **Maintain a list of your details.**

What are you going to do when your wallet gets stolen or lost Which had every credit card of yours? You can attempt to look up every one of your accounts on the internet and discover the contact info, yet it may take a while, as well as several sites will not display your real card number.

It is usually an excellent suggestion to keep a paper checklist of every one of your card numbers, expiry dates, as well as call telephone numbers readily available. This way, if your cards are swiped or lost, you can terminate the accounts as promptly as feasible. Simply bear in mind to keep the listing in a hidden place.

- **Perhaps you need to maintain your "starter cards" open.**

Normally, "starter cards," or cards made for people without a credit history, featured a relatively high rate of interest and charges, low limitations, and do not use much in the method of rewards. When your credit score is built up, it can be extremely alluring to shut them.

Nevertheless, it may be a better idea to keep them open and merely not utilize them. I stated above that 15% of your rating comes from the length of your credit history, so by maintaining your oldest account open, you'll help this component of your score.

- **Examine your accounts, even if you do not utilize them.**

Mentioning credit cards, you do not utilize, make certain you still check all your accounts every so often. Guarantee there are not charges like annual costs on there and that no person is fraudulently utilizing your card. Ruining your credit rating because you really did not realize you owed an annual fee is a ridiculous factor for your credit history to drop.

**Any questions please visit  
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## SPECIAL FEATURE

# ONE OF THE WOMAN PIONEERS IN SRI LANKAN AVIATION

## Olga Sirimanne

**By: Blue. K.N. Sivagnanasunderam**  
(Former Flight Operations Officer Air Ceylon)  
kanesiva6@gmail.com

In 1909, on the 15th of February in Pau. Pont-- Long, southern France, when the whole world was proclaiming about Katharine Wright of Dayton Ohio, as the first female person or woman to be in the air, on a plane, built by her brothers Wibur and Orville Wright, and moreover when she took a ride as a passenger with her brother Wilbur Wright, none would have ever dreamt or thought even, 39 years later in a beautiful island paradise, almost 9200 miles from Dayton, in a far away land called Ceylon, later to become Sri Lanka, a young lady named Olga de Silva, would join a newly born airline, Christened

history, as one of the first group of four ladies to graduate as a cabin staff or an air hostess and took the wings to fly, by setting pace for all other Sri Lankan lasses to set their heights and sights in aviation in Sri Lanka. She flew with Therise, (not sure of the other ladies' names), who later became Mrs. Ferdinands, my former boss Capt. Ferdinanads wife, incidentally I think Olga flew on the first inaugural flight to Jaffna Palaly airport, (not sure of it) She continued to fly with air Ceylon on its domestic sectors Jaffna, Batticaloa, Trincomalee, and in its regional sectors Madras and Trichy also, until she met a dashing

young man, Lionel Sirimanne who was one of our pioneer Radio officer along with another pioneer, late John Rajkumar Vethavanam, with whom I had the fortune and pleasure working closely in the flight operations department when I joined the airline in 1972 and indirectly with Mr. Sirimanne, who became our Radio engineer for the aircrafts, Avro-Hs 748 and Trident Hs ---121.

Olga's and Siri's meeting blossomed into a romance which ended in holy matrimony happily for both of them in June 1954, when both were solemnized in wedding as husband and wife.

I actually don't

know whether Olga continued to fly, for some more time even after her marriage. Olga made sure that her marriage, to be an example for others to follow. She and Siri were blessed with three dutiful children, Sunil, Laksen and a beautiful daughter Minoli,

grandchildren and a great grandson. Olga believed in raising a family with great values in family life' religion and integrity. Her children, like their parents, spread their wings far and wide, one in Los Angeles, another in Vancouver, Canada, and the other in Hongkong. Olga, devout catholic and was a regular church goer.

She travelled a lot even after Air Ceylon was forced to close it's wings in 1979 and went with her husband Siri, on many voyages, who Joined the Merchant ships to offer his invaluable services in the same capacity. Olga saw to it always, that the love emanated from her family didn't stay within the four walls of her house but benefitted others as well. She was a very good host and took care all of them in an exemplary manner. She was endowed with this great trait at all times. After leading a successful family and social life, of happiness and contentment Olga took leave from this earthly world to be with the Heavenly Father, on the 12th of February 2021, leaving her ever loving husband Siri of 66 years in tears, A Centurion 101 years now, at a ripe age of 98 years, and her beautiful loving children, grandchildren and a great grandson, and flew on a final "flight to Eternity"

Olga left behind a beautiful legacy of family values for others to emulate. I am pretty sure, Olga must be watching her family as always.

*"Her thoughts were so full of you all,  
She could never forget!  
And so I think that where she is  
She must be watching yet,*

*Waiting till we come home to her,  
Anxious if we are late-----  
Watching from Heaven's gate."*

I wonder if this young lady would not have taken to the skies in 1948 and serving people in a career, which not many young ladies would not have had thought of doing at that time, eventually in succeeding in it and being a "Trail blazer" for other women in the annals of Sri Lankan aviation, can the present national carrier pride or stake its claim in its cabin services, as one of the best in the travel industry in the world ?

I would love to say in tribute & honor to this beautiful soul, Lady Olga for her selfless service for the aviation industry in Sri Lanka, of which I was a part of it for 8 good years and a million thanks to others who graduated with her at that time.

May God bless her soul and let this soul rest in peace.



as Air Ceylon, with the help of a foster father, an indomitable, no nonsense Gentleman late Sir John Kotelawala.

Soon, Olga secured the place in aviation

## SPECIAL FEATURE



# Vivekh was a rare actor who practised what he preached through comedy and lived his life based on those beliefs

By Srivatsan S

Vivekh was one of the lambs shepherded by legendary filmmaker K Balachander, who introduced the actor as 'Vivek' in Manathil Uruthi Vendum, in which he played a small role. But what was truly a breakthrough for Vivekh was his character in Balachander's Pudhu Pudhu Arthangal (1989), wherein he played the hero's manager. The film saw Vivekh doing a near-perfect impression of Tamil cinema actors, particularly of Rajinikanth, and effortlessly delivering punchlines that were so unique of its time — like, "Inniketha nalaiki paal (today's death is tomorrow's milk)," which most people have pointed out on social media, drawing a parallel with the actor's death.

This rather effortless idea of comedy spoke to the audience and Pudhu Pud-

The two-star culture of Tamil cinema somehow crept into the comedy space too, for, Vivekh was always seen and pitted against his rival-friend, Vadivelu. They produced the best of comedies when they collaborated in films, like Manathai Thirudi Vittai and Middle Class Madhavan. Despite facing a tug-of-war like situation with Vadivelu, Vivekh invented his own brand of dialogue-comedy, with a tinge of social responsibility, that was born out of instinct.

There is always a Vivekh comedy for everything that is wrong in society. He questioned superstitious beliefs in movies like Minnale, Youth and Run to name a few, and took on the subject of caste in Saamy. The train journeys, for most of us, were never the same after his howl-arious portion in Anniyan, one of his all-time best performances.

films may not have had a separate "comedy" track, the humour was inducted into the film and Vivekh held his own ground — whether it was the now-popular Mangalam Sir in Boys, Alaipayuthey, Kana Kanden, Perazhagan, Ennaku 20 Unnaku 18 or Chari in Anniyan. He never missed an opportunity to take a dig at actors and invariably made jokes on Kamal Haasan, and poked fun at Tamil cinema in films like Viswanathan Ramamoorthy (in which he played a struggling director), Parthiban Kanavu (known for making its parody on Mudhal Mariyathai), Guru En Aalu (in which he spoofed Thalapathi) and Bommalattam.

Vivekh was also a rare actor who practised what he preached through comedy and lived his life based on that



Vivekh - Vivekanandan  
(19 November 1961 – 17 April 2021)

— something even the former himself acknowledged once. The duo complemented each other so well that their comedy seemed natural — whether it is Vivekh's Azhagusundaram from Velai Illa Pattathari or Emotional Ekambaram from Uthamaputhiran. In the latter part of his career, Vivekh switched to playing serious, character roles that worked to the film's advantage. These include films like Manithan, Kaashmora, Brindavanam (in which he played himself)



Chennai: Funeral ceremony of actor Vivekh, in Chennai, Saturday, April 17, 2021. (PTI Photo)



Chennai: Tamil Nadu police personnel pay gun salute near the mortal remains of actor Vivekh during his funeral ceremony, in Chennai, Saturday, April 17, 2021. (PTI Photo)

hu Arthangal was the launchpad for a career of more than three decades, in making the audience laugh and introspect as well.

Though Vivekh was testing waters initially by playing supporting characters, it is believed that Kadhal Mannan (1998) was the first film that established him as a comedian, almost a decade after making his debut. Since then, there was no turning back. From 1998 to till about, say, Anniyan (2005), the period can be argued as the one that brought out the best of Vivekh. He was beginning to get noticed and began churning out blockbuster comedies in films such as Eazhayin Sirippil, Mugavaree, Kushi, Pennin Manathai Thottu, Priyamanavalee, Dhill, Dhool, Minnale, Saamy and Poovellam Un Vaasam to pick a few.

The 2000s saw Vivekh at his peak where he was literally the second-fiddle in every other film.

Every outsider sympathised with his character in Run, in which he made even biriyani look cool. Vivekh's comedies may not have resonated with the working class, as much as, say, Vadivelu. But the actor had always put social values above everything — to the point where actor Santhanam once famously said, "Ungalaiyellam aayiram Vivekh vandhalhum thirutha mudiyathu (Even 1000 Vivekhs cannot change you)."

Perhaps after Chinni Jayanth, one can argue that Vivekh was one comedian who defied age; he played a college mate and a sidekick to top stars including Rajinikanth, Vijay, Ajith Kumar, Vikram, Suriya, Prashanth, Prabhudeva and so on. He was among the earliest of comedians who successfully made the transition to taking up character roles during the height of his career, which is usually considered a step back. While these

belief. An admirer of former President of India Dr APJ Abdul Kalam, Vivekh launched Green Kalam in 2012, his eternal fight to global warming and planted over a billion tree saplings across the state. He had since then launched and been part of several initiatives for social causes — even as recently as when he took the COVID-19 vaccine, in a bid to encourage people from getting vaccinated. He was the recipient of Padma Shri, India's fourth-highest civilian honour, for his contribution to Tamil cinema.

### Harbinger of joy

Vivekh redefined his own formula in the last decade; he appeared less in films and became mindful of the projects he chose to associate. Among the younger crop of actors, it should not be an exaggeration to say that Vivekh's best collaboration came from Dhanush

and Viswasam to name a few. He received critical acclaim for his performance as the lead in Vellai Pookal, a crime-thriller. Last year, Vivekh delivered a heartwarming performance as Dr Kannadasan, a fertility expert in the Tamil remake of Vicky Donor (titled Dharala Prabhu). While the film received a positive response, most critics seemed to have agreed that Vivekh was the best thing that happened to the remake.

Always with a disarming smile whether on or off screen, Vivekh's death has left the fans devastated. For, the actor has become a part of our vocabulary; of the way we think and respond to situations. As we mourn in silence, one suspects that Vivekh would have said: "Elley don't worryyyy, be happyyyy."

— via The Hindu



## 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.

# Kollu kuzhambu (Horsegram)

Horsegram, or kollu as it's called in Tamil, is now widely available in Western countries. High in fibre, great for weight loss and a heat-inducing grain, this dish is great for cold winters and those in between times when we see all four seasons in a single day.

### Ingredients:

- ✓ ½ cup of kollu
- ✓ 3 tbsp of sesame or coconut oil
- ✓ 2 green chillies
- ✓ 2 dried red chillies
- ✓ ½ tsp cumin seeds
- ✓ 2 small brinjal, cut into wedges
- ✓ 4 cloves of garlic, chopped
- ✓ 1 sprig of curry leaves
- ✓ ½ tsp ginger/garlic paste
- ✓ 1 Bombay/Ceylon onion, diced
- ✓ 1 small tomato, chopped
- ✓ 100ml thin tamarind water (or ½ tsp paste)
- ✓ 1tsp masala curry powder
- ✓ 2 tsp coriander powder
- ✓ ½ tsp turmeric powder
- ✓ 1 tbsp coriander leaves, chopped
- ✓ 1 cup of water
- ✓ Salt



### Method:

Soak the kollu overnight or for a minimum of 1 hour. Pressure cook it with garlic cloves and green chillies until soft. If you don't use a pressure cooker, boil these ingredients together until the horsegram is soft enough to mash with a spoon.

In another pan, add oil, cumin seeds, red chillies, ginger garlic paste and onions. Cook until the onions turn soft. Add the tomatoes and cook until they are soft as well. Add the chopped brinjal, masala powder, turmeric powder, coriander powder and salt along with a cup of water and let everything cook together with a lid on the pot for 5 minutes. Add curry leaves, kollu and tamarind water and cook for a further 20 minutes. Garnish with chopped coriander leaves and serve with rice or chapathi. Hashtag #monsoonjournal on Instagram and send us your pics, comments and feedback. Spread the love (and recipe!)

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)



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**Canadian Tamils' Chamber of Commerce (CTCC) is proud to be the  
Call Centre Sponsor for the Scarborough Hospital Network (SHN) Foundation  
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Scarborough Health Network (SHN) Foundation's inaugural Tamil Radiothon programme aims to inspire our community and neighbours to support the future of health care in Scarborough. This important event not only brings people together for a day of education and awareness for SHN's exceptional care but will also raise significant funds that will directly impact our three Scarborough hospitals — Centenary, General and Birchmount — and the local patients and families who rely on them. SHN Hospitals are heavily patronized by the Tamil community to obtain excellent treatment and healthcare.

CTCC has been a strong supporter of SHN and was first established in 1991 to encourage and foster Entrepreneurship among the Tamil community. CTCC is now proud to be the owner of its own space to continue to fulfill its mission. CTCC has become the platform that connects entrepreneurs and business professionals to develop and grow in Canada's diverse economy. To learn more about CTCC and how to become a member visit [www.ctcc.ca](http://www.ctcc.ca).

**To learn more about the Radiothon and to donate  
please visit [www.shnfoundation.ca/tamilradiothon](http://www.shnfoundation.ca/tamilradiothon).**

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## Achievements

### ***Dr. Thiru Yogaparan winner of the Peter McCracken Physician Innovator in Education Award by the Canadian Geriatrics Society***

Dr. ThiruYogaparan is this year's winner of the Peter McCracken Physician Innovator in Education Award by the Canadian Geriatrics Society.

This award recognizes her work as the Undergraduate Lead for Geriatrics at the University of Toronto, where she leads the effort to establish the core geriatric curriculum priorities for undergraduate medicine and increase the time students learn to care for older adults.

She also leads a CGS committee to revise the undergraduate medicine core geriatric curriculum priorities on a national level, and the development of a HUB of digital learning opportunities for medical students and residents on core topics in geriatrics. She graduated with a medical degree from the University of Jaffna Medical Faculty.



### ***Mohan Samaranayake appointed Director-General of Sri Lanka's Information Department***

Senior journalist Mohan Samaranayake has been appointed as the Director-General of the Information Department and the Presidential Media of Sri Lanka.

With four decades of experience in the field of journalism, Samaranayake served as an Assistant Editor of the Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation and held the position of News Director of the Sri Lanka Rupavahini Corporation for nearly five years.

He later served as the head of the United Nations Information Center in Colombo and for a long time served as the Chairman of the Sri Lanka Rupavahini Corporation.



### ***Ms. Thilanka Abeywardene elected President of Sri Lanka Institute of Marketing***

Sri Lanka Institute of Marketing (SLIM) which is the apex body for Sri Lankan Marketers, elected its first ever female President Thilanka Abeywardena at its 51st Annual General Meeting. Thilanka is the first female President to be elected in SLIM's 50 - year history.

Thilanka is an International Marketing professional with 15 years of experience in strategic marketing management with geographic exposure ranging from Sri Lanka, UAE to emerging Asian markets.

Thilanka holds an MBA (UK), BSc Special (Hons) degree in IT and have completed postgraduate diploma inmarketing at CIM, UK.



### ***Aruni Goonetilleke appointed as a Non-Executive, Non-Independent Director of Hatton National Bank in Sri Lanka***

Banker AruniGoonetilleke has been appointed as a Non-Executive, Non-Independent Director of Hatton National Bank in Sri Lanka with effect from April. Goonetilleke is a financial services expert with over 25 years of experience in regional financial markets. She has extensive experience in enterprise risk management, credit, audit, and business origination and has held leadership positions in local and international Banks. She has a Masters in Law from Harvard Law School, Harvard University, USA and a Bachelors in Law (Honours) from the Faculty of Law, University of Colombo. She was a visiting lecturer in law at the University of Colombo.

Thilanka holds an MBA (UK), BSc Special (Hons) degree in IT and have completed postgraduate diploma inmarketing at CIM, UK.



## Quotable Quotes

By: Siva Sivapragasam

“They said it”



“We'll press forward with speed and urgency for we have much to do this winter of peril and significant possibilities.Much to repair,much to heal,much to build and much to gain”

– US President Joe Biden



“We will finish the fight against Covid. We will all get back to work We will come roaring back”

– Canadian Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister Christia Freeland when presenting the Budget 2021



“The province is on fire and we needed action today,and we still have not got it”

– NDP Ontario Leader Andrea Horwath on Covid 19 in the province



“A Namaste will work for the time being... hugs and handshakes can wait.”

- Meenakshi Vijay, Blue Ocean IMC

## “Memory of the Past” Prince Philip's visit to Sri Lanka



*His Royal Highness, Prince Phillip of Edinburgh, being officially received by Ms. F. Pathmanathan, Secretary, Ministry of State, when he visited Sri Lanka in February 1987; centre: Dr. Anandatisa de Alwis, Minister of State.*

## Land for Sale in Sri Lanka

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## 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 truly grateful for your continued support. Also, DTA's Tamil school continues to provide virtual Tamil classes for our students.

### DTA's Tamil New Year 2021 Celebration

DTA's Tamil New Year, 2021 happened on two Sundays with lots of traditional programs. Even though it was a virtual program, everyone dressed up traditionally and enjoyed the show. Thank you to all the participants.

### Virtual Easter Game & Costume Contest

=DTA had a virtual Easter egg hunt/games and costume contest on Sunday April 4th for ages 4-12. It was full of creativity and everyone showed their festive spirit. At the end of the program, participants won prizes too.

### DTA's Talent Show

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

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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=LIQinT8000>

Every Sunday we will showcase some of the best talent from Ontario's Tamils. OPEN CALL FOR ALL ONTARIO TAMILS - ALL AGES

(Free event/ No membership required)

Acting, Singing, Dancing, Public Speaking, Instrumentalists, Arts & Crafts, Cooking, Poetry, and any other Special Talents. Out of province & International participants are welcomed!

Complete Talent show form at [durhamtamils.org](http://durhamtamils.org) and send your recordings to [dtatalentshow@gmail.com](mailto:dtatalentshow@gmail.com)

All Performances will be assessed and selected.

If you have any Questions, please call 905-428-7007

### 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)

### 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.

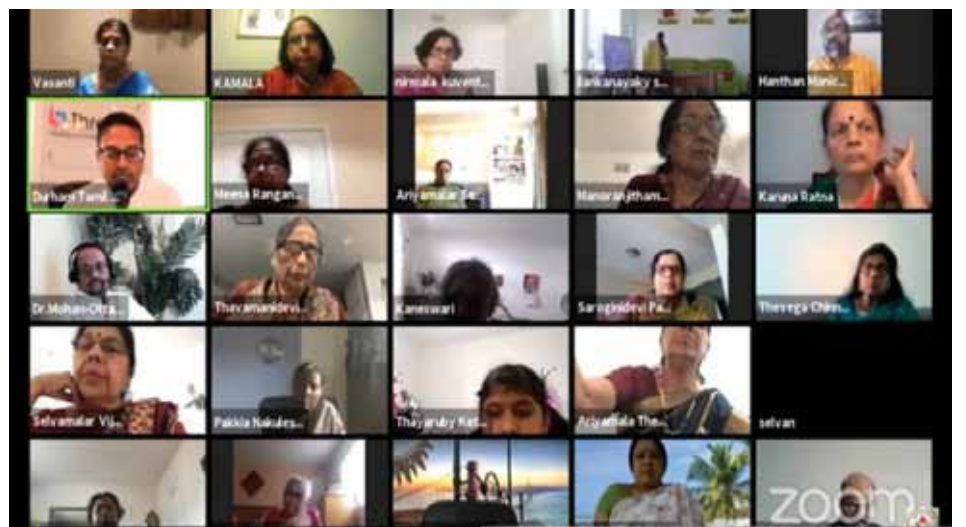
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-Teens & Adults

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





# COMMUNITY WATCH



## Durham Tamils Association Serving Our Community



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





## SPECIAL FEATURE

# THE FAMOUS SUN TEMPLE IN KONARK, ODISHA, INDIA

Compiled by : KIDAMBI RAJ

### INTRODUCTION

The name *Konark* is derived from the combination of two Sanskrit words, *Kona* (corner or angle) and *Arka* (the Sun). The Sun temple of Konark, *Puri Jagannath temple* and the *Lingaraj temple* of Bhuvaneshwar form a bilateral triangle and the Konark temple is one Kone (angular point of a triangle). This gives the word Kona the meaning in making that nomenclature. This temple is said to have been built by *King Narasimhadeva I* of the eastern Ganga Dynasty around 1250 CE. It is about 35 kilometres northeast from Puri on the coastline of Odisha, India. *Hindu Sun God Surya* and the nine planets (*Navagrahas*) are worshipped in this temple. Konark Sun Temple is depicted on the reverse side of the Indian currency note of Rs. 10 to signify its importance to Indian cultural heritage.

The temple in its present state was *declared by UNESCO, as a World Heritage Site* in 1984, although many portions are now in ruins. What remains of the temple Complex continues to draw not only tourists but also Hindu pilgrims. This temple stands as a classic example of Hindu temple architecture, complete with colossal structure, sculptures and art work on myriad themes.



- Konark Temple



- Konark Wheel

to the 12 months of the Hindu calendar, each month paired into two cycles (Shukla and Krishna).

Sun Temple of Konark is renowned throughout the world for its stone sculptures. The temple was designed in the shape of a huge chariot drawn by 7 mighty spirited horses on 12 pairs (total 24 wheels) of gorgeously decorated wheels at its base. The size of the wheel is of 9 feet 9 inches in diameter and each one of them having 8 wider spokes and 8 thinner spokes. Out of these 24 wheels 6 are in either side of the main temple, 4 wheels are on each side of the *Mukhasala* and 2 wheels on each side of steps at eastern front. The huge wheels of the Konark Temple are one of the major attractions for visitors.

Various theories have been advocated regarding the significance of Konark wheel. According to some, the 7 horses represent the days of the week and the 12 pairs of wheels represent the 12 months of the year and the 24 wheels signifies 24 hours of a day and the 8 major spokes signifies praharas (three hour period) of a day. According to others, the wheels of the chariot have been interpreted as the *Wheel of Life*. They portray the cycle of creation, preservation and achievement of realisation. These 12 pairs of wheels may also possibly represent the 12 zodiac signs. Some also believe that the Wheel of Konark is the same as the Dharmachakra of the Buddhists - The Wheel of Karma, The Wheel of the Law.

A tourist who visited the Konark temple had this to say: "I visited Konark temple several times. During my last visit, I hired an experienced guide who explained me that the Konark wheels are used as Sun dials in ancient times to know the time of the day. He also explained me that out of these 24 wheels, 2 wheels will show you the time accurately from sun rise to sun set. When I asked about other 22 wheels, he told me that he is not sure about them but he will definitely explain me the technique to calculate the time using these 2 wheels. He took me to one of the wheel and put his finger at centre of the axel and I along

with other tourists was surprised that the *finger's shadow showed the precise time of the day.*"

The Konark wheel has 8 wider spokes and 8 thinner spokes. The distance between two wider spokes is of 3 hours (180 minutes). The thinner spoke between two wider spokes is of 1.5 hours (90 minutes). There are 30 beads between one wider spoke to the next thinner spoke and each bead represents 3 minutes. The Sun dial shows time in anti-clockwise and the top centre wider spoke represents 12 PM (midnight).

### SUN GOD AND KONARK TEMPLE

There are three images of the Sun God at three different sides of the temple. These three images of the Sun God are positioned in such a way to catch the rays of the sun at dawn, noon and evening. In the Vedas, Surya is conceived as an unified manifestation of the Brahmanical Trinity.

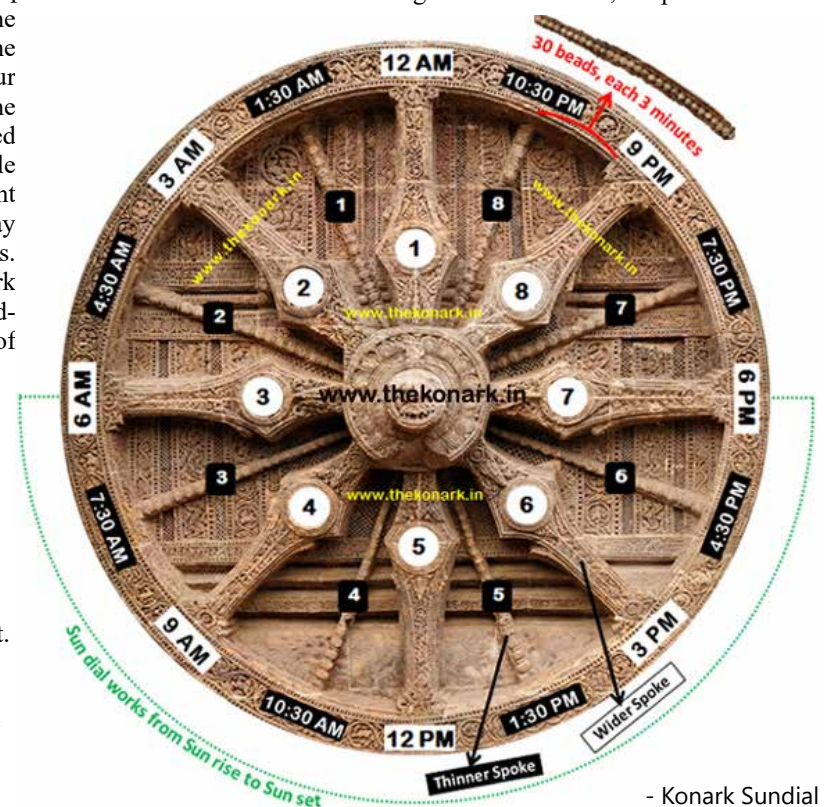
- the Morning Sun being identified with **Brahma**, the creator;
- the Mid Day Sun with **Maheswara**, the destroyer and
- the Evening Sun with **Vishnu**, the preserver

### OTHER MAJOR SUN TEMPLES IN INDIA

The Sun Temple in Gaya, The Modhera Sun Temple on the banks of Pushpavati river in Mehsana District of Gujarat, The Surya Pahar Temple near Goalpara town in Assam, The Suryanar Temple in Kumbakonam, Tamil Nadu, The Surya Narayana Temple in Arasavalli in Srikakulam Dist., In Andhra Pradesh, The Brahmanya Dev Temple in Unao near Jhansi in Madhya Pradesh, The Martand Sun Temple in Jammu and The Sun Temple in Gwalior.

### ABOUT THE TEMPLE

The Konark or Konarak as it is also called, was built around 1250 AD, during the reign of the Eastern Ganga King *Narasimhadeva I* from stone in the form of a giant ornamented chariot dedicated to the Sun God, Surya. In Hindu Vedic iconography, Surya is represented as rising in the east and travelling rapidly across the sky in a chariot drawn by seven horses. He is described typically as a resplendent standing person holding a lotus flower in both his hands, riding the chariot marshalled by the charioteer, *Aruna*. The seven horses are named after the seven meters in Sanskrit prosody: **Gayatri, Brihati, Ushnih, Jagati, Trishtibha Anushtubha and Pankit**. Typically seen flanking Surya are two female who represent the *dawn goddesses, Usha and Pratyusha*. The Goddesses are shown as shooting arrows, a symbol of their initiative in challenging the darkness. The architecture is also symbolic, with the chariot's twelve pairs of wheels corresponding



- Konark Sundial

## SPECIAL FEATURE



### Pravhata Surya - Morning Sun - The Creator

The First image of Sun God on the Southern side wall called *Mitra* is described as the *Pravhata Surya* (Morning Sun or Rising Sun). As the plan of the temple slightly makes an angle with the cardinal directions, the image of the south, is flooded with the rays of the morning-Sun and is therefore significant for its expression of youth and activity, justifying the description of Pravhata Surya. It is decorated with typical set of ornaments on the arms, neck and in the ears. The head-dress is also typical. The waist band is provided with tassels hanging down from it. This is called the *avyanga* (waist band) and is the Indianised form of Aiwiyonghen the secret waist girdle of the Iranians. The drapery, reaching up to the knee, is wonderfully carved. The hands of the statue holds two full bloomed lotuses, one of which still exists above the right hand of the figure. It is also decorated with the figures of seven horses driven by *Aruna*, the charioteer of Surya, sitting near the feet of the statue with the reins of the horses in his hands.

### Madhyanha Surya - Mid Day Sun - The Destroyer

The second image of Sun God on the Western side wall called as the *Madhyanha Surya* (Mid-day Sun), standing with full vigour and personality. Decoration of the panel, ornaments and drapery used, the presence of King and Queen, the seven horses and the figure of Aruna are almost similar to the Pravhata Surya (Morning Sun) who also wears boot.



- The Creator

### Astachala Surya - Evening Sun - The Presever

The third image of Sun God on the Northern side wall called as the *Astachala Surya* (Evening Sun or Setting Sun). The figure brings out beautifully the tired expression which is the result of a hard day's work, when all the other horses are completely tired, he is any how completing his journey by riding on the back of the last horse who is also found to be stooping with its folded legs.

### ARCHITECTURAL FIGURES AT KONARK SUN TEMPLE

King Narasimha Deva I's desired temple was built in the form of a huge Ratha (chariot), having twelve pairs of wheels exquisitely carved out in the northern and southern sides of the plinth masonry and drawn by a team of seven spirited horses, speeding as if through the heaven.



- The Destroyer

### Royal Guard of Konark - Lion upon Elephant upon Man

The eastern gateway which is the main entrance to the temple compound, is decorated with *Gajasimha* (Lion upon an elephant) images, with outward faces, installed on two high stone benches on either side of the passage. According to Hindu mythology, the lions represent the pride and elephants represent the wealth and both of them kill the human. The entire figure is made out of one piece of stone.

### Great Wheel of Konark

The entire temple is made in the form of huge chariot of Sun God with 24 wheels (12 pairs). The Konark wheel is primary attraction of the temple. The wheels of the chariot have exquisitely decorated around their axles and peripheries. The art work of every wheel is different. The wheels of the chariot are also symbolic and have been interpreted as the *Sun Dial*.

### War Horses of Konark

There are two gorgeously carved war horses in front of the southern side of the temple. They are each 10 feet long and 7 feet high. The sculpture depicts each of them with its massive strength and energy crushing down the warrior. This figure of war horse has been accepted as the symbol of the State Government of Odisha and her former martial glory.

### Elephants of Konark

The figures of elephants which had originally stood on the side walls of the flight of steps at the northern and southern sides of the *Jaganmohana* (assembly hall of the people), were found amidst the mass of debris. They were however installed in masonry platforms nearer to the compound walls facing the main temple, but in fact, they were supposed to face outwards to welcome people coming in.

### Seven Horses of Konark

The entire temple structure is made in the form of a huge chariot with 24 wheels and pulled by a set of seven galloping horses (4 on the right side and 3 on the left side). The



- Lion upon Elephant upon Man

representation of these seven horses has been explained in different ways by many:

1. The seven horses that pull the sun temple towards the dawn, represent the seven days of the week.

2. The seven horses, have been named in Bhagavad Gita as, *Gayatri*, *Usnika*, *Anushtubha*, *Brihati*, *Pankit*, *Trishtibha* and *Jagati* which stand for the rhythmic representation of the sacred verses of the Vedas.

3. The seven horses at Konark are the seven colours visible in a rainbow – VIBGYOR. The seven horses are therefore named after these seven colours: *Sahasrara* (violet), *Indra-nila* (Indigo, Nila (Blue), *Haritaha* (Green), *Pita* (yellow), *Kausumbhaha* (Orange) and *Rakta* (Red).

### NINE PLANETS (NAVAGRAHA) TEMPLE AT KONARK

Navagraha Temple (Nine Planets' Temple) is located just outside the Sun Temple compound. It houses a huge chlorite slab, 20 feet (6 metres) long, four feet (1.2 metre) high and 7 feet (2 metres) deep with idols of nine planets made with black chlorite stone and richly ornamented. This stone slab was originally set above the temple's ornamental doorways (*Jagamohana*) is now kept inside the Navagraha Temple.

### Sun, Moon and Mars

*Surya* (Sun) stands on a vehicle of seven horses and holds two lotuses in his both hands.

*Chadra* (Moon) rides on a swan and carries discs of moon in his left and right hands.

*Mangala* (Mars) being the warlord, holds a kattara (cutter) in his right hand and in the left, several human heads, in the act of devouring. His vehicle is a goat.



- The Preserver

### Mercury, Jupiter and Venus

*Budha* (Mercury) sits on a lotus and he holds in his two hands a bow and an arrow. *Brihaspati* (Jupiter) being the highest of the priests of the Devatas, has a flowing beard and holds a rosary and Kamandalam in his hands, but he has to be seated either on a frog or on a skull, instead of a lotus. *Sukra* (Venus) is said to be the priest of the Asuras (demons). Excepting the blindness of one eye, his icon is more or less correctly shown.

### Saturn, Rahu and Ketu

*Saturn* (Sani) rides on a tortoise and holds a rod in his hand, instead of sitting on a lotus.

*Rahu* (Ascending Node) has only the upper half of the body. Two of his canine teeth are projecting from his upper jaw, to represent him as a monster and a fierce aspect of the Sun and the Moon. He is found holding the Sun in one hand and the Moon on the other.

*Ketu* (Descending Node) is the last one in the group. His upper part is similar to others, but the lower is formed of the body of a serpent coiling around. He is to hold the noose of the snake in one hand a sword on the other.



## SPECIAL FEATURE



# Lester James Peries THE EMANCIPATOR OF SINHALA CINEMA

By D.B.S.Jeyaraj

**R**enowned Sri Lankan Film Maker Lester James Peries passed away three years ago at the age of 99. Among the many who paid homage to the Maestro at that time was Asoka Handagama who is one of the two brightest directorial stars in the Sinhala film firmament of today. (the other is Prasanaa Vithanage). Asoka used a reference by Russian writer Fyodor Dostoevsky to highlight an interesting comparison between Gogol and Peries.

Asoka Handagama was quoted then in a news story on Lester James Peries in "The Hindu" written by its Colombo correspondent Meera Srinivasan: "They say that Dostoevsky once said 'we all come out of Gogol's Overcoat'. The same way, we all came out of Peiris's 'Rekava,'" Handagama told The Hindu.

The impact and influence of Nikolai Gogol on the "golden age" generation of Russian writers was immense and that is what Dostoevsky's oft-quoted remark meant. Likewise well-known director Asoka Handagama's allusion was to emphasise the sea change brought about in Sinhala cinema by the advent of Lester James Peries and the influence of the pioneering director on future Sri Lankan filmmakers.

Lester's third death anniversary was on April 29th. As stated earlier, this column would be focusing on a cinema related topic in the first week of every month. As such this article seeks to commemorate the life and work of Lester James Peries. Lester is my favourite Sinhala movie director about whom I have written extensively in the past. I shall be relying on some of those writings for this article.

### 'Rekava' (Line of Destiny)

Let me begin with Lester's first feature film the path-breaking "Rekava" which according to Handagama could be termed as the Mother of real Sinhala Cinema. 'Rekava' (Line of Destiny) directed by Lester James Peries premiered at the Regal Theatre in Colombo on 28 December 1956. 'Rekava' was the path-breaking film which altered the destiny of Sinhala cinema. (Though Rekava is spelled with both a 'V' as well as a 'W' in English, I am sticking to V because the original titles shown in the film spelled it with a V).

Veteran journalist Mervyn de Silva, writing about 'Rekava' after the premiere, described it as 'the birth of Sinhala cinema'. Well-known journalist, critic and writer Regi Siriwardena was exhilarated after seeing it. He called it an 'event of tremendous importance' in an excellent review written by him in the Sunday Observer. The following excerpt from that review sums up aptly the significance of the film: "And so, in the very first few moments of 'Rekava,' - "you realise you are in an entirely different world from that

of the Sinhalese film up to now. We are no longer watching preposterous puppets animated by synthetic emotions; this is life itself. .... What Lester Peries has done is to tear down the artificial barriers that the Sinhalese film industry had erected between the screen and the real life of our own people."

Regi and Mervyn and many others who praised 'Rekava' were impressed by the fact that the film dispensed with the melodramatic hallmarks prevalent in Sinhala movies since the first Sinhala talkie 'Kadawuna Porunthuwa' or Broken Promise was made in 1947. The making of Sinhala films in the early years was heavily influenced by Hindi and Tamil films made in India which were derisively described as 'Masala movies' or 'formula films'. It was said that the only things Sinhala about them were the actors, dialogue and the words in the songs. 'Rekava' was a departure which contrasted sharply with the usual Sinhala films. Lester was in that sense the emancipator of Sinhala cinema.

### Affluent Westernised Background

Lester James Peries was born on April 5, 1919 in Dehiwela to Catholic parents from an affluent Westernised background. His father Dr. James Francis Peries had studied medicine in Scotland. His mother Ann Gertrude Winifred

Jayasuriya was the first student to pass the Cambridge senior exam at St. Bridgette's Convent. Lester had three siblings, Erica, Ivan and Noel.

Young Lester had his schooling at St. Peters College, Bambalapitiya. His parents wanted him to become a lawyer or a doctor while his teachers wanted him to be a Catholic priest. Lester however wanted to study literature and began writing stories, poems and plays from his student days. He was also an incurable film buff. Lester dropped out of school at the age of seventeen and became a journalist. He worked at 'Daily News' and later at 'Times of Ceylon'. Lester also reviewed books for 'Radio Ceylon'. It was then that he began dabbling in drama by joining a theatre group called the 'Drama Circle'. It is said that the legendary Lionel Wendt realised Lester's creative potential and advised his parents to allow him to do whatever he wished.

Peries went to London in 1947 to join his brother Ivan Peries a reputed painter. The brothers lived together for some years and apparently led a Bohemian way of life bordering on the avant garde. Lester wrote a column from Britain for the 'Times of

Ceylon' in Colombo, then edited by Frank Moraes. It was titled 'Letters on the Arts from England'.

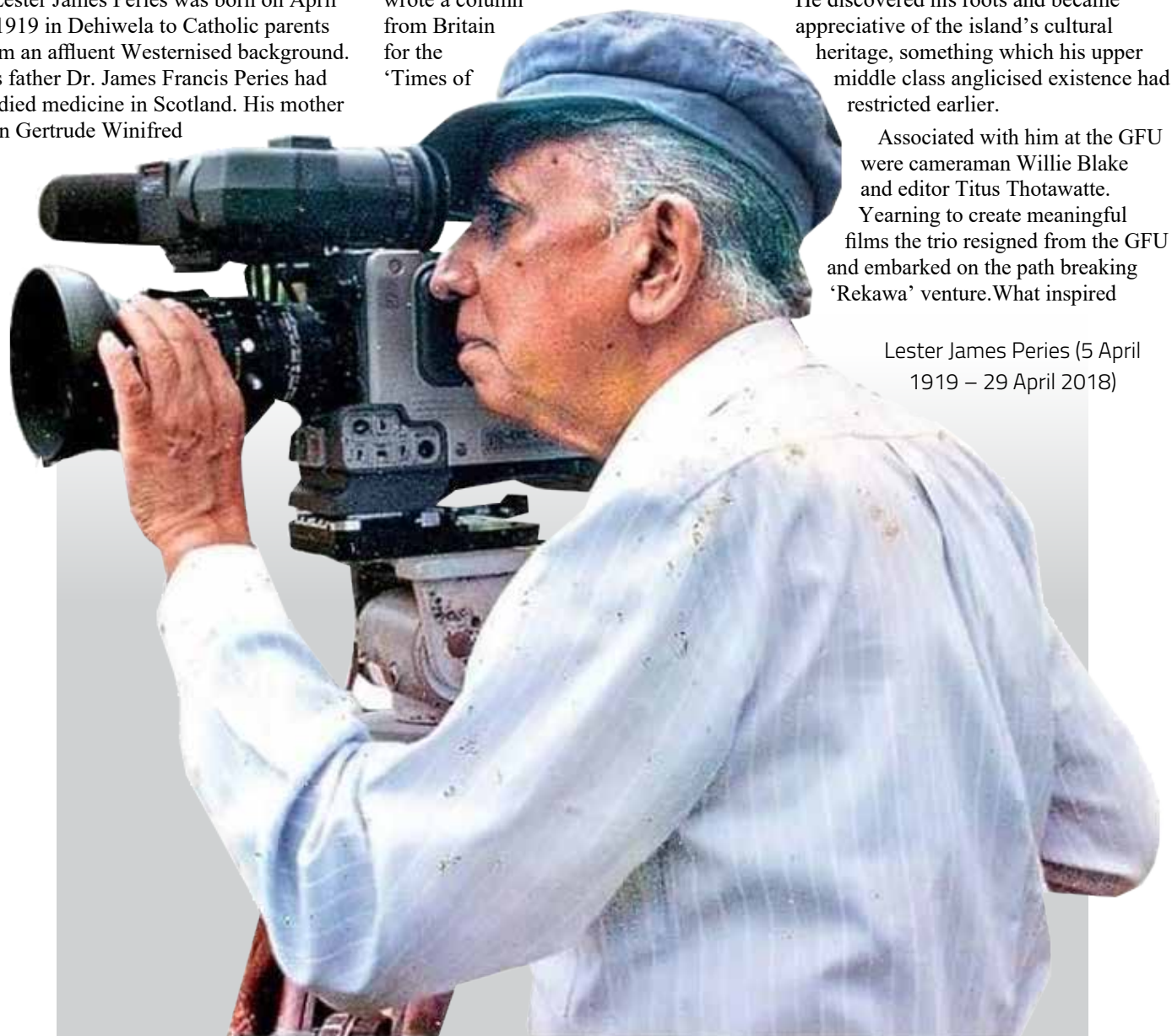
While working as a correspondent of 'Times of Ceylon', Peries also engaged himself in making short films and documentaries. A short film, 'Soliloquy' made in 1949 won an award for artistic and technical merit from the Institute of Amateur and Research Filmmakers of Great Britain in 1951. He also produced another award winner 'Farewell to Childhood'. It was based on a short story he had written when in Sri Lanka, but on film he adapted it to English surroundings.

### Government Film Unit (GFU)

It was the eminent film maker Ralph Keene who was instrumental in persuading Lester to return home. "You should make films in your own country, about your own people," Ralph told him. Returning to Ceylon in 1954 Lester joined the Government Film Unit (GFU) headed by Ralph Keene himself. Lester began churning out documentaries on several subjects including malaria and vehicular traffic for the GFU. In the process he was exposed to new experiences of life. He discovered his roots and became appreciative of the island's cultural heritage, something which his upper middle class anglicised existence had restricted earlier.

Associated with him at the GFU were cameraman Willie Blake and editor Titus Thotawatte. Yearning to create meaningful films the trio resigned from the GFU and embarked on the path breaking 'Rekava' venture. What inspired

Lester James Peries (5 April 1919 – 29 April 2018)



## SPECIAL FEATURE



Lester James Peries to quit the Government Film Unit along with colleagues Willie Blake and Titus Thotawatte and embark upon the venture to make an authentic and realistic Sinhala film?

Three film factors deeply influenced and motivated Lester in this yearning to make a realistic film amidst a rural setting. The first was the semi-fictional documentary 'Nelungama' made by Lester's boss at the GFU Ralph Keene. Lester had co-written the script and the dialogues for it. While filming, Lester was exposed to village life and longed to make a film in a rural environment. The second was the impact of Italian neo-realistic cinema, particularly the films of Vittorio de Sica, Luchino Visconti and Roberto Rossellini. The third was the film 'Do Bigha Zameen' (Two acres of land) by Indian Director Bimal Roy that brought rural life to the screen in a realistic manner.

Lester's early training as a documentary film maker as well as his penchant for creative literature were reflected in his films. According to Regi Siriwardena, the twin hallmarks of Lester's auteuristic film making approach were his stylistic "construction of narrative" and ability to "capture and project actualities in a realistic manner."

Lester's films captured emotions and moods vividly on screen. These expressions were two-fold in the sense that they consisted of clearly articulated or manifested emotions on the one hand and also of unarticulated, underlying feelings on the other. Complex relationships, poignant moods, tense undercurrents, etc. are portrayed in unique style that is simple and comprehensible. What is outstanding in his films is the underlying humanism,

### Sri Lankan family Themes

Lester's films do not have a very overt political content. The political message if any is quite subtle. As Lester himself explained it in his own words, "I cannot make intensely political films. Politics is there on the periphery, in films like Yuganthaya, where there is reference to the tension between labour and capital. All my themes are about the Sri Lankan family. I use the family as a microcosm through which the problems of a larger world are reflected. I understand my limitations and work within this. To me the battles within the family are more important and far more intense than anything outside of it."

Though he filmed several novels and short stories, Lester was able to break away from the bondages imposed by strictures of literature and the stage. Economy of dialogue was a hallmark in most of his films. His narrative style blended cinematic images into the story with telling effect. There are long gaps of silence between dialogue. It is said that Lester had a shooting script but deviated from it as the film was being shot. He improvised with innovative spontaneity as shooting proceeded. The nature of Lester's films has been described as the "cinema of contemplation" and his narration the "language of silence" by connoisseurs.

### Made Twenty Feature Films

In a film making career spanning more than five decades Lester James Peries made Twenty feature films in all. The first of his feature films was the path-breaking 'Rekava' or line of destiny in 1956. His final feature was 'Amma Waruney' or an elegy to a mother released in 2006. Lester James Peries has also made 11 short films,

most of them in documentary mode. The first of these short films was 'Soliloquy' made in 1949 and the last 'Kandy Perahera' filmed in 1973.

The greatness of Lester however cannot be measured by the quantity of his output. It is the qualitative excellence of his films that elevated him to commendable heights over the years. 'Rekava' (Line of Destiny), 'Gamperaliya' (Changes in the Village) and 'Nidhanaya' (Treasure) are widely accepted as the three finest films made by Lester. In 1997- the golden jubilee year of Sinhala cinema- the Government of Sri Lanka (GoSL) identified ten films as foremost among the best films made



Lester James Peries was married to Sumitra Gunawardena in 1964

in the 50 year history of Sinhala cinema. Lester's Rekava, Gamperaliya and Nidhanaya were included in that list.

"Rekava" shot entirely in Sri Lanka outdoor locations was hailed as a turning point in the decade-long evolving history of Sinhala cinema. Rekava was screened by invitation at the 10th Cannes film festival I held from May 2 -17, 1957. Rekava dubbed in English as "line of destiny" did not win but Lester James Peries won significant fame for Sri Lanka known as Ceylon then by gaining world exposure for a Sinhala film for the first time.

### 'Gamperaliya' (Changes in the Village)

'Gamperaliya' (Changes in the Village) was released on December 20, 1963. The film placed Sri Lanka then known as Ceylon on the global cinema map by winning gold at two international film festivals. The film won the 'Golden Peacock' award for Best Film at the third International Film Festival of India (IFFI) held from January 8 to 20, 1964 in New Delhi. It also won the Golden Head of Palanque award in 1965 at the Mexico International Film festival held in Acapulco. Gamperaliya won silver at the 1967 Cork Film festival in Ireland. Prior to its public release, 'Gamperaliya' also competed at the third Moscow International Film Festival in July 1963 and won a Merit certificate.

'Gamperaliya' also harvested many awards at home. The Sarasaviya awards are the Sri Lankan equivalent of the Oscars. The event was introduced by the Sarasaviya weekly published by the Associated Newspapers of Ceylon Ltd. (Lake House). The first Sarasaviya film festival was held on May 9, 1964 at the

Asoka Theatre in Colombo. All Sinhala films produced between 1960 and 1963 were up for awards. Only five awards were given, for Best Film, Best Director, Best Actor, Best Actress and Best Script Writer at this pioneering event.

'Gamperaliya' swept the boards, winning four out of five. Producer Anton Wickremasinghe accepted the award on behalf of 'Gamperaliya' for Best Film. Lester James Peries was Best Director. Regi Siriwardena was Best Script Writer and Punya Heendeniya Best Actress. Only the Best Actor prize eluded 'Gamperaliya'. It went to D.R. Nanayakkara for 'Sikuru Tharuwa'.

Regi, who has worked as scriptwriter with Peries on some films, told this writer that the first Ray film viewed by Lester was 'Aparajito' and that too was only after 'Rekava' was made. "It is a classic instance of two great Asian directors being of the same creative wavelength and proceeding on a parallel course independent of each other," stated Siriwardena then.

### Sumitra Gunawardena

Lester James Peries was married to Sumitra Gunawardena in 1964. She had earlier worked as an assistant director on Lester's "Sandesaya" (The Message). Sumitra then became the Editor for Gamperaliya. Thereafter she was the editor for several other films directed by Peries. Later Sumitra herself became a reputed director with several notable films to her credit.

Apart from Rekava, Gamperaliya and Nidhanaya, some of Lester's other milestone movies include 'Delovak Athara' (Between Two Worlds), 'Golu Hadawatha' (Silent Longing) 'Ran Salu' (Golden Robe), 'Akkara Paha' (Five Acres)

'Desa Nisa' (The Eyes), "Madol Duwa" (Enchanted Island), 'Ahasin Polowata' (From Sky To Earth), 'Beddagama' (Village In The Jungle), "Kaliyugaya" (Age of Kali), "Yuganthaya" (End of an Era) and "Awara Gira" (The Sunset).

The only English film made by Peries was 'God King', a Sri Lanka-German co-production. With a blend of foreign and local artistes, the film was shot in Sri Lanka. The story revolved around the Sinhala monarch Kassapa who built the Lion Fortress- palace rendered famous by its frescoes on Mount Sigiriya. The stipulations of a foreign-funded movie restricted Peries's creative control and cramped his style severely. The result was quite visible in the finished product which was not one of the director's best works.

### Lifetime Achievement Award

Twenty-four years ago at a ceremony held to mark the golden jubilee of Sri Lanka cinema, Lester James Peries was presented the Lifetime Achievement Award by then President Chandrika Kumaratunga. After the event in an interview given to senior journalist Roshan Peiris, a visibly-moved Lester said: "I treasure this award a lot given for my contribution to the local film industry. It is a distinction that does make me feel that my film career has been worthwhile."

When asked by Roshan Peiris what the secret of his successful film making was, Lester replied: "My success I think, is partly due to the fact that I never compromised. I went ahead and did what I wanted to do and did not deviate from that, no matter what the pressures on me were. Also one must have a deep sense of dedication, despite ups and downs."

### An Inspiring Beacon

Lester James Peries was the pioneer of authentic Sinhala cinema. It was he who created in every sense of the term an indigenous cinema in both substance and style. It was also Lester who first gained worldwide recognition for Sinhala cinema. Lester emancipated Sinhala cinema and guided it to new vistas where the medium of film was understood and appreciated. It is widely acknowledged that Lester was indeed the pioneer who went off the beaten track and proved to be an inspiring beacon for the film makers who followed him. - via: [dbsjeyaraj.com](http://dbsjeyaraj.com)

### 'Nidhanaya' (Treasure)

Nidhanaya' (Treasure) made earlier in 1970 was later entered for the 1972 Venice International Film Festival where the film won the Silver Lion of St. Mark award. It also received a certificate as one of the outstanding films of the year at the London Film Festival. 'Nidhanaya' was also included in the global list of 100 best films to be ever made that was compiled by the Cinematheque Institute of France to mark the World Film Centenary. The film won the award at Sri Lanka's Golden Jubilee of Independence for being the best Sinhala movie in 50 years. The creative effort of director Lester James Peries along with the collaborative efforts of cast and crew resulted in the film 'Nidhanaya' becoming a cinematic treasure.

### Satyajit Ray of India

Analogies have often been drawn between the South Asian contemporaries Satyajit Ray of India and Lester James Peries of Sri Lanka. India's greatest film maker Satyajit Ray (whose Birth Centenary is May 2nd) had burst upon the global film scene before Lester James Peries. Ray's 'Pathar Panchali' was made in 1955 and 'Aparajito' in 1956.

Since Lester's Rekava was released in December 1956 many reviewers wrongly assumed that Ray had inspired Peries. Satyajit Ray himself considered Lester to be of the same mould as him and once referred to the Sri Lankan director as his "closest relative East of the Suez." In spite of the creative affinity between the two, Peries was not influenced by Ray when he made his first film.

Writer and scholar, Regi Siriwardena once told me in an interview that Lester had not seen 'Pathar Panchali' or 'Aparajito' when he first made 'Rekava'.



BY THULASI MUTTULINGAM

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## Radio to Keep me entertained

I bought a radio to keep me entertained now that I'm mostly off social media.

Years ago, I loved listening to Tamil radio, not so much English radio as the fake accents of the English anchors put me off.

What I loved about Tamil radio was the attractive, authentic voices of the anchors speaking pure Tamil.

Now however the Tamil anchors too are using fake accents and lisps a la Tamil Nadu anchors. What's with them? Has no one told them it's not a good idea?

Its very grating on the ears.

Is it lisp:

I'm not sure lisp is the right word.

Basically putting fake intonation and drawls in Tamil radio speech - no idea when it began. It sounds bloody awful.

When they are foreign:

Fair enough if that were the case - but these are local Tamil anchors whose first language is Tamil.

What about mispronunciations:

I noticed that too. It's being deliberately done under the impression its stylish. It's seriously irritating.

When I first landed in Sri Lanka as an adult in 2002, I instantly fell in love with local radio stations. They were unique and authentic.

Now they are brash and fake and I'm surprised audiences haven't

complained. It really does grate on the ear. What a disappointing development.

At that time listeners from India used to tune into SL radio as they found SL radio anchors pleasing to listen to.

That had been the case for decades right up to the mid 2000s.

Now the Sri Lanka anchors are deliberately sounding like Tamil Nadu anchors who mispronounce and misintone words in a jarring manner.

English words and Tamil anchors: The Tamil Nadu anchors do.

Sri Lanka tamil radio stations

have long had policies on not mixing English words - that still mercifully appears to be the case.

Evolving?

Evolving is good. Inauthenticity is not.

When someone deliberately puts on fake accents it jars.

On recommending:

I'm not sure I know enough to recommend any.

I just started listening to the radio after a long time.

Yet to investigate different stations.

They all pretty much stream music interspersed with the occasional talk show as far as I know.



## Clueless to address real issues:

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.

It's not that mysterious if you go on twitter.

This is one classic example in recent days:

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

## Moral tales and darkness

Say, why do they have to make kids moral tales so dark?

Kid me must have been a little psychopath because I don't remember crying over these stories but I am now.

Just had to read this cute donkey died due to innocently believing a grasshopper's tall tales.

Moral of the story was: just because someone says something, why do you have to believe it?

My moral question to the author: why the devil do the naive have to end up dying? And that in a kids moral tales book?



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.

“தாயகத்தின் இதயத் துடிப்பு”

VIRAKESARI  
**வீரகேசரி**

தமிழால் இணைவோம்

செய்தி வரலாற்றில் 90 வருட பழைமையையும் பாரம்பரியத்தையும் கொண்டுள்ள வீரகேசரி செய்தித்தாளான வெளியிடும் எக்ஸ்பிரஸ் நியூஸ்பேப்பர்ஸ் நிறுவனத்தின் சகல பதிப்புக்களையும் மின்னிதழ்களாய் ஒரே தளத்தில் படித்திடுங்கள்.

சமீபத்திய செய்திகளை தெரிந்துகொள்ள தினந்தோறும் ஒளிபரப்பாகும் வீரகேசரி செய்திகளை எமது YouTube / Facebook பக்கத்தில் காணத்தவறாதீர்கள்.

(கனடா டொரென்டோ நேரம் காலை 9.30, இலங்கை நேரம் இரவு 8.00 மணி)

நீங்கள் உலகின் எப்பாகத்திலிருந்தாலும் தாயகத்திலும் உலகெங்கிலும் நடந்தேறும் முக்கிய நிகழ்வுகளையும் அவற்றின் உள்ளூன்றிய ஆய்வுகளையும் தாய்மொழியில் அறிந்திடுங்கள்.



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SCARBOROUGH HEALTH NETWORK FOUNDATION

**RADIOTHON**

**ரேடியோதான்**

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Live-to-air on East FM 102.7

Featuring interviews with patients, physicians, nurses, staff,  
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**Raising \$50,000 in support of the highest  
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