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June 9th - the first-ever Tamil Radiothon airs live on EAST FM 102.7
PRESENTED BY CANADIAN TAMILS' CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, (CTCC) IN SUPPORT OF SCARBOROUGH HEALTH NETWORK
CANADIAN TAMILS' CHAMBER OF COMMERCE (CTCC) RAISES \$25,000 IN ONE HOUR AHEAD OF THE TAMIL RADIOTHON!

By Siva Sivapragasam

Scarborough Health Network (SHN) which provides exceptional health services to patients through its hospitals is hosting a radio programme titled Radiothon on June 9th on East FM 102.7 to raise funds primarily from the Tamil community.

Canadian Tamils' Chamber (CTCC) has already raised \$25,000 in one hour through a virtual meeting acting as the Presenting and Call Centre Sponsor for the forthcoming Radiothon programme. The Sri Lankan Tamil community

patronizes the Scarborough Hospital's network heavily for their healthcare requirements.

The community's participation in this programme and the donations contributed will certainly be of great assistance for the Hospitals to provide the highest priorities and urgent equipment needs at the Scarborough Hospitals.

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.

The Canadian Tamils' Chamber of Commerce hosted a virtual meeting on the eve of June 2nd and raised \$25,000 in one hour and becomes the presenting and Call Centre sponsor at the full day Radiothon programme on June 9. Over the years, the Canadian Tamils' Chamber of Commerce (CTCC) has raised funds well over \$350,000 for the Hospital Foundation through the Annual Walkathons hosted by the Chamber.

The all-day live event on East FM 102.7 will give listeners the opportunity to hear unique stories from SHN patients, physicians, nurses, staff, and volunteers.



Jaffna Sri Lanka's Iconic Temple
Nallur Kandaswamy



By: Thulasi Muttulingam
For full article, see pages 38 to 41

Drawings and paintings by
Pirunthajini Pirabakaran

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Ontario Releases Three-Step Roadmap to Safely Reopen the Province

Province Safely Reopening Outdoor Recreational Amenities Prior to End of Stay-at-Home Order

May 20, 2021

Office of the Premier

TORONTO — The Ontario government, in consultation with the Chief Medical Officer of Health, has released its Roadmap to Reopen, a three-step plan to safely and cautiously reopen the province and gradually lift public health measures based on the provincewide vaccination rate and improvements in key public health and health care indicators. In response to recent improvements to these indicators, Ontario will allow more outdoor recreational amenities to reopen, with restrictions in place, effective May 22, 2021 at 12:01 a.m.

“As a result of the strict public health measures we introduced to stop the spread of COVID-19 variants, we are seeing a steady improvement in our situation as ICU and hospital numbers begin to stabilize,” said Premier Doug Ford. “While we must remain conscious of the continued threat the virus poses, with millions of Ontarians having received at least their first dose of vaccine we can now begin the process of a slow and cautious re-opening of the province in full consultation with our public health professionals.”

Roadmap to Reopen outlines three steps to easing public health measures, guided by the following principles:

Step One An initial focus on resuming outdoor activities with smaller crowds where the risk of transmission is lower, and permitting retail with restrictions. This includes allowing outdoor gatherings of up to 10 people, outdoor dining with up to four people per table and non-essential retail at 15 per cent capacity.

Step Two Further expanding outdoor activities and resuming limited indoor services with small numbers of people where face coverings are worn. This includes outdoor gatherings of up to 25 people, outdoor sports and leagues, overnight camps, personal care services where face coverings can be worn and with capacity limits, as well as indoor religious services, rites or ceremony gatherings at 15 per cent capacity.



Step Three Expanding access to indoor settings, with restrictions, including where there are larger numbers of people and where face coverings can't always be worn. This includes indoor sports and recreational fitness; indoor dining, museums, art galleries and libraries, and casinos and bingo halls, with capacity limits.

The province will remain in each step for at least 21 days to evaluate any impacts on key public health and health system indicators. If at the end of the 21 days, the following vaccination thresholds have been met, along with positive trends in other key public health and health system indicators, then the province will move to the next step:

Step 1: 60 per cent of adults vaccinated with one dose.

Step 2: 70 per cent of adults vaccinated with one dose and 20 per cent vaccinated with two doses.

Step 3: 70 to 80 per cent of adults vaccinated with one dose and 25 per cent vaccinated with two doses.

Based on current trends in key health indicators, including the provincial vaccination rate, the government expects to enter Step One of the Roadmap the week of June 14, 2021. The province will confirm closer to the expected start of Step One.

“While we know that now is not yet the moment to reopen, Ontarians deserve to know the path forward on what we will carefully reopen and when, starting with the settings we know are safest,” said Christine El-

liott, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health. “Brighter days are ahead and we believe this Roadmap represents a path out of the pandemic and will encourage Ontarians to get vaccinated and to continue following public health advice.”

The provincewide emergency brake restrictions remain in effect while the province assesses when it will be moving to Step One of the roadmap with the Stay at Home order expiring on June 2, 2021. During this time, the government will continue to work with stakeholders on reopening plans to ensure full awareness of when and how they can begin to safely reopen.

Due to the continuing success of Ontario's vaccine rollout and the collective efforts of Ontarians in following public health and workplace safety measures to date, effective May 22, 2021 at 12:01 a.m. the province will reopen outdoor recreational amenities with restrictions in place, such as the need to maintain physical distancing. These amenities include but are not limited to golf courses and driving ranges, soccer and other sports fields, tennis and basketball courts, splash and spray pads and skate parks. No outdoor sports or recreational classes are permitted. Outdoor limits for social gatherings and organized public events will be expanded to five people, which will allow these amenities to be used for up to five people, including with members of different households. All other public health and workplace safety measures under the province-

wide emergency brake will remain in effect.

At this time, publicly funded and private elementary and secondary schools in the province will continue to operate under teacher-led remote learning. Data will be assessed on an ongoing basis and medical experts, including the Chief Medical Officer of Health, and other health officials will be consulted to determine if it may be safe to resume in-person learning.

“Due to the stringent efforts of Ontarians following public health and workplace safety measures, we have reached the point where we can begin preparing to exit the provincewide emergency brake and lift the Stay-at-Home order,” said Dr. David Williams, Chief Medical Officer of Health. “We must remain vigilant however, as the fight against COVID-19 is not over and our case counts, ICU capacity and hospitalizations are still concerning. It remains critical that all Ontarians continue to follow all public health and workplace safety measures currently in place to help further reduce transmission and save lives.”

The government will continue to work with the Public Health Measures Table, Public Health Ontario, and other public health and scientific experts to determine public health guidance for Ontarians to follow, including protocols for masking and outdoor/indoor gatherings, after being fully vaccinated.

Via <https://news.ontario.ca/>

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Monsoon Journal Greet readers,
advertisers and distribution outlets;
Happy Father's Day
Sunday, June 20, 2021



International Day of Yoga 2021:

Maintaining balance through the physical and mental benefits of yoga in the COVID-19 pandemic

By **Harrish Thirukumaran**

To put simply, yoga is an ancient physical, mental and spiritual practice that originated in India. The word 'yoga' derives from Sanskrit and means to join or to unite, symbolizing the union of body and consciousness.

Today it is practiced in various forms around the world and continues to grow in popularity. This is what is thus celebrated with International Day of Yoga on June 21 annually as spearheaded by the United Nations.

As it became increasingly aware of its universal appeal, December 11, 2014, the United Nations proclaimed June 21 as the International Day of Yoga by resolution 69/131.

The International Day of Yoga aims to raise awareness worldwide of the many benefits of practicing yoga. The draft resolution establishing the International Day of Yoga was proposed by India and endorsed by a record 175 member states.

The resolution notes "the importance of individuals and populations making healthier choices and following lifestyle patterns that foster good health." In this regard, the World Health Organization has also urged its member states to help their citizens reduce physical inactivity, which is among the top ten leading causes of death worldwide, and a key risk factor for non-communicable diseases, such as cardiovascular diseases, cancer and diabetes. The theme last year, and still ongoing arguably, was Yoga for Health - Yoga at Home".

While the physical distancing measures adopted by countries to fight the COVID-19 pandemic have shut

down yoga studios and other communal spaces, yoga practitioners have turned to home practice and online yoga resources. Yoga is a powerful tool to deal with the stress of uncertainty and isolation, as well as to maintain physical well-being.

The theme for this year is "Yoga at Home and Yoga with Family". It persuades people to stay motivated at home and adopt a healthy lifestyle by doing exercise and yoga. This can be done together with your families or others who live in your household as we physically distance and stay at home. Both exercise and yoga can continue to help us to stay optimistic as we approach the light at the end of a dark tunnel that has been COVID-19 here in Ontario and Canada. I myself have regularly practiced yoga along with other exercises from home in staying fit and positive during this time of uncertainty and gym closures.

Some ways to spread the benefits of yoga include watching yoga class videos on YouTube and assess your steps and telling your children about yoga and its importance. Other ways can take the form of reading articles about yoga and sharing your knowledge with others using social media platforms.

The late renowned yoga practitioner, B. K. S. Iyengar once said that "Yoga cultivates the ways of maintaining a balanced attitude in day-to-day life and endows skill in the performance of one's actions." This is surely something that applies to all of us in being able to maintain that sense of balance through the physical and mental benefits of yoga now and beyond the COVID-19 pandemic.

Canada Historic Milestones

June 16, 1946

The Canadian government deports 3,964 formerly interned individuals to Japan. The American ship S.S. General M.C. Meigs sets sail for Japan with the Japanese-Canadian and Japanese-American deportees aboard.

Mackenzie King's government decided that Japanese-Canadians, who had been interned during the Second World War, would not be permitted to return to the Pacific Coast because of concerns about their national loyalties. They were given only two choices: move east of the Rocky Mountains, or go to occupied Japan.

In 1988, Prime Minister Brian Mulroney will apologize on behalf of the Canadian government for the internment and subsequent deportation. He will also repeal the War Measures Act, making similar occurrences in the future impossible.



Peace is a question of will. All conflicts can be settled,
and there are no excuses for allowing them
to become eternal

- Martti Ahtisaari - (b: June 23, 1937) Finnish Statesman, Nobel laureate



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Anticipated Schedule for Second Doses of COVID-19 Vaccines

May 28, 2021

Office of the Premier

TORONTO — With two-thirds of the adult population having received at least one dose, Ontarians have been provided with a strong level of protection against COVID-19. Now, the province is accelerating second doses for all Ontarians. While the interval between first and second doses can be up to 16 weeks, Ontario will begin to offer second dose appointments at an earlier interval of four weeks or later based on availability of vaccines.

The following is an anticipated schedule for eligibility to book a second dose appointment based on confirmed supply.

Week of May 31: individuals aged 80+

Week of June 14: individuals aged 70+

Week of June 28: individuals who received their first dose between the week of March 8 to April 18, on a “first-in, first-out” basis. For example, this included individuals with the highest-risk health conditions and special education workers.

Week of July 19: individuals who received their first dose between the week of April 19 to May 9, on a “first-in, first-out” basis. For example, this included individuals aged 50 and over, as well as individuals with high-risk health conditions.

Week of August 2: individuals who

received their first dose between the week of May 10 to May 30, on a “first-in, first-out” basis. For example, this included individuals who cannot work from home and individuals who have at-risk health conditions.

Week of August 9 to 16: individuals aged 12 to 25

Week of August 9: individuals who received their first dose from the week of May 31 onwards on a “first-in, first out” basis, respecting the recommended intervals.

Currently, the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine is being offered at an accelerated pace with a 10-week interval for individuals who received their first dose between March 10 to March 19, 2021. In addition, beginning the week of May 31st, all individuals who received their first dose of the AstraZeneca vaccine from March 10 onwards will be eligible to receive a second dose of the AstraZeneca vaccine at a 12-week interval, with appointment dates based on the timing of their first dose.

How can Ontarians book their second dose appointment?

Several different vaccination clinic options are available across Ontario's public health regions, including mass immunization clinics, pop-up / mobile clinics, hospital clinics and pharmacy clinics. Not all clinic types are available in every region and depend on local planning done by each public health unit.

Second dose appointments can be rebooked through the provincial booking system, and through pharmacies. For those in public health units who use their own booking system, or who received their doses from their primary care provider or through a pop-up clinic, more information will follow on how and when second dose booking and rebooking will be available.

Second doses can also be booked (without a first appointment) in the provincial booking system.

Who is already eligible for an accelerated second dose?

Ontario has already begun offering second doses of COVID-19 vaccines at a shortened interval to certain groups, including high-risk health care workers, individuals with certain health conditions and First Nations, Inuit and Métis individuals.

Individuals who received their first dose between March 10 to March 19, 2021 may opt for an earlier dose interval of 10 weeks. Acceleration of AstraZeneca second doses will proceed on a 12-week interval, with booking eligibility based on date of first dose.

Where to get vaccinated and how to book an appointment:

Mass immunization clinic:

For public health units using the provincial booking system: visit ontario.ca/bookvaccine to book online or call the Provincial Vaccine Booking Line number at 1-833-943-3900.

For public health units using their



own booking system: visit your public health unit website for booking details.

Pop-up / mobile clinic

Individuals may already have an appointment booked at the pop-up location where they received their first dose. Those who attended these clinics will also have the option of booking second doses at mass clinics, or at a pharmacy, or at another mobile clinic.

Hospital Clinic

Visit your public health unit website for booking details, if available in your region.

Pharmacy Clinic

Eligible individuals are encouraged to contact the pharmacy or primary care provider where they received their first dose. Primary care settings and pharmacies may also be reaching out to eligible Ontarians to accelerate appointments for second doses.

Via <https://news.ontario.ca/>

Making life more affordable for Canadian parents

May 28, 2021

Ottawa, Ontario

The global COVID-19 pandemic has made life more difficult for Canadian families. That's why the Government of Canada has taken action to support parents through this crisis and helped make life more affordable for all families, including through the Canada Child Benefit (CCB). Since its implementation in 2016, the CCB has given more money to about nine out of ten Canadian families, grown the middle class, and helped lift nearly 435,000 children out of poverty.

The Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau, today announced that families entitled to the CCB will receive additional support of up to \$1,200 for

each child under the age of six. This temporary measure will put money directly into the pockets of Canadian families to better help them cope with the pressures of the pandemic.

Families with a net income of \$120,000 or less will receive up to four tax-free payments of \$300. Families with a net income above \$120,000 will receive up to four tax-free payments of \$150, for a total benefit of up to \$600. To ensure that more money goes to the families that need it the most, families with net incomes that are too high to be entitled to the CCB will not receive these additional payments.

The first and second payments will be issued today, with subsequent payments on July 30 and October



29, 2021. This measure will benefit approximately 1.6 million Canadian families and approximately 2.1 million children under the age of six.

Many families with young children have been struggling with a wide range of expenses during the pandemic. These payments will make life easier for them to afford healthy food,

short-term child care, and at-home learning activities. While we finish the fight against COVID-19 and build back better for everyone, the Government of Canada will continue to make life more affordable for Canadian families and grow the middle class.

Via pm.gc.ca

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Ontario Accelerates Rollout of Second Shots Targeting a Two-Dose Summer

65 per cent of Adults Have Received First Doses, Ahead of Schedule

May 28, 2021

Office of the Premier

TORONTO — Ontario has reached a key milestone in its fight against COVID-19, having achieved its target to administer first doses to 65 per cent of Ontarians aged 18 and over ahead of schedule. Ontario is also preparing to roll out the eligibility for accelerated second dose appointments starting with individuals aged 80 and over, beginning on May 31, 2021. If there is sufficient vaccine supply, it is anticipated that the majority of Ontario residents who choose to receive the vaccine will be able to be fully vaccinated by the end of summer.

“Team Ontario has shown what we can do when we have a steady and reliable supply of vaccines,” said Premier Ford. “Having made so much progress administering first doses, we are now in a position to begin delivering second doses for a two-dose summer. If we receive more vaccines from the federal government, we’ll be able to accelerate our rollout further to offer more protection to Ontarians even sooner.”

Due to a reliable and increased supply of vaccines throughout May, Ontario has been able to quickly expand eligibility and access at mass vaccinations sites, hospital clinics and pharmacies, with all Ontarians aged 12 and over eligible to book an appointment to receive the vaccine ahead of schedule. With over 8.6 million doses administered, and over 8 million people having received at least one dose, the province has reached its target to administer first doses to 65 per cent of Ontarians aged 18 and over by the end of May.

“Thanks to the efforts of our front-line health care heroes and community partners, our province has reached another exciting milestone of 65 per cent of Ontario adults having received their first dose,” said Christine Elliott, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health. “Accelerating second doses will provide more protection to Ontarians sooner. Every dose administered means we are one step closer to the end of the pandemic, and I encourage all Ontarians to get vaccinated and continue following public health advice.”

With two-thirds of the adult population having received at least one dose, Ontarians have been provided with a strong level of protection against COVID-19. Now Ontario is beginning to accelerate second doses for all Ontarians. While the interval between first and second doses can be up to 16 weeks, Ontario will begin to offer second dose appointments at an earlier interval, based on availability of vaccines. The timing of second dose appointments may vary based on local considerations, vaccine supply and the date of first dose appointment.

To support this accelerated rollout, the province has developed an anticipated schedule for eligibility to accelerate second doses based on confirmed supply. This will begin with individuals turning 80 and over in 2021, who will be eligible to book their second dose appointment expected to begin on May 31, 2021 at 8:00 a.m., followed by individuals aged 70 and over scheduled to begin the week of June 14, 2021. The province will then continue to expand eligibility for second dose appointments based on date of first dose. Ontario will further accelerate the rollout of second doses in the event that the federal government confirms increased vaccine deliveries.

Ontarians who have had their first dose and are eligible for an accelerated second dose may be able to return to the same site or channel where they received their first dose for their second dose appointment, or may choose to book an appointment at a different site or channel. Second dose appointments can be rebooked through the provincial booking system and through pharmacies. For those in public health units who use their own booking system, or who received their doses from the primary care provider or through a pop-up clinic, more information will follow on how and when second dose booking and rebooking will be available. Second dose appointments can also be booked (without a first appointment) in the provincial booking system.

Ontario has already begun offering second doses of the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine at an accelerated pace with a 10-week interval for individuals who received their first dose



between March 10 to March 19, 2021. Acceleration of AstraZeneca second doses will be provided at a 12-week interval, dependent on vaccine supply, with booking eligibility based on the date of the first dose. Eligible individuals are encouraged to contact the pharmacy or primary care provider where they received their first dose to book an appointment. They might be redirected to a local pharmacy that is participating in administering second doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine. Primary care settings and pharmacies may also be reaching out to eligible Ontarians. The province will provide further guidance based on advice expected shortly from the National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) with respect to administering doses of two different vaccine types. This advice will be provided in advance of the 12-week interval when most people are needing to receive their second dose.

“As Ontario’s vaccine rollout continues, we are expanding our distribution plan in response to medical expertise, evidence and the availability of vaccines,” said Solicitor General Sylvia Jones. “Accelerating the scheduling for second doses and providing individuals with the option of also receiving their second dose earlier, will allow a greater number of people to be fully vaccinated sooner.”

The government also continues to roll out first doses to Ontarians. Recently the province expanded eligibility to youth aged 12 and over to schedule a COVID-19 vaccine appointment through the provincial booking system and call centre, and public health

units that use their own booking systems, as well as at select pharmacies administering the Pfizer vaccine. To ensure as many youth as possible are fully vaccinated before the start of the school year, the province expects to provide a first dose to all willing youth aged 12 to 17 before the end of June, and a second dose before the end of August 2021. To ensure access to COVID-19 vaccination for youth aged 12 to 17 in Ontario’s 31 fly-in northern communities and Moosonee, Ornge will lead Operation Remote Immunity 2.0 starting on May 31, 2021. The province is expecting to administer first and second doses to youth aged 12 and over in each of these communities by the end of July.

This significant progress has enabled the government to allow the provincial declaration of emergency and Stay-at-Home Order to expire on June 2. The province’s emergency brake will remain in effect, with public health measures and restrictions still in place, until the province is ready to enter Step One of Ontario’s Roadmap to Reopen. Step One may begin as early as two weeks after 60 per cent of Ontario’s adults receive at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine and if key indicators, such as risk of COVID-19 variants, hospitalizations, ICU occupancy and new hospital admissions and case rates continue to decline. Based on current trends in key health indicators, the province expects to enter Step One of the Roadmap the week of June 14, 2021. The province will confirm timelines closer to the expected start of Step One.

Via news.ontario.ca



Statement by the Prime Minister on the anniversary of the Komagata Maru incident

May 23, 2021

Ottawa, Ontario

The Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau, today issued the following statement on the anniversary of the Komagata Maru incident:

“Over a century ago, the Komagata Maru steamship arrived in Vancouver’s Burrard Inlet. On board were 376 Sikhs, Muslims, and Hindus of South Asian origin. Like so many people before and after them, they came to Canada in hope of a better future.

“But for two months, the Komagata Maru sat in the harbour. Immigration officials, enforcing discriminatory laws



of the time, prevented most passengers from entry.

“Only a few passengers would ever set foot on Canadian soil. The rest

were confined to the ship, sometimes going days without food or water. Local South Asian communities tried to protest the federal government’s decision, but to no avail. On July 23, 1914, everyone still onboard the Komagata Maru was forced to return to India, where some were killed and many others imprisoned.

“The shame and suffering caused by this event are a part of our past, and always will be. Five years ago, I stood in the House of Commons to apologize on behalf of the Government of Canada to all those whose lives were impacted by the Komagata

Maru incident. What happened more than a century ago still matters today. Whether we choose to learn from the mistakes of the past, and make sure to never repeat them, is up to us all.

“As we remember the victims of the Komagata Maru tragedy and their descendants, I invite all Canadians to reflect on the many contributions Canada’s South Asian communities have made, and continue to make, to our country. Diversity and inclusion are among our greatest strengths, and the cornerstones of a better, fairer, and more prosperous society.”

Via pm.gc.ca

Kurusamy sweeps three categories and ranks as the top Terrific Staffer

First published by Hill Times,
May 26, 2021

BY ALICE CHEN

Called a ‘lifesaver’ for the Ontario caucus, new Terrific 25 entrant Gowthaman Kurusamy also ranked as the Best All-Round staffer, tied for the Most Knowledgeable staffer, and placed as No. 1 Best Cabinet staffer

Barely six years into professional political work, Gowthaman Kurusamy is already making quite a mark, topping The Hill Times’ 18th annual Terrific 25 Staffers list. The now-senior policy adviser to the health minister ranked as the top overall terrific staffer, the Best AllRound Terrific staffer, tied for the Most Knowledgeable staffer, and placed as the Best Cabinet staffer. One respondent went as far as to call him a “lifesaver for [the] Ontario caucus during the pandemic.” He was appreciative of his ranking while emphasizing that he’s had the “honour and privilege” to work with the minister during a global pandemic. “It’s good to serve and I appreciate the recognition, but I think all staff whether on the Hill or in the constituency, we’re all trying our absolute best for Canadians during uncertain times,” he told The Hill Times. He also noted he probably won because he’s acted as



Gowthaman Kurusamy, at left, now senior policy adviser to the health minister, took this year’s top spot on the Terrific 25 Staffers list, followed by PMO chief of staff Katie Telford, centre, and MP executive assistant Frédéric Larouche, right.

The Hill Times file photograph and photographs courtesy of Gowthaman Kurusamy and Frédéric Larouche

the health minister’s intermediary for a lot of requests, being the first office that people turned to for help. “[If I] can provide a little bit of guidance and help navigate folks or direct people, I think that’s been important and probably one of the reasons for this.” Promoted to senior policy adviser earlier this month, Mr. Kurusamy has been working for Health Minister Patty



Hajdu (Thunder Bay-Superior North, Ont.) since January 2020, previously as an Ontario regional affairs adviser. He had earlier done the same job in Ms. Hajdu’s office as employment minister, and got his start in politics as the executive assistant for Liberal MP Gary Anandasangaree (Scarborough-Rouge Park, Ont.) back in 2015. The full article can be accessed at:

https://www.hilltimes.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/052621_ht_.pdf?mc_cid=9479c3b46d&mc_eid=ffba60c24f

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WORLD NEWS

UN agencies appeal for funds as COVID-19 surge eclipses South Asia

21 May 2021

Health

The UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) on Friday launched a \$164 million appeal for personal protective gear, together with COVID-19 testing and control equipment, to save lives amidst the deadly wave of infections which continues to sweep across South Asia.

Across the region of almost 2 billion people, more than three new COVID-19 infections are being recorded every second, while over three lives are lost every minute to the disease, according to UNICEF.

George Laryea-Adjei, UNICEF Regional Director for South Asia, warned that the scale and speed of the COVID-19 surge is "outstripping" countries' abilities to provide life-saving treatment for their populations.

"Hospitals are overwhelmed, there is an acute lack of oxygen and other critical medical supplies, and there is a real risk of fragile health systems collapsing."

This week saw India record daily deaths at 4,529, the highest ever number since the pandemic erupted last year.

Neighboring Nepal is also experiencing case positivity rates as high as 47 per cent, while Sri Lanka and the Maldives are recording new highs

in cases and deaths on a daily basis, according to UNICEF. Bangladesh, Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Bhutan could all face similar devastating surges, it cautioned.

'We must do everything in our power'

UNICEF also warned of the impact of the crisis on the region's children and mothers, as already fragile health systems reel under the acute and severe burden of COVID-19.

"We need to do everything within our power to prevent and treat COVID-19 while keeping the critical health care services that children and mothers so heavily depend on running", Mr. Laryea-Adjei said.

UNICEF's regional appeal identifies urgent requirements for oxygen equipment, including on-site oxygen-generating plants for hospitals, portable oxygen concentrators and cylinders; medical and diagnostic equipment including RT-PCR and RNA extraction machines; personal protective equipment (PPE) needed to keep health & frontline workers safe.

It also highlights the need of infection prevention and control including, such as hand washing stations, sanitizers and hygiene supplies; as well as therapeutics and medical supplies, including nutrition support.

'Breaking point' in Nepal

Meanwhile, UN agencies in Nepal issued a separate emergency response



© UNICEF Nepal

UNICEF staff and the Nepal Army install a medical tent on the premises of the overcrowded Bheri Hospital in Nepalgunj Sub-Metropolitan City, mid-western Nepal.

plan, as part of a national effort with partners, to address immediate needs and assist 750,000 of the most vulnerable people affected the pandemic.

After several months of relatively low daily cases, infections began to rise rapidly in mid-April – 150 cases per day to over 8,000 cases per day, within a matter of weeks, according to the UN Country Team in Nepal (UNCT). In addition, with almost half of the COVID-19 tests nationally reporting positive, there are fears that the actual number of infections are much higher than reported.

The surge in cases has overwhelmed hospitals in capital Kathmandu and other cities, with many having to turn away patients due to a shortage of beds, and gaps in vital supplies, including oxygen, are reported across

the country. The situation in rural areas is especially worrying, with health facilities facing staff shortage to operate ventilators and provide ICU case management.

The Nepal Covid-19 Response Plan calls for swift action and international solidarity, which are "desperately needed to save lives" and prevent unnecessary suffering today, tomorrow, and in the weeks to come, Sara BeysolowNyanti, UN Resident Coordinator in Nepal said in a statement.

"The current outbreak is having a devastating impact not just on health but across all sectors, hitting the poorest and most marginalized people in Nepali society the hardest ... We have no time to lose."

Via news.un.org

Plastics from Burning Ship Cover Sri Lanka Beach

By AFP

May 28, 2021 03:46 AM

COLOMBO, SRI LANKA - Tons of charred plastic pellets from a burning container ship washed ashore near Sri Lanka's capital Friday as an international effort to salvage the vessel dragged into a ninth day.

Thick black smoke rose from the Singapore-registered MV X-Press Pearl, anchored just outside Colombo harbor, heightening fears that it could break up spilling its 278 tons of bunker oil.

Navy personnel in hazmat suits were sent to clean millions of plastic granules mixed with burned oil and other residue that covered Negombo beach, 40 kilometers north of the capital.

The plastic-covered beach, normally a draw for tourists and known as a fishing center, was declared off limits. The smoking container ship could be seen on the horizon.

Bulldozers scooped up tons of the polythene pellets that came from at least eight containers that fell off the ship on Tuesday.

Officials said the vessel was known to carry at least 28 containers of the pellets that are used as a raw material in the packaging industry.

The fire broke out on May 20 as the ship waited to enter the Colombo port.

It is also carrying 25 tons of nitric acid, an unspecified quantity of

ethanol and lubricants in its 1,500 containers.

Authorities believe the fire was caused by a nitric acid leak which the crew had been aware of since May 11, Sri Lanka's Marine Environment Protection Authority (MEPA) said.

MEPA chairman DharshaniLahandapura said the crew could have avoided the disaster had they offloaded the leaking containers or returned them to the port of origin before entering Sri Lankan waters.

Lahandapura said the MEPA is bracing for an oil spill if the X-Press Pearl breaks up as monsoon winds have fanned the flames across the length of the ship.

She said the vessel was carrying 278 tons of bunker oil and 50 tons of marine gasoil when the fire erupted.

Oil residue and charred containers have already washed ashore at Negombo.

Sri Lanka navy chief Vice Admiral NishanthaUlugetenne said Thursday it would take days to extinguish the fire, even with the weather improving.

Four Indian vessels have joined Sri Lanka's navy in the battle to contain the fire. Salvage operations are led by the Dutch company SMIT which has sent specialist firefighting tugs.

The 25-member crew evacuated on Tuesday and two of them suffered minor injuries in the process, the owners of the vessel said on Thursday.



A Sri Lankan navy soldier hauls debris washed ashore from the burning Singaporean ship MV X-Press Pearl, which is anchored off Colombo port at Kapungoda, near Colombo, Sri Lanka, May 27, 2021.

SMIT, renowned salvage trouble-shooters, was also involved in dousing the flames on oil tanker which caught fire off Sri Lanka's east coast last September after an engine room explosion that killed a crewman.

The fire on the New Diamond tanker

took more than a week to put out and left a 40-kilometer-long oil spill. Sri Lanka has demanded the owners pay a \$17 million clean-up bill.

Via voanews.com

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South Asia Turns to China for COVID Vaccines after India Halts Exports

By Anjana Pasricha

May 28, 2021 09:01 AM

NEW DELHI - South Asian countries like Bangladesh and Sri Lanka are turning to China for vaccines for Covid 19 after India suspended vaccine exports due to critical shortages at home. Analysts say this will help Beijing increase its clout in the strategic Indian Ocean region where it has been building influence.

China has given 1.1 million doses of vaccines made by its Sinopharm Group company to Sri Lanka. Bangladesh received its first donation of half a million vaccines from China this month while Nepal has been promised an additional one million shots.

The shots from China are helping these countries restart inoculation drives that had stalled as supplies from India dried up. They come at a critical time -- surging infections are raising fears that the torrid second wave which India is battling could impact neighboring countries.

"Make no mistake, India's suspension of vaccine exports is a strategic opportunity for Beijing," according to Michael Kugelman, the Deputy Director of the Asia Program and Senior Associate for South Asia at the Wilson Center. "China certainly sees its vaccine diplomacy as an image-building tactic at a time when Beijing has had a tough time with image management."

As in many countries, there was some hesitancy in Sri Lanka and Bangladesh about Chinese-developed vaccines, but the emergency approval granted last month by the World Health Organization to Sinopharm's has boosted its acceptance.

These countries had initially relied on India, which had also given AstraZeneca vaccines to several countries including Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Nepal earlier this year. They had also placed commercial orders with the Serum Institute of India, the world's largest vaccine producer, but many of those have not yet been fulfilled due to India's surging need.

In a video conference with several South Asian countries last month, Beijing's foreign minister, Wang Yi, offered to set up an emergency reserve of vaccines for the region.

Analysts say as China moves in to fill the gap left by India, Beijing's "vaccine diplomacy" could give it leverage in the strategic Indian Ocean region, where it has been pushing its Belt and Road initiative that aims at building infrastructure projects across many countries.

"Given that this crisis will be with us for the foreseeable future, certainly there is going to be a sense of China becoming a very important player for many of these countries if India is not able to pick up some slack after a few

months once things stabilize," according to Harsh Pant, Director Studies and Head Strategic Studies program at the Observer Research Foundation in New Delhi.

In Sri Lanka, Beijing has already built several strategic infrastructure projects including port, roads and railways. It is now building a gleaming new port city off the coast of Colombo on reclaimed land.

The vaccines will add another dimension to its growing presence in the country, says political analyst, Asanga Abeyagoonasekera in Colombo. "China already has influence in Sri Lanka, but the vaccines represent another layer that would strengthen the Chinese influence. Chinese humanitarian assistance during the pandemic is always welcome but the question is whether it will deepen its strategic inroads," according to Abeyagoonasekera.

China's "vaccine diplomacy" may not be all about soft power, point out some analysts. The Chinese ambassador to Bangladesh recently said in Dhaka that any move to join the Quad would damage ties with China. The Quad, an informal strategic alliance which Beijing views as anti-China, comprises India, United States, Japan and Australia.

Bangladesh meanwhile has also urged Western countries to help as it runs out of AstraZeneca shots with which it rolled out its drive -- more than a million citizens have not received the second shot.

Calling the vaccine situation a "crisis", Foreign Minister A K Abdul Momen said recently that Bangladesh is "desperate" to get vaccines from countries like the U.S., Canada, Russia, China and Britain.

Analysts say it will be crucial for countries like the United States, which has promised to donate 80 million shots, to help those scrambling for vaccines in a region that is of strategic importance.

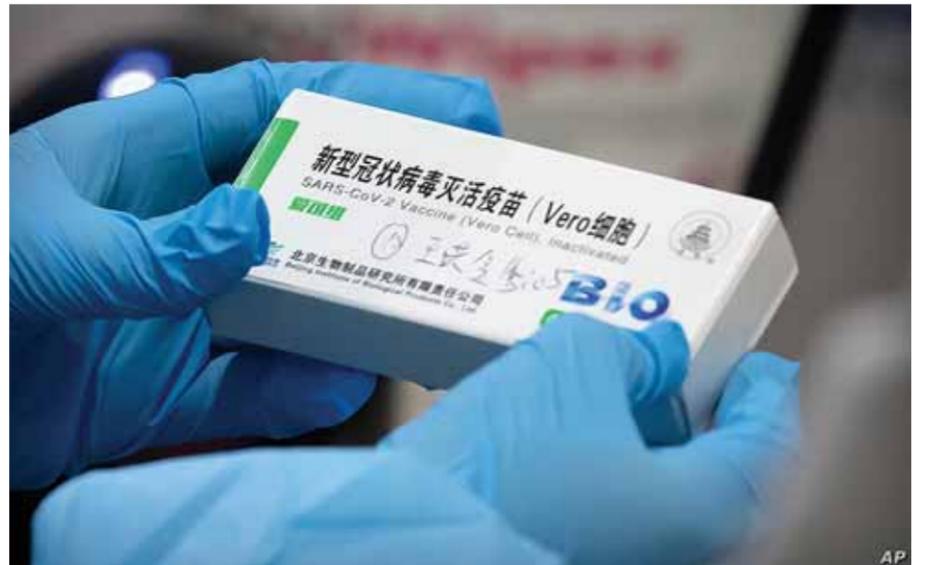
"The fact that Chinese are able to help countries at this point will go a long way in shaping those countries memories and remembrances of what happened at a very critical phase in global history," according to Pant. "So, America would do well to respond to some of these issues. Of course, the question is how far and how fast they are willing to go, but that might really shape the way in which these small countries, small players in the Indo Pacific, South Asia, would look at their foreign policy."

India, which had exported about 65 million doses before it shut down shipments, hopes to ramp up enough capacity to resume vaccine deliveries to other countries -- but that may not happen till the end of the year.

"New Delhi has the opportunity to reassert itself further down the road.



A woman receives a dose of Covishield, the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine for COVID-19 in her car at a drive-in vaccination facility in Ahmedabad, India, May 28, 2021.



FILE - A medical worker holds a package for a Sinopharm vaccine at a vaccination facility in Beijing, Jan. 15, 2021.

India is the world's top manufacturer of vaccines, so it has an inherent comparative advantage over China," points out Kugelman. China's vaccine diplomacy, he says is aimed at promoting its image at a time when it has taken a hit both due to its expansionist policies and questions over how and

where the COVID virus originated.

China has emerged as the world's largest vaccine exporter as many countries across Asia, Africa and Latin America use shots from Beijing for their inoculation drives.

Via voanews.com



WORLD NEWS

Thousands Evacuated in India as Strong Cyclone Inches Closer

By Associated Press
May 25, 2021 04:24 AM

NEW DELHI - Tens of thousands of people were evacuated Tuesday in low-lying areas of two Indian states and moved to cyclone shelters to escape a powerful storm barreling toward the eastern coast.

Cyclone Yaas is set to turn into a "very severe cyclonic storm" with sustained wind speeds of up to 177 kilometers per hour (110 miles per hour), the India Meteorological Department said. The cyclone is expected to make landfall early Wednesday in Odisha and West Bengal states.

The cyclone coming amid a devastating coronavirus surge complicates India's efforts to deal with both just 10 days after Cyclone Tauktae hit India's west coast and killed more than 140 people.

Thousands of emergency personnel have been deployed in coastal regions of the two states for evacuation and



Village men walk past as sea water gushes in after breaking an embankment on the Bay of Bengal coast in South 24 parganas, West Bengal state, India, May 25, 2021

any possible rescue operations, said S.N. Pradhan, director of India's National Disaster Response Force. India's air force and navy were also on standby to carry out relief work.

Fishing trawlers and boats have been told to take shelter until further notice as forecasters warned of high

tidal waves.

In West Bengal, authorities were scrambling to move tens of thousands of people to cyclone shelters. Officials said at least 20 districts in the state will feel the brunt of the storm.

Last May, nearly 100 people died in Cyclone Amphan, the most powerful

storm in more than a decade to hit eastern India, including West Bengal state. It flattened villages, destroyed farms and left millions without power in eastern India and Bangladesh.

"We haven't been able to fix the damage to our home from the last cyclone. Now another cyclone is coming, how will we stay here?" said Samitri, who uses only one name.

In Odisha, a state already battered by coronavirus infections, authorities evacuated nearly 15,000 people living along the coast and moved them to cyclone shelters, senior officer Pradeep Jena said.

In a televised address Monday, the state's chief minister, Naveen Patnaik, appealed to people being moved to cyclone shelters to wear double masks and maintain social distancing. He asked authorities to distribute masks to the evacuated people.

"We have to face both the challenges simultaneously," Patnaik said.

Via voanews.com

German recognition of Namibia genocide sees mixed reactions

The government in Namibia has welcomed the move but Herero and Nama activists have slammed Germany's pledge to fund projects in the country rather than provide reparations.

A landmark accord on German colonial-era crimes in present-day Namibia was greeted with praise, but also heavy criticism and protests in both countries on Friday.

Germany finally recognized the massacre of thousands of people as "genocide." It promised to pay €1.1 billion (\$1.3 billion) over 30 years for reconstruction and development projects in the African country, but stopped short of formal reparations.

It also pledged to ask forgiveness for killing 65,000-80,000 members of Herero ethnic group and 10,000-20,000 members of the Nama ethnic group in the early 20th century.

"We will now officially refer to these events as what they are from today's perspective: genocide," said Foreign Minister Heiko Maas.

What was the reaction in Namibia? While Namibian government supports the deal, many representatives of the Herero and Nama communities slammed it as insufficient.

"Genocide is a crime, and so that crime is already regulated by international law. The penalty for it is reparations," said Nandi Mazengo of the Herero Genocide Foundation.

"They have not admitted guilt to that crime, which they know comes with liabilities. They have admitted guilt to a different kind of genocide. We do not know who defines it."

While Herero and Nama communities are split in factions and have no overarching ethnic leadership, several ethnic leaders joined a protest in Namibia's capital, Windhoek, on Friday.

Germany's President Frank-Walter



Protesters in Namibia oppose reports of German president preparing to visit

Steinmeier is expected to soon visit the city and make an apology speech. However, MutjindeKatjiua, Secretary-General of the Ovaherero Traditional Authority told journalists that Steinmeier was not welcome.

"We advised the (German) ambassador that the president should stay in Germany. We will do anything in our effort to make his coming or his state unattainable," he told reporters. "We will not accept any outcome between these two governments."

Herero chief VekuiiRukoro described the accord as "an insult."

"That's a black cat in the bag instead of reparations for a crime against humanity," he told the Reuters news agency.

Many representatives of Herero and Nama have also criticized Germany for excluding them from the talks and negotiating only with Namibia's central government. The nation's politics is dominated by the Ovambo ethnic group.

What is Germany's stance?

Responding to this criticism, Germany's chief negotiator RuprechtPolenz told DW that his counterpart in the

talks, Dr Zed Ngavirue, is a Herero.

"And in his delegation, there were Herero and Nama people present and in preparation of the Namibian position," Polenz added.

He also told DW that "all Namibians are represented by the government."

"There are no elected leaders of Herero and Nama, there are many traditional chiefs, other persons who can speak for some of the Herero and Nama."

When asked about reparations, Polenz said that the talks focused on "political and moral obligations."

"And this is a different and therefore we are not speaking about in legal terms about reparations," he added.

The Herero and Nama should still have had a "greater voice" in negotiations, according to political scientist Joshua KwesiAikins.

"The borders of modern-day Namibia were basically drafted here in Berlin in the infamous Africa Conference of 1884-85," he told DW. "So to now limit negotiations to the Namibian government and a few select individuals is not good enough."

What do German activists say?

Activists in Germany also criticized the deal. The Society for Threatened Peoples greeted Berlin's recognition of genocide, but said the accord should be "a new beginning for processing Germany's colonial history, not its end."

They urged Germany to reach out to Herero and Nama associations who believe to have been excluded from the talks.

Berlin-based Herero activist Israel Kaunatjike dismissed the promised payment as "peanuts."

He said Germany only committed to a "small developmental aid program, that has nothing to do with reparations."

The Berlin Postcolonial group slammed the deal as "doomed to fail" and "not worth the paper it was written on."

They said Germany still did not admit to genocide in the context of international law, and was framing its payment to Namibia as "voluntary aid." The group was set to stage a protest against the deal on Friday.

via dw.com

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This project has been reviewed and approved by the community research ethics board.

If you have any questions, please contact Thivia Jegathesan
(perspectivesinhealthresearch@gmail.com)

**INTERDISCIPLINARY PERSPECTIVES IN
HEALTH RESEARCH**

Tourist service centers will be constructed along the roads connecting the major tourist cities of Sri Lanka

May 19: Tourism Minister Prasanna Ranatunga asserted, under the first phase, 28 tourist service centers will be constructed in Nuwara Eliya, Kandy, Badulla and Kegalle districts.

The Minister said these tourist service centers will be constructed under the President's National Policy and that they will be equipped with all the facilities required by local and

foreign tourists and will be constructed in accordance with international standards.

A virtual discussion on this project was held recently with the participation of officials from the Ministry of Tourism, Ministry of Urban Development, Sri Lanka Tourism

Development Authority and Urban Development Authority.

The officials of the Ministry of Urban Development stated that they have planned to construct 11 centers in the Nuwara Eliya District, 03 centers in the Kandy District and 12

centers in the Badulla District and 02 Centers in the Kegalle District.

Furthermore, they pointed out that these centers would be built from Kitulgala to Nuwara Eliya (through Ginigath-hena), Gampola to Nuwara Eliya (through Pussellawa), Nuwara

Eliya to Bandarawela (through Welimada) and Nuwara Eliya to Bandarawela and Ella (through Diyatalawa).

While pinpointing the need to comply with international standards in the construction of these service centers with the provision of all the facilities required by tourists such as

sanitary facilities, restaurants and money transfer centers, Minister Prasanna Ranatunga also highlighted the necessity to set up such tourist service centers in suitable cities along the roads leading to tourist destinations in addition to the selected areas mentioned-afore.

Furthermore, currently there are 15 tourist zones gazetted. These areas are



Kuchchaveli, Nilaveli, Trincomalee, Kalkudah, Arugambay, Yala, Unawatuna, Maduganga, Dedduwa,

Bentota, Beruwala, Mount Lavinia, Negombo, Kalpitiya and Pinnawala.

In addition, it has been proposed to declare Ella, Nuwara Eliya, Sigiriya,

Deniyaya and Delft Island as tourist zones.

The discussion also focused on the development of infrastructure in these zones In order to create a separate identity as a tourist zone.

- news.lk

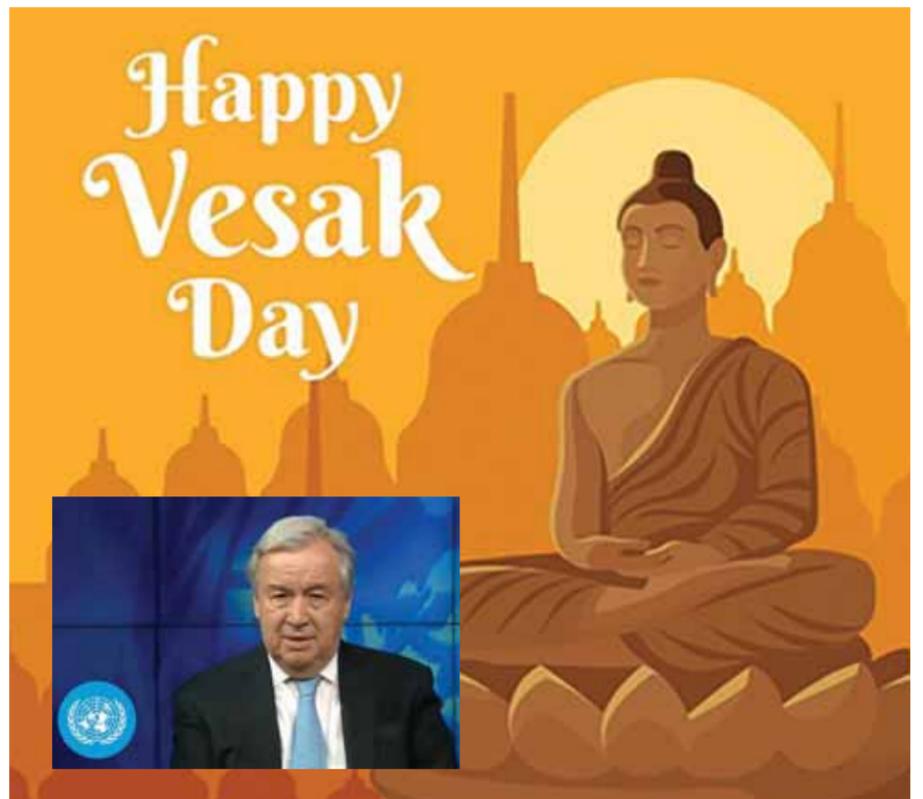
Vesak day message from UN Secretary General

"On this Day of Vesak, let's resolve to build lives of peace and dignity for all on a healthy planet", UN Secretary-General António Guterres said in a statement on May 26th.

"Vesak", the Day of the Full Moon in the month of May, is the most sacred day to millions of Buddhists around the world. It was on the Day of Vesak two and a half millennia ago, in the year 623 B.C., that the Buddha was born. It was also on the Day of Vesak that the Buddha attained enlightenment, and it was on the Day of Vesak that the Buddha in his eightieth year passed away.

The General Assembly, by its resolution 54/115 of 1999, recognized internationally the Day of Vesak to acknowledge the contribution that Buddhism, one of the oldest religions in the world, has made for over two and a half millennia and continues to make to the spirituality of humanity. This day is commemorated annually at the UN Headquarters and other UN offices, in consultation with the relevant UN offices and with permanent missions, which also wish to be consulted.

- UN. Org





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Local Scarborough McDonald's restaurants stepping up to Feed the Frontlines with \$35,000 pledge to Scarborough Health Network

Starting on June 1st, a portion of proceeds from every coffee sold in Scarborough McDonald's will go directly toward purchasing meals for our frontline health care workers.



SCARBOROUGH (May 26, 2021)

23 local McDonald's restaurants in Scarborough are stepping up to Feed the Frontlines during the intense third wave of COVID-19. Beginning on June 1, 2021 and for a limited time only, a portion of the proceeds from every coffee purchased will go toward providing hot meals to Scarborough Health Network (SHN) frontline health care workers at the Birchmount, Centenary and General hospitals.

The Scarborough community has rallied behind SHN's frontline workers since the beginning of the pandemic, and now local Scarborough McDonald's restaurants have also stepped up.

"It's an honour to be able to show our appreciation for the SHN frontline healthcare workers after everything they have done for the community during the COVID-19 pandemic," says Dale Bartlett, McDonald's Canada owner-operator in Scarborough. "I am proud to have my restaurants be among 23 McDonald's locations taking part in this important initiative."

Facts:

- The Feed the Frontlines Campaign will begin on June 1, 2021 in 23 Scarborough McDonald's restaurants
- 23 local McDonald's restaurants have generously committed \$35,000 to the Feed the Frontlines Campaign to support Scarborough's courageous frontline health care workers
- For a limited time only, a portion of the proceeds from every coffee purchased will support the campaign, beginning June 1, 2021.

- 100% of the proceeds will go directly to providing meals for staff at the Birchmount, Centenary and General hospitals in Scarborough

"Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, Scarborough Health Network has been on the frontlines handling some of the highest number of cases in Ontario," says Elizabeth Buller, President and CEO of SHN. "Our courageous staff and physicians have been working tirelessly to protect our community, and we are tremendously grateful for our local Scarborough McDonald's commitment to supporting our community. All funds raised through this initiative will provide meals for our most embattled frontline workers, and help them stay strong as we battle the third wave of the pandemic."

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

"During the pandemic, SHN has seen an outpouring of support from our Scarborough community and beyond," says Ryan Baillie, Vice President, Community Development at SHN Foundation. "We are so thankful to our local McDonald's restaurants for spearheading the Feed the Frontlines campaign and supporting our health care workers. Our local McDonald's have been longstanding partners of SHN Foundation, and this latest initiative shows their commitment to supporting our community hospitals."

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.

About McDonald's Canada

In 1967, Canadians welcomed the first McDonald's restaurant to Richmond, British Columbia. Today, McDonald's Restaurants of Canada Limited has become part of the Canadian fabric, serving close to three million guests every day. In both franchised and corporate-owned restaurants, nearly 100,000 people are employed from coast-to-coast, and more than 90 per cent of McDonald's 1,400 Canadian restaurants are locally owned and operated by independent franchisees. Of the almost \$1 billion spent on food, more than 85 per cent is purchased from suppliers in Canada. For more information on McDonald's Canada, visit mcdonalds.ca.

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THE LASTING LEGACY OF WWII VETERAN AND SHN SUPPORTER THOMAS WHELER

A World War II spitfire pilot. A husband. A father. A loyal SHN supporter. These are just some of the ways to describe legacy donor Thomas Wheeler, although no words could ever accurately capture the kindness and generosity with which he lived his life.

Thomas grew up in East Toronto during the Great Depression. With a desire to serve his country during the Second World War and a love of flying, he became a spitfire pilot for the Royal Canadian Air Force.

"My dad's love of flying went all the way back to when he was a child," said Gail, Thomas's daughter. "He kept his pilot's license until he was well into his 80's, and it truly was his passion."

While serving his country during the war, enemies shot down Thomas's plane in June of 1944, and they took him as a prisoner of war.

Escaping his captors not once but three times, Thomas was sent to England to recover from his harrowing



experience. However, he was soon sent home to Canada because escaped prisoners of war could not return to fighting. Because if they were captured again, they would have been executed for escaping.

Upon his return to Canada, he married the love of his life, Milly Lush, to whom he was engaged before he left to fight overseas. Milly's father, Harold Victor Lush, was the founder of Supreme Aluminum Industries in Toronto's east end and was instrumental in founding SHN's Centenary hospital.

"Philanthropy runs deep in our

family," said Gail. "My grandfather did a lot of fundraising to help build the Centenary hospital, and all six of his children volunteered at the hospital and helped with fundraising whenever they could. My mom was a volunteer there for 15 years."

Thomas stayed in the Air Force until 1968, moving around the world with Milly and their five children. He then retired as a Squadron Leader and returned home to Toronto, where he worked for Supreme Aluminum Industries, his father-in-law's company, retiring in 1979.

"He truly was a man who had a will to live! He had a number of serious operations at Centenary hospital and always battled his way to full recovery," Gail said. "He had a deep respect for the doctors, nurses and support staff who provided care to him and my mom. He felt a strong connection to Scarborough and Centenary hospital because of our family's history, so it was only fitting



that he included SHN in his will."

Thomas Wheeler's story inspires us at SHN Foundation because his legacy will live on through his gift. For a man who lived his life to the fullest, with

compassion, strength and courage, may his legacy live on through the people in Scarborough who will receive world-class health care thanks to donations like his.

May is Leave a Legacy month, and if you would like to learn more about including SHN in your will or estate, please visit SHNFoundation.ca/ways-to-give/legacy-giving or contact Verna Chen, Associate Vice President, Donor Engagement, at 416-438-2911 ext. 6040 or vchen@shn.ca.



HEALTH & WELLNESS



5 Questions With...



Aatefa Nusrat, RPN

We recently celebrated National Nursing Week in Canada, a time to show appreciation for the hard work and dedication for our nurses. The theme for this year's Nursing Week is #WeAnswerTheCall and was developed to showcase the many roles that nurses play in a patient's health care journey. The pandemic brought to light the courage and commitment that nurses work under every day and showed the important role that nurses play in the community.

We sat down with Aatefa Nusrat, a Registered Practical Nurse (RPN) at Centenary hospital, to talk about what Nursing Week means to her and her role in a patient's journey.

1. Our Scarborough hospitals have seen some of the highest cases of COVID-19 since the first wave. As a frontline health care worker, how have you been taking care of yourself during these extremely challenging times?

2021 has been far better than last year, just because at this time last year we had no idea what this virus was or how badly it could affect people. Now, we know what pieces of PPE we need, how to treat people, and how

to battle this virus from a health care perspective.

We know now how to protect ourselves as health care workers from the virus, and SHN has provided great support with mental health and wellness resources. We can get tested whenever we need to, and now that vaccines

are becoming more available there is finally hope on the horizon.

Although our ICU's have continued to struggle with the influx of COVID-19 patients, the cases have slowly been decreasing. I try to encourage my friends, family and community to get the vaccine as soon as they're eligible. There are many misconceptions about the vaccines, but they are our only hope to beat this virus and hopefully return to life as we know it!

2. National Nursing Week is from May 10-16, and the theme this year is #WeAnswerTheCall to showcase the many roles that nurses play in a patient's health care journey. What role do you and your fellow nurses play in a patient's journey here at SHN?

For me personally, a nurse's role has two sides – the medical and human side. When I was in nursing school, they told me to see all patients as a loved one, whether a brother, sister or mother, and to use that emotion to care for them as a person first.

On the medical front, we take care of their physical needs and stabilize all of their vitals. At the same time, it's also our job to stabilize them emotionally

and make sure their needs are being met. One thing I do every day is to start and end my day with a smile, and make sure I introduce myself to every patient I see that day. I also make sure to say goodbye before I leave for the day.

I always get emotionally invested in each patient's care. I speak with them, listen to them, laugh with them and sometimes even cry with them. Listening is so important and it articulates my day. When I can listen, I can better care for the patient and ensure their needs are being met.

3. You were recently recognized as an SHN Superstar, with a grateful patient donating to SHN Foundation in your honour. What does it mean to you to be recognized by a patient for providing exceptional care?

It's an honour to be recognized as an SHN Superstar. I hear often from patients that I did a great job, and it's nice to hear that feedback both from them and from colleagues and managers. But, for someone to donate to honour my name is something entirely different – I cried when I found out.

I don't even know exactly who made the donation until I was presented with the award. I then read the lovely card, and was very emotional knowing that I made such a huge difference in someone's life by just being with them for a short period of time.

It really makes me want to do more. Although we do what we do for our patients and not for recognition, it does validate that the relationships I form and the way I care for patients doesn't go unnoticed. It really did mean the world to me, and if someone has received exceptional care I encourage them to honour an SHN Superstar and

make a gift in their name.

4. You've been with SHN for 3 years now. What is your favourite thing about Scarborough and the vibrant community we serve?

The diversity and multiculturalism for sure. I learn so much from people of different backgrounds – not just our patients, but coworkers too. I learn how to care for patients in culturally-sensitive ways, and make sure every single patient that comes into our unit is treated with respect and kindness.

5. What would you say to encourage people to donate to our Scarborough hospitals or make a donation in recognition of an SHN Superstar?

It really means a lot to not only receive recognition from a former patient, but to also know that recognition is helping support SHN. Our staff provide such great care, and it's a shame that the facilities in which we're providing that care aren't as modern or updated as they should be.

By donating in recognition of an SHN Superstar, you're helping us to better serve our community. With donations we can upgrade and buy new medical equipment and machines, and ultimately create a brighter, healthier Scarborough.

We are so grateful for health care staff and nurses, like Aatefa, who continue to care for our Scarborough community as we battle the pandemic. This Nursing Week we are thanking the incredible nurses across the globe who are making a difference in the lives of our patients. Thank you.

If you would like to learn more about recognizing an SHN Superstar, visit SHNFoundation.ca/superstars today!

Join Scarborough Health Network Foundation for the inaugural Tamil Radiothon on June 9th

Join Scarborough Health Network (SHN) Foundation for the inaugural Tamil Radiothon in support of health care in Scarborough! The Tamil Radiothon – the first ever in Toronto – will feature interviews with patients, physicians, nurses, staff, and volunteers to inspire the community and help shape the future of health care in Scarborough by showing their support through donations.

This important event will bring people together for a day of education and awareness for SHN's exceptional care while raising significant funds that will directly impact the three Scarborough hospitals – Centenary, General and Birchmount – and the local patients and families who rely on them.

75% of Toronto's Tamil population resides in Scarborough, with members of the SHN team being part of the Tamil community and working specifically to support their unique health care challenges. This includes a dedicated Tamil-speaking mental health therapist who exclusively addresses and supports mental health within the Tamil community, SHN working to ensure all materials are available to read in Tamil, and having a full-time Tamil interpreter available to support patients and families.

SHN prides themselves on offering care and treatment to every population in Scarborough, and the team members truly reflect the diversity of the community. SHN Foundation has had incredible support from the Tamil community. This includes The Canadian Tamil Medical Association's donation of \$60,000 through their Lights of Healing Fundraising Dinner Gala in 2019 to help hire the Tamil-speaking mental health therapist at SHN, and events held by The Canadian Tamils' Chamber of Commerce since 1999 including an annual Walk-A-

Thon raising over \$350,000 for SHN. The Foundation also has dedicated and passionate Tamil volunteers who donate their time and expertise to support fundraising initiatives. Our co-chairs for the inaugural Tamil Radiothon are Sritharan Thurairajah and Logan Velumailum, long-standing supporters of SHN Foundation.

Sritharan Thurairajah,

Co-Chair, SHNF Tamil Radiothon

"I'm honoured to support the inaugural Tamil Radiothon. When we need the hospital it is always there for us, and this is our opportunity to be there for the hospital."

Logan Velumailum,

Co-Chair, SHNF Tamil Radiothon

"I have always believed we should give back to our community that we live in, and I am looking forward to June 9th and having our community show their support for our Scarborough hospitals."

In collaboration with partner EAST FM 102.7, the SHN Foundation Radiothon will air live on June 9, 2021 from 8am – 8pm. Listen live to hear from our special guest speakers, including:

- **MP Gary Anandasangaree,** MP for Scarborough-Rouge Park;
- **MPP Vijay Thanigasalam,** MPP for Scarborough Rouge-Park;
- **Yalini Rajakulasingam,** Trustee, Ward 21 from the Toronto District School Board for Scarborough North;
- **Dr. Senthuran Gunaratnam,** Psychiatrist at SHN; and,
- **Dr. Coomasamy Kirupanathan,** OB/GYN at SHN.

SCARBOROUGH HEALTH NETWORK FOUNDATION
RADIOTHON
தமிழ் ரேடியோதான்
June 9, 2021
 Join us for the first-ever Tamil Radiothon in Toronto in support of our Scarborough hospitals!
 In partnership with **east FM 102.7** In support of **SHN FOUNDATION**

This event is generously sponsored by passionate Scarborough businesses, including the Canadian Tamils' Chamber of Commerce (CTCC) as the Call Centre sponsor. SHN Foundation is proud to include our Power Hour sponsors, Life100, Nava Wilson Law, the co-operators, Premier Diagnostic Network, JC's Banquet & Convention Centre, Sri Lankan Accountants Association, Formula Honda, Prisha Law, and Vinoba Suthagar-TD. Our community sponsors include Monsoon Journal and Suntharalingam Professional Corporation. Together with our sponsors, speakers and vibrant Scarborough community, the Tamil Radiothon will inspire everyone and help build a brighter, healthier future for Scarborough.

Visit SHNFoundation.ca/TamilRadiothon to learn more or donate today!



HEALTH & WELLNESS



INNOVATION AT SHN MADE POSSIBLE BY DEDICATED VOLUNTEERS & DONORS



- Dr. Sarah Wong

Dr. Sarah Wong, a plastic surgeon at SHN, is one of only a handful of surgeons in Canada trained to perform a life-changing procedure to cure lymphedema. And now, thanks to generous donors and determined SHN volunteer Mary Murphy, she has the equipment she needs to do so.

Lymphedema is a chronic swelling that happens when fluid doesn't flow well through the lymphatic system and accumulates in the body's tissues. It is prevalent in breast cancer patients who often need to have their lymph nodes removed to reduce the risk of their cancer spreading to the lymphatic system. As a result, small vessels are destroyed that carry blood and fluid from their limbs. Patients with lymphedema experience painful swelling in their limbs, fingers or toes because blood can't properly flow and excess fluid isn't circulated back throughout the body.

"A lot of patients learn to live with this painful illness," says Dr. Sarah Wong, an SHN Plastic Surgeon and one of few physicians able to cure lymphedema in Canada. "Those of higher socio-economic status can pay for weekly lymphatic massages, compression garments and exercise routines to manage this disease. But, here in Scarborough, that's not always an option for our patients suffering from lymphedema."

Dr. Wong trained at the University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center, the largest cancer center in the United States, where she learned to perform the cutting-edge procedure. Using a machine called the SPY Elite Fluorescence Imaging System, a.k.a. the SPY machine, she can see lymph channels the size of a hair and reconnect the blocked pathways.

"I compare it to taking the collector route on Highway 401," says Dr. Wong. "When the express route is blocked, you take an alternate route through the collector. Then, you're

reconnected to the express once you get past the traffic jam."

For Dr. Wong to perform this life-changing microsurgery, however, she needed the SPY machine – a rare piece of equipment that SHN didn't have. Then, along came Mary Murphy.

Mary, a long-time supporter and former Board Member of SHN



- Mary Murphy

Foundation, first heard about the SPY machine during a presentation from Dr. Wong herself. She was even able to see Dr. Wong perform the surgery with a borrowed SPY machine on a patient who had been in and out of the hospital to manage her lymphedema. The patient was in constant pain, and hadn't even been able to wear her wedding ring for over ten years due to the extreme swelling.

And then, after a remarkable yet straightforward procedure, she was cured.

Mary also met Dr. John You, a vascular surgeon at SHN who could use the machine to perform life-saving procedures for patients suffering from intense wounds.

"As a vascular surgeon, I'm responsible for making sure there are no blockages in patients' veins or arteries," says Dr. You. "When limbs don't get enough blood flow, caused by a cut or an injury resulting in a wound that won't heal properly, we have to

decide whether or not we can salvage it or if we need to amputate."

Before the SPY machine, Dr. You and his colleagues would need to use subjective methods to determine whether they needed to amputate. Even after performing angioplasty or bypass surgery to improve blood flow, they have to wait to see if the wound will heal properly. They would look at the limb, feel it to see if it's warm or if they feel a pulse, and then decide if they could save it.

"After seeing the extraordinary work that Dr. Sarah Wong and Dr. John Yu could do with this machine, I was committed to finding the money for them to buy it," says Mary. "Their innovation, leadership and drive, pushing to get the best healthcare for our Scarborough community is inspiring and absolutely needs to be supported. The improvement in care and cost savings that this machine could deliver made the decision easy; not only to support this purchase personally, but to take this extraordinary opportunity to others and provide them the opportunity to make a difference in Scarborough."

Mary set out to raise the nearly \$200,000 it cost to purchase the SPY machine. Within a year, she had secured enough donations to make the SPY machine a permanent fixture at SHN's General hospital.

"Certain hospitals and communities have more resources to raise money to purchase equipment like this," Mary continues. "It is essential that we reach out and let people know that the impact their donations have on community hospitals is huge. We have physicians that are able to perform rare and cutting-edge procedures – and yet they don't have the tools to do it. The hospital must raise significant funds to ensure they meet their local community share, including 10% of all infrastructure costs and 100% of all medical equipment."

SHN is one of the few hospitals in the GTA who have the SPY machine, and the possibilities aren't limited to Dr. Wong's cutting-edge procedure to cure lymphedema.

"The SPY machine gives us an objective way to see if the blood is flowing to a limb and if revascularization is possible," Dr. You says. "By seeing this, we can make a better-informed decision on something that will absolutely change someone's life – and sometimes save it. It can be the difference between salvaging a leg or amputating it."

Dr. You and Dr. Wong worked closely together to develop the first specialized wound clinic in the entire GTA at SHN's General site over ten years ago. Combining the vascular and plastic surgery specialties into one location allows a true multidisciplinary approach to patient

care. This patient-centred philosophy makes it more convenient for patients who often must see both types of physicians to treat their wounds.

"We're fortunate that our plastic surgeons have a high interest in wound care," Dr. You continues. "Most of our patients' wounds are chronic and can take multiple visits seeing multiple physicians to heal. They're also able to see the same surgeons each visit, ensuring consistent follow-up and care."

Since SHN's wound clinic opened, trainees and residents from the U of T School of Medicine have come through and mimicked the clinic at other hospitals, including Sunnybrook.

"The SPY machine and our wound clinic have the potential to put us on the map," Dr. You says. "The work we've done to create the wound clinic and the cutting-edge procedure to cure lymphedema that Dr. Wong is doing are truly innovative. The work we do often gets overlooked because SHN is a community health network."

Since the purchase of the SPY machine, made possible by determined volunteer Mary Murphy and generous donors, Dr. Wong is looking forward to changing the lives of those living



- Dr. John You

with lymphedema. "When I first brought this surgery to Canada, it was considered experimental," says Dr. Wong. "There was no support from the government, and it wasn't an insured procedure, so I did a lot of my first surgeries pro bono. The passion and dedication of our donors and volunteers motivates me to continue pushing forward. To continue performing innovative procedures and ensuring our amazing SHN team gets the recognition we deserve. I'm tremendously grateful for Mary's advocacy and for leading the charge in not only purchasing this machine but for believing in the future of health care in Scarborough."

It is the resilience and perseverance of our dedicated volunteers, generous donors and passionate medical staff that make a difference in Scarborough. Together, we're building a brighter, healthier future for our diverse community. If you would like to donate to Scarborough Health Network, visit SHNFoundation.ca/DONATE today.

SCARBOROUGH HEALTH NETWORK FOUNDATION

RADIOTHON

ரேடியோதான்

June 9, 2021

Join us for the first-ever
Tamil Radiothon in Toronto
in support of our
Scarborough hospitals!

In partnership with

In support of



Jaffna Medical Faculty Overseas Alumni launches relief campaign in aid of Jaffna, Sri Lanka hospitals



Jaffna Medical Faculty Overseas Alumni (JMFOA) is organizing a COVID-19 relief campaign in Jaffna, Sri Lanka. The JMFOA are composed of physicians who were trained in Jaffna are practising in Canada. It is done through a coordinated effort both globally and within Sri Lanka. It has identified 3 key areas of support that can help to soften the magnitude of the COVID-19 impact for the most vulnerable.

Three Areas:

1. Family Support
2. Hospital Support
3. Support at Home

Please find more information on how you could support their efforts here:

<https://gofund.me/de72276b> - our GoFundMe

jmfoa.ca/covid - our website campaign

<https://www.facebook.com/111075203795213/posts/317502396485825/>

https://www.linkedin.com/posts/jmfoa_covid-jmfoa-foundation-activity-6802644290712481792-y3aT



JMFOA– Canada

Jaffna Medical Faculty Overseas Alumni

JMFOA Foundation

Jmfoa.ca



May 25, 2021

Dear well-wishers,

COVID Support Campaign for the affected in Sri Lanka

COVID 19 affected all of us worldwide and recently reached Sri Lanka, where the situation is currently worsening like India.

This humanitarian crisis is going to hit Sri Lanka hard, and like in most nations, it is always the most vulnerable and war-affected population that gets hit the hardest. With this rise in COVID 19 cases, exhausted medical teams, with their limited and dwindling resources, the worst is yet to come.

We, the doctors trained in Jaffna Medical Faculty, always remain committed to reaching out to help our community back home.

Currently, we are working in full force to address this impending crisis from COVID with various international organizations and our medical colleagues to assist Hospitals and Health Authorities in need in the North/East Srilanka.

We urgently request your support to help these people in need with this proposed medical assistance; we assure you that your donations will totally and securely reach them in time to satisfy their urgent requirements through our expert medical team on the ground.

Please review additional information in the email, website, and the 'Go fund me' donation links to make your contribution timely for this urgent, crucial relief effort. Also, please help us spread this message to the broader community by sharing this with your friends, community organizations, etc to reach out to many to support this initiative.

We look forward to your support and thank you.

Sincerely

Jaffna Medical Faculty Overseas Alumni
JMFOA-Canada

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Where Peace Begins

"This existence can be enjoyed. You are not void of joy.
Joy is still in you." - May 7th 2021. Prem Rawat

When I travel and speak to people, my message is about the very real thing that peace is and the possibility of feeling that peace in this life every single day. So where does it begin? Let me tell you a little story that might put it in perspective.

One day a tourist arrived in a very remote village where the people were very simple. The next morning he put his mirror on the wall to shave, but forgot to take it down. Later on, an elderly villager with gray hair, bright eyes, and a beautiful shining face came across the mirror on the wall. He had never seen himself before, and so when he saw his reflection in the mirror, he was mesmerized. "Today," he thought, "I have seen the face of God." He left completely happy.

Then came a beautiful young girl. When she saw herself in the mirror, she was taken aback. "I have seen the most beautiful woman on earth, and when I grow up, that's how I want to look!" Next, a man came along who had lost his father. When he looked in the mirror, he said, "Oh, my God, I saw my father again!" And he took the mirror with him.

Now, these three people who

had seen themselves in the mirror started to get very upset. They started arguing, and before long, fights broke out throughout the entire village. Soon everybody was unhappy because whoever looked in the mirror saw something they liked, and they all wanted the mirror for themselves.

Finally, a wise man happened to come along and asked, "Why are you fighting?" One said the mirror showed him God, another that it showed him his father, and others told him what they had seen. So he called for this magical thing, and when he saw it, he smiled, "Do you know what this is? This is a mirror."

He called the old man and said, "You did not see the face of God. You saw yourself."

He called the young girl and said, "You did not see the most beautiful woman—you saw yourself." He called the young man and said, "You thought you saw your father because now you look like him. But it was you." One by one, he called everyone and he said, "Look. What you see in this mirror, what you like in this mirror, is not the mirror. It's you!"

How does this story relate to peace? Peace begins with us.

Try to understand where the idea of peace came from. Was it somebody's invention? Was there some intelligent person walking along high mountains somewhere who said, "Peace. That's a good idea. Let's have peace." No.

As long as there have been human beings, there has been a desire for peace. The need for peace comes from within. Peace is the desire of the heart. It is as simple as the coming and going of breath. The movie of life begins with the first breath. And we all know how the movie ends.

We are fascinated by the in-between part. This is what we live for: "Who am I? What am I? What have I accomplished?" That's all fine, but never, ever forget the importance of where it began and where it ends.

Within you lies the possibility of peace. Peace does not belong to any nation, any society, or any religion. Peace belongs to people like you and me. Where will peace manifest? It will manifest in the cathedral of the heart. That is the only place where peace is welcomed. It is people like you and me who want peace and welcome it in our lives. It is here in our existence that peace resides.

Being here, being on the face of this earth for as long as you are—here, the whole idea of death kind of floats, hovers in so many places, in so many countries that had made themselves the "idyllic land of milk and honey" and "free of disease" and, you know, so many things. And yet even those have been victimized. But that is because it is changeable. It did change—because it can change. And it is changeable—and it will change.

But then there is something that doesn't change. And that thing that doesn't change is what is your reality, what you need to invest in, what you need to be a part of, what you need to court in your life—and allow yourself to be filled with that, with that understanding that you want to attach yourself to that which is real. So, that's definitely one thing that we have to remember.

You have to invest, you have to court that one thing that is real in your life, not all the other things. They may be distracting. And you might get distracted. There's no harm in getting distracted if you can find your way back. And that's what's important.

Prem Rawat

www.timelesstoday.com



KUNDALAKESI

By: Kumar Punithavel

Among the large collections of ancient Tamil literature, there are five great epics referred to as Aimperumkapiyam meaning five big epics. Kundalakesi is one of them. This epic and Valayapathy, could not survive the wrath of time and most of it, is missing. Though it's believed that the original text of the epic had ninety-nine verses only nineteen of them had survived to date. We learn about this epic from quotations, citations and references made in other great Tamil texts during its time and later. The name of the author of this epic is Nathakunthamar.

In this epic the heroine's birth name was Bhadra Theesa. At latter stage of her life, she became a Buddhist nun, and shaved her head. When the hair regrew, it grew curly like a round ear ring. Kundalam in Tamil means ear ring. Kesam is the Tamil word for hair. Thus, the name Kundalakesi, meaning person with hair like ear rings.

The story as reframed for want of the original text, goes as follows;

Bhadra Theesa was born in a wealthy merchant's family in Puhar, the capital of Chola Kingdom. She lost her mother when she was very young and lived in a sheltered life. In that city lived a handsome highway robber named Kaalan. He was arrested while committing a highway robbery and was sentenced to death. While he was taken along the streets of Puhar to face his punishment, Kundalakesi saw the handsome prisoner through the window of her house, and instantaneously fell in deep love with him. Out of infatuation for Kaalan, she begged her father to save the prisoner. The wealthy father who loved his only daughter very much, appealed to the king to release Kaalan, and offered to pay ransom. It is told the wealthy father paid to the coffers of the king, gold equivalent to the weight of thief Kaalan, and also 81 elephants as ransom.

On his release, Kaalan got married to Kundalakesi, and the couple lived together happily. As mentioned in the famous adage, "tiger never changes its stripes", he wanted to rob all the wealth of his wife Kundalakesi this time, and schemed a plan. One day he suggested to Kundalakesi very casually, that they both go hiking to the mountain Saar. She too gladly joined her lover husband innocently for the fun climb, and to see the panoramic view from the summit on that bright sunny day.

However, while climbing half way she felt some evil motive in her husband's suggestion of hiking. She innocently asked Kaalan what's his plan is. Realizing she has guessed his sinister plans, he confessed that he had planned to rob her of all the jewelry and push her over the cliff.

Realizing how wicked he is, she realized her end is near. But she begged him for one last wish. Saying, still he is her husband, and she would like to circumnate him thrice, and get his blessing before dying so that she will go to heaven. He too felt there is no harm for his plans, and thinking if she wants to be stupid so be it, he conceded to her wish. On reaching the summit while walking around him with folded palms and closed eyes praying, she pushed him from his behind over the cliff to his death.

On return Kundalakesi was sad and dejected by her lovers' betrayal. She renounced the worldly life and became a Buddhist nun shaving her head with a palmyra leaf stem blade. In those days of distant past, large portion of Tamils followed Buddhist religion. The hair that sprouted after shaving grew curly, and thus she got the name



Kundalakesi, when the hair grew curly.

The epic Kundalakesi is believed to have been authored by Nathakunthamar. The original text is believed to be comprised of 99 verses, of which, only 19 is now available. As a sample let's look at the second verse, which is the one after the invocation of blessing.

The verse starts with mentioning about medicines. A sick person will not bother about the taste of the medicine however bitter it may taste.

Sick one cares not about taste of medicine;
நோய்க்குற்ற மாந்தர் மருந்தின்கவை நோக்க கில்லார்

Next line it mentions that a person on a cold wintery day seated next to bonfire, will not be bothered about the smoke that comes out of the fire from which he gets the warmth.

Warmth seekers cares not the smoke of the fire.

தீக்குற்ற காத லுடையார்பகைத் தீமை யோரார்

The poet continues, as one narrates about Buddha who abdicated the throne and renounced the three faults. The inherent faults of humans being our desire, hate and ignorance as mentioned by Lord Buddha.

Praising the one who abdicated the three folly's I recount,

போய்க்குற்றமூன்று மறுத்தான்புகழ் கூறு வேற்கென்

Any mistake I make in my narration should not be considered as a wrong doing, for out of love and admiration of the great one I make this epic.

It's not an error even if I make one out of ignorance.

வாய்க்குற்றசொல்லின் வழுவும்வழு வல்ல வன்றே.

Let's take a look at the whole verse # 2 of Kundalakesi;

Sick one cares not about the taste of the medicine,

Warmth seekers cares not the smoke of the fire.

Praising the one who abdicated the three folly's I recount,

Consider not as error, even if I make out of ignorance.

நோய்க்குற்ற மாந்தர் மருந்தின்கவை நோக்க கில்லார் தீக்குற்ற காத லுடையார்பகைத் தீமை யோரார் போய்க்குற்றமூன்று மறுத்தான்புகழ் கூறு வேற்கென் வாய்க்குற்றசொல்லின் வழுவும்வழு வல்ல வன்றே.

Let us now check another verse of the epic. This time it is Verse 9 of Kundalakesi.

The poet understands the impermanency of life, a core thought in Buddhist theology. We go through various stages, and as we pass along what ever we passed, will never come back again. The poet mentions various stages and finally ask why not we moan for us in old age for we will not come back to that stage again to moan why not we moan ahead he says. The poet implies not to grieve for death for death is not something new. If we are to grieve for death then we should be cry for our selves too. Here is the poem and the translation;

Death to the form of fetus, death to the form of childhood,

Death to the form of adolescence, death to the form of youth,

Death repeating is distressing, death comes in old age too,

Death happens in all stages, why don't we cry for our self too!

பாளையாம் தன்மை செத்தும் பாலனாம் தன்மை செத்தும்

காளையாம் தன்மை செத்தும் காழும் இளமை செத்தும்

மீளும்இவ் இயல்பும் இன்னே மேல்வரு மூப்பும் ஆகி நாளும் நான் சாகின்றாமால் நமக்கு நாம் அழாதது என்னோ!

It is interesting to note about two thousand years ago Buddhism was greatly followed by Tamils, though only very few Tamils do follow this religion at present. However, the influence of the teachings of Lord Buddha is greatly lingers on like compassion and vegetarianism, which may be attributed to his teachings and to that of the influence of St. Thiruvalluvar classic book of ethics called Thirukkural to a great extent.



Global Immunization to End COVID-19 Pandemic



By **Kanagasabai Theivendirarajah**, Ph.D (London)

John Hopkins University reports the global death count to be 3.4 million however, WHO estimates the death rate to be 3-4 times greater. Until the beginning of 2021, the only mode available to curtail the spread of COVID-19 virus was containment. Many countries were able to contain the disease reasonably well. With the large scale production of vaccines, such as Pfizer, Moderna (mRNA vaccines), AstraZeneca, Sputnik V, Johnson and Johnson, and Sinovac, countries began to immunize their citizens. Immunization is the ultimate method to get rid of COVID-19 and bring an end to this pandemic. Countries like the UK, USA, Canada, and Israel have immunized 50-70% of their adult population. The UK and Israel were the first to achieve mass immunization within their population. This resulted in big drops in their death rates. Now both countries have herd immunity, which will gradually result in the eradication of COVID-19.

Many countries in the world, especially poorer nations are still struggling to immunize their population. This is due to the lack of sufficient vaccine supply. Only 0.3% of people have been vaccinated in poorer countries.

The global COVID-19 pandemic cannot be eliminated fully until all countries immunize their populations. Though vaccination is not mandatory, from a moral viewpoint, people must immunize themselves to prevent the spread of this deadly disease, which has led to the death and suffering of thousands of people all over the world. India, with a population of 1.4 billion has now experienced the greatest number of infections, with a daily loss of 4,000 people. India, also one of the largest producers of vaccines, is still behind in their mass immunization campaign. Until wealthy nations provide millions of doses to poorer countries, COVID-19 will linger and cause untold miseries to many. Recently, the UN secretary general, Antonio Guterres, has called for global solidarity in the fight against COVID-19.

The COVID-19 pandemic affected the economies of most countries, the worst affected were small businesses like restaurants, salons, wellness centers, etc. In regions where infections and death rates are declining, officials have relaxed lockdown rules and allowed the opening of these small businesses. One of the sectors which was severely affected by COVID-19 was the education of high school and post-secondary students. Many of these institutions have remained closed for over a year, with most providing virtual learning. Such virtual learning is no match as compared to in-person learning. Many countries are planning to open up schools and universities in the upcoming school year. Now that teachers, staff, and students are being vaccinated in Canada, hopefully all educational institutions will open in September of 2021. Subjects like Biology and Chemistry, and professional field such as medicine and engineering cannot be taught properly by virtual or on-line learning, they need practical with hand on



Kanagasabai Theivendirarajah,
Ph.D (London)

experience under a laboratory learning set up. As an example, any chemist working in pharmaceutical companies or chemical companies cannot perform without practical training from a University/ College.

Overall, there appears to be a light at the end of this dark tunnel but, more work is yet to be done by the governments of the world to ensure all countries can be done with this pandemic.

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SPECIAL FEATURE

Jaffna Library Burning – 40th anniversary

June 1, of this year marks the 40th anniversary of burning Jaffna library, one of the largest libraries in Asia with a beautiful architecture. At midnight on May 31st, 1981, the Jaffna Public Library, filled with historic Tamil literature was set ablaze by an organized mob and uniformed officers.

The Jaffna Public Library was home to over 95,000 texts; within the fire many irreplaceable texts were lost, as the library had housed the only copies in existence. For example the single copy of Yalpanam Vaipavama, which detailed the history of Jaffna by a Tamil poet, Mayilvagana Pulavar. The library held thousands of invaluable documents including ancient texts written in palm leaves, manuscripts and newspapers going back hundreds of years. The library was the largest library in all of Asia and was a plethora of Tamil literature. It was loved not only by locals but also internationally as it was the focal point of the Tamil community. Furthermore, it was used worldwide for various research purposes.

Originally in 1933 the library was the private collection of a scholar, K.M. Chellapha, but with the help of a local committee it became a renowned library. It started off with only 1000



The Jaffna Public Library, destroyed in 1981 and rebuilt twice since, once sat in a no man's land between warring forces. It's been fully restored and become a haven for readers young and old. Pic by: Julie McCarthy - via: NPR

books, but through monetary and book donations from prominent Tamil members it quickly expanded. The Jaffna Public Library was a home to all things relating to Tamil culture. Even 40 years later, this terrible event is remembered by many Tamils as it was one of many signs that a civil war was about to erupt within the country.

This act of arson was an attempt to

erase the rich Tamil culture and the Tamil identity. The library burned for two nights but was only the beginning of the horror that Tamils would face. Thankfully in the following years the library was slowly able to rebuild due to the kindness and goodwill of donors. In 1982, the reconstruction of the library began, and books began to be collected. Although as the civil



Jaffna Library in the aftermath of burning

war broke out in 1983, the library was damaged in crossfire further delaying the reopening of the library. As the war continued into the 2000s, the locals and the government were debating on whether to rebuild the library as it was or keep the burned building as a memorial and build a new library instead. Despite many Tamil locals wanting to keep the burned building as a memorial, Sri Lankan government was keen on forgetting the tragedy and decided to continue with the rebuild. Even through war, the library was able to be rebuild and finally reopened in 2003.

(The author of this article Athirai Il-angko is an undergraduate student at the Schulich School of Business and a co-facilitator of Centre for Leadership and Innovation.)



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■ FROM THE SOUTH TO THE HILLY REGION AND FINALLY TO THE NORTH



C. Kamalaharan

My transfer from Dickwella to Welamboda was in tune with the phrase out of the frying pan into the fire as both these places were remote and undeveloped far away from my native place in the North. Dickwella is in a coastal area where the settlement of the Muslim community is mainly along both sides of the road leading to Beliatte whereas Welamboda is in a hilly region where the settlement of the Muslim community is scattered here and there. Except the natives all others employed in Welamboda reside in Gampola and travel to Welamboda by bus or car.

For me it was the first visit to Gampola a place I was forewarned to be flooded and waterlogged during rainy season. Arriving there in the Udarata Menike express train from Colombo I stood on the platform thinking of my next move. The station master on duty Mr. S. Kathirkamanathan on seeing me in a state of confusion approached and asked, "Whom are you looking for?" I replied, "I've come on transfer to Welamboda Muslim Maha Vidyalaya and my immediate concern is to meet my former batch mate and friend Mr. K. Yogavanam who is a teacher here." His instant response delighted me, "Yogavanam is my friend too and he is also my neighbour I'll take you there." On meeting Mr.

Yogavanam everything fell in line and I was comfortably settled in Mr. Thuraisingam house next to where Mr. Yogavanam stayed. I was extremely happy with the new set up in the midst of my Tamil brethren employed in various departments or engaged in various trades.

Gampola is a small town having all government and private business establishments besides eateries run by Tamil businessmen. Travelling between Jaffna and Gampola is not as tedious as travelling between Jaffna and Dickwella. My school Welamboda Muslim Maha Vidyalaya is at a distance along the hilly route from Gampola. At the beginning I was scared to travel by bus to Welamboda as the bus winds its way up the narrow road along the breathtaking precipice. As days passed I overcame the fear and anxiety.

At Welamboda Muslim Maha Vidyalaya I taught general science. My teaching there was only for two years during which I represented the school in the annual athletic meet for teachers in the Udunuwara electorate. On the whole my service at Welamboda was not as satisfactory and memorable as in Dickwella where the Muslim community always remembers with gratitude the untiring services rendered to their community by teachers from Jaffna.

I wish to quote a nasty incident I encountered with an unruly uncouth parent a few days after my assumption of duty at Welamboda. Once while I was teaching this man clad in sarong and shirt gate crashed into my classroom and handed me an invitation card for his son's circumcision ceremony to be held the following weekend. As there was no response for the invitation from the other members of the staff I too refrained from attending the function. A few days later while I was waiting for the bus after school this man shot out of a barber saloon with folded palms as though respecting me and shouted sarcastically at me using obscene language. Being intoxicated he was all out to attack me when the other teachers intervened and prevented a scuffle taking place. It was purely to annoy and hurt me as I was from a different community. He didn't express his wrath against the Muslim teachers who abstained from attending the function. The following day the matter was reported to the principal who discussed the matter in the SDS meeting and a stern warning was issued to him not to step into the school thereafter and not to have any dealings with any member of the staff. I became thoroughly disgusted after the incident.

When the principal went on transfer to his native place in Galle

his vacancy was filled by a man from Welamboda itself. This man's intention was to transfer the teachers from other communities and fill the vacancies by the teachers from their community. On hearing this we decided to leave the school before we were kicked out. Fortunately my batch mate and friend Mr. K. Yogavanam's transfer to Jaffna created a vacancy at Gampola Vidyalaya. Having a similar qualification I acted swiftly and filled that vacancy.

Meanwhile I got a transfer for my wife Thilagam from Uduvil Manns School to Gampola Balika Vidyalaya. It is a bilingual school on the summit of a hill. Thilagam had to climb several steps to reach the summit. Son Aravinthan was only one and a half years old then. Life was very pleasant for us as everything was available. We attended prayers every Friday at the Murugan and Ambal temples. But with the arrival of daughter Bamini we found it difficult to manage and so we decided to return to Jaffna. Having served in the outstations for several years including difficult areas I was eligible for transfer to Jaffna and citing my transfer Thilagam too was eligible and so both of us returned to Jaffna to serve our children in our home town till we hung up our boots.

Welamboda Muslim Maha Vidyalaya



SPECIAL FEATURE



Valluvar's Views

Effective Medical Treatment



- pharmeasy.in

By: J.A. Rajah

The skillful treatment of a disease consists in identifying the symptoms and causes, as well as possible remedies before choosing the best.

*'Noi naadi noymudal naadi athu thanikkum,
Vaai naadi vaippacheyal'*

The systematic analysis of the causes of a disease should be thoroughly looked into before arriving at the correct medicine. In Jaffna, I came across a doctor who asked several questions about the symptoms/causes leading to the sickness before prescribing the medicine. Excess or deficiency of the three humors (wind, bile, and phlegm) could cause disease; which begins the humors as listed

by experts. If one takes food again, only after the earlier meal has been well digested, no medicine is needed to ensure good health. After digesting what has been eaten earlier, have food again in the right measure; moderation in eating is the secret of longevity. After making sure that the previous meal has been digested, when one is really hungry, have only such food as will agree with the system. Socrates the world's greatest thinker asserted: 'The best sauce for food is hunger'. If one has only the food that agrees with his system and limits the intake, his healthy life will not suffer any harm.

'Maarupadu illatha undi maruthu unnin,

Uoorupadu illai uyirkku'.

The man, who exercises conscious restraint, will retain the power of eating, so too the unrestrained eater will invite disease. The man, who eats beyond the limit of his digestive powers, will be subject to all kinds of ailments. In prescribing the treatment, the good physician considers the capacity of his patient, the progress of the disease and the season. The patient, the physician, the remedy and the attendant are the four elements that go to make up effective medical treatment. Even in the matter of Coronavirus, all situational and incidental factors have to be scrutinized before arriving at the proper medical treatment.

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SPECIAL FEATURE



Romantic Pairs of Yesteryear Tamil Films

By: J.A. Rajah

Romantic pairs of yesteryears are worthy of remembering. Sivaji Ganesan came into the forefront after acting as the vociferous hero in 'Parasakthi'. Later he started acting as a romantic hero with Padmini one of the Travancore sisters. They were well received by the Tamil audience and they acted in many films where they were put together as the romantic pair. Being a prolific dancer, Padmini excelled in Thillana mohanambal which brought out her talents in dancing as well as shaping up well as a romantic heroine. As there was an overwhelming demand for the duo, they enacted in many films of the fifties and the sixties. Vietnam Veedu, Deivappiravi, Kulama Kunama, Panam, Ethirparathathu, and Senthamarai are some of the films where Sivaji Ganesan acted very well and with great success.

Gemini Ganesan and Saroja Devi became very famous after the film 'Kalyana-parisu'. It was film studded with several lilting songs that captivated the minds of the audience in a great way. The notable songs were, 'Vaadikkai Maranthath eno', 'Aasaiyinale manam', 'Unnaikandu naan vaada', and 'Thullatha manamum thullum'. The songs were sung by A.M. Rajah and P. Sushila. The film paved the way for many other romantic films

the story. Udumalai Narayana Kavi and Ghantasala did excellent job as composer and vocalist respectively. Nageswara Rao as the Romeo type lover and Savitri as his Juliet excelled throughout the film. The songs- Oh!, Oh! Devadas in the younger days to "Ualge Maayam" at the end added meaning and realism to a film that captivated the audience in a great way. It ran for 68 weeks continually in a theatre in Tamilnadu. Kamalhassan, who had a great admiration for the film later produced and acted in a film with a similar theme entitled 'Vazhlve Mayam'. Nageswara Rao and Savitri were paired together in several other films but Devadas is still remembered as his most an outstanding romantic film. Dilip Kumar, the famous Hindi actor said that the role of Devadas was enacted by other actors too but none can surpass the excellent acting of Nageswara Rao.

MGR and Jayalalitha acted together as romantic pair in several films of various types. Romance and bravery were two traits that were given prominence in Sangam literature and many of MGR films highlighted these traits in their themes. 'Ayirathil Oruvan' was the first film in which they started acting together. Their films were popular mainly due to action and valor though romance



Nageswara Rao and Savitri in Devadas (1953)

the film. All songs were sung by Ghantasala and Bhanumathi. 'Jevithamellam Sweetakach cheyum prema nightingale', 'Inbakkaviyam aahum Vazhlve kaathalinala', "Naan konda kaathal ivaru than", "Valvellam palanathe", 'Kalynae namma kalyaname', 'Aaha naan adainthen inbame'" - are all expressive sweetly rendered songs. The songs made it a wonderful romantic film. ANR's films were lucky in that they had good music score-"Music is the food of love". Nageswarao Rao and Bhanumathi acted in several romantic films like

In times of M.K.T, films ran merely for the excellence of classical music. M.K.T and T.R. Rajakumari were paired together in films like Pavalakkodi, Haridas, Shyamala and Amarakavi. The song- 'Shyamala, shayamala-en jeeva priye shyamala'-still rings in my memory as a vibrant romantic song sung by M.K.T in his brilliant energetic tone which captured the hearts of all his fans. Haridas is a mega film which had several popular songs like-'annaiyum thanthaiyum thane' and 'Krishna, muhuntha, murare'. T.R. Mahalingam and T.R. Rajaumari were featured in similar films.

Mutturaman and Devika acted in several romantic films in the sixties and seventies. Some of them were Sumaithangi, Nenjil oor alayam, Vazhlkkaippadagu, Engiruntho Vantharl and Pazhlani. Mutturaman acted as the cancer ridden husband of Devika, cured by her lover played by Kalyan Kumar. The songs in the film were very popular. They were written by Kannadason. 'Muthana Muthallavo', "Sonnathu neethana", "Engiruthaalum Vazhlka", and 'Oruvar Varlum aalayam' were some of the memorable songs. The film was directed by C.V. Sridhar. The pair acted in several other films that were well received by the audience.

The Tamil films were a great source of entertainment for the middle and lower classes. In Jaffna cinema theatres become fully crowded in weekends for both matinee shows as well as the two evening (6.30 and 9.30 pm) shows-though the addicts suffered from the miseries of bug-bites creeping from their benches in the gallery. The gallery ticket which cost only 60 cents- at that time- was easy on the purse of the low income groups and they never missed a new film that was screened. People who work hard in the week days went to films in the weekends as a way of entertaining themselves.



where Sarojah Devi and Gemini Ganesan were paired together. Malathi, Kairasi, Ellorum Innaddu Mannar, Vaazhla Vaitha Deivam and Panama Paasama are some of the films where these two did well to carry on the name and fame they achieved in 'Kalyana Parisu'.

Nageswara Rao and Savitri shone as outstanding romantic pair after their excellent performance in Devadas that created a great impact on the audience in terms of acting and realism. It was a tragedy illuminated by supremely expressive songs that depicted the characters and development of every mood of

did play a significant role. They were both energetic and vibrant. 'Matukkara Velan', Engal Deivam, Kanavan, Kannan en kaathalan, Rickshawkaran and Kudiyirunthakovil were some of the most popular films. They were all enacted between 1965 and 1973.

Bhanumathi was an actress and producer and she proved to be an expert at romantic films. Nageswara Rao and Bhanumathi were put together in "Kaathal" - an excellent romantic film. All the songs in the film were sweet and meaningfully rendered. Bhanumathi is a singer and she wrote the story and directed

Laila-majnu and Missiamma. ANR and Lalitha were featured as love pair in 'Oor iravu' acting for the song 'Thunbam Nerkaiyil' which brought three Tamil stalwarts of those days together - C.N. Annaduari as story writer, M. Karunanithy as script writer and Bharathi-Thasan as song writer respectively. Apart from this, his classic performance in Anarkali with Anjalidevi, easily make him the most attractive romantic hero of the South Indian screen with his cool temperament, meaningful gestures, endearing looks and realistic acting.



Schools Should Not Take Place in the Evening



assignments, enjoy personal time, and be in bed at a reasonable hour.

In conclusion, school should not take place in the evening because it would not encourage students to be productive. The change in the school schedule will not only affect students, but caregivers as well. It would reduce the amount of time students would have for themselves, friends, and family. It would be more productive and efficient for everyone if school continued to be scheduled in the morning.

- learningliftoff.com

By: Mithusha Partheepan

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic and the shutting of public schools, teens dreaded waking up in the early morning to attend school. They would complain about the early start times and wish school would take place in the evening so they could sleep in. School taking place in the evening sounds appealing at first. Being able to sleep in, enjoy slow mornings and laze about is a much more attractive option than going to school. However, there are many cons to shifting school hours to the evening, such as difficulty with transportation, effects on extracurricular activities, and a decrease in productivity. Attending school in the morning is much more beneficial and efficient for everyone.

Students going to school in the morning would encourage them to be productive because they have just slept and are now fully recharged for the day. The brain is the most active after waking up in the morning so it is the optimal time to be productive and learn. The morning is the best time for retaining information. If students were to attend school in the evening, their attention spans would be shorter and their brains' performance would be reduced.

One of the biggest concerns about changing school start

times concerns parent schedules. When school begins in the morning, most parents will see their child off before going to work. If the school districts change the start time to later in the day, parents would not be able to drive their kids to school and still get to work on time. This is an issue, especially for parents of young children as younger children need constant supervision as they get ready for school and wait for the school bus. For teens, later school times may lead to an increase in responsibility as parents may have to go to work before school begins. This means that teens will have to supervise themselves, make food before class, and tend to younger siblings if they have any.

Some students, parents, and administrators are concerned about later school start times because of the possible impact on extracurricular activities. Students who participate in sports, music groups, service learning clubs, and other organizations typically meet for several hours after school. If school districts change their start times, these activities will be pushed to even later in the day. This would make it difficult for students to participate and still have enough time to study, complete homework



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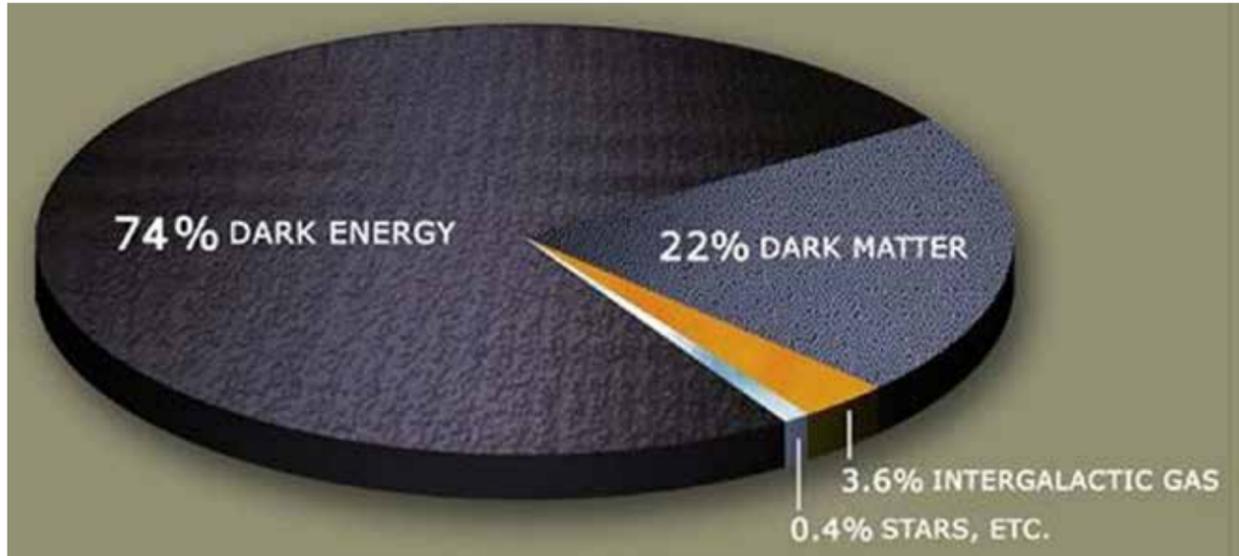
THE MAJOR UNRESOLVED MYSTERIES IN PHYSICS

Solving the Most Challenging Problems Caused by Nature is not Fun

By OUE Research Institute

The British physicist Lord Kelvin is said to have declared in 1990: "There is nothing new to be discovered in physics now. All that remains is more and more precise measurement." Quantum

directly or indirectly. The Dark matter's existence and properties are inferred from its gravitational effects radiation. This shadowy substance is thought to penetrate the outskirts of galaxies and may be composed of "weakly interacting massive particles (WIMPs)." There are many detectors on



mechanics and Einstein's theory of relativity had revolutionized the field within three decades. Today, no physicist would try to declare that our physical knowledge of the universe is near completion. On the contrary, each discovery seems to unlock Pandora's box of even more significant, even more, profound physics questions. These are our tools for the most profound open questions of all. You will learn about parallel universes, why time

the lookout for WIMPs in the world. So far, not one has been found. However, one recent study suggests dark matter might form long, fine-grained streams throughout the universe and that such streams might radiate out from Earth-like hairs.

Matter & Antimatter

There is much more matter than its oppositely charged and oppositely-spinning twin, antimatter.



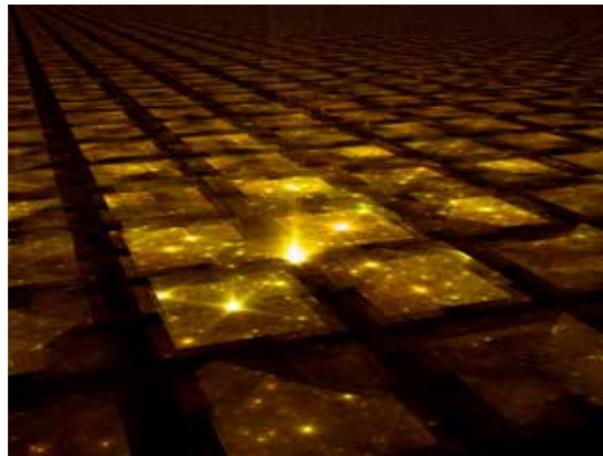
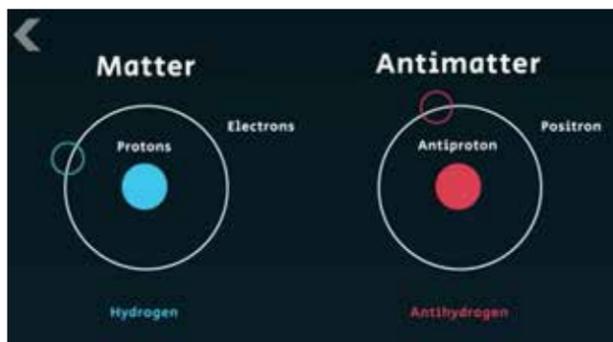
seems to move in one direction only, and why we don't understand disorder.

Dark Energy

No matter how astrophysicists crunch the numbers, the universe does not add up. Even though gravity is pulling inward in space-time, it keeps expanding outward faster and faster. To account for this, astrophysicists have proposed an invisible agent that counteracts gravity by pushing space-time apart. They call it dark energy. In the most widely accepted dark energy model, it is a "cosmological constant": an inherent property of space itself, which has "negative pressure" driving space apart. As space expands, more space is created, and with it, more dark energy. Based on the observed rate of expansion, scientists know that the sum of all dark energy is more than 70% of the universe. Unfortunately, no one knows how to look for it.

Dark Matter

Over 80% of the matter does not emit or absorb light in the universe. "Dark matter" cannot be seen



Therefore, one expects the universe would treat matter and antimatter symmetrically. So that, at the moment of the Big Bang, equal amounts of matter and antimatter should have been produced. If that had happened, there would have been the destruction of both: Protons would have canceled with antiprotons, electrons with anti-electrons, neutrons with antineutrons, and so on. But, for some reason, there was an excess matter that did not get destroyed. For this, there is no accepted explanation. The differences between matter and antimatter, announced in August 2015, confirm they are mirror images of each other, providing exactly zero new paths toward understanding the mystery of why the matter is far more common.



Arrow of Time

Time moves forward because the Universe property called "entropy," roughly defined as the level of disorder, only increases. Therefore, there is no way to reverse the entropy after it has occurred. Furthermore, there are more disordered arrangements of particles than there are ordered arrangements. So as things change, they tend to fall into disarray. The underlying question is, why was entropy so low in the past? Universe so ordered at its beginning, when a massive amount of energy was crammed together in a small amount of space.

Parallel Universes

Astrophysical data suggests space-time might be "flat," rather than curved, and therefore that it goes on forever. Thus, the region we can see as "the universe" is one patch in a vast "quilted multiverse." At the same time, the laws of quantum mechanics direct that there are only a finite number of possible particle configurations within each cosmic piece. So, with an infinite number of cosmic pieces, the particle arrangements within them are forced to repeat. As a result, there are infinitely many parallel universes. Cosmic patches the same as ours, and pieces that differ by just one particle's position, patches that differ by two particles' positions, and so on. Is there something wrong with that logic? And if it is true, how might we ever detect the presence of parallel universes?

Fate of the Universe

The fate of the cosmos strongly depends on a factor of unknown value: Ω , a measure of the density of matter and energy throughout the cosmos. If Ω is greater than 1, then space-time would be "closed"



like the surface of an enormous sphere. If there is no dark energy, such a universe would ultimately stop expanding and would instead start contracting, eventually collapsing in on itself in an event dubbed the "Big Crunch." On the other hand, if the universe is closed but there is dark energy, the spherical universe would expand forever.

Alternatively, if Ω is less than 1, the geometry of space would be "open" like the surface of a seat. In this case, its ultimate fate is the "Big Freeze" followed by the "Big Rip." First, the universe's outward acceleration would tear galaxies and stars apart, leaving all material frozen and isolated. Next, the acceleration would become so strong that it would overcome the effects of the forces that hold atoms together, and everything would be pulled apart. If $\Omega = 1$, the universe would be flat, stretching like an infinite plane in all directions. If there is no dark energy, such a planar universe will grow forever but at a continuously decelerating rate, approaching a halt. If there is dark energy, the flat universe eventually will experience runaway expansion leading to the Big Rip. Regardless of how it plays out, the universe is dying, which was discussed in detail by astrophysicist Paul Sutter in December 2015.

There are still many questions beyond the Standard Model of physics. Under this article, we looked at dark energy, dark matter, matter and antimatter, the arrow of time, and parallel universes. The list is restricted to my favorites, but there are many more than 20 mysteries we can look at in future articles.



Estate Planning Strategies - The basics and beyond

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

None of us likes to think about our end of days, but we should if we want our legacy to be passed on as we wish, to ensure our family is protected, and to limit the taxes levied against our estate. Good financial planning must include providing for your loved ones and ensuring they are taken care of after your death. It should also include taking the right steps to ensure that your wishes for your finances and medical treatment will be respected even if you become incapacitated. That's why estate planning is so important.

The basics:

A Will is the foundation of any estate plan. It designates how your estate should be distributed according to your documented wishes. If you die without a will (i.e. intestate), provincial legislation will determine how your estate is distributed amongst your heirs, which may not be consistent with your intentions. Suitable arrangements for minor children and other dependents could be made in a Will and in particular guardians could be named for them. Having a properly drafted will minimizes delays, costs and the complexities of passing on your estate. It reduces taxes to the extent possible, in some cases by creating Testamentary trusts for beneficiaries who are in higher tax brackets. It is not absolutely necessary to

have a lawyer prepare your Will, but it is highly recommended. You should also create a Living Will and a Power of Attorney that designates person(s) of your choice to make financial and health related decisions on your behalf should you become too ill to do so on your own. Generally speaking the purchase of Will kits and Power of Attorney kits at various retail stores or on line is NOT recommended, as it is easy to make mistakes. A holograph Will is one prepared by you in your own handwriting and signed by you without witnesses. Such a Will can raise many problems and should be avoided except in an emergency. The bottom line: When it comes to Wills, professional advice is well worth the cost.

Beyond basics:

Probate or not? Probate is the process by which your will is validated by a court with fees paid to your provincial government usually calculated on the net fair market value of the assets in your estate. Although reducing probate fees may be desirable, avoiding probate through the use of strategies such as beneficiary designations and joint ownerships can lead to other problems.

Set up a trust: A trust specifies a trustee who will manage the assets so long as the assets are held by the

trust. Although it is possible to set up a trust during your lifetime, most people set up trusts in their Wills. A trust set up in your Will is known as a Testamentary trust, and it can serve several purposes, including maintaining control over the assets until certain beneficiaries are mature enough to manage them, and providing certain tax benefits to high income beneficiaries.

You should review and revise your Will when:

- your marital status has changed;
- there has been a major tax change;
- birth of a child;
- a beneficiary dies or becomes disabled;
- your business succession plan has changed;
- you move to a different province, territory or country;
- your financial position changes significantly;
- you want to change your Execu-

tor(s) or Guardian (s)

Your personal estate plan strategies depend on your financial situation and the rules in your province. Wills become more complex if you own a business, are in a blended family, want to set up trust, have specific bequest objectives, or want to structure your assets to minimize taxes and probate fees. A qualified financial advisor and lawyer can help ensure your legacy is left as you wish while limiting probate costs and taxes.

Disclaimer:

This report specifically written and published as a general source of information only, and is not intended as a solicitation for mortgage or to buy/sell specific investments or insurance, nor is it intended to provide investment advice. For more information on this topic, please contact me.

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Joint Credit Card Debt after Divorce or Separation, who is Responsible to Pay??

Divorce can be a long, as well as a difficult procedure. You require to make decisions concerning whatever from ordinary details to highly charged topics. That consists of debt that you tackled jointly with your spouse. Do not simply presume that your divorce level will divide financings up the means you anticipate. It's crucial to take steps to safeguard on your own from future financial difficulties and tension.

Divorce Arrangement vs. Financing Arrangement

First, know that your lending institutions might not acknowledge everything you agree to throughout the divorce procedure. One partner may be responsible for settling funding after divorce, even joint financial obligation, such as a loan for both companions. But that just implies they are expected to care for the financial debt; they may not follow through with paying.

Who authorized the financing arrangement? If your name is detailed on financing, you are 100% responsible for the financial debt from the loan provider's viewpoint as a customer or co-signer. Also, if you are divorced as well as your former

partner agreed to take care of the debt, your credit gets on the line if your ex-spouse defaults, as well, as you're also responsible for any kind of late fees and collection expenses.

Your credit reports: Lenders possibly do not even recognize when you got divorced, and unfortunately, they are not considerate to individual struggles. Altering your address, changing your name, as well as alerting lenders of your divorce with the information of your arrangement will not obtain you off the hook for finance. Lenders will continue to report financial activity to credit history bureaus, which will impact your debt reports. Any kind of missed repayments will create a drop in your credit scores.

To put it another way, your ex-spouse could be lawfully responsible for the financial debt; however, you are still in charge of the "lending" or the account till it's taken care of.

Shield Your Credit Scores

There are two methods to keep your credit scores risk-free after divorce. Discuss these techniques with your attorney prior to taking any type of action:

- Get your name off the loan by refinancing or having your name removed.
- Organize to pay the lending institution in full.

Getting Rid of Yourself from Loans

It is ideal for separating on your own from common financings that your ex is meant to repay. Even if you rely on the other person completely, they could pass away or come to be impaired temporarily, placing the debt back on your shoulders, although life, as well as impairment insurance that you own, could resolve that issue.

Most loan providers will not just take your name off lending after divorce. It is possible, and it never harms to ask, yet do not get your hopes up. The financing was approved, trusting both of your incomes as well as looking at both of your credit ratings. It could have been your credit report that quickened the funding approval, which would make loan providers also less inclined to allow you off the hook. If the loan provider does consider this possibility, they will probably require assessing the staying borrower's debt, as well as income, before eliminating your name.

Any questions please visit
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SPECIAL FEATURE

Canadian - Sri Lankan Tamil woman Pusphalatha Mathanalingam

WINS OHS AWARD FOR 2021

Compiled by: S. Raymond Rajabalan

Pusphalatha Mathanalingam, a Tamil woman from North Sri Lanka who arrived in Canada 20 years ago as a war-affected refugee has been chosen as one of the winners for 2021 awards by Occupational Health and Safety magazine of Canada.

Mathanalingam is among the 40 women chosen by this reputed journal as the winners of Women in Safety awards for 2021.

Below is Pusphalatha's experience in her own words of how she single handedly faced great challenges while looking after her children as well as her elderly parents.

"I was a young girl when I first saw someone getting buried alive. The Sri Lankan army had dug pits about half a kilometre away from my house in plain sight. Every so often, I would hear the blood-curdling screams of men, women, and even little children being dragged out to the pits. I could only listen helplessly as the muffled cries of the buried victims were lost into the night. The 30-year civil war in Sri Lanka had birthed many dreadful moments but it's these types of moments that gradually built the mindset and resilience to overcome any challenge inside of me.

I came to Canada about 20 years later as a war-refugee and sole-support parent. This meant that I was in charge of raising my children, paying the bills and putting food on the table in a new country all by myself. I was also responsible for taking care of my sick parents. My father is a type two diabetic with Alzheimer's disease and my mother suffers from depression. On too many occasions, I would return from a long day at work or school only to find out that one of my parents



Pusphalatha Mathanalingam
Health and Safety Consultant



needed to be rushed to the hospital. There were definitely moments when the financial and emotional burdens felt too heavy, but whenever this

happened I always kept coming back to the same belief; I didn't come this far to only come this far. I fought my way out of hell-like conditions in Sri Lanka and I couldn't put all that blood, sweat, and tears to waste.

After years of all-nighters and relentless working, I eventually graduated from Ryerson University but even after acquiring a degree, struggled to find work and bounced around low-paying jobs for years. At this point, I could barely afford basic groceries such as milk and bread so providing for my ill parents and young children by myself seemed like an impossible task. After getting laid off as a cashier in a supermarket, I decided that I didn't want my paycheck coming from anyone else's hands anymore. That's when I decided to become an entrepreneur and start my own safety business. For years, I've built my business up and am now finally able to live life comfortably on my own terms. Through my business, I've been able to provide freedom and stability to my family for the first time in our lives.

My name is Pushpha and this was the story of how entrepreneurship, the safety industry, and dog-like perseverance changed my life for the better."

Armed with a Bachelor of Applied Science (BASC) degree in Occupational Health and Safety from Ryerson University, she started her own business in 2012 in Oakville Ontario and is presently the President and CEO of **ONTARIO OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY CONSULTANTS (OOHSC)**

ABOUT OOHSC

OOHSC is an Ontario based safety management consultancy company. Its primary function is to help industrial and small/medium business establishments to successfully manage the safety needs noticed in their workplaces.

OOHSC primarily offers safety related training programs and systems that allow industrial & small/medium business companies to fulfill the workplace safety requirements in Canada.

OOHSC provides customized training for its clients' needs through Canada-Ontario Job Grant (COJG). COJG creates opportunities for employers to invest in their workforce.

The courses offered by OOHSC provide both employers and employees the knowledge and how to implement safety practices in the workplace.

OOHSC provides training certificates for each course through authorized health and safety professionals

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Email: ohsontario@gmail.com

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Karnan is as entertaining as how it intersperses action and drama with its symbolism and social message

By **Harrish Thirukumaran**

Free and liberated. It was the last straw as Karnan furiously charged towards and destroyed a bus. It is shot in parallel with a donkey running freely through a picturesque grassy landscape until it stops and watches this event unfold with a mysterious young-looking figure. This figure has the head of a deity. This was after their ankles were untied by Karnan. In a way, they shared a bond in how they were both restricted by external forces. For Karnan, it has been his people urging him to not disrupt this complex

system of caste oppression they suffered. The string tied around the donkey's ankles prevented them from moving served as a recurring motif. It represented how Karnan knew this bus and other behaviours that he and his people were clearly acts of injustice that he could not do anything about.

Karnan, starring Dhanush as the title character himself, is about an enraged young man from the village of Podiyankulam who bravely fights for the right and dignity of his people. They are systematically oppressed on the basis of their low caste that was and still is an ongoing social issue in India. At the centre of this caste

conflict is how they are purposely denied basic necessities such as a bus stop for their village as one of the other motifs in the film. Although mundane at first glance, it was really a ladder of opportunity for Karnan and his fellow villagers. It was a key to accessing education and employment across Tamil Nadu and India for that matter in bettering their livelihoods both socially and economically. Directed by Mari Selvaraj, this picture is loosely inspired from the 1995 Kodiyankulam violence against a Dalit village in Tamil Nadu.



One could not help but point out the sheer irony in the police station setting where some from Karnan's village were brought to after this bus vandalism incident. These villagers included Vadamaalaiyan, played by Yogi Babu. There were portraits of B.R Ambedkar and Subramania Bharathi, who were important historical figures in India. They were fierce activists against the caste system and discrimination of the Dalit people. Yet, Vadamaalaiyan and the other villagers were detained unlawfully and subjected to beatings by the police. It was not for the bus incident per se, but simply because they chose to bear the names of certain Hindu gods despite being of lower caste status.

There is even a close up shot of the BR Ambedkar portrait

as this police station is being torn apart. Karnan and some of his fellow villagers come to the rescue to return this violence as his acts here and throughout the film emulate the warrior character, Karnan from the Hindu epic, the Mahabharata. He serves as the God looking over his village, especially in their hour of need as referenced in the opening scene and song of the film. This shot depicts, in my view, how ingrained this system is in Indian society and how it must be disrupted so to speak in order to move to a better state of affairs for all. It was an event that triggered Vadamaalaiyan to lend his support to Karnan in liberating their people. It enlightened him profoundly after being among a few village voices against Karnan calling out and cracking down on

caste oppression.

Among these supporters was also Draupathi played by Rajisha Vijayan, who was a love interest to Karnan that was at times interesting but also not well developed. Though one could interpret how her own inner conflict straddled between the conservative sense of her brother, Vadamaalaiyan and doing what was right as seen with Karnan.

Nonetheless, the film is as entertaining as how it interspersed its action and drama into its symbolism and social message within its 160-minute run time. It is now available on Amazon Prime.



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.

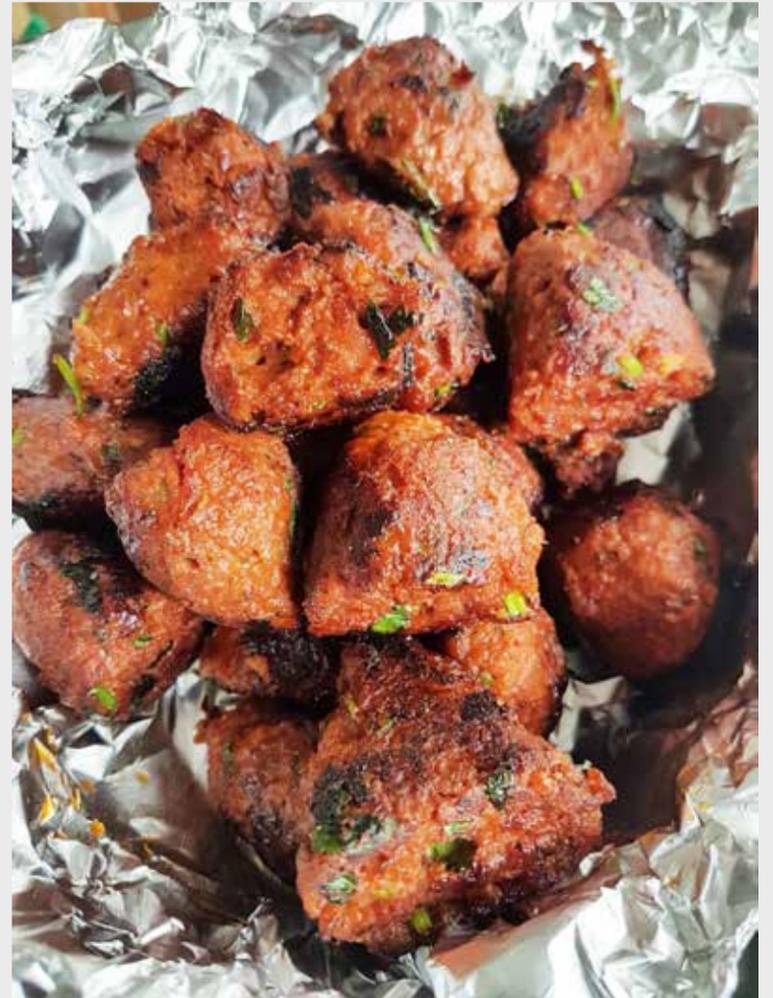
Rajini, lives in Toronto and has a background in psychology. Her speciality is in Tamil food from around the world, catch up on her meal ideas on Instagram @tamil_food.

Vegan Turkish-style kebab bites

Lock down may not be over yet, but at least barbeque season is finally here and to help you enjoy the summer, here is a meat free recipe for you. This is best eaten the next day, so all the flavours marry well. Fight the temptation, and wait for the day, it will be worth it!

Ingredients:

- ✓ 1 pack (approx. 454g) of Beyond Meat Mince
- ✓ 1 medium red onion
- ✓ 5 cloves of garlic
- ✓ 1 thumb-sized piece of ginger
- ✓ 1 small handful of chopped cilantro
- ✓ 2 tbsp of fine pul biber (fine Turkish chilli flakes)
- ✓ 1½ tsp of salt
- ✓ Pinch of ground black pepper
- ✓ Breadcrumbs (detailed below)
- ✓ 1½ tsp dried mint
- ✓ 1½ tsp dried oregano
- ✓ 1 tbsp sumac
- ✓ A drizzle of olive oil



Method:

Making breadcrumbs:

Toast 1 slice of bread to a golden colour, let it cool and blitz to a breadcrumb consistency. Set aside until needed (you could use store bought if you must)

The rest:

Blend the onion, garlic cloves and ginger to a purée and add to a mixing bowl along with all the other ingredients, including the breadcrumbs. Mix well for one minute and form small bite-sized pieces and set aside on greaseproof paper. In a frying pan, drizzle some olive oil and fry the pieces until slightly blackened on the outside. Make sure you turn the pieces constantly for even cooking.

Once cooked, let it cool and keep in the fridge overnight. Best eaten the next day, either warmed in the oven, microwave or on the stove top. Serve with couscous, salad, halloumi and all the sauces you like!

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- 13 Feb Nasi Goreng
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- 27 Mar Kurma
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Jaffna- Sri Lanka's Iconic Temple

Nallur Kandaswamy



Nallur Kandaswamy Temple - Drawings and paintings by Pirunthajini Pirabakaran

By Thulasi Muttulingam

Adoration of Lord Murugan is deeply enmeshed in the Sri Lankan psyche – among the indigenous Veddhas, Sinhalese and Tamils alike. The ever-youthful divine princeling is a much loved deity on these shores. Particularly as he's supposed to have wed a Sri Lankan indigenous girl, Valli, a Veddha chieftain's daughter. In Sinhala Buddhism, he's a much loved guardian deity of the island nation. In Tamil Hinduism, he's an accessible Adonis who settled down with a local girl. The local girl being an indigenous Veddha, the Veddha community worship him too and run one of the most important shrines to him in the country in the hilly, forested terrain of Kataragama, Sri Lanka. Alongside Kataragama which draws pilgrims on pada yatra (foot pilgrimage) from around the country, are yet many other shrines to the resplendent princeling dotting the island. The Tamil enclave of Jaffna comes in for its fair share of well-known Murugan shrines too.

Of these, one of the most well-known identity markers of Jaffna, widely used by the Sri Lanka Tourism Promotion Bureau as an emblem of the region, is the Nallur Kandaswamy Temple. It shows up well in promotional photos with its unique façade and is thus a well-known feature in Jaffna Postcards. People from around the world familiar with the area or visited it even once recognize the famed iconic temple instantly. It's a beacon to millions with its Tamil lettered 'Om Muruga' flashing Gopuram at its main entrance ushering in the faithful and the culturally curious

alike, from both local and international shores. In the heart of Jaffna city, surrounded by pristine white sands and an ever elaborately evolving temple structure, adored by millions, Lord Murugan reigns supreme.

Jaffna is often associated with Sri Lanka's long drawn-out civil war. Even now, a decade past the end of that 30-year war, that's what the area is best known for outside its own environs. Perhaps fitting then that its most iconic deity is the Hindu God of war. Locally however, he's known more as a lover than a warrior. So much so that he became immortalized by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in one of their promotional songs for seemingly all the wrong reasons - as per the LTTE anyway. They critiqued him for cavorting with Valli instead of lending his support to their cause. Might have been an oblique reference to the temple management keeping well clear of politics and the ethnicized conflict. Nevertheless, Lord Murugan isn't held by his adoring Tamil public to have taken part in the war. His adoring Sinhala public don't think he took partisan sides in it either. Vishnu by the by is held to have done (on the side of the Sinhalese), but that's another story.

Skanda / Murugan in the meantime is worshipped all over Sri Lanka as a cherubic mischievous child, a handsome stylish prince, a romantic prankster lover but not as a God of war. Every November, for the Kanda Shasti festival which celebrates the main events in the life of this God, the Sooran Por (his famous war

against the Asura king Soorapadman) is enacted – but the people are much more invested in his subsequent romance with Valli on Sri Lankan shores and the placation of first wife Deivayanai directly after when he comes home with his second wife. Bigamy for an ordinary man would be frowned upon but Murugan returning to his palace with his local conquest to find the doors locked to him by the first wife gains a lot of sympathy – every year there is much investment in his long drawn out romance and ultimate conjugal bliss with both wives after sending emissaries including finally Lord Vishnu to placate his first wife.

And that's how he's widely worshipped around the nation here. The handsome God astride a peacock, with a light-skinned wife, the Goddess Deivayani on his right and the dark-skinned tribal wife, the Goddess Valli on his left. In Nallur though, he's worshipped as a Vel (his spear). This carries with it its own history and an ongoing feud on agamic versus non-agamic worship forms culturally cleaving as well as entrenching the Temple's foremost place in Jaffna Tamils' consciousness.

History of the temple

Nallur Kandaswamy Temple is believed by Jaffna's Tamils to be one of their most historic temples. They trace it back a 1000 years or more via popular imagination. The current edifice however is only 286 years old. It was built to commemorate the historical memory of



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the ancient temple that people remembered via popular folklore as once standing in the vicinity. At the time the current temple was built, Jaffna was under Dutch rule and had had all its temples razed to the ground more than a century prior by the invading Portuguese in 1620.

All precolonial religious structures had long been demolished by that time and first Catholicism under the Portuguese and then Calvinism under the Dutch had been forced upon the people. Popular folkloric memory is still rampant with tales of how people secretly worshipped their Hindu Gods. Symbolism took the place of statues and so trident and vel worship became common among the masses – explained away as gardening tools, stuck under trees to the colonizers.

Towards the end of the Dutch period however, the governors became a little more lenient in allowing locals to worship their own Gods. The Dutch governor's wife had favoured one of the neighbourhood children, and brought him up as a protégé at her residence in the Dutch Fort. When he grew up and wished to build a Shiva temple, he was granted permission – although being the first temple to come up again in over a century, he had to employ subterfuge to open it up for public worship. As per his descendants citing family lore, permission had been granted to their ancestor to maintain the temple only for his own worship within his residence. Even this was a massive first in the region. Thereafter he incrementally sought permission for friends and family to visit the temple and thence eventually went on to make it public. This was Vaithilinga Chettiar whose descendants still run the Vannarpannai Sivan Kovil, now an archeological protected monument of Sri Lanka. Once that temple began to go public, a shroff in the Dutch administrative service, Ragunatha Maapana Mudaliyar sought permission to rebuild the historic Nallur Kandaswamy temple as well.

The ideation and veneration for that temple was still strong in folk memory but its exact precolonial location had by then been forgotten. Based on approximations of folk memory, the Mudaliyar had selected a region in the general area of the old Nallur Kingdom - which had been a Muslim settlement till just a few years prior - and placed a vel with a small edifice there. The original structure was quite humble, made of stone and a Cadjan roof. The building of these two temples marked the beginning of Hindu revivalism in the region which had been at least nominally Christian under threat of the sword for over a century.

Current scholarship estimates the original Nallur temple's location to be where an Anglican St. James church is currently standing about a 100 meters away. It was originally a Catholic church under the Portuguese, then a Calvinist church under the Dutch and eventually became an Anglican church under the British, which still stands. Roadwork in the 1970s led to the discovery of underlying structures in this area leading scholars to estimate it to be the likely site of the original Nallur Kandaswamy temple.

As of now, three major religions are united in the quest for the historical Nallur – and settle their differences amicably and even respectfully. The church held to be the site of the original temple, and the current temple situated amidst an old Muslim settlement, adjoining a Sufi tomb worshipped until recently by Muslims. Nevertheless, due to the decades long war, there is wariness in discussing what is well known historic as well as current memory in case it broils over into religious or ethnic conflict.

The current temple, now possibly in its fifth avatar, is built upon a historical memory of a kingly seat that was sacked several times and then rebuilt in both precolonial and colonial history.

The earliest known reference to the temple within Sri Lanka are from Sinhalese sources, the Rajavaliya and Kokila Sandesa dating to the 15th



Nallur Kandaswamy Temple

and 17th centuries respectively. They refer to a Sapumal Kumaraya, who later ruled the country from the Kotte Kingdom as King Buvaneka Bahu VI as the builder of the Nallur Kandaswamy Temple. He is recorded as having warred against the then independent Jaffna Kingdom from 1447 – 1450, eventually winning the war leading to the Jaffna king escaping to South India with his family. As such he is said to have sacked their capital city Nallur, then rebuilt it along with the Nallur Kandaswamy temple – the Sinhalese sources however are not clear on whether he was

“ Since many of Jaffna's own records were destroyed during colonial rule – or else taken away to Portuguese and Dutch archives from where they are yet to be retrieved, apart from this stone inscription found in Jaffna, Sinhalese and Tamil historical documents written in a much later period circa the 15th to 17th centuries are the only available documents tracing the temple's history at the moment. ”

responsible for rebuilding an existing temple that he had sacked, or built a new one. He ruled Jaffna for 17 years before relocating to Kotte to claim his kingdom there- at which point Jaffna's exiled royal family returned again to claim their kingdom.

When the Portuguese a few centuries later destroyed the area's temples, they used the dismantled stones to build their fort on the coast, which still stands. Archeological research around this fort in 1971 yielded a stone with an inscription from Rajendra Chola dated to 1030 AD recording his contributions to a temple in the area of Nallur, Jaffna – but does not specify whether it was the Nallur Kandaswamy Temple. Scholars estimate it likely could have been as it was the most important temple for Kings of the area – including when they invaded, as in the case of Rajendra Chola. Nallur was the capital city of Jaffna Kingdom and the kandaswamy temple the primary shrine worshipped by the sovereigns.

Since many of Jaffna's own records were destroyed during colonial rule – or else taken away to Portuguese and Dutch archives from where they are yet to be retrieved, apart from this

stone inscription found in Jaffna, Sinhalese and Tamil historical documents written in a much later period circa the 15th to 17th centuries are the only available documents tracing the temple's history at the moment. The Sinhalese sources predating currently available Tamil sources attributing the building of the temple to King Buvaneka Bahu VI can be a tetchy subject in the country. Like everything else it has become ethnicized and politicized through a contemporary lens which does not reflect medieval Sri Lankan reality. The issue in contention being that if King Buvaneka Bahu VI built the Nallur Kandaswamy temple, it is of Sinhala origin and not Tamil.

King Buvaneka Bahu VI however was not Sinhalese. He was the adopted son of the previous king of Kotte and various sources place him as either an East Sri Lankan Tamil or Tamil mercenary from South India. He is known as Chenpaka Perumal in Tamil sources and Sapumal kumaraya in Sinhala sources – Tamilized and Sinhalized versions of the same name based on the fragrant yellow Magnolia champaca flower from which he drew his name. A 17th century Sinhalese manuscript, the Mukkara Hatana detailing the exploits of the karava / karaiyar caste who were once naval cum military mercenaries employed by Sri Lankan kings, claims him as one of their own. His father as per this document was a Tamil karaiyar chief called Manikka Thalaivan who was killed in battle and thus he came to be adopted by the reigning king of Kotte.

The karaiyar / Karava caste of Sri Lanka claim kshatriya (royal warrior caste) lineage from India. They were employed as both navy and army to guard the nation's maritime provinces by Sri Lankan kings. Therefore they were settled all along the coastline of the island nation, with those in Tamil dominant areas becoming tamilized and those in Sinhala dominant areas becoming sinhalized, known as Karaiyar and Karava caste respectively – it's the same caste and they acknowledge kinship with each other across the ethnicized divide. Today, they are known as a fisherfolk caste as the advent of colonialism took away their national defence role but they still remember their warrior clan background of defending the country with pride. Closer to the present day, karaiyar community predominated in the LTTE, and harked back to their warrior past and valour to explain the phenomenon. Likewise the Sri Lankan army and navy are predominated by the Karava caste who too claim their military past and might is reflected in the present. Both Prabakaran the LTTE leader and General Sarath Fonseka, the army commander who won the final war against



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the LTTE are Karaiyar and Karava respectively. In other words, kin. Unfortunately, in modern day Sri Lanka, historical aspects such as these are brushed under the carpet to demarcate strong ethnic divides which do not reflect reality. The history of the Nallur Kandaswamy Temple is just one more of these politicized issues in the country presently.

Be that as it may, the Kings who ruled Jaffna as an independent kingdom and styled themselves the Arya Chakravarthis predated the advent of Buvaneka Bahu VI, and took over the reign of Jaffna again when he left 17 years later to claim his kingdom at Kotte. They ruled from Nallur as before, with Nallur Kandaswamy Temple as their central shine.

The well-known travel-diarists of the medieval world, the Venetian Marco Polo and the Moroccan Ibn Batuta have left records of an independent kingdom in Jaffna with an Arya Chakravarthi in power when they travelled through it in the 13th and 14th centuries respectively. Since Jaffna kingdom's history is hotly disputed even now within the framework of the ethnicized conflict ravaging Sri Lanka, not much independent research has been done on it.

Many of Jaffna's own records disappeared during its 400 year history of colonial rule. Academics from Jaffna University surmise that many of these records could likely be found in Portuguese or Dutch archives of the time period but while some work has been done drawing history from English colonial sources, not much effort has yet been made, to extract it from the previous colonial sources of the Dutch and the Portuguese. At least one Portuguese writer named Queroze is known to have written of the existence of the Nallur Kandaswamy temple before its sacking by his compatriots. Apart from this, colonial archives of the Dutch and Portuguese relating to their rule of Jaffna are known to exist but citing lack of knowledge of Old Dutch and Portuguese languages as a barrier, on top of the ethnic conflict and lack of state sponsored support for such historical research, academics in Jaffna claim not to have been able to follow up on research related to Jaffna's colonial or precolonial history.

Historical memory in the region though is still rife. Despite over 500 years since the deposition and execution of the last King of Jaffna, Sangili II by the Portuguese, the place names around Nallur and its suburbs hark back to the kingdom. Panikkar Valavu where the palace elephants were stabled, Ariyalai where the horses were stabled, Arasadi and Rasa Veethi where the king took his walks, Sangiliyan Thoppu and Rasavin thottam (the king's gardens or parks) among many others are still extant place names in and around the Nallur vicinity.

Being a densely populated area, not much archeological surveys have been done, but Jaffna archeologists point out remote sensory equipment would likely yield a lot of information given that just digging a little below the soil in farm lands dotting the area yield potsherds and coins of a much earlier era. Despite this, not much in the nature of archeological surveys have been done either. A road construction in the 1970s yielded many artefacts but with the ethnic conflict then heating up, was not followed up on. History being deeply disputed between the Sinhalese and Tamil ethnicities, historians of either ethnicity do not feel able to make headway in independent research. They are regularly labelled race traitors or bigots depending on whichever side their findings might favour. This also tends to subsume the history of Muslims, whose presence in Sri Lanka also reach back several centuries including in Jaffna. They have always been mainly a trading community in Sri Lanka, and then as now, the State had been wary of their economic prowess. Apparently, the 18th century Dutch colonial government had sought to dismantle their economic might in Nallur and set the Tamil majority in Jaffna against them,



Lord Muthukumaraswamy
- Festival procession at Nallur

leading to the Muslims displacing to what is now Jaffna town in 1728. The location of the current Nallur Kandaswamy Temple was once a well-known Muslim settlement therefore. When Ragunatha Maapana Mudaliyar built his temple in 1734, it was in close proximity to a pre-existing tomb commemorating a Sufi saint. Muslims and Hindus alike worshipped at that shrine. The temple eventually expanded to encompass this tomb as well. According to the Muslim community in Jaffna, the temple authorities remained respectful of Muslim sentiments regarding their shrine, kept a lit lamp there in respect of the entombed saint, and gave some Muslim families exclusive camphor selling rights around the temple in recognition of their ancestral connection to the temple grounds. This was the case till 1990 when the Muslims were evicted en masse from the area by the LTTE in pursuit of their independent Tamil homeland. Many Muslims have since returned to Jaffna after the civil war ended in 2009, but while they retain historical memory of the tomb and their ancestral connections to Nallur, Sufi forms of worship have mostly erased from their current religious practices and so they no longer seek the shrine to worship. The tomb has been walled off now and is just a memory but scholars estimate that the Nallur phenomenon can be attributed at least in part to the existence of the tomb. While cultural memory of the phenomenon is fast erasing among the current generations of Jaffna's Hindus and Muslims alike, Sufi mystics were once much revered by both communities here and their tombs were considered places of potent power and prayer fulfillment.

The Nallur Phenomenon

There are hundreds of temples dotting Jaffna peninsula now and more coming up every day. While there are a few temples that vie with Nallur for iconic status, the fact that many Tamils not just locally but also in the diaspora view it as their cultural emblem to the extent of reproducing the temple and its festival in their own climes is a unique phenomenon.

Why Nallur and not any other temple? There are differing theories as to why, depending on whom you ask. Some say its due to the historical memory of an ancient citadel of a long ago Tamil kingdom, worshiped by Kings and Queens of Jaffna. It's heavily romanticized in folkloric memory therefore.

Others attribute it to the prevalence of Muruga worship in the peninsula. Jaffna's Tamils identify as mainly Saivite (worshippers of Shiva) yet worship of Murugan is much more prevalent. As in South India, he's seen as an accessible God by the masses.

Of the two temples built when the Dutch eased regulations, the first to be built was the Vannarpannai Sivan Kovil, which was much grander and ambitious in scale. It was strategically set to be the primary temple in the region. Nallur by contrast was a small temple and in the subsequent century fell afoul of the most influential Hindu revivalist of the period, Arumuga Navalar who objected to its non-agamic style of worship including worship of the Vel instead of a statue of Murugan with his co-wives.

By this time the Dutch had been driven out and the British were in power. While they were not as authoritarian as the Dutch and Portuguese colonial governments in repressing Hinduism, they had employed missionaries to convince people to convert. Many people by this time were at least nominally Christian due to centuries of enforced Colonial rule and Arumuga Navalar was working to turn back the tide. Even people nominally Hindu, had apparently lost much of their understanding of the religion due to two centuries of colonial repression – so Navalar felt the need to proselytize Hinduism to them. The folk Hinduism being practiced at the time worshipped tridents and Vels instead of statues (primarily due to the aforementioned intolerant colonial repression), was not even remotely agamic, and employed practices like animal sacrifices and dancing girls. The Sivan temple being agamic did not follow these practices. Nallur Kandaswamy temple being non agamic did. Such practices were mocked by British and American missionaries of the time as uncouth which enraged Navalar – so he proselytized Agamic Saivism which he held to be refined enough to escape missionary ridicule. Nallur's temple authorities at the time catered to popular worship forms and wouldn't accept his position on the matter – and so for nearly his whole life of decades long proselytization, Navalar despite being a resident of Nallur himself, proselytized against Nallur Kandaswamy Temple and for Vannarpannai Sivan Kovil. Despite his famed prowess as an orator and writer though, the temple remained popular. If anything, the deeply held convictions for and against non agamic folk religion only flamed passions further. In time the nautch girls and animal sacrifices did disappear. But not because Navalar said so. It is so historically distant now that many in the current generation are not even aware that this was once the case. Contemporary belief is to fast during the festival and partake only vegetarian food on the days of visiting the temple. It is held to be a sin to enter the temple after consuming non-vegetarian food. The only reason we even know animal sacrifices once took place at this temple's festival is because Navalar expounded on it in three long treatises. He was so enraged by it that he pursued court cases against the temple management and Sir Ponnambalam Ramanathan, his protégé and eventually another stalwart leader of the Jaffna Tamils joined him. The temple management won the cases. In the 1930s, yet again a group of brahmins tried to wrest the temple from the family that owns it citing irregular worship and temple management – and they too lost.

The modern Temple

The Nallur Kandaswamy temple currently is associated in people's minds with history and traditions of the region, but interestingly it's also known for its modernity, creativity and trendsetting. The temple structure keeps evolving, and in doing so flouting conventional temple architectural traditions of the region. The traditionalists grumble but there is no doubting that it captures popular imagination and



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fascination. Jaffna's citizenry fancy themselves traditional and conventional – and they no doubt are, in many respects. Yet they are also obsessed with keeping up with modernity. The temple taps into this dichotomous nature rather well. It harks back to an ancient temple but as a relatively new structure does not feel itself obliged to preserve itself in perpetuity as a monument – other than for the original vel which still holds pride of place despite all attempts by agamic supremacists to remove it. As such the temple keeps reinventing itself with ever new structures that fascinate the people. It doesn't follow trends that other temples by and large follow in Jaffna whether they be ancient or modern. It sets it. After griping at the vastu shastra (traditional architecture) conventions Nallur is flouting, many of the other temples then follow suit.

The current owner of the temple, Kumaradas Mudaliyar, who has helmed its management for nearly 60 years is credited with most of these innovations. According to Dr. T. Sanathanan, an art academic at Jaffna University, Kumaradas Mudaliyar engaged in the same type of innovations with his temple in the North as Sri Lanka's famed architect, Geoffrey Bawa in the South of Sri Lanka; constantly breaking rules and reinventing them, redefining local architecture in the process.

Despite the cribbing of traditionalists initially, many of the innovations reflect a grandeur that the locals aspire to and has thus found much favour among them. The temple's famed villu mandapam – the frilled, bow shaped arch at its primary entrance for example, was blasted as an unorthodox innovation by vastu shastra exponents – yet it is primarily responsible for giving the temple its iconic appearance that has become emblematic to it - and when the Sri Lanka Tourism Promotion Bureau started putting out postcards of Jaffna in the 1970s, it became emblematic of Jaffna too. It was unique and stood out from every other temple in the area mostly still sporting colonial European architecture. Dutch style doric columns, Anglican church inspired bell towers and various other colonial architectural styles still grace many of the temples in Jaffna. Nallur used to have elements of these too, still does – instead of one bell tower however, it now sports six. As Jaffna academic and art historian P. Ahilan put it, "The temple structure is an eclectic mix of Dravidian, Mughal and colonial European architecture."

Alongside this, as Dr. Sanathanan points out, it is also the current temple owner cum manager's aspirational Jaffna architecture taking new forms not seen before, yet quickly copied by others, to become regular features of the region. Despite the temple regularly flouting conventions much to the chagrin of traditionalists in this conservative community, it keeps growing in popularity and is seen as a major trendsetter. It appears to effectively tap into Jaffna citizens' psyche as to what they want represented before they can cognize it themselves - and then they are enchanted and follow suit en masse.

The temple also sports contrasts aplenty to cater to differing temperaments. From the outside, set in a sylvan setting of white sand and sturdy trees with its trademark red and white striped boundary wall, the temple has a majestic yet soothingly simple appearance. Many other temples in Jaffna by contrast are flamboyantly multi-hued. Inside the temple though, there is gilt and glamour aplenty including clusters of chandeliers on the roof catering to a unique Jaffna fascination with gilt. Even the priests doing puja carry out their traditional arathi ceremony (flame waving around the deity) with a multi-tiered candelabra of flames which outshine the chandeliers above.

Timing is scrupulously observed at the temple. Its pujas at fixed times are carried out on the dot of the specified time. In a population lackadaisical about punctuality and used to temple pujas as and when priests decide to show up, this rigid



Lord Palani Andavar - during - "Mango Festival", the 22nd day of annual celebrations held in August/September.

adherence to time is hugely appreciated. People from far and near know the exact time to show up for puja, and so are regular patrons of the temple. Busy professionals pointed to this as one of the reasons they prefer to frequent this temple above others in the area; they don't need to waste their working time waiting for the puja, or show up at the appointed time only to realize it has already taken place as the priests decided to do it early – all common issues of grouse in other temples.

Arhana tickets are sold for Rs.1 – an almost meaningless amount in Sri Lanka now. Not even a toffee can be bought with it. This price has remained fixed for years in an apparent bid to keep it open to the masses – which the masses do indeed appreciate. While people of all castes and classes do access the temple however, it isn't usual to see anyone of a too humble appearance at Nallur. People feel obliged to deck themselves in their finest clothes when visiting Nallur. The resident deity there is known as something of a fashionista; 'Alangara Kandan' in local lingo. As one commentator put it, "The Murugan there is alangaram (decked up) and so are the people visiting him." This is not necessarily the temple management's intention however. In recent years they have put out rules cautioning against excessive displays of fashion as a tendency was developing for budding fashionistas to use the temple as a vantage place for flaunting their trendsetting clothing. From deliberately humble origins and wishing to retain folk elements of worship and thus accessibility to the masses – all that the vel still represents - the temple is steering currents of elitism even as it works to keep itself accessible and relatable to everyone. The fashion scene likely sprang up thanks to its long running festival and the tendency of people to dress their best for it – but it was aggravated by visiting diaspora members who always put Nallur on their must visit list when visiting home and show up decked in their best too – sporting varying fashions from across the world. The locals not to be outdone soon started sporting outlandish fashions in temple precincts in competition, which the temple felt a need to put a stop to eventually. Men have to walk in shirtless, women are required to dress culturally appropriately in modest clothing. A lot of glitter can still be seen to rival the glitter of the Kandan and his palatial splendour inside but the tendency to treat the temple as a modelling ramp has declined.

As of now, partly due to historical memory and association to the old kingdom, partly due

to the popularity of Muruga worship, and partly due to creative and strategic leadership, Nallur Kandswamy Temple is considered foremost among the emblematic temples of Jaffna.

Sociologists and religious scholars attribute a few other reasons too for its primacy over other temples in the region. For instance, it has the longest running festival in the country running for 25 days. For well over a month including days leading up to and after the festival, hawkers set up stalls all around the temple, giving it a carnival atmosphere. In the war-torn region of Jaffna where social events are few and far between, it's a rare opportunity for families and friends to enjoy a festive atmosphere. So deeply ingrained is this cultural aspect in people's lives that diaspora Jaffna Tamils across various Western countries try to reproduce their own Nallur festival complete with hawkers, palmyrah products and other Jaffna based regional snacks to relive their nostalgia. It's a much looked for event on the annual calendar in Jaffna and draws not only locals but also pilgrims and tourists from around the world including many in the diaspora who return every August to take part in the festival. All of Jaffna's hotels and numerous guest houses get booked out at this time. Traffic for a month will have to circumnavigate around a wide cut off swathe around the temple with police posts put up to accommodate the surging crowds. Some hawkers became so popular that they became permanent businesses around the temple, leading again to make it a happening area to visit for youths and business people alike. Many of Jaffna's most famous ice-cream parlours, restaurants and cultural centers surround the temple.

Another attributed reason is that Nallur attracted several well-known saints to its precincts. One of Jaffna's most well-known yogis of the 20th century, Yogar Swami, his guru Chellappa swamy, and a lady ascetic called Chadayama all preached the greatness of Lord Murugan of Nallur in its vicinity. Some of them occupied the area for years. Chellappa Swamy's tomb is situated opposite the temple and still draws crowds. Yogar Swamy meditated under a bilva tree near the temple for years and the crowds he drew came to associate his memory with Nallur. The temple's popularity spiked in some scholars' estimation due to the association of these venerated ascetics. Alongside this, Jaffna's well known aesthetic exponents like Veeramani Iyer composed songs in praise of the temple that gained mass popularity – again immortalizing the temple and Nallur Kandan.

In the locality, people have differing opinions – if they have an opinion at all - as to why they so revere this temple. Many are just stumped by the question. Veneration for Nallur Kandaswamy is just something that runs in their bloodstreams apparently. And so, apart from their daily or weekly visits to the temple, they will wend their way there on foot every August, decked in their best for the festival, chanting victory to Lord Murugan by the various names he's known by: "Kandanukku Arohara, Murganukku Arohara, Vadivelanukku Arohara, Sivabalanukku Arohara..."

They transform the area of Nallur with their fervour in the times of festival, often engaging in exorbitant worship forms such as *thooku kavadi* (affixing hooks to their bodies and being transported via tractors to the temple, hanging horizontally) and *Kavadi attam*, a type of dance dedicated to Murugan. Through thick and thin, despite the vicissitudes of life visited upon them in this war-torn region, their devotion to the Nallur Murugan runs deep. Long after the kings and queens who ruled alongside his reflected power are gone, he continues to rule over the people of Jaffna. A deity in tune with the masses. Aspirational and resplendent yet also approachable and accessible. That's his draw, according to Jaffna's public. A God and his temple, emblematic of who they are, as a people.



SPECIAL FEATURE

LORD AYYAPPA AND SABARIMALAI



Compiled by : KIDAMBI RAJ

INTRODUCTION

Lord Ayyappa is a popular Hindu God, who is worshipped all over India, especially in the South and particularly in the state of Kerala. He is also known as *Sastha*, *Dharmasastha*, *Hariharan* and so on. He is a powerful deity, and His blessings are considered effective in reducing the ill effects of planet Saturn.

Lord Ayyappa is usually depicted as a handsome, celibate God seated in a yogic posture with legs crossed and tied with a band and wearing a bell around his neck. Celebrated as a warrior deity, he is also shown riding a tiger. In other cases, he carries a bow and arrow in his left hand and holds a bow or a sword in his right hand.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND TO THE TIME OF AYYAPPA'S ORIGIN

The members of *Pandya dynasty* ousted by *Thirumala Naickar* the ruler of the erstwhile Pandya Empire spanning Madurai, Thirunelveli and Ramanathapuram lived in places like Valliyur, Tenkasi, Shengottah, Achankovil and Sivagiri. They had also established their supremacy in parts of Travancore, and some of them belonging to Chempazhanattu Kovil in Sivagiri were given the right to rule the country of Pandalam by the King of Travancore, some eight hundred years ago. *King Rajashekara*, the foster-father of Lord Ayyappa belonged to this dynasty.

A just and precocious sovereign King Rajashekara was held by his subjects in high esteem. Under him, the region was witnessing a golden age. But the king had one sorrow – he was childless and thus had no heir to inherit his

throne. Both the hapless king and his queen prayed ceaselessly to Lord Shiva for a child.

MYTHOLOGY BEHIND LORD AYYAPPA

There was a demon by the name of *Mahishasura* who undertook severe penance (tapas) and consequently Lord Brahma was forced to grant his wish, that nobody on earth could annihilate him. Emboldened by Brahma's boon, Mahishasura commenced systematic destruction of people and pulverized tribes and communities. Terrorized and fearing his wrath, people fled to distant lands. Realizing that only a superhuman power could exterminate the wayward Mahishasura, the devas appealed to *Goddess Durga*, who killed him in a bloody battle.

Legends speak elaborately about the birth and life of Lord Ayyappa. There was once a female demon called *Mahishi*, who was the sister of the demon *Mahishasura* who was killed by Goddess Durga. Mahishi did severe penance and got from Lord Brahma the extraordinary boon that she can be killed only by someone who is born to Lords Shiva and Vishnu. As two males together, cannot produce an offspring, she began taking herself to be indestructible and started committing various atrocities. Somewhere else, Bhasmasura, another demon managed to obtain a deadly boon from Shiva to the effect that any person on whose head he places his hand, would turn into ashes the next moment. But no sooner he got the boon he wanted to test its efficacy on the Lord himself. Realizing the implication, Shiva rushed to Lord Vishnu and sought his help. The God of protection assumed the form of *Mohini*, a bewitching

beauty and stood before the demon, who was in hot pursuit of the boon-giver. Smitten by Mohini's charm, the demon fell for her guiles, began acting as she wanted and ultimately ended up placing his hand on his own head. And true to the boon, he burnt himself to ashes. The relieved Shiva himself then felt deeply impressed with the damsel's charm, and the spiritual union of the two great Gods happened for the good of the world. The divine child Ayyappa was born to them, bearing the name *Hariharan* (Hari is Vishnu and Haran is Shiva), with his Nakshatra or *birth star being Uttaram* or *Uttara Phalguni*. This child was later found by king Raja Rajashekara Pandiyan of Pandalam and was brought up as the childless king's own son. As there was a bead tied around the neck of the child, the king named the boy *Manikantan*, the one who has a bead in the neck.

Later a son was born to the king himself, but still considering only Manikantan as his elder son, the king started making arrangements for declaring him the crown prince. However, the queen had other ideas and wanted her son to ascend the throne after the king. She hatched a conspiracy to get rid of Manikantan and pretending to suffer from severe head ache, and she made the physician to prescribe the milk of tigress as its only cure. While none came forward to undertake this dangerous mission, Manikantan, on his own accord, ventured into the jungles, perhaps to fulfill the purpose of his advent on earth.

He encountered the *female demon Mahishi* in the forest, fought a fierce battle with her and destroyed her. But it was actually a blessing in disguise for the demon, as, in the process, she assumed her original form of a beautiful

SPECIAL FEATURE



woman and is now worshipped in the Sabarimala temple of Ayyappa. Supremely pleased with the annihilation of the feared Mahishi, the Devas assumed the forms of tigers, riding on whom, Manikantan returned to the palace. Realizing the divinity and greatness of the young lad, the king and the others bowed to him with great respect.

With his divine mission completed, he took his abode at Sabarimala Mountain in the Pathanamthitta hill forests, to the north of Pampa River, in the present Kerala state. The king built the temple as desired by the lord and advised by Sage Agastya, in which, the idol of the lord as Ayyappa was consecrated by Parashurama, on the first day of the Malayalam month Makaram (which falls in the middle of January). Lord Ayyappa can be worshipped in the sanctum, seated cross-legged assuming a divine yogic posture.

SIGNIFICANCE OF AYYAPPA WORSHIP

A Sabarimala pilgrimage is steeped in its own traditions and rituals, of which *Irumudi* remains an important part. Irumudi is a cloth bundle of 2 compartments that is carried on the head by the devotees as the travel kit and usually is in the colors of black, dark blue or saffron. The front portion contains the Pooja articles and the sacred offerings to be made to the deity, like ghee-filled coconut, raw rice, jaggery or cane sugar, betel leaves, camphor, etc., while the personal belongings of the devotee are carried in the rear compartment.

The ghee coconut can be considered the most important part of the *Irumudi*, known as *Mudrai Thenga*, it is an insignia. It is a coconut whose outside is cleaned thoroughly, and the inside is emptied by draining out the sweet water through the eye of the coconut. Then the coconut is filled with pure ghee, which is used later for the Abishekam (hydration ceremony) of the Lord, at the time of worship. The opening of the ghee coconut is then sealed. The ghee coconut represents the act of emptying oneself of the worldly pleasures first and then filling the void with pure life force. Bathing the Lord with the ghee amounts to merging one's consciousness with the divine.

Pathinettaampadi in the temple and passing through it is an important and inseparable part of the pilgrimage. These Pathinettaampadi or the eighteen divine steps lead the devotees to the sanctum sanctorum of the Lord, which they start ascending by placing their right foot on the first step. Only those carrying Irumudi on their heads after observing the 41-day austerities can set foot on these steps, as per tradition. It is believed that only after climbing these steps and going beyond all that they represent, one can detach the self from all worldly bonding and attain a state where one can align with the supreme.

Ayyappa worship, along with the austerities observed, is believed to bestow immense benefits on many fronts to the individuals and their entire families. It would fulfill all the honest desires of the devotees and bestow good health, prosperity, and success. The lord is also well known for his special powers to control the malefic effects of *Shani* (planet Saturn). His worship can help to minimize or remove the hardships caused by the unfavorable placement of the planet, indicated by trying times such as *Sade Sati* (seven and a half year period of Saturn), Saturn in 8th house of birth chart, Saturn affliction, etc.

ABOUT SABARIMALAI TEMPLE



People in huge numbers from all over the country and even outside, keep visiting the Sabarimala temple after observing various strict austerities with intense devotion for weeks together, as laid down by the Lord himself and worship Ayyappa. Millions undertake the arduous pilgrimage with faith, trekking through mountainous forests and cov-



ering long distances on foot, especially during the consecutive months of Karthigai and Margazhi (Mid November - Mid January). This special period of the sacred Ayyappa worship concludes with the sighting of *Makara Jyothi*, a flash of light as stars that appears around sunset time at a distant horizon, on the holy *Makara*

Sankaranti day, (generally on the 14th or 15th of January). As Ayyappa is a celibate, young and middle-aged menstruating women, do not undertake Sabarimala pilgrimage.

Apart from the popular and extremely crowded November-January period, there are other important times too, for undertaking Ayyappa worship at Sabarimala. These include *Panguni Uttiram*, the day of Uttiram star falling in Panguni month (March-April); Chitra Vishu, the first day of the Vedic New Year (mid-April); and *Tula*

Vishu, the first day of the Malayalam month Thula (mid-October).

SOME INTERESTING FACTS

How did Sabarimalai get its name?

According to a legend, the name Sabarimalai is derived from *Sabari*, a tribal devotee of Lord Rama as mentioned in Ramayana. Sabarimalai literally means the hill of Sabari. Lord Rama had come to meet Sabari as predicted by Sabari's Guru, *Rishi Matanga*.

The Symbolism of the 18 steps in Sabarimalai

The 18 steps have considerable religious significance. Devotees believe that ascending these steps helps detach them from worldly desires, mentally and physically.

The first five steps are called *panchendriyas*: they symbolize the five human senses 1. *Visual* (eye), 2. *Auditory* (ear), 3. *Olfactory* (nose), 4. *Gustatory* (tongue) and 5. *Tactile* (skin).

The next eight steps symbolize the eight *Ash-tagrahas*: 6. *Kama* (love), 7. *Krodha* (anger), 8. *Labha* (avarice), 9. *Moha* (lust), 10. *Madha* (pride), 11. *Malsarya* (unhealthy competition), 12. *Assoya* (jealous) and 13. *Dhumb* (boastful).

The next three steps stand for the *Trigunas* or the three *Gunas*: 14. *Satva* (perspicuity, discernment), 15. *Rajas* (Activity, enjoyment) and 16. *Thamas* (Inactivity, stupor).

The last two steps stand for: 17. *Vidya* (knowledge) and 18. *Avidya* (ignorance).

Why do Ayyappa devotees wear black?

Wearing black may mean sadness in some religions. However, as far as the Sabarimalai pilgrimage is concerned, wearing black signifies surrendering all worldly pleasures. Not only that, it also means that all are equal before Lord Ayyappa.

What is the significance of 41 days for making the pilgrimage to Sabarimalai?

A devotee has to abide by several regulations and dictates if one has to mount the *pathinettu* (eighteen) *padigal* (steps) and enter the temple on Sabarimalai. The devotee embarks on a 41-day *vratham* after he gains permission from his parents and Guru.

Why does Lord Ayyappa sit like that?

Lord Ayyappa's sitting posture is called *Yoga Aasana*, which is different from the posture of other Deities. Yogaasana is meditating pose. The lap is not kept free, like other Gods which has the worldly meaning of providing space to the consort. Ayyappa's posture is more like balancing on foot rather than on sitting on the hip.



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.

DURHAM TAMIL ASSOCIATION

Free Virtual

FRIDAYS

7 P M

GAME Night

Host: Hanthan Manickavasagar

Register online : durhamtamils.org

Are You Suffering from Covid-19?

A message from Durham Tamil Association to the Tamil people living in Durham. If you or your family are currently isolating due to the coronavirus pandemic, Durham Tamil Association can provide services such delivery of your grocery orders and essential items for you, obtaining medicines at pharmacies, providing cooked vegetarian food, and driving people to be vaccinated if they have an appointment until June 30. Those who wish to request this service can call 905- 428 -7007 or register at www.durhamtamils.org.

DTA's Mother Day Celebration

DTA's Mother Day celebration went well with lots of fun activities including songs, poems, and heartfelt wishes. Also, we had an interactive session with the mother and daughter/son. Everyone fully enjoyed it and thank you to all the participants.

DTA's Virtual Vigil to Commemorate Remembrance Day

DTA had a virtual vigil to commemorate Remembrance Day. We remember May 2009 and all our participants had a Candlelight background to show their involvement.

DTA's Talent Show

Every Sunday we will showcase some of the best talents from Ontario Tamils. **OPEN CALL FOR ALL ONTARIO TAMILS - ALL AGES** (Free event/ No membership required) Acting, Singing, Dancing, Public Speaking, Instrumentalists, Arts & Crafts, Cooking, Poetry, Special talent. Province & International participants are welcome!

Complete Talent shows from at durhamtamils.org and sends your recordings to dtatalentshow@gmail.com All Performances will be assessed and selected.

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

DTA's Free Drop-in Virtual Homework Club

- JK, SK & Grade 1-8
- subjects: Math, Language Arts, French, Science, History Etc...
- Drop-In Time: Monday to Friday (time may wearable)

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

Register online: durhamtamils.org

DTA's Seniors

DTA is keeping our seniors fully occupied with multiple free virtual classes

ARE YOU SUFFERING FROM COVID ?

DURHAM TAMIL ASSOCIATION

Lending A Helping Hand With Care

நீங்கள் கோவிட் நோயால் பாதிக்கப்பட்டுள்ளீர்களா?

டறம் தமிழ் ஒன்றியத்தின் உதவியினை பெற டறம் வசிக்கும் தமிழர்கள் அழையுங்கள்

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Every Month

Next Show date : JUNE 6th 5:30pm - 7pm

OPEN CALL FOR ALL ONTARIO TAMILS ALL AGES!

Acting, Singing, Dancing, Public Speaking, Instrumentalists, Arts & Crafts, Cooking, Poetry, Special talent...

Out of province & International participants are welcome

VIRTUAL

Durham Tamils Got Talent!

Meeting ID: 890 3171 3780 Passcode: 572839

Share your awesome talents

Complete Talent show form @durhamtamils.org and send your recordings to dtatalentshow@gmail.com

Tel: 905-428-7007

All Performances will be assessed and selected

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

Tamil School

Durham Tamil Association's Virtual Tamil school has been running very successfully. As per many requests, we started some additional new Tamil classes. -Ages 4 & up

COMMUNITY WATCH



Durham Tamils Association Serving Our Community



DTA SERVING DURHAM TAMILS DURING THESE UNPRECEDENTED AND CHALLENGING TIMES

-Tamil Credit Course

-Teens & Adults

Please register online at durhamtamils.org

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

Thank you to DTA's Annual Sponsors

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

For more information on all DTA's Community Support Programs and Sponsor contacts please visit www.DurhamTamils.Org Tel 905.428.7007

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

DURHAM TAMIL ASSOCIATION PRESENTS

EVERY MONTH

OPEN CALL FOR ALL SENIORS IN ONTARIO, OUT OF PROVINCE & INTERNATIONAL PARTICIPANTS

ஒன்டாரியோ, பிறமாகாணங்கள் மற்றும் சர்வதேச பங்கேற்பாளர்கள் வரவேற்கப்படுகிறார்கள்!

SENIORS TALENT SHOW

முதியவர்கள் தங்கள் திறமைகளை காட்டுவதற்கான மேடை!

1ST SHOW DATE : MAY 28TH TIME 7:00 O -8:00PM

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PUBLIC SPEAKING பொது பேச்சு
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Meeting ID:
891 9783 7270
Passcode: 701656

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DURHAM TAMIL ASSOCIATION

Free Virtual Chair Yoga For seniors

Mrs. Vana Dineshkumar

Experienced and well-known Yoga Teacher

Fridays 10:00- 11:30

- REGISTER @ DURHAMTAMILS.ORG

Jennifer O'Connell
Member of Parliament, Pickering-Uxbridge

I want to begin by expressing my gratitude to the volunteers at the Durham Tamil Association (DTA). Thank you for your hard work and dedication in hosting this remembrance vigil in our community.

We gather here to remember the Mullivaikal massacre, a time of tremendous suffering for Tamils in Sri Lanka. It's been 12 years since 300,000 civilians were trapped in between a bloody and horrific civil war. Tens of thousands lost their lives, and almost 150,000 are still unaccounted for.

This was one of the deadliest massacres in our lifetimes, anywhere around the world. I remember following the news and being horrified at the senseless loss of life back in May 2009.

For the Tamil diaspora, here in Durham Region, the GTA and across Canada, it was a traumatic and devastating time. Many lost loved ones back home. For others, the struggle of even getting a hold of family and friends for days was a terrifying and nerve-racking experience.

The oppression of Tamils in Sri Lanka is ongoing to this day. So, as we stand vigil here this evening to remember the victims, let us continue to pursue justice for the victims and their families, and do all we can to ensure that a tragedy like this is never repeated again.

Sincerely,

Jennifer O'Connell
Member of Parliament, Pickering-Uxbridge

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Tue - 7:30 - 8:30pm Fri - 6:00- 7:00pm
Wed 7:30 - 8:30pm

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

NEW TAMIL ONLINE VIRTUAL ZOOM CLASSES ARE STARTING

Register Online website: durhamtamils.org

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

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

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



SPECIAL FEATURE

Achievements

Sanjay Rajaratnam appointed Sri Lanka's Attorney General

Acting Solicitor General Sanjay Rajaratnam, PC, will be the next Attorney General (AG) of Sri Lanka. Educated at St Peter's College and Royal College, Colombo, he has served the AG's Department for the past 34 years, having joined the Department in April 1988.

Mr Rajaratnam has held the post of Senior State Counsel, Deputy Solicitor General, Additional Solicitor General and Senior Additional Solicitor General until his appointment as Acting Solicitor General in October 2019. He is a Solicitor of England and Wales and holds a Master of Laws (Merit) from the Queen Mary University of London.

He was conferred silk in November 2014. He has had wide experience in the civil and criminal branches of the law.

He is also a member of the Law Commission of Sri Lanka and the Council of Legal Education.

He is the son of senior lawyer late Siva Rajaratnam.



Sasikala Suresh elected First Tamil Female Deputy Mayor for London Borough of Harrow, UK.

Sasikala Suresh has been elected as the First Tamil Female Deputy Mayor for London Borough of Harrow in UK.

Her father who was from Inuvil, Jaffna had served as the Deputy Auditor General. Her husband Suresh Krishna was also a former Mayor of Harrow.



Banker Palanivel Thiagarajan Tamil Nadu's new Finance Minister

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M K Stalin has picked MLA Palanivel Thiagarajan as the new Tamilnadu Finance Minister. He completed higher studies in the State University of New York, received an MBA in Finance from the Sloan School of Management at MITMBA and a doctorate from New York University.

He was an investment banker at the Lehman Brothers and later Managing Director of Standard Chartered Bank in Singapore. He is married to Margaret, an American. They have two sons, Palani Thevan Rajan and Vel Thiagarajan.



Geethanath Kassilingam appointed Rehabilitation Facilitation Officer for the North and East in Sri Lanka

Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa's Coordinating Secretary, Geethanath Kassilingam has been appointed as the government's special Rehabilitation Facilitation Officer for the north and east after the Cabinet approved the proposal.

Kassilingam's new role will now be to facilitate and look into the several issues faced by the people in the north and east as well as resolve the longstanding issues.



Quotable Quotes - 2021

By: Siva Sivapragasam

“They said it”



“

“Recent weeks and months have taught us a painful lesson. There is truth and there are lies. Lies told for power and profit. Each of us has a duty and a responsibility as citizens, as Americans, especially as leaders ... to defend the truth and defeat the lies.”

- U.S. President Joe Biden

”

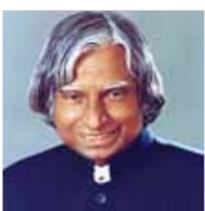


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“If Sri Lanka wants to develop the export sector, we need to be very globally oriented and really understand the big changes in the world and how we can effectively respond through flexible systems and processes”

- Subhashini Abeysinghe, an economist who specializes in international trade and is currently the Director of Research at Verité Research

”



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“Let us sacrifice our today so that our children can have a better tomorrow”

- Abdul Kalam, Former President of India

”



“

“My friends, love is better than anger. Hope is better than fear. Optimism is better than despair. So let us be loving, hopeful and optimistic. And we'll change the world.”

- Jack Layton, former NDP Leader

”



“

“I understand the fatigue and frustration felt by many. However, that cannot be an excuse for inconsiderate behaviour. We are doing so well, and I believe as a city we have turned the corner on our way to a safe summer and a safe re-opening”

- Toronto Mayor John Tory on large gatherings during the pandemic.

”

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(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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