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Trudeau's Liberal Government promises affordable home ownership, climate action, fighting COVID-19 and growing the middle class



Governor-General Mary Simon and Prime Minister Justin Trudeau
Picture Courtesy: APTN News

By Siva Sivapragasam

In a Throne Speech bubbling with confidence and enthusiasm, the Liberal Government has promised Canadians that it will take action to make house ownership within everyone's reach, fight the COVID-19 pandemic to a finish, strong climate action, make more jobs available and help the middle class grow.

The promises were contained in a speech delivered by Governor General Mary Simon, written by Prime Minister Trudeau and his aides and was delivered at the first session of the opening of Canada's 44th Parliament.

With this programme of action, the Liberal government will work to finish the fight against COVID-19, take strong climate action, make life more affordable, walk the shared path of reconciliation, put home ownership back in reach, create jobs, and grow the middle class.

The Government will also work with the provinces to create a national child-care system, increasing immigration and advancing reconciliation with

Indigenous people.

Much as in the old Parliament, Trudeau is expected to rely on the left-leaning New Democratic Party and the separatist Bloc Québécois for support. Those parties are aligned with him on several key policy areas, including combating climate change.

The throne speech is typically put to a vote that the government must win to stay in power. Trudeau's Government is a minority government and must rely on the support of the NDP, the Bloc Québécois to get the Throne speech approved in Parliament.

The Bloc Québécois appeared to indicate that it would not bring the government down over the speech. However, NDP Leader Singh has stated that their "support should not be taken for granted".

The Speech, highlighting national reconciliation stated, "We as a Parliament, on all sides, regardless of political stripe, regardless of where we come from to be here in Ottawa, every Canadian deserves a voice in this chamber."

Gary Anandasangaree to serve as Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada

By Siva Sivapragasam

Gary Anandasangaree, who is the current Federal MP for Scarborough Rouge River riding, and well-known Human Rights Lawyer plus a firm advocate for social justice, has been requested by Prime Minister Trudeau to serve as Parliamentary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada.

As a human rights lawyer and firm advocate for social justice, Gary recognizes how our laws uphold rights and freedoms, and ensure our general safety.

Contd. on page 3...



TNA wants US/India collaboration to push forward settlement of Tamil issues in Sri Lanka, in their talks with US officials



Tamil delegation team with US State Department officials
Full article on page 3...

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Ontario Confirms First Two Cases of Omicron Variant

Province Prepared to Protect Against New Variant of Concern

November 28, 2021
Health

TORONTO — Today, Christine Elliott, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health and Dr. Kieran Moore, Chief Medical Officer of Health issued the following statement:

“Today, the province of Ontario has confirmed two cases of the Omicron variant of COVID-19 in Ottawa, both of which were reported in individuals with recent travel from Nigeria. Ottawa Public Health is conducting case and contact management and the patients are in isolation.

The best defence against the Omicron variant is stopping it at our border. In addition to the measures recently announced, we continue to urge the federal government to take the necessary steps to mandate point-of-arrival testing for all travellers irrespective of where they're coming from to further protect against the spread of this new variant.

Regardless, Ontario is prepared and ready to respond to this new variant. Our hospital and intensive care capacity remain stable and the province continues to report one of the lowest rates of active cases in the country. The Ontario COVID-19 Genomic Network is continuing to actively monitor for all potential variants circulating in the province, including the Omicron variant, and is conducting genomic sequencing on 100

per cent of eligible COVID-19 positive samples. Since January 1, 2021, the network has sequenced over 48,000 samples.

Ontario has the infrastructure in place to manage outbreaks, including high-volume capacity for testing with 230 assessment centres and community labs and over 500 pharmacies offering testing to those who need it. The government is also enhancing its COVID-19 testing strategy by expanding the number of testing locations and making it more convenient to access publicly funded testing for those who need it as we head into the colder months and more people gather indoors.

In order to rapidly identify, trace and isolate COVID-19 and its variants, Ontario has already expanded eligibility for provincially-funded COVID-19 PCR testing at all testing centres to individuals who have returned from, or travelled in, the following locations between November 1st and December 6th, 2021: South Africa, Botswana, Lesotho, Eswatini, Mozambique, Namibia, and Zimbabwe. Asymptomatic family members and other household contacts of travellers are also eligible for testing. This list of travel locations may be updated as we learn more about the new variant. Anyone experiencing symptoms, even if they are mild, is strongly recommended to get tested.

If you are eligible for a booster dose, please book your appointment today to provide yourself with an extra layer of



protection. The government is working to accelerate the rollout of booster doses to additional age groups and will provide more details this week. If you have not yet received the vaccine, please do so today. This includes vaccinations for children aged five to 11. Achieving the highest vaccination rates possible remains key to reducing the risk of COVID-19 transmission and significant surges in cases.

We also recognize that residents in Ontario's long-term care homes are at particular risk from COVID-19 and its

variants. That's why we have made vaccinations mandatory for long-term care staff, support workers, students and volunteers. The province is also offering third doses to long-term care residents and boosters to staff. As of November 26, more than 88 per cent of eligible residents have already received their third dose.

We continue to urge all Ontarians to remain vigilant and continue following the public health and workplace safety measures in place that have been working for us and will help us get through this. However, we will continue to monitor trends in key public health and health system indicators, monitor for and learn about this new variant, and we will act quickly if necessary.

We continue to be in constant contact with the Public Health Agency of Canada and other jurisdictions to monitor the developing situation and ensure coordinated, effective and shared efforts to protect the public.”

Dr. Moore will hold a media availability on November 29th at 9:30 a.m. in the Queen's Park media studio. Accredited media representatives who wish to participate via teleconference can register by emailing Alexandra.Hilkene@ontario.ca.

Via news.ontario.ca

Gary Anandasangaree to serve as Parliamentary Secretary Contd. from page 1

He is also aware of the acute challenges posed by the history of racism and systemic barriers in our legal system. He is keen on improving our justice system, including ending minimum mandatory penalties and fully implementing the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Gary graduated with an Honours degree in Political Science in 1996 from Carleton University and was awarded the Henry Marshall Tory Award in recognition of his outstanding contribution to the University while attaining a high academic standing.

He graduated in 2005 from Osgoode Hall Law School and was called to the Bar in Ontario in 2006. Gary ventured on his own, initially as a sole practitioner, establishing his own Law firm. Gary received both the Queen Elizabeth

II Golden & Diamond Jubilee Medals. He also received the Osgoode Hall Law School “One-to-Watch” Alumni Gold Key Award & the South Asian Bar Association of Toronto's Young Practitioner Award.

As an active and engaged member of his community, Gary served as Chair of the Canadian Tamil Youth Development Centre, President of the Canadian Tamils' Chamber of Commerce, Board member of the Youth Challenge Fund, member of the Toronto Police Chief's Advisory Council, and member of the United Way Newcomers Grant Program.

Gary came to Canada with his mother as a refugee in 1983 and has advocated for the rights of refugees throughout his life. He is married to Harini and they have two daughters, Bairavi and Sahanah.

TNA wants US\India collaboration... Contd. from page 1

Sri Lanka's Tamil National Alliance (TNA), the main parliamentary group representing Tamils of the war-affected north and east, has requested the United States to collaborate with India and jointly push for a political solution in Sri Lanka.

A delegation led by TNA parliamentarian M.A. Sumanthiran and senior legal experts K. Kanag-Isvaran and Nirmala Chandrahaasan told State Department officials in Washington DC that a political solution to pending political issues of the Tamils in Sri Lanka could be reached with US, India collaboration.

Mr. Sumanthiran is an elected TNA Parliamentarian while Mr. Kanag-Isvaran is a leading Constitutional Lawyer in Sri Lanka and Nirmala Chandrahaasan is the granddaughter of Federal Party founder “Thanthai” Chelvanayagam.

“With the U.S. returning to the Human Rights Council, we think it is important that Washington advocates a political solution to the Tamil national

question, along with pending issues of accountability and justice,” Mr. Sumanthiran told The Hindu newspaper from London, where he was briefing British officials. The U.K. leads a “core group” on Sri Lanka at the Council.

While in the U.S., Mr. Sumanthiran also met Indian Ambassador Taranjit Singh Sandhu, as well as India's Permanent Representative to the UN T.S. Tirumurti in New York to brief them about the TNA's talks with US State Department officials. TNA leader Sampanthan also held a series of meetings with the Indian High Commissioner Gopal Baglay in Colombo ahead of TNA delegations visit to the U.S.

The TNA holds the position that the 13th Amendment to the Sri Lankan Constitution worked out through the Indo-Lanka Accord of 1987 was a necessary step, although not sufficient in the devolution of substantial power.

India has consistently called for the full implementation of the 13th Amendment and more recently, the early conduct of provincial council elections.

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Holidays to Celebrate Diversity

By Aanjalin Iruthayanathan

As a first-generation Canadian, taking the time to celebrate ethnic holidays on weekdays is a difficult task. Every September, I always compare the designated holidays in the academic calendar to my own faith holidays to see if I would be lucky enough to get the day off. It seems a little unfair to me that this lottery system decided whether I would be able to enjoy festivals on weekdays. Having to wrap up Pongal traditions early in the morning before school and only being able to join the Deepavali celebrations after finishing school work definitely dampened the festive vibes. I believe that all of us would greatly benefit from officially recognizing certain holidays to celebrate diversity. Not only would it grant students and employees the chance to celebrate their respective festivals, it would also be a wonderful opportunity for us to learn about a diverse range of celebrations.

With winter break just around the corner, many of us have started to make plans for Christmas and New Year celebrations. Although Christmas is rooted in Christianity, it is beautiful to see how even people of different faiths have embraced these festivities, making them a part of their lives. Since Christmas is an official holiday, we have the time to learn about and celebrate Christmas. Unfortunately, the same cannot be said for numerous other multi faith festivals. I can't help but wonder why a country like Canada, which prides itself on its diversity, has yet to implement multi faith holidays beyond Christmas, New Year and Easter.

Now don't get me wrong. Canada does promote diversity and we often see political leaders participating in a variety of religious and cultural events. Nevertheless, designating multi faith holidays as officially sanctioned holidays would allow people to fully engage in celebrations without the added stress of school or work.

In December itself, there are various other celebrations including but not limited to: the Jewish festival Hanukkah, the Buddhist festival Rohotsu, and the African-American celebration, Kwanzaa (12). Did you know that there are many cultures where January 1st does not mark the new year? Chinese New Year and Korean New Year both fall in early February, many South Asian cultures celebrate their new year in April and the Jewish New Year, Rosh Hashanah, occurs around late September (2).

Furthermore, in addition to the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, there should also be national holidays for Indigenous festivals and celebrations (11). These holidays would enhance Canadians' understanding and appreciation of Indigenous customs. Imagine how incredible it would be if all Canadians engaged in the Summer Solstice Indigenous Festival every June.

Like I mentioned earlier, implementing these holidays is not only about giving those who celebrate the festival time to do so. Officially implementing these holidays may also prompt the media to extensively feature different celebrations, thus familiarizing the general public with the true extent of Canadian diversity. This creates an exciting educational opportunity for those who may

not necessarily choose to celebrate these holidays, which would increase the understanding and acceptance of different cultures.

Now, as wonderful as this may sound in theory, I do understand that it is virtually impossible for change to happen overnight. Further, there are many practical constraints in implementing these holidays considering just how diverse Canada is. Having multi faith holidays may even result in the number of holidays exceeding the number of school days.

Ultimately, we need to find a balance to accommodate students of different ethnicities without compromising the quality of education. There are some possible ways to accommodate as many students as possible — for example, trying to have arbitrary breaks (like reading week) coincide with some multi faith holidays. At the end of the day, something is still better than nothing. Even if it is not possible to have days off for every single holiday from every faith and ethnicity, it would certainly be incredibly meaningful if we could be guaranteed a day off on at least one holiday.

As population demographics vary from city to city, it would therefore be best to address this concern locally. To accommodate as many people as possible, it would be more practical to implement local holidays. For example, in 2015, New York City's mayor, Bill DeBlasio, added Eid al-Adha and Eid al-Fitr to the list of official school holidays (1). Not only did this change give Muslim students the opportunity to celebrate Eid without having to miss school, their peers were also able to learn about the significance of these holidays.

At Western University, there is academic consideration for religious holidays, but it is not very well enforced nor properly advertised (10). While almost all students are aware of the Self-Reported Absence feature, not everyone knows that there are accommodations for religious holidays. Our course syllabi only contain a single line about such accommodations, and I haven't heard a single professor mention this in any of my classes. Further, being granted academic consideration for religious holidays may always not be favourable for students. For instance, if you were to miss an exam in a course that does not offer a makeup assessment, you would be at a disadvantage. In this case, it is likely that many students would choose to forgo celebrations and write their exams instead. This situation ultimately puts more pressure on the students. The easiest way to tackle this problem within a school setting would be to anonymously survey the student population prior to deciding the exam dates and assignment deadlines.

Delegating holidays to celebrate diversity would certainly help numerous Canadians embrace their heritage and culture while simultaneously promoting the awareness and acceptance of other cultures. With the hope that one day we will be able to celebrate and appreciate each other's holidays together, I wish you all a very happy holidays and a Happy New Year!

(Aanjalin Iruthayanathan is currently a 3rd year student of Medical Science at Western University.)

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Canada Historic Milestones

December 22, 1952

Canada's Parliament announces that a national library will be created on January 1, 1953, following the passage of the National Library Act. The mandate of the National Library of Canada will be to maintain a wide range of written records related to Canadian heritage.

The first National Librarian of Canada will be Dominion Archivist William Kaye Lamb. He will play a decisive role in the development of this cultural institution.

In 2004, the National Library of Canada and the National Archives of Canada will merge and become Library and Archives Canada.



"An equation for me has no meaning, unless it expresses a thought of God"

Srinivasa Ramanujan (22 December 1887 – 26 April 1920) Mathematician

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CANADA NEWS



Canadian Tamil Congress Press Release on CTNA meeting

On Saturday, November 20th, 2021, a handful of protesters conducting themselves in a disorderly manner disrupted a meeting in Scarborough, organized by Canada Tamil National Alliance, where democratically elected Members of Parliament from Sri Lanka, M.A. Sumanthiran and Shanakiyan Rasamanickam, were addressing attendees.

The Canadian Tamil Congress (CTC) respects an individual's right to protest and voice their opinion. However, CTC strongly condemns the aggressive and threatening behaviour of these protestors and believes their actions undermine the freedom of expression and peaceful assembly guaranteed by the Canadian Charter of Rights.

As an organization that values and

advocates for freedom of expression, CTC recognizes the differing opinions in the community as it relates to the Tamil struggle and possible solutions resolving the same. While, CTC welcomes constructive discussions guided by civility and mutual respect, intimidation, threats and verbal abuse should not be tolerated under any circumstances. Furthermore, such behaviour negatively affects the community and the plight of Tamils, further alienating community members from engaging in essential issues.

CTC reiterates its support and respect for an individual's right to protest, peacefully gather and express their own views but encourages such expression to remain respectful and shall not be aggressive, intimidating or violent.

Ontario Providing Access to Innovative Technology for Diabetes Care

Improving the health and quality of life for people living with diabetes



Providing access to innovative technology to improve diabetes care

November 26, 2021
Health

TORONTO — The Ontario government is now providing coverage for the FreeStyle Libre 2 system, the latest flash glucose monitoring system to become available, under the province's

publicly-funded drug program. Providing access to this innovative technology for diabetes care will help patients living with diabetes more conveniently and easily monitor their blood glucose levels.

"This year marks the 100th anniversary of the discovery of insulin right

Ontario NDP leader Andrea Horwath promises \$20.00 minimum wage if elected Premier

Ontario NDP Leader Andrea Horwath is promising to increase the minimum wage of workers to \$ 16.00 coming year and to \$ 20.00 by 2026, if she becomes the Premier of the province. The minimum wage will go up yearly by \$1.00 from next year and reach \$20.00 by 2026.

"The price of everything is going up – from gas to housing to hydro bills – and with Doug Ford's low-wage policy, everyone is feeling the squeeze. Minimum wage earners make sacrifices to buy necessities for the kids, and often pick up a second or even a third job to make ends meet", said Horwath.

The NDP is confident that their plan will work by offering a stable, predictable path so that they can prepare for



changes, and will also include a fund to help with the transition for legitimately struggling small and medium sizes local businesses, farms, and agri businesses.

The office of the Consulate General of Sri Lanka in Toronto shifted to new location

The office of the Consulate General of Sri Lanka has been relocated to a new location from 1st.Decemner 2021.

The new address is given below:

Consulate General of Sri Lanka
1, Eglinton Avenue East, # 501, Toronto, Ontario M4P 3A1.

The Consulate is open for Consular Services from 02.12.2021.

Please send in your queries to:

srilanka@bellnet.ca, slcg.toronto@mfa.gov.lk

here in Ontario. As we look towards the future, our government is committed to making life easier and more affordable for individuals living with diabetes," said Christine Elliott, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health. "Providing coverage for the FreeStyle Libre 2 system through the Ontario Drug Benefit program will support individuals living with diabetes to better monitor their day-to-day health and improve their quality of life."

Starting November 30, 2021, Ontarians eligible for the Ontario Drug Benefit program with a valid prescription can receive FreeStyle Libre 2 as a benefit. The FreeStyle Libre 2 system belongs to a group of glucose monitoring systems called flash glucose monitors and is the second flash glucose monitor to be funded under the Ontario Drug Benefit program for Ontario residents who manage their Type 1

and Type 2 diabetes with insulin.

Traditional blood glucose meters require individuals to take blood samples using frequent finger pricks, which can be inconvenient and time consuming. With a flash glucose monitor such as the FreeStyle Libre 2, individuals with diabetes can quickly review their real-time glucose reading by using a reader or smartphone app to scan a sensor worn on the back of the upper arm. These monitors do not require obtaining a blood sample through finger pricks, making it easier and more convenient for people to monitor their glucose levels and stay healthy. It also enables people to check their blood glucose more often, which can lead to better health outcomes in the long-term and help prevent health emergencies.

Via news.ontario.ca

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Statement by the Prime Minister on the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women

November 25, 2021
Ottawa, Ontario

The Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau, today issued the following statement on the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women:

“Today, on the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, we come together to condemn misogyny and sexism in all of their forms, and remain steadfast in our work to ending gender-based violence here in Canada and around the world. We also recognize the survivors, advocates, and community-based organizations, who work tirelessly every day to end discrimination and violence against women and girls, and support survivors.

“Living in fear of violence is a reality for too many Canadian women; more than four in 10 women in Canada have experienced some form of psychological, physical, or sexual violence from an intimate partner. Some women and girls continue to be at a higher risk of gender-based violence due to the discrimination and additional barriers they face because of their sexuality, race, disability, or social and economic situation. Since the outbreak of COVID-19, there have been escalated rates of gender-based violence around the world. The social and economic impact of the public health emergency has resulted in a shadow pandemic. It has underscored the systemic issues that lead to violence, as well as the gaps in support to protect and prevent those at risk from harm.

“The Government of Canada is taking action to prevent and address gender-based violence, including investing more than \$600 million over five years in Budget 2021 to develop a National Action Plan to End Gender-Based Violence, which builds on the federal Gender-Based Violence Strategy announced in 2017 and the National Strategy to Combat Human Trafficking launched in 2019. From this funding, the government has committed \$30 million, over five years, to support crisis hotlines in their work to help those experiencing gender-based violence. Since the beginning of the pandemic, we have invested nearly \$300 million to support shelters, sexual assault centres, and organizations assisting women and children experiencing violence. This funding will ensure that these organizations are able to provide the necessary services and support to those who need it most. Additionally, the 2020 Fall Economic Statement has committed \$724.1 million to establish a comprehensive Violence Prevention Strategy to increase access to a continuum of culturally relevant supports for Indigenous women, children and LGBTQ2 people, including Two-Spirit, facing gender-based



violence. This strategy includes the construction of new Indigenous-specific shelters and transitional housing across the country.

“Earlier this year, the 2021 Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and 2SLGBTQIA+ People National Action Plan was launched, which outlines concrete steps needed to end this national tragedy. At the same time, the government launched the Federal Pathway in response to the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls and the federal component of the National Action Plan. The Federal Pathway provides a comprehensive roadmap to address the root causes of gender-based violence against Indigenous women, girls and LGBTQ2 people along four interconnected themes: culture, health and wellness, human safety and security, and justice. The government will continue to work alongside families and survivors, Indigenous governments and organizations, and provincial and territorial partners to implement this plan and bring about the transformative change needed to end violence against Indigenous women, girls, and LGBTQ2 people.

“Ending all forms of gender-based violence and harmful practices, especially for women and girls, in all their diversity, is also a priority for Canada’s international efforts. Centred around our Feminist International Assistance Policy, Canada’s international response to COVID-19 has prioritized responding to the increase in gender-based violence as a result of the pandemic, particularly through providing comprehensive services to survivors of violence and supporting the essential work of local organizations working on the frontlines. Canada is also working to prevent gender-based violence in fragile and conflict-affected states and believes that increasing the meaningful participation of women in conflict prevention, conflict resolution, and peacebuilding around the world is vital to sustainable peace. This work is done through our second National

Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security, the Elsie Initiative for Women in Peace Operations, and the Feminist International Assistance Policy.

“Today, as we start the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence, let us reflect on what everyone can do to address and to protect the rights and well-being of women, girls, and gender-diverse people to bring an end to gender-based violence in Canada and around the world. I encourage Canadians to participate in activities being held around this year’s theme, ‘16 and Beyond,’ and use the hashtag #16Days on social media. By speaking up against acts of gender-based violence, we can build a more inclusive, safer, and brighter future for everyone.”

The Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau, today issued the following statement on the Speech from the Throne:

“After 19 months of facing a once-in-a-century pandemic, Canadians chose to move forward this September. They gave Parliamentarians a clear direction to work together to put the COVID-19 crisis behind us and find the real solutions needed to build a better future for all Canadians. The Government of Canada has listened to Canadians, and we are ready to finish the fight against COVID-19, take strong climate action, make life more affordable, walk the shared path of reconciliation, put home ownership back in reach, create jobs, and grow the middle class.

“Building a better future starts with getting the pandemic under control and finishing the job on vaccines. Together, we’ve made progress. More than 86 per cent of eligible Canadians are fully vaccinated, and we have mandated that all federal and federally regulated workers, and everyone travelling within Canada by plane, train, or cruise ship be vaccinated. Just last week, Health Canada approved vaccines for children between the ages of five and 11, and the government is securing next generation COVID-19 vaccines and booster shots.

If we continue to encourage all eligible Canadians to get their COVID-19 vaccines, we can build a healthier tomorrow and a stronger health care system. The government will better support all Canadians by taking action to clear the backlog of delayed procedures caused by COVID-19, strengthening long-term care, and improving access to mental health and addiction treatment. We will keep Canadians safe and healthy now and into the future.

“As we put the pandemic behind us, we need to rebuild an economy that truly works for everyone. To do that, the government will continue to put Canadians first and invest in their future. That means tackling the rising cost of living and taking action on housing affordability and child care. We’re going to help put home ownership back in reach for Canadians with a more flexible First-Time Home Buyer Incentive, a new rent-to-own program, and by reducing closing costs for first-time buyers. Supporting families will make life more affordable for the middle class and people working hard to join it. That’s why over the last few months, we’ve signed nine child care agreements with provinces and territories that will cut fees in half in the next year for most jurisdictions, build hundreds of thousands of new child care spaces across the country, and create an early learning and child care system that will cost, on average, \$10-a-day for hard-working parents. The Government of Canada will get the job done on \$10-a-day child care, and continue to make life better and more affordable for all Canadians.

“To create a more resilient economy, create jobs, and grow the middle class, Canada must take strong and bold climate action. That’s why we’re moving forward to cap and cut oil and gas sector emissions, investing in public transit, and mandating the sale of zero-emissions vehicles. We have the raw materials and skilled work force to produce the clean products that the world will need to cut pollution and create a green economy. The Government of Canada will continue to invest in our workers and industry to help bring us into the economy of the future, while also taking action to clean the air that we breathe and protect Canadians from extreme weather events. Together, we need to go further and move faster on climate action, not just to protect our environment, but to grow our economy in a way that leaves no worker behind.

“All Canadians deserve to feel safe in their communities, but gun violence is on the rise in Canada’s biggest cities. While we’ve already taken strong action on gun control, there’s still more to do. That’s why we will build on our progress and implement a mandatory buyback of assault-style

Ontario Building and Improving Schools

\$600 million announced to build new schools and child care spaces across Ontario

November 23, 2021
Education

MISSISSAUGA — Stephen Lecce, Minister of Education, joined by Kinga Surma, Minister of Infrastructure, and Natalia Kusendova, MPP for Mississauga Centre, announced that the Ontario government is making major investments to build and improve schools and create more licensed child care spaces across the province. The government announced that two capital building programs representing \$600 million in funding is being invested to support 78 school and child care related projects.

The newly approved Capital Priorities Program projects will create 19,700 new student spaces, and 1,525 new licensed child care spaces in schools. These new spaces will be supported by an investment of \$565 million, which will see 26 new schools and 20 permanent additions and renovations built. In addition, the Ontario government will collaborate with several school boards in this round of Capital Priorities funding to expand solutions for accelerated school construction through a pilot project using modular construction methods. This will deliver efficiencies in construction and reduce build times so that stu-



dents can take advantage of new and updated schools sooner.

The investment is part of the Ontario government's commitment to provide \$14 billion to support school construction over ten years. There are currently more than 300 child care and education building-related projects in development across Ontario with more than 100 actively under construction.

"In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, we have made safer schools a priority, which is why we continue to invest in modern and accessible learning spaces with improved ventilation," said Minister Lecce. "This investment is part of our multiyear plan to build, expand, and update schools and child

care spaces across our province. It will leave a lasting legacy that benefits working families for years to come."

An additional \$42.6 million through the Early Years Capital Program will go toward renovations or additions of 32 child care centres located in schools across the province. This will create over 1,500 new licensed child care spaces to provide families with more options for their children.

"After years of neglect under the previous government, we are stepping up to support families by investing in affordable and accessible child care that meets their needs," added Minister Lecce. "These investments are key to our economic recovery and further evidence of how our government con-

tinues to lead the way when it comes to investing in child care."

The support for school-based child care centres is part of the government's commitment to invest up to \$1 billion in the creation of up to 30,000 new licensed child care spaces over five years. To date, over 23,000 new spaces have been approved, which will support families and ensure a strong and accessible child care system.

"Our government is committed to Building Ontario and putting the necessary infrastructure in place that will help the young, bright minds of our province grow, learn, and develop," said Kinga Surma, Minister of Infrastructure. "Today's announcement is another example of how we are supporting families as they navigate the COVID-19 pandemic and setting them on a path towards a safe and successful recovery."

Today's announcement was made at Elm Drive Public School in Mississauga. On April 8, 2020, the province announced that Peel District School Board received Approval to Proceed for a total funding allocation of \$19.8 million to build a new school featuring 650 new student spaces, four child care rooms and one EarlyON Child and Family Centre room.

Via news.ontario.ca

Ontario Passes the Working for Workers Act

November 30, 2021

Labour, Training and Skills Development

TORONTO — Monte McNaughton, Minister of Labour, Training and Skills Development, issued the following statement in recognition of the passing of the Working for Workers Act, 2021:

"Our government is working for workers everyday to help them earn bigger paycheques, stay safe, and have better opportunities. We are determined to rebalance the scales and put workers in the driver's seat of Ontario's economic growth while

attracting the best workers to our great province.

Through the passage of this legislation, Ontario is ensuring our labour laws keep pace with the acceleration of new technology, automation, and remote work. We are protecting workers' rights, while positioning Ontario as the top destination for global talent and investment.

We have introduced measures to make it easier to spend time with family and loved ones, requiring most workplaces have a right to disconnect policy. To help workers advance their careers and earn more, we are banning businesses from using non-com-

pete agreements.

Other changes passed today will protect and support vulnerable workers by establishing mandatory licensing of recruiters and temporary help agencies, with the harshest penalties in the country for violators.

For truckers and food delivery couriers who keep our world moving, we are enshrining their right to access washrooms in the businesses and restaurants they serve.

Finally, we are making it easier for internationally trained individuals to practice in the professions they trained in, helping more businesses find the workers they need to drive

economic prosperity for us all.

This legislation is another step towards building back a better province and cementing Ontario's position as a global leader, for others to follow, as the best place in the world to live, work and raise a family."

Via news.ontario.ca



Elimination of Violence against Women

Contd. from page 6...

weapons and work with the provinces and territories that want to ban handguns.

"The government will also continue to ensure that everyone is safe and has a shot at getting ahead regardless of their gender, who they love, where they come from, what language they speak, who they pray to, or the colour of their skin. We will continue to fight systemic racism, sexism, and discrimination in our communities, and promote the empowerment of Black and racialized Canadians, and Indigenous peoples. We will also stand-up for LGBTQ2 communities while completing the ban on conversion therapy, and we will protect and support our

two official languages, both inside and outside of Quebec.

"But creating a more inclusive and equitable Canada can't happen unless we move faster on our shared path of reconciliation. Canadians were horrified by the discovery of unmarked graves and burial sites located near former residential schools. As a country, and as a government, we must continue to tell the truths of these tragedies so we can right past wrongs and move forward in the spirit of reconciliation, for everyone. The Government of Canada will continue to support Indigenous peoples in these communities by investing in a distinction-based mental health

and wellness strategy, and we will respond to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Calls to Action and appoint a special interlocutor to further advance justice on the legacy of residential schools. The government will also accelerate work with Indigenous partners to address the national tragedy of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people, and we will ensure fair and equitable compensation for those harmed by the First Nations Child and Family Services program. Together, we will close the gaps that far too many First Nations, Inuit, and Métis communities still face today and build a better and more equitable future.

"Finally, the government recognizes that we live in a deeply connected

world. The pandemic has shown us the importance of working with our global partners to tackle the challenges of today and tomorrow. From fighting the climate crisis to securing supply chains that create good middle class jobs, and standing up to reinforce international peace and security, Canada will continue to be a leader on the world stage.

"As we build back from the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, Canadians expect Parliamentarians to work together and deliver on their priorities. The Government of Canada is committed to continuing to put Canadians first as we build a cleaner and healthier future. Together, we move Canada forward – for everyone."

Via pm.gc.ca



Prime Minister welcomes new parliamentary secretaries

December 3, 2021

Ottawa, Ontario

The Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau, today announced a new team of parliamentary secretaries.

This team will be an important link between ministers and Parliament, working closely with their colleagues to find real solutions to the challenges that Canadians face, as we finish the fight against COVID-19 and build a better future for everyone. Together, we will work to create new jobs and grow the middle class, put home ownership back in reach for Canadians, accelerate the fight against climate change, deliver on \$10-a-day child care, and continue to walk the shared path of reconciliation.

The new parliamentary secretaries are appointed as follows:

Gary Anandasangaree becomes Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada

Vance Badawey becomes Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indigenous Services

Jaime Battiste becomes Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations

Terry Beech becomes Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance

Rachel Bendayan becomes Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance

Chris Bittle becomes Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage

Élisabeth Brière becomes Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Mental Health and Addictions and Associate Minister of Health

Paul Chiang becomes Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion (Diversity and Inclusion)

Julie Dabrusin becomes Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources and Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change

Pam Damoff becomes Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety

Francis Drouin becomes Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food

Terry Duguid remains Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change

Greg Fergus remains Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board

Andy Fillmore becomes Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry

Darren Fisher becomes Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Seniors

Peter Fragiskatos becomes Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Revenue

Anthony Housefather becomes Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister



of Public Services and Procurement

Yvonne Jones becomes Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources and Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Northern Affairs

Mike Kelloway becomes Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard

Annie Koutrakis becomes Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport

Irek Kusmierczyk remains Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion

Marie-France Lalonde becomes Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship

Stéphane Lauzon becomes Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Rural Economic Development

Soraya Martinez Ferrada becomes Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion (Housing)

Bryan May becomes Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence

Yasir Naqvi becomes Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Emergency Preparedness

Jennifer O'Connell becomes Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Infrastructure and Communities

Rob Oliphant remains Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs

Ya'ara Saks becomes Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development

Darrell Samson remains Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence

Marc G. Serré becomes Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Official Languages

Terry Sheehan becomes Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Labour

Maninder Sidhu becomes Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs

Jenna Sudds becomes Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Youth

Anita Vandenbeld becomes Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Development

Adam van Koevorden becomes Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health and Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Sport

Arif Virani becomes Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, Export Promotion, Small Business and Economic Development

The Prime Minister announced that Mr. Fergus and Mr. Oliphant will be sworn in as members of the Privy Council.

The Prime Minister also announced the following appointments. Under the leadership of the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Mark Holland, and the Chief Gov-

ernment Whip, Steven MacKinnon, the following team will work with all parliamentarians to make progress on the priorities that matter most to Canadians:

Kevin Lamoureux will continue to serve as Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons

Mark Gerretsen will serve as Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate)

Sherry Romanado will serve as Deputy Leader of the Government in the House of Commons

Ruby Sahota will serve as Deputy Government Whip

This new team of parliamentary secretaries brings the diverse knowledge, experience, and skills needed to carry out the Government of Canada's progressive plan and support the unique needs of people and regions across the country. They will help advance new legislation, engage directly with Canadians on key initiatives, and represent the government at home and abroad.

Via pm.gc.ca

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and

A Happy New Year

- January 1, 2022



India Issues Precautionary Guidelines as Omicron Variant Spreads Worldwide

December 01, 2021 4:59 PM

Mira Varghese

India has announced precautionary measures to further mitigate the spread of COVID-19 amid the emergence of the omicron variant of the coronavirus, which has now appeared in nearly 25 countries, including the United States.

While India has not yet reported any cases of the new variant, the country said it was not weakening its fight against COVID-19, the disease caused by the coronavirus.

The Ministry of Health issued new guidelines, which took effect Wednesday, for international travelers. Ahead of arrival in India, they will have to upload a record of their travel history from the past 14 days to an online portal. They will also have to upload proof of a negative RT-PCR test, which would be taken 72 hours before their journey.

Passengers arriving from countries designated as "at risk" by the ministry, which include all European countries, South Africa, Brazil and China, among others, will have to take another COVID-19 test and wait for results before leaving the airport or boarding a connecting flight.

Passengers who test positive will have to quarantine for seven days and retest on the eighth day after arrival.

Six test positive

Following the instatement of these

guidelines, six passengers, out of nearly 3,500 on 11 international flights from "at risk" countries, tested positive for COVID-19, according to a press release from the Health Ministry.

It is not clear when scheduled commercial international flights will resume. According to a notice released by the directorate general of civil aviation in response to the omicron variant, these flights will restart in "due course."

Increased testing is also a priority across the country. On Tuesday, the Health Ministry directed states to conduct more COVID-19 testing, after testing decreased the prior week, according to the Reuters news agency.

Tests per day

Around 1 million tests have been conducted each day across the country in the past few weeks, but Reuters reported that this was less than half the testing capacity.

The Health Ministry warned state governments that this decline in testing would be problematic for the country's fight against the pandemic.

In a letter to the northeastern state of Nagaland, which decreased testing by over a third in two months, Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan wrote that decreased testing would make it "very difficult to determine the true level of infection spread in a geography," according to Reuters.

"With a majority of countries seeing



multiple surges in COVID cases in recent times and a few developed countries facing even fourth and fifth waves despite high levels of COVID vaccination, there is a need for continued vigil given the unpredictable and contagious nature of the disease," Bhushan wrote.

Some cities have also postponed the opening of schools to mitigate the virus's spread. Reuters reported that the Mumbai municipal corporation announced it was delaying schools' reopening for younger children until December 15. The city of Pune is also holding off students' return to school.

Active cases decline

Currently, there are 99,023 active cases of COVID-19 in India, a decrease of 1,520 from Tuesday, according to data from the Health Ministry. Deaths, however, increased by 267, bringing the death toll to 469,247.

More than 1.2 billion vaccines have

been distributed across the country.

The situation in India has improved dramatically since April and May, when the delta variant of the coronavirus ripped through the country, creating a massive second wave of the virus's spread.

At the height of the delta variant's spread, more than 400,000 new cases were being reported daily. The situation severely strained the country's health systems, and the deaths of loved ones became a part of everyday life.

India's new daily case average has since fallen, to 8,716 new infections, according to Reuters. This average is just 2% of the highest daily average that was reported on May 8.

Despite the improvement, India's total infections rose to 34.6 million on Tuesday.

Via voanews.com

India's Serum Institute Resumes Vaccine Exports to COVAX Vaccine Sharing Program

November 27, 2021 6:05 AM

Anjana Pasricha

NEW DELHI

The world's largest vaccine maker, the Serum Institute of India has resumed exports of coronavirus vaccines to COVAX the partnership that is distributing vaccines to developing countries. The resumption of exports comes at a critical time when a new variant found in South Africa is causing concern around the world.

India suspended exports of vaccines in March this year following a severe surge in infections during the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic as it used its stocks to ramp up its domestic inoculation program.

The first shipments went out Friday.

"This will go a long way in restoring vaccine supply equality in the world," Serum Institute chief executive Adar Poonawalla said on Twitter.

The company said in a press statement that said that it expects the supply of vaccines to COVAX to increase substantially in early 2022. The Serum Institute of India was expected to be one of the main suppliers to the vaccine sharing facility which was created to ensure global equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines after the

outbreak of the pandemic.

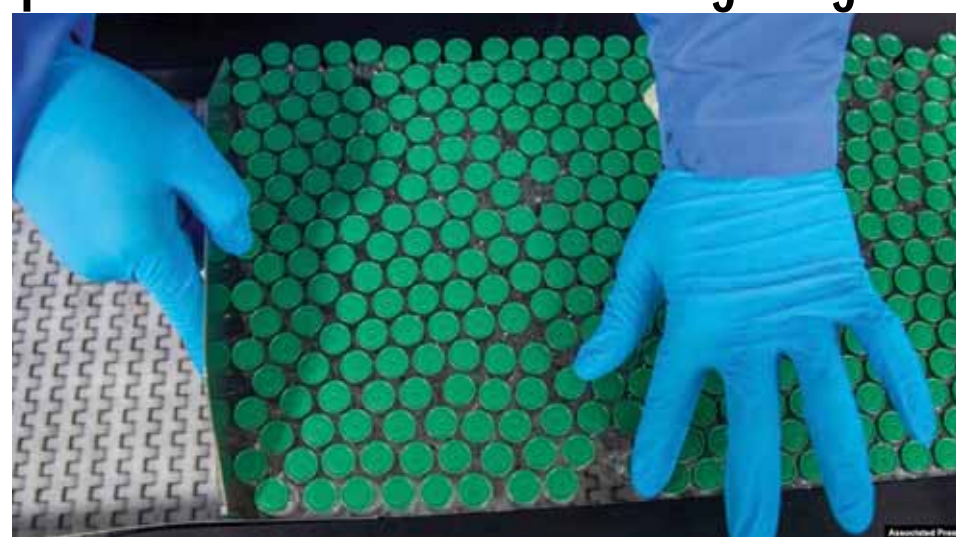
The Serum Institute linked the resumption of exports to surpassing its target of producing 1 billion doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine by the end of this year – it has produced 1.25 billion doses so far.

Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, which leads the COVAX program along with the World Health Organization, called the restart of exports from India an important development "as it enters its busiest period yet for shipping vaccines to participating economies."

The export curbs by India were a huge setback to efforts by COVAX, which had been relying on supplies of the affordable and easy to store AstraZeneca vaccine from India's Serum Institute to distribute to low-income countries. The vaccine is called Covishield in India.

"While COVAX's portfolio is now much more diversified than it was earlier this year when we received our first SII deliveries, COVISHIELD remains an important product which has the potential to help us protect hundreds of millions of people in the months ahead," according to Seth Berkley, chief executive of GAVI, the Vaccine Alliance.

India has allowed exports to resume as its vaccination program makes sub-



An employee packs a box containing vials of Covishield, a version of the AstraZeneca vaccine, at the Serum Institute of India in Pune, Nov. 22, 2021.

stantial progress and vaccine supplies improve – about 80% of the country has received one dose and about 40% is fully vaccinated. Cases of coronavirus have also reduced dramatically – on Friday, India reported about 9,000 cases.

However, a new variant found in South Africa, dubbed omicron, is causing widespread concern and has prompted experts in India to caution against complacency. Designated a variant of concern by the World Health Organization, omicron has already been found in Belgium, Botswana, Israel and Hong Kong and has

prompted several countries, including the United States and Britain to impose travel curbs.

India has said it is scaling up screening of passengers from overseas. At a meeting held Saturday to review the pandemic, Prime Minister Narendra Modi asked officials to review plans to ease international travel restrictions.

"In light of the new variant, we remain vigilant with a focus on containment and ensuring increased second dose coverage," he tweeted.

Via voanews.com



WORLD NEWS

Immediately initiate a program to use the Kalpitiya Islands for tourism which has been delayed for 10 years – The COPE Committee

December 01, 2021

The Chairman of the Committee on Public Enterprises (COPE) Prof. Charitha Herath, Member of Parliament directed the Secretary to the Ministry of Tourism and the Tourism Development Authority to expedite the Preparation of a program to utilize the 12 islands under the Tourism Development Authority in the Kalpitiya area for the benefit of the tourism industry.

It was revealed that although an investor had applied for 5 of the 12 islands which is of 2055 acres in 2011, it had been delayed due to the inability to identify a proper institution to obtain approval for his Water Bungalows project.

The COPE Chairman pointed out that the delay of such a project for 10 years due to the inability to get approval for this investor who already own hotels of similar nature in the Maldives is an obstacle to the development of the tourism industry as well as the development of the country.

The COPE Chairman stressed the need to utilize these beautiful islands for tourism. The COPE Chairman directed the Mr.S. Hettiarachchi and Chairman of the Tourism Development Authority Kimarli Fernando to implement a special project within a strong legal framework since Cabinet approval has been granted for this putting forth a Steering Committee with all relevant parties such as the Marine Environment Protection Authority, Central Environmental Authority, North Western Provincial Council, Coast Conservation and Coastal Resource Management Department.

The aforesaid was disclosed at the COPE Committee meeting chaired by Prof. Charitha Herath held recently (26) to examine the Auditor General's Reports for the years 2018 and 2019 and the current performance of the Tourism Development Authority.

Also, the Committee paid attention

towards the audit observation that there was payment of Rs. 11 million out of 29 million for the renovation of the Kataragama

Resort a few years ago for work not done. It was also disclosed that the value of this 11 million has been estimated at Rs. 4.8 million by a re-appointed expert committee. It was also brought to the notice of the Committee that despite a committee being appointed through the Ministry of Public Administration which has made recommendations that the Attorney General conduct an investigation into the incident and punish the culprits, no action has been taken so far. Instead, the Auditor General revealed that only a warning letter had been issued to the officer involved in the said incident and the committee expressed its strong displeasure in this regard.

The COPE chairman pointed out that this was not a criticism of the existing management but a responsibility of Government institutions to change this long-standing system and take appropriate action on audit observations and recommendations.

The committee also inquired about the payment of an additional Rs. 10 million for the construction of the Kalpitiya Thoraiadi Jetty and the road near the Wannimundalama Lagoon. The Authority said that it had inquired about this from the Puttalam District Engineer and was informed that further action could not be taken as they did not have the relevant documents. The Auditor General revealed that although the COPE Committee had given a recommendation in 2016 to look into this matter, the investigation process only began in 2018. The COPE chairman expressed his displeasure over this and stated that state institutions are bound to implement a recommendation made by Parliament, the highest body on financial control in the country, thus, an immediate inquiry should be conducted and a



report should be submitted as soon as possible.

Despite spending Rs. 1.2 billion on tourism development in 2018-2019, 1.9 million tourists have visited the country. Therefore, the existing institutions should be set up for the tourism industry under a more efficient mechanism, said the Chairperson of the Tourism Development Authority, Kimarli Fernando. Accordingly, the Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority, the Sri Lanka Tourism Promotion Bureau and the Sri Lanka Convention Bureau, which are currently working separately for the betterment

of the tourism industry, will form a single entity whilst the Sri Lanka Institute of Tourism and Hotel Management is intended to operate separately, the chairperson further said.

The Secretary to the Ministry said that the Bill on this regard will be presented to Parliament by March-April as it has been approved by the Cabinet. The COPE Chairman instructed the Secretary to the Ministry to expedite the work on this regard if it is the need of the Ministry and the institutions for the purpose of a more efficient mechanism.

The Committee drew attention to the obstacles faced by Sri Lanka in comparison to Maldives which has

made rapid progress in the tourism industry. Ms. Kimarli Fernando said that only the highest priced luxury hotels in the Maldivian tourism industry are active, promoting globally through active public relations, operating under a small team of 15 international level experts, and making a significant impact by bringing in leading international investors bringing about such impact. The Chairperson also said that the institute has played a major role in uplifting the tourism industry in the face of the COVID pandemic. She added that her institution has made great strides in training hoteliers amidst the COVID crisis, having fully completed the online registration process.

The COPE Committee also stressed the need to make more effective use of the properties owned by the Tourism Development Authority, including lands in many areas, for the betterment of the tourism industry.

Hon. State Minister Susil Premajayantha, Hon. Members of Parliament Rauff Hakeem, Jagath Pushpakumara, Nalin Bandara, S. M. Marikkar, Madhura Withanage, Premnath C. Dolawatte, officials of the Tourism Development Authority were present at this Committee meeting.

Via news.lk

Sri Lanka Missions to Accelerate Tourism Promotion

December 03, 2021

Foreign Minister Prof. G.L. Peiris, Minister of Tourism Prasanna Ranatunga and State Minister of Regional Cooperation Tharaka Balasuriya jointly addressed the Sri Lanka Heads of Mission and Post abroad on accelerating the tourism promotion activities of the Sri Lanka Missions and Posts on 01 December 2021 at the Foreign Ministry. The Chairperson of Sri Lanka Tourism Kimarli Fernando made a detailed presentation on the wide range of tourism attractions in Sri Lanka and the way forward to increase the number of inbound tourists.

It was decided to vigorously promote tourism openings in several sectors including health, religion, food, environment, sports, film and music through the 66 Sri Lanka Missions and Posts in different parts of the world and review the progress on a monthly basis. Senior officials of the Foreign Ministry, Tourism Ministry and the Sri Lanka Tourism Promotion Bureau also participated in the meeting while the Heads of Mission and Post of Sri Lanka joined virtually.

Foreign Ministry
Colombo
Via news.lk



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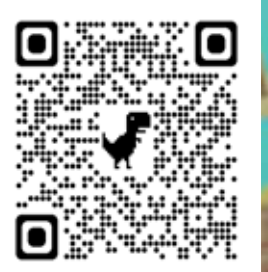
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SHN Foundation thanks supporters for First-ever Tamil Radiothon that raised almost \$300,000 for Scarborough's hospitals

On Wednesday, November 24th, 2021 Scarborough Health Network (SHN) Foundation came together to thank the sponsors, donors and supporters for their efforts in raising more than \$290,000 for Scarborough's hospitals. This appreciation dinner recognized the incredible efforts toward the first-ever Tamil Radiothon in June 2021.

On Wednesday, June 9th, 2021, the all-day Radiothon hit the airwaves inviting listeners to hear unique stories from SHN patients, physicians, staff, community members and volunteers. They sought to inspire the community to help shape the future of health care in Scarborough by showing their support and donating. Proudly presented by the Canadian Tamils' Chamber of Commerce (CTCC), the event went live to air on EAST FM 102.7.

The appreciation dinner included many of the supporters of the Radiothon offering remarks and congratulations, including Alicia Vandermeer, President & CEO of SHN Foundation, MPP Vijay Thanigasalam, MPP for Scarborough-Rouge Park, Dr. Mayoorendra Ravichandiran, Emergency Physician at SHN, Kubes Navaratnam, Managing Partner at

Nava Wilson LLP, and Sritharan Thurairajah, Co-Chair of the Tamil Radiothon.

Alicia Vandermeer offered her gratitude and appreciation to SHN Foundation's partner and host, EAST FM 102.7, Presenting Sponsor CTCC, Co-chairs Sritharan Thurairajah and Logan Velumailum and all of the sponsors, donors and volunteers that helped to accomplish a successful radiothon.

SHN supports many Tamil communities as more than 75% of Toronto's Tamil population resides in Scarborough. Members of the SHN team are part of the Tamil community and work 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 and a full-time Tamil interpreter available to help patients and families.

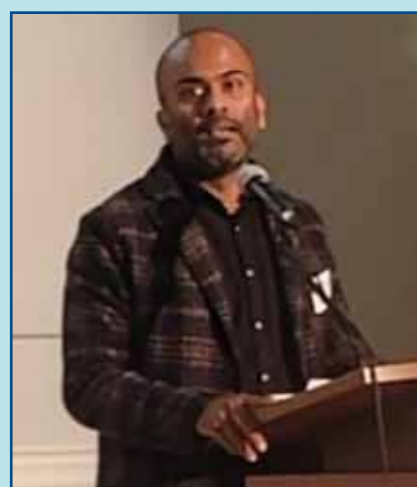
SHN Foundation is looking forward to next year's Radiothon and working with the sponsors, donors, volunteers and community once again to raise funds for SHN's highest priority needs.



Alicia Vandermeer, President & CEO of SHN Foundation



Dr. Mayoorendra Ravichandiran, Emergency Physician at SHN



Kubes Navaratnam, Managing Partner at Nava Wilson LLP



Sritharan Thurairajah, Co-Chair of the Tamil Radiothon



Scarborough “V Team” getting ready to deliver COVID-19 vaccines for kids, ages 5-11

More details on rollout plan to come later this week, including new booking links

SCARBOROUGH (November 22, 2021)

Scarborough Health Network (SHN) and its Scarborough Ontario Health Team (SOHT) partners are making sure their community is better protected against COVID-19 by inviting Scarborough children to join their super squad of health heroes.

Following Health Canada’s approval of the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine for the five to 11 age group and today’s announcement from the Province, the Scarborough Vaccine Clinic Team is getting ready to begin expanding their proven vaccination program to include this younger demographic. The clinic website will be updated later this week with new booking links specifically for making appointments for kids, aged five to 11.

mind, and heart to stop COVID-19 in its tracks.

“Families can be confident that they will have a safe, calm, and kid-friendly experience during their child’s vaccination appointment,” said Glyn Boatswain, Chief Nursing and Allied Health Executive, SHN. “Captain V Bear and the V Team kids are a fun part of the child and family centered care you can expect at each of our vaccine clinics. Our vaccinators and clinic staff, including doctors, nurses, pharmacists, support services, child life specialists, screeners, volunteers and more, are specially prepared for helping families to get younger children vaccinated.”

VaxFacts for Parents Virtual Town Hall

For more information on the vaccine, how it works in children, and why it’s so important, SHN invites families to attend the free VaxFacts for Parents Virtual Town Hall to hear from some of SHN’s expert physicians — including Dr. Peter Azzopardi, Chief of Paediatrics, Dr. Reena Lovinsky, Medical Director of Infection Prevention and Control, and Dr. Latif Murji, Physician Lead for the VaxFacts Clinic.

Join the VaxFacts for Parents event on Thursday, November 25 from 7 to 8 p.m.

Zoom: zoom.us/j/98595788905

Dial-in: 647-558-0588

Learn more at vaxfacts-virtual-town-hall.eventbrite.ca, and RSVP to receive event reminders and an email with the Zoom link.



The V Team

With more than 578,000 doses already administered, SHN and the SOHT partners are poised to spring into action with the help of their very own “V Team.” Formed to demonstrate the awesome power of becoming fully vaccinated, the V Team bestows honorary membership upon all kids aged five to 11 who roll up their sleeve and get the shot. Providing some support and a little encouragement, is Captain V Bear and the V Team kids who use body,

More details to come this week

SHN and its SOHT partners are planning to roll out vaccines to children ages five to 11 through a number of approaches, including through local schools, at the Scarborough COVID-19 Vaccine Clinics, and within the community. Further details including when parents can begin booking at the Scarborough Vaccine Team clinics will be announced later this week.

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.

Media contact:

Lisa Cipriano, Scarborough Health Network, lcipriano@shn.ca or
416-356-7950



Central East Ontario Hospitals Coming Together to Introduce

Single, Unified Digital Health Record for Patients

(SCARBOROUGH) - November 24, 2021 – On December 3, 2021,

Seven partner hospital organizations, representing 14 hospitals in Central East Ontario, will introduce Epic – a new, digital clinical information system (CIS) that will provide a single, unified personal health record for each patient.

The new Epic CIS will go live at Campbellford Memorial Hospital, Haliburton Highlands Health Services, Lakeridge Health, Northumberland Hills Hospital, Peterborough Regional Health Centre, Ross Memorial Hospital, and Scarborough Health Network. This collaboration represents the largest number of individual organizations joining together on Epic in Ontario and will transform the way health care is delivered for generations to come.

“Epic is a gamechanger for Central East Ontario,” said David Graham, Chief Administrative Officer and Executive Vice-President at SHN. “It will vastly improve the way we deliver care across Central East Ontario for generations to come.”

Epic will provide health-care teams with the tools they need to better collaborate across the

region and enable them to make the best possible decisions about an individual’s care and treatment. In addition, there will be increased access to real-time information that will help to improve patient outcomes, and access to standardized tools and processes that will reduce duplication, streamline processes, and improve results.

The launch of Epic will also include a new MyChart Central East Ontario patient portal that is integrated with the Epic system. This free, secure, online portal will allow patients to access their medical records and personal health information. Patients can register for the new MyChart patient portal beginning December 3, 2021 by visiting mychart.ourepic.ca.

“As our teams transition to this faster, safer, and better way to deliver care, patients and families may initially notice longer than usual wait times and some processes that are done differently,” explains Graham. “We appreciate our community’s patience and understanding as our teams make this important change to serve them better.”

Epic is one of the world’s largest electronic health records software companies. Their best-in-class

clinical information system has been adopted by hundreds of leading hospitals in North America and Europe, including the Mayo Clinic, Cleveland Clinic, The Ottawa Hospital, SickKids, and others.

About Scarborough Health Network

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For more information, please contact:

Lisa Cipriano, Scarborough Health Network,
416-356-7950 or lcipriano@shn.ca

Seven hospital organizations in Central East Ontario have partnered to implement a shared Clinical Information System (CIS) to support care for 1.5 million patients across our region. The partner hospitals are: **Campbellford Memorial Hospital, Haliburton Highlands Health Services, Lakeridge Health, Northumberland Hills Hospital, Peterborough Regional Health Centre, Ross Memorial Hospital and Scarborough Health Network.**





World Health Organization reports new Covid variant Omicron poses 'very high' global risk and world must prepare.....

The Omicron coronavirus variant is likely to spread internationally, posing a "very high" global risk of infection surges that could have "severe consequences" some areas, the World Health Organization (WHO) has stated.

The UN agency urged its 194 member states to accelerate vaccination of high-priority groups and, in anticipation of increased case numbers, to "ensure mitigation plans are in place" to maintain essential health services.

Omicron has an unprecedented number of spike mutations, some of which are concerning for their potential impact on the trajectory of the pandemic," the WHO said.

To date, no deaths linked to Omicron had been reported, though further research was needed to assess Omicron's potential to escape protection against immunity induced by vaccines and previous infections, it said.

The overall global risk related to the new variant... is assessed as very high."

"Increasing cases, regardless of a change

in severity, may pose overwhelming demands on health care systems and may lead to increased morbidity and mortality.

The impact on vulnerable populations would be substantial, particularly in countries with low vaccination coverage," it said. The variant was first reported to WHO on Nov 24 from South Africa, where infections have risen steeply.

It has since spread around the world, with new cases found in the Netherlands,



Denmark and Australia even as more countries imposed travel restrictions to try to seal themselves off. Japan said on Monday it would close its borders to foreigners, joining Israel in taking the toughest measures.

There have been three cases reported in Ontario at the time our edition goes to print.

Pfizer says COVID-19 Pill 90% effective and will cut hospitalization and deaths

One of world's leading pharmaceutical firms Pfizer says that their experimental anti-viral pill to fight COVID-19 is 90% effective.



According to Pfizer sources, their pill will cut hospitalization and deaths by 90% in high - risk adults as the drug maker is experimenting on the new drug.

Pfizer is seeking approval for its use from the FDA and international drug regulators as soon as possible to make available for public use.

Since the outbreak of COVID-19 drug researchers have been experimenting on a pill that would cut down deaths due to the pandemic and, also reduce hospitalization of patients affected by the disease.

The pill has been approved in UK and awaits approval from Health Canada.

"It's rare that you see great drugs come through with almost 90-per-cent efficiency and 100 - per-cent protection for death" stated Dr. Michael Dolsten, Pfizer's Chief Scientific Officer.



SPECIAL FEATURE

by **RAYMOND
RAJABALAN**



Most of us have been brought up with the traditional Christmas story—you know, the one about Jesus being born on Christmas day in a stable in Bethlehem with the shepherds and three wise men looking on as depicted in countless manger scenes.

A careful look at what the Bible really says reveals some surprising differences. Let's examine what the Bible actually does say about the circumstances surrounding Christ's birth.

While the Gospel accounts of Matthew and Luke describe the true story of Jesus' birth, we'll see that they assuredly do not describe the Christmas story so popular at this time of year.

Luke's important background

Consider first Luke, the Gospel writer who had the detailed mind of a physician and a historian. He wanted to make sure he presented all the perti-

nents to serve in the various temple functions.

Not wanting any to be left out of serving, David's solution was to divide the priests into 24 courses. Each priest would then serve for a specified week-long term twice during the year, plus the three festival seasons (Deuteronomy 16:16) when all the priests would serve.

The question is: Do we know at what times of the year the course of Abijah served at the temple? Yes, we do. The determination can be made by combining the information in 1 Chronicles 24 with a study into the traditions of Judaism regarding when the temple courses were carried out during the year.

The evidence points to Zacharias' week of service described by Luke being around Pentecost, which generally falls in late May to mid-June on our calendar. Although they fall at specific times on God's sacred calendar, the dates of His annual Holy Days and festivals vary up to several weeks on the Roman calendar we use today.

So it seems we can ascertain when Zacharias was serving in the temple. One resource, *The Companion Bible*,

him, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him. But the angel said to him, 'Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your prayer is heard; and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John'" (verses 11-13).

41111 Then the angel explained the mission of Zacharias' son-to-be, John the Baptist: "He will also be filled with the Holy Spirit from his mother's womb . . . He will also go before Him [Jesus Christ, the coming Messiah] in the spirit and power of Elijah . . . to make ready a people prepared for the Lord" (verses 15-17).

Although a righteous man, in this instance Zacharias was all too human and displayed a lack of faith in the angel Gabriel's message. Because of his unbelief, he would not be able to speak again until his son John was born (verses 18-20).

Timing of Elizabeth's and Mary's conceptions

"So it was, as soon as the days of his service were completed, that he departed to his own house. Now after those days his wife Elizabeth conceived; and she hid herself five months" (Luke 1:23-24). Since Zacharias' temple course

you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest . . . And He will reign over the house of Jacob [Israel] forever" (verses 31-33).

Mary, since she was a virgin, then asked the obvious question. The answer came back: "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you" (verse 35).

Gabriel emphasized God's miracle-working power: "Now indeed, Elizabeth, your relative [cousin, KJV] has also conceived a son in her old age; and this is now the sixth month for her who was called barren. For with God nothing will be impossible" (verses 36-37).

Mary and Elizabeth

So a little more time has elapsed. It is now Elizabeth's sixth month, perhaps late December or a little beyond. "Now Mary arose in those days [the same basic time frame] and went into the hill country with haste, to a city of Judah, and entered the house of Zacharias and greeted Elizabeth. And it happened, when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, that the babe leaped in her womb" (verses 39-41).

Nativity Story

nent facts.

Notice his preface: "Since many have undertaken to set down an orderly account of the events that have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed on to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the word, I too decided, after investigating everything carefully from the very first, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may know the truth concerning the things about which you have been instructed" (Luke 1:1-4, New Revised Standard Version, emphasis added throughout).

Luke, in other words, interviewed those who had witnessed or were knowledgeable of the events of Christ's life, and that information was the basis for his Gospel. After this important introduction, Luke begins the true story leading to Jesus' birth with an account of God's dealings with Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist:

"There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the division [or "course"] of Abijah. His wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth" (verse 5). Later in the account it tells us she was a cousin of Mary (verse 36, King James Version).

"And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and they were both well advanced in years" (verses 6-7).

Zacharias' priestly assignment or "division" helps us to know and understand the general time frame of Christ's birth. His was "the course of Abijah." But what does this mean?

About a thousand years earlier, King David had organized the Levitical priesthood into 24 "courses" or "divisions." As explained in 1 Chronicles 24 and more specifically in verses 3, 10 and 19, there was an abundance of



calculates it to the week of June 13-19 in the determined year (1974, Appendix 179, p. 200).

An unexpected angelic appearance

Luke's account continues: "So it was, that while he was serving as priest before God in the order of his division, according to the custom of the priesthood, his lot fell to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord" (Luke 1:8-9).

What happened next would have been rather frightening to anyone. "Then an angel of the Lord appeared to him . . . And when Zacharias saw

was in mid-June, assuming she became pregnant within a couple of weeks, five months would put this into mid- to late November.

The scene then shifts to the Messiah's birth: "Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph . . . The angel said to her, 'Rejoice, highly favored one, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women'" (verses 26-28).

This account clearly shows that Mary was a remarkable young woman of faith. Gabriel said to her, "And behold,

Elizabeth at this time was in her sixth month of pregnancy with John the Baptist. It would not be a stretch to understand from the previous passage that Mary was now also pregnant with Jesus. Elizabeth even speaks of Mary as though she knows Mary is an expectant mother: "But why is this granted to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For indeed, as soon as the voice of your greeting sounded in my ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy" (verses 43-44).

Verse 56 says, "And Mary remained with her about three months, and returned to her house." Timewise it was now late March. Mary stayed with Elizabeth right to the birth of John the Baptist. "Now Elizabeth's full time came for her to be delivered, and she brought forth a son" (verse 57).

We see, then, that Mary was probably three months pregnant when John was born. John was probably born in late March or early April. So when was Jesus Christ born? Six months later would be late September or early October—in the autumn of the year, not in the dead of winter, as so many today mistakenly assume.

The evidence of the Roman census

Can we find other biblical evidence that Jesus was born in the autumn rather than in winter? Indeed we can.

Continuing in Luke's account: "And it came to pass in those days that a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered" (Luke 2:1). "All the world" in this context would mean all the areas under Roman rule. "This census took place while Quirinius was governing Syria. So all went to be registered, everyone to his own city" (verses 2-3).

What kind of people were the Romans when it came to order and efficiency? They built bridges, roads and buildings that in some cases are still in use to this day, 2,000 years later. Their roads were marvels of engineering. They con-

SPECIAL FEATURE



structed great waterworks and sewage systems. Even today, our city planning owes a great deal to the Romans. Even much of modern government and military organization is copied from the Romans. They were masters of organization and structure.

Would the Romans, then, have ordered a census in the dead of winter? Of course not. This would have defeated the whole purpose! In winter, temperatures drop below freezing around Jerusalem, and the roads would have been muddy and wet with cold rains and occasional snow. It would've been a terrible time to travel, especially for a wife nearing her delivery.

No rational Roman official would have scheduled a census in winter. For an agrarian society such as that of first-century Judea, a census in the autumn, when the crops would've been safely gathered in, would have made much more sense.

Why was there no room in Bethlehem?

Picking up our story in Luke again, we find other biblical evidence for the true timing of Jesus Christ's birth.

"Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth . . . because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be registered with Mary, his betrothed wife, who was with child. So it was, that while they were there, the days were completed for her to be delivered" (verses 4-6).

We don't know how far ahead of time they traveled, nor how long they were there for the census. The essential point is that the most important human birth in all history took place under these circumstances.

"And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling cloth, and laid Him in a manger [margin, feed trough], because there was no room for them in the inn" (verse 7).

But why was there no room for Joseph and Mary in Bethlehem? We learn a great deal from understanding the culture of the time.

If we have judged the time frame correctly based on John being conceived shortly after the time of the first term of Abijah around Pentecost, and his birth following nine months later, followed by Jesus' birth six months after that in late September or possibly early October, was something else happening at that particular time of the year that would've created crowded conditions in Bethlehem?

Indeed there was. Late September and early October is the autumn festival season on God's calendar, one of the three times in the year when families would travel to Jerusalem to observe God's Holy Days (see Deuteronomy 16:16). With the Jews of Israel still obeying this command, even today it is difficult to find a hotel room in Jerusalem at this time of year!

The population of Jerusalem swelled several times over to overflowing at this time. This affected nearby towns such as Bethlehem, a few miles south of Jerusalem. Because of this huge influx of people, every house was filled. Joseph and Mary did find a place in what was normally used to shelter animals. It certainly wouldn't have been first class, but likely they were thankful to have even that.

The shepherds and their flocks

Continuing in Luke's account, we find



further proof that Jesus wasn't born in winter. Verse 8 tells us, "Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night."

This likewise shows that these events did not take place in winter. The common practice of shepherds was to keep their flocks in the open fields from April to October, but in the cold and wet winter months they took their flocks back home and sheltered them.

The Interpreter's One-Volume Commentary (1971) says this passage argues "against the birth [of Christ] occurring on Dec. 25 since the weather would not have permitted" shepherds watching over their flocks in the fields at night.

Adam Clarke's Commentary explains that, "as these shepherds had not yet brought home their flocks, it is a presumptive argument that October had not yet commenced, and that, consequently, our Lord was not born on the 25th of December, when no flocks were out in the fields; nor could He have been born later than September, as the flocks were still in the fields by night. On this very ground the nativity in December should be given up. The feeding of the flocks by night in the fields is a chronological fact, which casts considerable light upon this disputed point."

Again, the evidence in Luke points to a late September birth.

The shepherds come to see Jesus

Continuing the story in Luke 2:10-17: "Then the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger.'

" . . . And they came with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the Babe lying in a manger. Now when they had seen Him, they made widely known the saying which was told them concerning this Child."

We might notice that only the shepherds arrive in time to see Jesus in the manger. The wise men, as we will see, didn't arrive on the scene until later.

"And when eight days were completed for the circumcision of the Child, His name was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before He was conceived in the womb. Now when the days of her

purification according to the law of Moses were completed, they brought Him to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord (as it is written in the law of the Lord, 'Every male who opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord'), and to offer a sacrifice . . . a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons" (Luke 2:21-24; compare Exodus 13:2).

This was called "redeeming the firstborn." Leviticus 12:2-3, 6 tells us that this ceremony occurred 40 days after the birth of a son. So if Christ was born in late September, we are now into mid-November.

The wise men and Herod

We'll now continue the story flow in Matthew 2:1-3: "Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, saying, 'Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East and have come to worship Him.' When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him."

Why did this news disturb Herod? Other historical accounts attest to Herod's paranoia about being overthrown. The news that a new king of the Jews had been born threatened his position.

Herod obviously knew of the traditions and the prophecies relating to the Messiah. "And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. So they said to him, 'In Bethlehem of Judea'" (verses 4-5).

King Herod carefully concealed his murderous intentions. "Then Herod, when he had secretly called the wise men, determined from them what time the star appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem and said, 'Go and search carefully for the young Child, and when you have found Him, bring back word to me, that I may come and worship Him also'" (verses 7-8).

Notice that now Herod referred to Jesus not as a baby, but as "the young Child." He realized how long their travels would have taken the wise men—possibly from as far away as Parthia or the region around Babylon, where the Israelites and Jews had been exiled centuries before. Herod knew from when the star had appeared that he was not seeking a newborn baby, but a boy by now considerably older.

And to remove any threat to his position, Herod "put to death all the male children who were in Bethlehem and in all its districts, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had determined from the wise men" (verse 16). Herod, covering all of his bases in protecting his throne, ordered the murderous slaughter of those 2 years old and under.

It wasn't the common nativity scene

The wise men were miraculously guided to the Christ child (verses 9-10). "And when they had come into the house, they saw the young Child with Mary His mother" (verse 11). The typical nativity scene completely falls apart at this point. There is no mention of a manger here. Rather Jesus was, as stated, in a house. And Jesus was no longer an infant, He was a young child. The wise men obviously visited Jesus long after the shepherds had come and

gone—perhaps a year or more later.

The typical manger scene includes three wise men. The Bible, however, nowhere says how many wise men there were. It does note, however, that they presented three kinds of gifts to Him—gold, frankincense and myrrh.

Why these three particular gifts? Their symbolism is striking when we understand it.

Gold was a gift for royalty—in this case the chosen King of the Jews and ultimately the "King of Kings and Lord of Lords" who will rule over the entire earth (Revelation 19:16).

Frankincense was an incense intimately connected with the priesthood and temple sacrifices, foreshadowing the fact that Jesus Christ would serve as our High Priest and give Himself as the perfect sacrifice to pay the penalty for the sins of all mankind (Hebrews 4:14-15; 9:11-14; 1 Peter 1:18-19).

Myrrh had a much more sobering symbolism. When a person died, this perfuming agent was wrapped with the body to help cover up the stench of death. Jesus' own body would be wrapped in linen with myrrh and aloes (John 19:39-40).

Why we should celebrate God's Holy Days instead

Matthew and Luke reveal the true story of the birth of Jesus Christ and the general timing of when it really occurred. John the Baptist was born in the spring. His cousin Jesus was born six months later—probably in late September, possibly early October. The shepherds visited immediately; the wise men—their number unknown—arrived much later.

It's tragic that the true story should have become so badly garbled by human traditions. It's also tragic that people ignore the Bible's clear instructions and invent their own. Jesus Himself roundly condemned religious leaders of His day who were "making the word of God of no effect through your tradition" (Mark 7:13).

A strong and weighty biblical principle is found in Deuteronomy 12. It tells us why we should observe the annual Holy Days and festivals God has revealed in His Word—not traditional holidays borrowed from paganism:

"You shall not worship the LORD your God in that way; for every abomination to the LORD which He hates have they done to their gods . . . whatever I command you, be careful to observe it; you shall not add to it, nor take away from it" (Deuteronomy 12:31-32).

Have you ever thought it curious that although two of the Gospel writers describe the circumstances surrounding Christ's birth (the other two don't even cover the event), neither of them gives the date? Has it puzzled you that the Bible never once mentions "Christmas"? And that none of the biblical writers says anything about commemorating that birth?

We do find, however, explicit commands to commemorate Jesus Christ's sacrifice and death on our behalf (1 Corinthians 11:23-26). We also find commands to observe other biblical festivals, the same festivals Jesus and the New Testament Church celebrated. Isn't it about time you looked into the Bible to see what God's Word says about them?



SPECIAL FEATURE

Words of Peace

I thought this was kind of interesting, because I just today received a letter from Argentina—and so I'd like to read it to you; I brought it with me.

"Dear Mr. PremRawat, we've been watching the Peace Education Program for three months running. And we would like to thank you, because your message helps us know ourselves. When we listen to you, we forget that we are in prison. Thank you very much.

"With respect and love, we would like to invite you to this prison unit. It would be an honor for us to meet you in person and talk with you about what we have learned. Kind regards, Men's Prison, Buenos Aires, Argentina!"

So, there I am at this prison; I said, "Okay, you know, you realize, God is the only one in this entire creation that can't go from here to here. It's impossible for God to go from here to here. Why? Because if God leaves here to go here, it's not possible, because he

department. We, when everything is perfectly good—but there we are, suffering. And you wonder why. "Why are you suffering?"

"Oh, this happened, and then that happened...." Are you not concerned about what opportunity you have right now? Why are you attached to what happened yesterday—when yesterday has graciously said, "I'm out. I'm out of your life. You will never be able to get to me again!" And you're like, "Yeah, well that doesn't matter."

You're trying to contemplate, "What's going to happen tomorrow; what's going to happen tomorrow?"

No Rules

When you embrace your own sense of clarity, self-imposed limitations disappear.

that first event that I—the transcript from that first event ever, when I was four years old—the satsang I gave, or the talk I gave. And it's like, "You have to realize what this opportunity is"—this is that four-year-old talking—"you have to realize what this opportunity is, what you have been given here.

"And in realizing that opportunity, you shall find peace; you will find peace. In acknowledging that, you will get peace. In that clarity, you will find your freedom."

Because freedom is not an independent state. Freedom is not an inde-

going to graduate.

What do you want out of your life? Do you want that clarity? Do you want that simplicity in your life? Do you want that beauty that is possible in your life? And I was saying, "This is what's different about Knowledge." So, here's what's different about Knowledge.

Everything else requires you buy into that set of rules. If you don't buy into the set of rules, "no go." So anything you come to, like, "Okay, I want to be this," or "I want to be that," or—"Okay, here are the rules; here are the rules; here are the rules; here are the rules."

Knowledge: no rules. "Just get in touch with your thirst." If you're not thirsty, no big deal—till you are! And when you are, look me up. If you are, let me help you.

No rules! This is befuddling to people. "Whaat? No rules?" No rules. "If I practice, just...?" Excuse me. "If I stop practicing Knowledge, will I go to



will always be here. And he is already here, so how can he come here? Can't go from here to here!"

Because I'm using that same logic. The problem isn't the logic. The problem is the thing that created that logic—about "going," about "coming," about creating—not God creating us in his, shadow, but we creating God in ours. And giving God exactly the same attributes of jealousy, fear, anger, everything else.

"If you don't do what I tell you to do, I'm going to destroy you." Well, excuse me, that was the plot all along. So, what's the news here!? I mean, isn't that, in the creation, how it's laid out? "I was, I'm going to be born, and one day I will be destroyed." So what is this thing of "destroying?"

And it's like, "Oh, well, if you don't do these things, they'll send you to hell." Well, why do you have to send anybody to hell; it seems like we can create our hell right here all by ourselves; you don't need a separate

What happened yesterday; what happened yesterday? I don't like this guy. I don't like that guy. I, da-da-da, what's going on here? Yeah.

"How, how come I'm not with that woman? How come I'm not with that man? How come I don't have that car? How come I don't—I'm not rich like that?" Day and night! "How do I get out of my problems?"

So, you see this letter, and the reason why I brought it is that they're in the prison. They—and it's not like, "Oh, we heard you and we got out. You know, there was a seven-question quiz and we passed from everything you had said, and then now we're out." No, they're still in prison.

But when they listen and they savor that clarity, the bars are lifted; prison is opened. You're no longer a prisoner; you are free. And that freedom is felt from within you. It is not sitting there and daydreaming, "Oh, yeah, I'm free." Reality and dream are not colliding.

Because—and many times I've seen

pendent state; it is merely for those ties, those bonds that bind you to be severed. And when that happens, when that process happens, when those ropes, those anchors that bind you, when they are severed, you automatically go into freedom. It's, that's it; that's how—the only way you can get there.

But the question is, who binds you to these? You do. Other people offer you the rope, but you tie the knot. And who suffers? You do. And then you hear me say, "Cut it," and you go, "Oh, that's really difficult." It wasn't so difficult tying the knot, was it? Was it? It's like, "Oh, yeah, okay, another rope. Wow, this is good; this is good."

Because, you see, when you come to the realm of Knowledge, this is what's really awkward about it—and really, really—and I have seen this since I was very, very young.

Everything out there has a set of rules, and you have to buy, accept that set of rules. If you don't, you're not

hell?" No! "What? No rules?"

And believe you me, people try to create rules. "There have to be rules, so let's make some rules. How can we not have rules? If the Christians have rules, if Hindus have rules, if the Jewish religion has rules, if the Moslems have rules, we have got to have rules." And it's like, "No. No rules." And then, like, "Oh my God. What am I to do?"

So people ask, "What's next?" The answer is, you are. You are next. Because, instead of focusing on everybody else, and everything else that is none of your business.... Instead of focusing on everything else and everyone else which is none of your business—this is not why you're here—you need to focus on yourself. That's your business. And that should be the only business you have.

And you are next! And you'd better be next on your agenda, my friends.

- PremRawat

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HAPPY NEW YEAR : 2022

2021 hasn't been great - for anyone in any country - let's hope for a better 2022.

All those essays I wrote back in 7th grade about how life would be like in the year 2020, 30 years hence at that point – I wrote about robots and flying cars but I little imagined we'd live under extended lockdowns over a virus. We were the generation growing up thinking we had mastered communicable diseases and our only worry need only be non-communicable diseases like heart disease, which we fancied science would soon help us master anyway.

As a kid, I had many expectations of life. Adult life has been a mixed bag of goodies and brickbats so far. I turned 40 this year; it was the only birthday I've ever wanted to celebrate. Yet I couldn't. I don't generally celebrate my birthdays. Most years I wake up to birthday wishes on my phone and only then realise it's my birthday. This was the case even in childhood as my family didn't believe in celebrating birthdays either. I have photos of an occasional cake cutting because one or another of my friends might bring over a cake and insist I cut it – but I've never had a proper birthday party to date.

For some reason, when I turned 40 on September 04th, for the first time ever, I wanted a big party – complete with balloons, festoons and cake. But there was an island-wide lockdown. So I invited a few friends over to lunch and they had to come undercover and leave separately so as not to risk being caught in a gathering however small. There were only four of us anyway, but it was still a risk.

Maybe, next year, I'll get to have a great shindig of a birthday party. I wanted to mark the milestone of turning 40. I was 19 at the turn of the millennium in 2000, was so excited to see what the new millennium would bring; 21 when I landed in Jaffna, so excited to start my life anew here...

Unfortunately, that decade was a damp squib in my life. Being the dutiful elder daughter in a conservative Tamil family is a curse. I was near 30 before I figured out I had the right to live on my own terms.

The 30s were the best decade of my life. I had been led to believe I'd regret leaving my youth behind.

Hogwash. I didn't enjoy my youth. Being a young woman in a conservative society where men leer at you and their ammas act like you're going to lure them away (as if I'd even want to) isn't much fun. Neither is being a dutifully meek domestic goddess slaving from dawn to midnight on household chores yet still being critiqued on how next door so and so's daughter made puttu better.

It took me a while to realize it wasn't just me, that none of the girls in my community were getting compliments anyway, just constant criticism and running commentary on not being good enough, no matter what they did. Next door so and so's daughter probably heard that the front door neighbour's daughter made finer string hoppers. As they say in Tamil, a proper idiyappa chikkal. Oh, what a tangled web we weave...

Anyway, I escaped the tangled web of other people's opinions as to how I should live by the time I was 30. What a blessed relief! It was only in my 30s I learnt who I was as a person, what my interests and dislikes were and how to live in a way authentic to my sense of self. I am often asked to this day by bewildered people whether I am not worried about what others might think. No, I am not! I just worry about what I think. I need to meet the gaze of the person in the mirror without cringing. All through my 20s, that's what I did. I couldn't bare to face myself. After wasting money and time on dozens of self help books to get over my low esteem but learning nothing from them apart from stupid platitudes, I came across a meme on facebook one day that changed my life. It simple posited a

Happy New Year
2022



question to me:

"If you met yourself, would you like yourself?"

I realized I didn't. Years of living according to community rules that made no sense had made me an alien unlikeable stranger to myself. Rectifying that has been my life's work ever since. I'll go out at midnight on a journalism assignment if I want to. If next door Suppiah twitches his curtains and tsks, I don't lose any sleep over it. By this time I've already heard several times to my face that I must be engaged in sex work. Because you know, what other work could a woman go out for at night?

If that's supposed to make me cringe, it hasn't had the desired effect. The people who ask this of me should be the ones to cringe, but they don't have the self awareness to realize their own small-mindedness. And their petty cattiness is no reflection upon me. I am not going to live according to the dictates of this lot.

So yes, my 30s were good. After being a nonentity till then stuck in limbo with studies and work in community approved fields going nowhere, I got into journalism, was awarded

several international scholarships, fellowships and grants, started Humans of Northern Sri Lanka, travelled the country, got into English teaching, and moved out on my own to live independently. That's a remarkable lot for just a decade.

I don't know what the 40s will bring; ill health is a concern. As I get older, I realize I cannot abuse my body with lack of sleep, nutrition or exercise as I used to do. It's been a cranky process getting all of those on track – particularly as I enjoy none of the three. However various health scares in recent months as well as warnings by doctors that I am straddling the margins of high blood pressure, cholesterol and diabetes means I've had to take measures to invest in my long term health.

I am hoping just as I got more independent in my 30s, my 40s will help me improve my ability to earn and be self-sustainable. The pandemic years however have been quite challenging, in that regard.

I'm not alone in having economic worries at this time, the Sri Lankan economy has gone to hell in a basket. As mostly a freelancer, most of my paid gigs in report writing dried up. I've managed to stay afloat though. Because I retrained as an English teacher a couple of years ago – and because due to pandemic, we discovered online tools to teach and study, I am now able to teach students from not only all over Sri Lanka but also from all over the world. It has been quite an eye opening and rewarding experience. I am enjoying myself hugely in this new avatar.

As the year comes to a close, I also look back on the blessings over the years, especially the last two. It has been a terrible couple of years since the pandemic's onset but I've learned many things of value. I've learned to live on my own, I've learned to budget on a skinflint salary and when that ran out, ration my savings. I've never yet had to ask anyone yet for a handout – no shame in that though, in these trying times, I've sent money to several close friends who lost jobs and struggle to support their families. But my deepest blessing of all is knowing I have friends and relatives who'd do the same for me. There have been several times when I skirted close to pennilessness – and given that I have an entire neighbourhood of dogs around me depending on me to feed them, I didn't so much fear going hungry myself as fearing not being able to feed them. Yet for several months now, friends and relatives both in Sri Lanka and abroad have been regularly checking up on me, offering me money continuously even though I didn't take them up on it. I told them I'd ask when I need to. So far, even when I skirt close to running out, I pick up again and continue on my own steam – but as I told a friend from Canada who visited recently and offered her support yet again – just knowing that people like her have my back means I sleep easy at night.

I feel truly blessed to have such friends in my life. Even a pandemic is bearable with their love and support. May you all have similar love and blessings in your lives. Here's wishing you a better 2022.



SPECIAL FEATURE

The worlds first human composting facility Alternative funeral arrangement

By: Kumar Punithavel

One of the most trying moments in a person's life is when a dear and near person dies. Here is a person whom you loved hugged and caressed lying senseless, will never come back to greet you again. Humanity has faced this situation of death and used various methods to rid the dead body. Disposing of the human carcass has evolved with time. In the very early time when cannibalism was still in existence, maybe the family members might have shared the carcass with the living relatives. Maybe they might have developed a tradition where closer relatives got the choicest portion.

But, always losing a dear one, is a very sad and difficult one to cope up with. There were always two options mainly used to close the chapter of the life of a loved one. One is to bury the dead and the other is to cremate the dead. People always had believed there was an afterlife, or may we call it the wishful thinking of the person left back to grieve? This led to the dead to be buried in a location close to where they had lived' so their survivor could bring offerings, such as food and beverages, to the location buried.

This thought is the underlying logic for people to believe that the souls of the departed went to the underworld, believing the nether land to be underground. As a result of this the dead were buried in the ground so they could have easy access to their next home! When burials were done in hot and arid regions it necessitated mummification of the dead to prevent them from rotting fast and bringing disease to the living. This belief of an afterlife made the griever to bury wealth etc. with the dead body.

The second common way of dealing with the dead body was to cremate the dead body. Here too the religion introduced rituals guaranteeing safe passage to the high above, during the afterlife. Wherever religion is involved there are the related rituals and expenses, after all they must maintain the infrastructure of an organization. In this case a large quantity of timber is piled, and the body is incinerated. In recent times incinerators do the disposal of the body with gas powered furnaces. While burial encroached useful land, especially in big cities like London and New York etc., the latter used fossil fuel to do the job.

The third common burial method is what is called Sky burial. In this case a human corpse is placed on a lonely mountain top or a very tall tower leaving the body to decompose while exposed to elements, or to be eaten by scavenging birds, especially carrion birds. One must accept that in this method of Sky burial wastage is minimum. Instead of fire or germs and worms eating the body, least living birds benefit by eating it.

Standard burial has the limitation that useful real-estate is lost permanently. Imagine if we are to permanently reserve a portion of land surface permanently the surface land around the world will be covered with graves in the long run!



An example vessel that is used in the natural organic reduction process created by Recompose. religionnews.com-Photo by Sabel Roizen

Obviously, this cannot be the permanent solution. Further due to the increased cost of burial people these days opt for cremation.

In the case of cremation furnaces which are more commonly adhered due to high cost on the alternate solution, the body is combust at temperatures as high as 900 degrees Celsius, and it takes about an hour to incinerate the body. An average body weighing 68 Kg which contains 65% water will require 100 MJ of thermal energy using up to 3 cubic meters of natural gas, or 3 liters of fuel oil. In addition to harmless compounds such as water vapour, emissions include carbon dioxide, carbon monoxide, nitrogen oxide, sulphur dioxide, hydrogen chloride gas, hydrogen fluoride, mercury vapour etc. These being averse to the environment.

Today a new trend is slowly finding its way into the world which look promising. That is to decompose the dead human remains to soil. On Feb 16th, 2020, Laura Sanders on 'Science news' had written a very interesting article about six dead bodies that were allowed to decompose among wood chips and other organic material. Composting animal carcasses is not something new. The prime requirement is to mix with wooden chips to provide the carbon and a decent supply of water, else high interior temperature will dry it up. Using this environmentally friendly method is only logical.

Washington has become the first state to legalize the practice of human composting. Though it does not allow people to be buried on private land, under the new law, the remains reduced by natural organic reduction can be spread on private land with owner's permission.

A decomposing recipe includes wood chips, alfalfa, and straw grass. The body is placed in a closed vessel kept at a temperature around 55 to 60 degrees

centigrade and has a rotating device. The bones break down as the body decomposes. In a month's time each body will yield up to 1.5 to 2 cubic yards of bone riddled soil-like material which meets EPA standards. It can be made available to the relatives who can spread it in their gardens or use it to plant trees, which is another environmentally friendly act.

It's not a difficult task to compose human cadaver. The microbes naturally found on the skin, in the body and on the carbon rich plant material will kick start the process. Embalming has a negative effect in the process of decomposition; however, it does not stop it completely. With sensor monitoring and keeping the cylinder rotating ensures a complete decomposition in a month. The energy required to maintain the temperature of the cylinder holding the cadaver and to rotate it periodically is minimal and could be easily met by solar power.

Religion hand in hand with the funeral industry, has billions in stake. In today's world, cremation and burial are in vogue. Conventional burial involves injecting the body with formaldehyde and placing it in a tomb or burnt if fossil fuel. But in the case of decomposition, it is going back to the natural process in a dignified manner.

It is, but our duty to give our near and dear one's instructions on what to do with the remains, either encroach a piece of land permanently as ours and feed worms and germs, or as final act in the world to add pollution. Of course, one has the more dignified way to do the exit with an environmentally friendly act to mother earth which had nurtured and protected the persons through the whole life.

<https://www.calgarymemorial.com/effect-of-cremation-on-environment.html>

<https://www.sciencenews.org/article/turning-human-bodies-into-compost-works-small-trial-suggests>

New call to the bar, Mario Pushparatnam joins law firm, Ascentia LLP.

Mario's practice will focus on litigation and real estate law.

Mario Pushparatnam was called to the Bar on September 24, 2021 - formally making him a Barrister and Solicitor in Ontario. Due to the pandemic, Mario took his oath before seasoned Criminal Defence lawyer, Peter Connelly in the

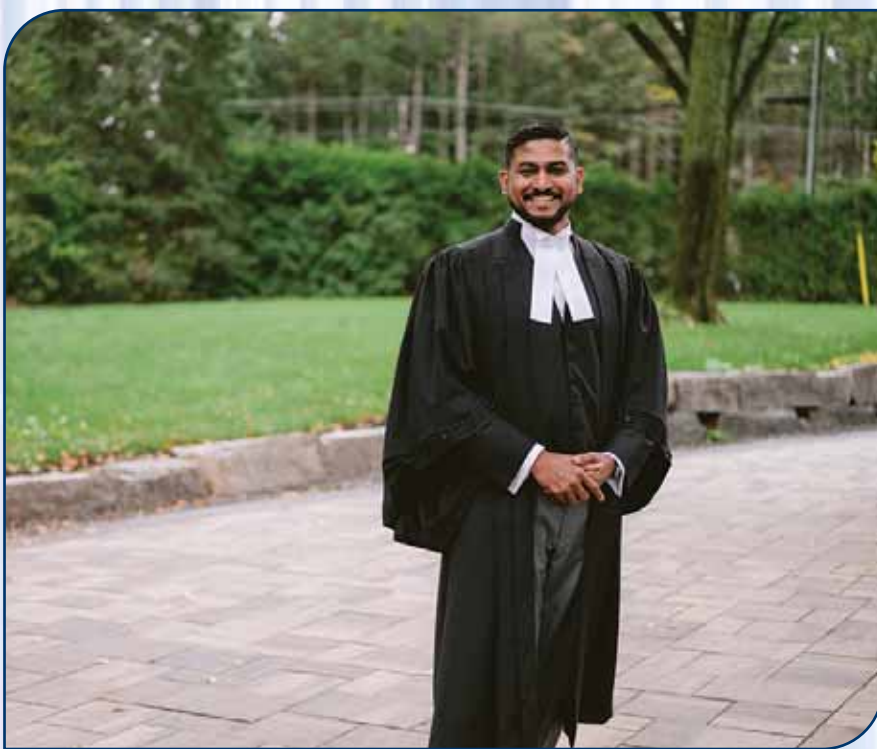
presence of his family and friends.

Mario has a decade of experience in real estate law in various capacities. Prior to his call, Mario gained significant experience in all aspects of real estate transactions including complex litigation arising from failed transactions.

Mario joins Mukunthan Paramalingam as a

partner at Ascentia LLP Professional Corporation. Ascentia LLP specializes litigation and advocacy.

Friends of Mario and Mukunthan wish them well and much success in their practice of law.



Mario Pushparatnam robed before his call to the bar



Mario Pushparatnam takes oath to become Barrister and Solicitor before Peter Connelly



Mario Pushparatnam and his wife Caroline Sanjayan are celebrating Mario's call to the bar



Mario Pushparatnam's parents and brother in attendance for the call to the bar ceremony

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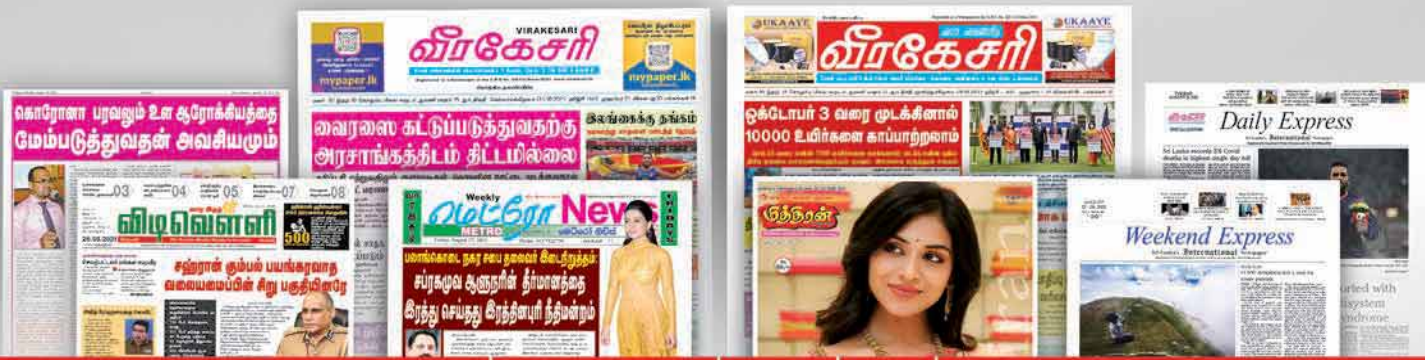
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SPECIAL FEATURE



THE TORRENTIAL RAIN



C. Kamalaharan

Rain rains go away
 Come again another day
 That was our rhyming couplet
 During childhood in our hamlet.
 But today it's raining cats and dogs
 It's mating time for the croaking frogs.
 All the roads are almost water logged
 And drains are completely water clogged.
 People are forced to be indoors
 Shunning all activities outdoors.
 In this most annoying situation
 They lead a life of frustration
 Watch the shower from ground floor
 And curse the torrential downpour.
 The weather too seems bitterly cold
 And peoples' worry remains manifold.
 Life as such has to be dragged along
 As long as the winter tends to prolong.
 We agree what Shelley intends to remind
 'If winter comes can spring be far behind.'



SPECIAL FEATURE

Efficiency in Action



-vistage.com

By: J.A. Rajah

*‘Vinaya thidpam enpathu oruvan manathidpam,
Mattaya ellam pira’*

வினைத்திட்டம் என்ப தொருவன் மனத்திட்டம்
மற்றைய எல்லாம் பிற

*‘Enniya enniyangu eythupa enniyar,
Thiiniyarakap perin’*

எண்ணிய எண்ணியாங் கெய்துப எண்ணியார்
திண்ணியர் ஆகப் பெறின

Efficiency in action springs from the resoluteness of mind. All the other matters only come later. Lord Chesterfield asserted that ‘firmness of purpose is one of the best instruments of character and success’. The twin advice of wise men is that one must avoid all ill-considered action, not oriented to success and then having embarked on an enterprise face problem that arise from it boldly. An efficient man of action discloses his purpose and plan only on completion of such action. Premature disclosure causes immense problems.

*‘Solluthal yarkkum eliya ariyavam,
Soliya cvannam ceyyal’*

சொல்லுதல் யார்க்கும் எனிய அரியவாம்
சொல்லிய வண்ணம் செயல்

It is easy to make a plan and speak about it. A much rarer achievement is to accomplish it as stated and then speak about it. Example is more valuable than precept. When a minister earns a name for the performance of his deeds, the kings’ regard for him and appreciation go apace.

A person of resolute will and efficient action achieves his objective. He will achieve it in the manner he has designed.

It is not wise to belittle men of small size for they may perform great functions. It is similar to the axle-pin of a mighty huge temple-car. The classic story of David and Goliath in the Bible is relevant. A plan of action must be decided with a clear and unconfused mind. The action should be pursued vigorously without dilatoriness. Programs that would increase the sum total of human happiness must be pursued with a will, even against hazards. One may have achieved success in other directions. Unless such person has efficiency of action, the world will have no ultimate use for him. Action is the ultimate hall-mark of success.

(Kural: 661-670)



Valluvar's Views

SPECIAL FEATURE



THE PHILOSOPHIC INFERENCES OF UDUMALAINARAYANA KAVI'S DEVADAS FILM SONGS

By: J A Rajah

Udumalainarayana Kavi was an Indian poet and lyricist of the 20th Century. (1889-1981). He wrote lyrics for several Tamil movies like Nallathamby, Vellaikkari, Parasakthi, Manohara, and Devadas. It was said that he was paid Rs. 15,000/- for a song. He followed the style of Subramaniya Bharathi and used simple language which was easy for the peasants of those days to understand. He also wrote songs depicting the national/patriotic spirit of the Indians. He wrote songs to encourage people to engage in social reforms to better themselves. He wrote altogether 10,000 lyrics/songs. Songs proved to be a plus factor for Tamil films as seen in the yesteryear, Tamil films were mainly produced with heroes who can sing themselves like T.R. Mahalingam and M.K. Thiyagaraja Bagavather. T.R Mahalingam in 'Ithaya Geetham' and M.K. Thiyagarajah in "Haridas" sang brilliant Tamil songs which still rings in my memory. Tamil is a musical language and Tamil films gave an important place for songs in their content.

"Thunitha Pin Maname"



Confronted with excess agony owing to love failure Devadas says in this song that worry is disastrous. He compares deep sorrow to a lamp lit in a heavy stormy wind, falling in the dangerous river, an umbrella used as cover for the heavily falling rain."Paarlumaatil nee veerlntha pinnal neenthu vathal payanethu'. Metaphors make the song very meaningful fitting the mood of the character. He also cites the example of a roaring sea, as Devadas was caught in the tumultuous love affair. The song finally concludes with the assertion that 'Death is inevitable'.

"Uravum Illai, pahayum illai"



In simple words, Narayana Kavi shows the mind of Devadas looking for solace in alcoholic drinks. This is a duet song where Devadas and Parvathi express their frustration and sorrowful feelings. Parvathi laments, "The pure light of my life -where are you? My longing to serve you wholeheartedly has vanished". Devadas reciprocates, 'There

is no happiness like endless sorrow, the love and regard for an unforgettable thing will never cease". In depths of sorrow and anguish, Parvathi sings, "If a tank becomes full, it will flow out and go elsewhere, an erupting volcano' will eventually subside', the floodwaters of sorrow in her mind has nowhere to go". The picturesque metaphor used effectively portrays the mind of the characters.

"Ulage Mayam"

This is the signature song of the film with very captivating phrases portraying the mind of the frustrated lover. The world and life are myths. Life is like a bubble that can burst at any time. Our desires and pretensions of love are all myths. Kingly life, as well as ceremonial joys, is all myths. Our relatives, kinsmen, and even parents are not going to come with us when we depart from this world. Even the sacred books teach these fundamental aspects of life. Devadas seated under the light post at the edge of a road in the company of a stray dog sings this heart-revealing, mind-blasting song- immersed in agony and tremendous sorrow. Nagaswararao did not just act the role, he lived it- may be enthused by those wonderful lines in the song and its awe-inspiring music.. It was an awesome display of realistic acting effectively backed up by these wonderful songs.

"Ellam maayai thaana"

This song expresses the feelings of Parvathi. She says that all is vain and her thoughts of love and life are all illusions. The endearing love was lost. Devathas was unable to disobey the words of his parents. The love was lost owing to her poverty. She was wondering how she will be able to live with the help of an unknown person. She has to succumb to the pangs of mental torture-being denied of her longing to lead a joyful life with her dearest Devadas.



"Kanavithuthan Ninaivithuthan"

There is vast amount of difference between dreams and reality. None can overcome the dictates of fate. Memories of yesteryears torment us. Fate will bring about a conflict in our minds between our flesh and thoughts. That is indeed the nature of falling in love. Unrealized desire should not be allowed to grow. It will not be stabilized. When two minds join together there is happiness but if they are separated there is unspeakable suffering, worry and agony. These were the thoughts of Devadas after he failed in his love affair and is expressed in this song by Narayana Kavi.

'Anpe Pavama'

Lalitha is singing this song reflecting her feelings of unrequited love, when Devadas refuses her proposal. A friend introduces Devadas to Chandramuki so that he could find some solace. She is asking why her love should be denied. Picturesque metaphors like a parrot waiting in vain for a cotton boll to ripe ('Ilavu kaatha Kizhli'), wonderfully illustrates the effectiveness of Narayana Kavi's writing ability. Chandramuki said that she did not find happiness in her irregular life and wanted to be of help to Devadas so that she could show and redeem true love. She laments that Devadas has become slave to the habit of drinking and lost his character and educational values. She confesses that she failed in her attempt through singing these wonderful lines put together by Udumalai Narayana Kavi.



Narayana Kavi was an experienced lyricist at the time he wrote the songs for Devadas Film. Every song he wrote in simple lingua franca reflected the mood and feelings of the characters and proved to give a tremendous boost to the film which came out well as a great movie and still remembered for it after several decades.



My Values



By: Mithusha Partheepan

- parbery.com.au

Values are an important part of anyone's life. They are what aid us in making morally grounded and ethical decisions. We are taught certain values from a young age that our guardians learned from their guardians. As we learn these values from childhood, they become engrained into our minds as we develop our own way of thinking. Even as we grow older, we continue to rely on the values we were taught at a young age to make decisions and choices. I believe the values we deem the most important to us describe our personality and character. When I was younger, I was taught personal growth, respect, courage, and honesty were the most important values to follow. These values are very important to me and are evident in my behavior towards myself and other people today, especially when solving issues.

Personal development is a value that takes time to develop because it is a learning process to improve and grow. In the past, I made a lot of ignorant mistakes and choices that I was not proud of because it put my friendships in jeopardy. For that reason, I strived to learn from my mistakes and make amends with those friends so that in the future, I wouldn't repeat the same actions. As time passes, it is expected I make mistakes, but what is important is I grow from them. Personal development is one of the most important values to me because it provides you a chance to live out new experiences and to learn from them.

At a young age, I was always

taught to show respect to my elders as they are having more wisdom from the numerous years they have lived. When I started going to school, I learned respect was a common courtesy of universal politeness that did not only apply to people who were older, but also to my peers, friends, and those who were younger. As I grew older, I had a different definition of respect and often associated it with the phrase "treat others the way you want to be treated." I believe that you don't necessarily need to like someone in order to show respect. It is common decency to be attentive to people, even to those who you aren't fond of. I show respect to my rivals because it is how I would like to be treated.

Honesty is a value I take seriously because it goes hand-in-hand with trust and loyalty. I was taught honesty earned more respect from others because it showed a strong moral character. I practice honesty every day, and it shows in my daily behavior. This is a value I look for when I make new friends. Honesty is not only something that is necessary to find friends, but also in every other aspect of your life, including a future work environment. I often follow the phrase "honesty is the best policy", because it means telling the truth is better than lying even when it is hard to do.

In conclusion, these four values are very important to me, because they were taught to me when I was young. They helped me make guided decisions and will aid me in the future. Everyone

has their own set of values and morals they were taught when they were younger. These values describe the personal qualities we choose to embody to guide

our actions the kind of person we want to be, the manner in which we treat ourselves and others, and our interaction with the world around us.



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2021 NOBEL PRIZE FIRST TIME WIN FOR CLIMATE SCIENTISTS IN 120 YEARS

Trio Win Physics Nobel for Work Decoding Chaotic Climate Change

By OUE Research Institute

Italian Giorgio Parisi, German Klaus Hasselmann, and Japanese-born American Syukuro Manabe won the 2021 Nobel Prize in Physics for work that helps understand complicated physical systems such as Earth's changing climate. In a decision hailed by the U.N. weather agency as a sign of a consensus forming around anthropogenic global warming, one half of the 10-million Swedish crown (\$1.15 million) prize goes in equal parts to Manabe, 90, and Hasselmann, 89, for modeling Earth's climate and reliably predicting global warming. The other half goes to Parisi, 73, for discovering "hidden rules" behind seemingly random movements and swirls in gases or liquids.

Scientist Discoveries



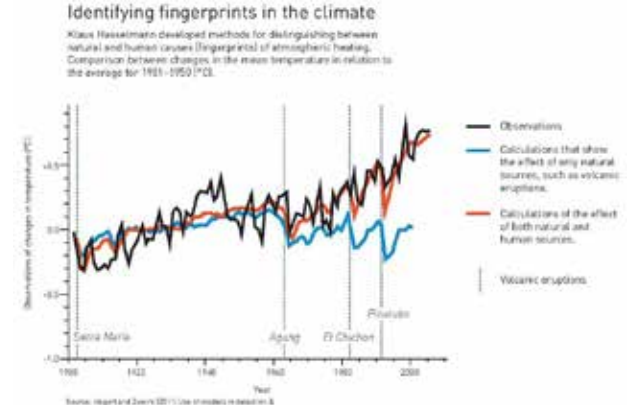
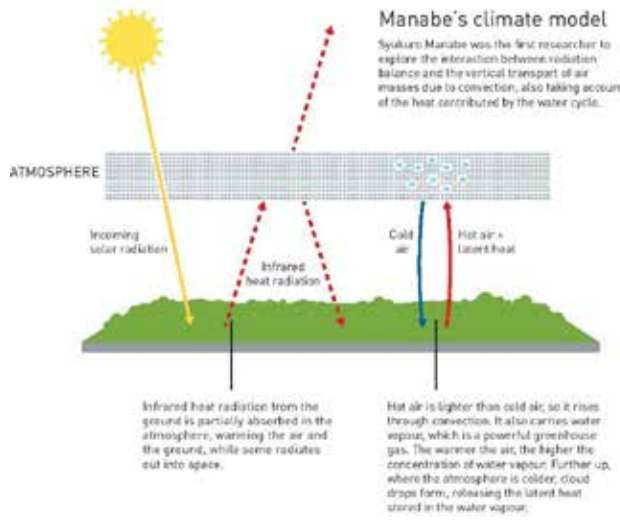
"Syukuro Manabe and Klaus Hasselmann laid the grounds of our knowledge of the Earth's climate and how humanity changes it," the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences said in a statement. "Giorgio Parisi is rewarded for his innovative offerings to the theory of disordered materials and random processes."

Scientist Manabe works at Princeton University in the USA laid the groundwork in the 1960s for today's knowledge of Earth's climate after moving to the United States from Japan. Manabe was the first to show that pumping carbon dioxide into the atmosphere would raise the earth's surface temperature. He built the earliest computer climate model in the 1960s that the doubling of carbon dioxide concentrations in the atmosphere

would cause global temperature to rise by over 2 deg C. Scientists today are remaining to fine-tune such models, which can help nations reduce the impacts of climate change. Climate models show how the earth system responds to factors such as the amount of planet-warming emissions. The models will then project how things such as temperature, rainfall, and sea levels will be affected.

In the 1970s, Professor Hasselmann, from the Max Planck Institute for Meteorology in Germany, developed a model that showed how weather and climate are connected. It proved that humanity's carbon dioxide discharges cause rising temperatures in the atmosphere. His model explained how fast-changing weather patterns, such as changes in wind speed, can lead to slow-changing ocean characteristics, such as temperature. This connection is crucial in helping scientists identify the fingerprints of weather change - which refers to long-term modifications to the earth's systems - in weather events, such as heatwaves and droughts. Hasselmann's work also proved that the increased temperature in the atmosphere was due to human emissions of carbon dioxide.

Parisi discovered in the early 1980s "hidden rules" behind random movements and swirls in gases or liquids that can also be applied to aspects of neuroscience, machine learning, and starling flight formations. He unscrambled and made sense of disordered physical systems, from atomic to



will happen in a few years," he said.

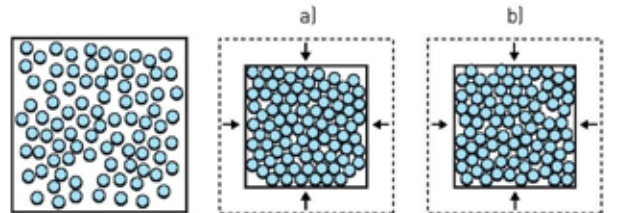
Parisi dialed into the media briefing announcing the winners, was asked for his message to world leaders to meet for U.N. climate change talks. "I think it is very crucial that we take real and solid decisions and we move at a powerful step," he said, who works at the Sapienza University of Rome.

Global Warming

The award comes in just before to the U.N. climate change conference in Glasgow, Scotland, underscores the urgency of nations taking more

Mathematics for complex disordered systems

Every time many identical discs are squeezed together, a new irregular pattern is formed despite them being squeezed in exactly the same way. What governs the result? Giorgio Parisi discovered a hidden structure in such complex disordered systems, which these discs represent, and found a way of describing them mathematically.



decisive climate action to limit impacts. The COP26 conference finalized the details that will help nations implement the 2015 Paris Agreement. Countries make commitments to limit global warming to well below 2 deg C to 1.5 deg C, related to pre-industrial levels. Work on climate change and global warming has been recognized by Nobel prizes before. Former U.S. Vice President Al Gore and the U.N. climate panel received the Peace Prize in 2007 for galvanizing international action against global warming. William Nordhaus won one-half of the 2018 Economics prize for integrating climate change into the Western economic growth model. "Sceptics or deniers of scientific facts are not so visible anymore, and this climate science message has been heard," World Meteorological Organization Secretary-General Petteri Taalas said of this year's award.

Frustration
When one spin points upward and the other downward, the third one cannot satisfy them both at the same time, because neighbouring spins want to point in different directions. How do the spins find an optimal orientation? Giorgio Parisi is a master at answering these questions for many different materials and phenomena.

action against global warming. William Nordhaus won one-half of the 2018 Economics prize for integrating climate change into the Western economic growth model. "Sceptics or deniers of scientific facts are not so visible anymore, and this climate science message has been heard," World Meteorological Organization Secretary-General Petteri Taalas said of this year's award.

First Time for Climate

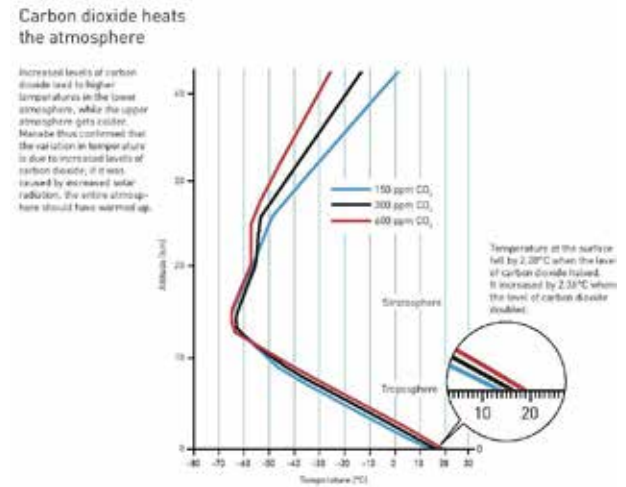
For the first time in the 120-year history of the scientific world's most prestigious award, the Nobel Prize in Physics was given to climate scientists.

Three scientists were lauded for their efforts to spotlight humanity's role in causing the planetary crisis and developing tools to help countries deal with the impacts of climate change. The Nobel prizes were created in the will of Swedish dynamite inventor and businessman Alfred Nobel and have been awarded since 1901 with only a handful of interruptions, primarily due to the two world wars. Like last year, there will be no banquet in Stockholm because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The laureates will receive their medals and diplomas in their home countries.

planetary scales. The earth's climate is an example of a complex biological system, and his work helped provide some structure for scientists studying disorderly systems. Ice ages were caused by how the planet moved around the sun, altering how much sunlight it receives. The climate has changed before due to natural causes. Now, humans are warming the world at an unprecedented rate. The laureates' work has ripple effects through the generations.

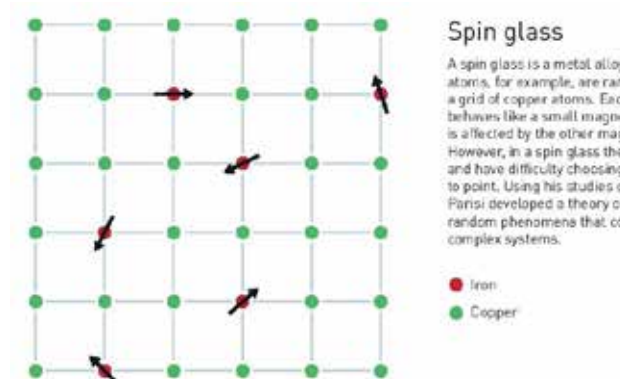
Media Briefing

Manabe interviewed by the journalists at his home, Manabe said he believed his award reflected the Academy's recognition of climate change, which he said will continue to intensify with more droughts, torrential rains, warming of landmasses, and melting of polar ice. "There are many events showing climate change is occurring," he said. "And I think that is the reason why the theme of climate change was selected for the award this time." Asked how he would address climate change doubters, he



replied, "that is a million times more difficult than understanding climate change. It is very mysterious to me."

Hasselmann, who is at the Max Planck Institute for Meteorology in Hamburg, told Reuters from his home that he did not want to wake up from what he described as a beautiful dream. "I am retired and has been a bit lazy lately. I am happy about the honor. The research continues," he said. Scientists have worked decades urging climate change action on an often uncertain society, Hasselmann told in a recording published on the Nobel Prize's website. "It is just that people are not willing to accept the fact that they have to act now for something that





Recipe for Financial Success in 2022

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

A new year and a time for renewal—the time when many people look into their past and future and resolve to make changes for the better. Your overall quality of life is directly related to the overall quality of your finances so getting your financial life in order should be near the top of your list. Here are ten essential financial planning tips to make that resolution a reality in 2022.

1. Set a budget and stick to it: Take a critical look at your income and expenses and set realistic monthly budget that includes an amount for saving and investing. Budgets are a necessary evil. They are the only practical way to get a grip on your spending and to make sure money is being used the way you want it to be used. Creating a budget generally requires three steps: Identify how you are spending money now, evaluate your current spending and set goals to take into account your long-term financial objectives, Track your spending to make sure it stays within those guidelines.

2. Get your debt under control and keep it there: Develop good spending habits and use debt wisely. Always pay off credit cards and other high-cost, non-tax deductible debt first. To get control of your debt, you need to uncover the real reasons for your debt issues by identifying the behavior that sunk you deep in debt and take the steps that will keep you from sinking even deeper.

3. Maximize RRSP contribution:

Investing in RRSP eligible investments is the best tax-sheltered savings builder for most Canadians. Strive to make maximum contribution for faster and bigger potential investment growth. If you are having trouble coming up with enough money to fill your available RRSP eligible investment contribution room this year or if you have got unused room from previous years, an RRSP loan may be a smart strategy. The keys to the success of a top-up RRSP loan strategy are: Repay the loan as quickly as possible—preferably one year but, in most circumstances no longer than two years. Use your RRSP-related tax return to pay down your loan.

4. Develop an education savings plan for your children: A tax-sheltered, compound-growth RESP eligible investments is an excellent way to cover escalating education costs and give your kids a head start on life.

5. Be a prudent money manager: Carefully consider each dollar before it's gone. Start with careful and critical assessment of your life goals and your income and set aside enough on a regular basis to achieve those goals. Beware of luxuries dressed up as necessities.

6. Check and revise your insurance coverage to match changing needs: As your life changes your need for income protection and estate planning changes. Be sure your insurance coverage keeps pace. A common rule of thumb suggests you should maintain life insurance coverage equal to ten

times your income. However the danger of a 'rule of thumb' is that it does not account for an individual's age, stage of life, or personal and family circumstances. Instead of relying on a 'rule of thumb' that may not apply to you, you'd be well advised to complete a thorough needs analysis with the assistance of a financial planner.

7. Make 'tax-efficient' investment decisions: Certain investments are more tax-efficient than others. For example, interest income is taxed significantly higher than dividends and capital gains—so it's often better to hold investments that earn dividends and capital gains outside your RRSP eligible investments and interest-earning investments inside it. Take advantage of the Tax-Free Savings Plan (TFSA) eligible investments, which allows investment income to grow and be eventually received on a tax-free basis.

8. Establish an asset allocation plan that complements your financial planning needs: An effective asset allocation plan delivers a portfolio that includes the right balance of assets from the three categories—cash,

fixed income investments and equities for steadier long-term growth.

9. Minimize your taxes: Take advantage of all the tax deductions and tax credits available to you including moving expenses, child-care expenses, tuition fees, medical expenses, charitable donations etc.

10. Develop a financial plan and stick to it: A consolidated financial plan—and the common sense and discipline to stick to it—plus the help of a professional advisor will keep you on track to achieving your dreams. Setting goals and objective is the first step of any financial planning process. Give some thought to your financial goals. These goals are the building blocks to any sound financial plan.

Disclaimer: This report specifically written and published as a general source of information only, and is not intended as a solicitation to buy or sell specific investments or insurance, nor is it intended to provide investment advice.

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Reflections in History

Journalism in Sri Lanka during the sixties and seventies were both demanding and interesting. We, at Lake House, the premier news organization, had the opportunity of experiencing some interesting incidents and events which were spiced with wisdom and humour. Below are some among the many anecdotes I remember
- Siva Sivapragasam

Anecdotes of the Past



UN Anecdote

In the early days at the United Nations, there was a longstanding anecdote about how one could predictably guess the nationality of a diplomat judging by how he reacts when introduced to an attractive woman at a diplomatic reception.

The British delegate will be exceptionally formal asking her what her area of specialization is, what committee she is covering and how long she has been in her country's foreign service.

The French delegate will gracefully bow and offer to kiss her hand proving that chivalry is not dead. The American delegate will cut to the chase – and ask her for a date.

But when the Sri Lankan delegate is introduced to a woman – so the story goes – he will rush to his office and telex the Foreign Ministry for instructions.

(Contributed by Thalifdeen, Thalifdeen was the UN Bureau Chief and Regional Director, Inter Press Service (IPS) news agency).

We worked together at Lake House, Sri Lanka - Siva Sivapragasam)

Former SLFP Finance Minister Felix Bandaranaike's wit and humour

A former Minister of Finance Minister Felix Bandaranaike during the SLFP regime headed by Mrs. Bandaranaike was undoubtedly an able and energetic Minister in the cabinet, although arrogant sometimes.

Mrs. Bandaranaike relied on him for most of the Government policies.

When Parliament met for the first time after SLFP's victory at the election in 1970 soon after Mr. Bandara-

naike's death, Felix was coming down the stairs while Journalist Shirathananda and I from Lake House were standing at the foot of the stairs.

When Felix stepped on the floor the usually loud mouthed Shirathananda told Felix "So Felix, you won the election because of Bandaranaike's death. Felix gave us a mischievous smile, pulled out the pipe from his mouth and said sarcastically, "Shira, we won not because of Bandaranaike's death but in spite of his death". Both Shirathananda and I stood speechless at Felix's wit and humour.

President Obama & the Canadian PM

A joke evoking laughter from a Sinhalese journalist friend of mine.....

President Obama and the Canadian PM are shown a time machine which can see 50 years into the future. They both decide to test it by asking a question each.

President Obama goes first: "What will the USA be like in 50 years' time?"

The machine whirls and beeps and goes into action and gives him a print-out, he reads it out: "The country is in good hands under the new president, José Fernandez.... crime is non-existent, there is no conflict, the economy is healthy. Vice President Jin Tao has declared Chinese language mandatory in all USA schools, There are no worries."

The Canadian PM thinks, "It's not bad, this time machine, I'll have a bit of that" so he asks: "What will Canada be like in 50 years' time?"

The machine whirls and beeps and goes into action, and he gets a print-



out. But he just stares at it.

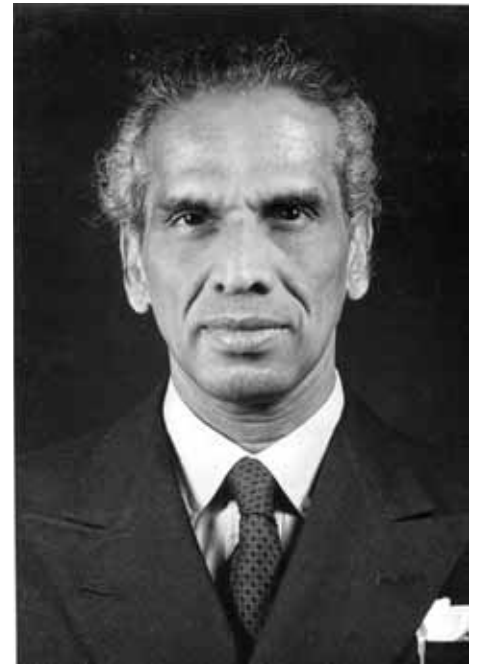
"Come on, Stephen " says Obama, "Tell us what it says."

"I can't . It's all in Tamil."

"Borrowing money from the Bank"- India's former Defense Minister Krishna Menon

Menon visited Sri Lanka somewhere around the 1970s and addressed the Press Club. I was fortunate to be present at the meeting and was able to converse with him.

As a young journalist, I was rather nervous in talking to a diplomat who was well-known for his wit and arrogance. Yet, he made me relaxed and said "Talk to me Young man, and ask me what you want". Journalists all over the world feared to ask him



questions due to the sharp retort he gave them. I did talk to him for few minutes.

He championed India's case for Kashmir in the UN once speaking for over four hours much against the advice of his doctor as he was running a high temperature. He finished his speech, slumped in the chair and was carried out of the auditorium.

Menon's quip during his lecture at the Press Council meeting on "Borrowing money from the Bank."

"When you borrow \$1,000 from the

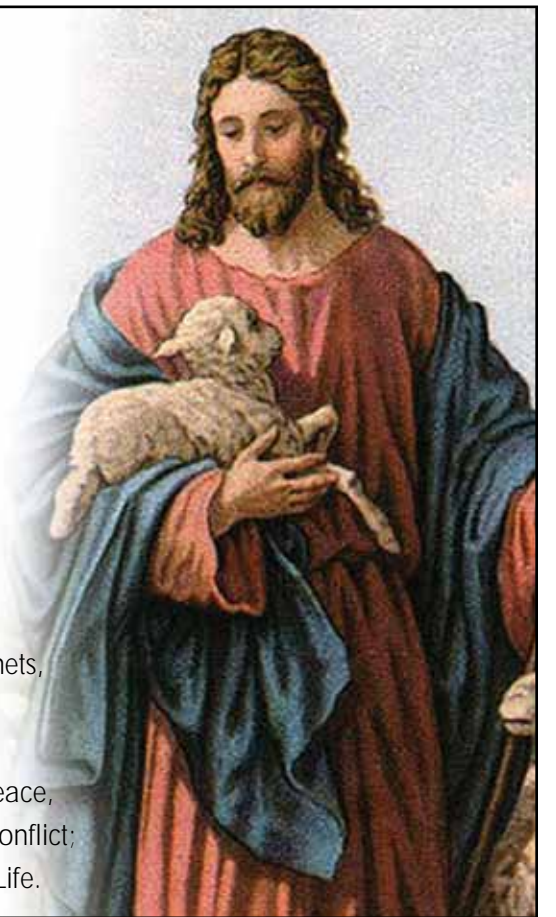
Bank, you are at the Bank's mercy. But when you borrow \$100,000 from the Bank, the Bank is at your mercy".

Brilliant, astute, sharp wit and point blank in his responses, V.K. Krishna Menon, a South Indian Keralite, was undoubtedly one of the most successful yet aggressive diplomats and statesmen from India. He served in several top positions as the then Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru's close political confidante. The power he held was so immense that it is no surprise that the 'Time' magazine called him the second most powerful man in India.

'A Saviour is Born'

By: J A Rajah

Jesus is called the wonderful,
The Mighty God,
The Prince of Peace;
He did mighty wonders,
He healed the sick,
He raised the dead;
He relieved human burdens,
He is the son of the mighty God,
He created the earth and the planets,
He quelled the storms;
He brought peace,
He sowed the seeds of eternal peace,
He ensured peace to a world in conflict;
He is the Way, the Truth and the Life.





COMMUNITY WATCH

Appointments & Achievements

Sundaram Arumainayagam has been appointed a member to the Public Service Commission in Sri Lanka

The Parliamentary Council in Sri Lanka which met under the chairmanship Speaker Mahinda YapaAbeywardena has agreed to the proposal made by President Gotabaya Rajapaksa to appoint SundaramArumainayagam as a member to the Public Service Commission given the demise of V. Sivagnanasothy.

Arumainayagam has previously served as the Secretary to the State Ministry of Foreign Employment Promotions and Market Diversification and the State Ministry of Investment Promotion. The Parliamentary Council has also agreed to the proposal made by the President to appoint Mrs. P. S. M. Charles to fill the vacancy created given the resignation of Jeevan Thiagarajah from the Elections Commission.



Dr.Hegde receives India' prestigious Padma Vibushan Award

Dr. Belle MonappaHegdehas been presented with the Indian Padma Vibushan Award for Medicine. He is a cardiologist, physician-scientist, educationist, motivational speaker, author, and teacher. He spread awareness among people regarding issues of health and wellness. Indian President Kovind presented the Award to Dr.Hegde.



Rajeev Amarasuriya, Secretary of the Bar Association of Sri Lanka, has been elected to the Executive Committee of LAWASIA (The Law Association for Asia and Pacific)

Rajeev Amarasuriya, Secretary of the Bar Association of Sri Lanka, has been elected uncontested to the Executive Committee of LAWASIA (The Law Association for Asia and Pacific) for 2021/22.LAWASIA is a regional association of lawyers, judges, jurists and legal organizations, which advocates for the interests and concerns of the Asia Pacific legal profession.

Rajeev Amarasuriya being an Alumnus of Royal College, Colombo holds a Bachelor of Laws LL.B (Hons.) Degree, from the University of Colombo.He practiced law for more than a decade before commencing his own law chambers.

He also provides corporate and legal consultancy in a wide range of commercial areas as the Senior Legal Consultant of Amarasuriya Associates.



Dr. Vajira Chitrasena receives the "Padma Shri" Award from the Government of India

Dr. VajiraChitrasena has been conferred the "Padma Shri 2020" Awardfrom the Government of India for her achievements in the field of Art.The Padma Awards are one of the highest civilian honours of India announced annually on the Republic Day of India on 26th January. The award seeks to recognize distinguished service or achievement in diverse fields and disciplines.

VajiraChitrasena is a veteran Sri Lankan traditional dancer, choreographer, and teacher. Vajira is regarded as Sri Lanka's first prima ballerina. She is the first Sri Lankan woman to practice the traditional Kandyan dance which was traditionally performed only by men.



Quotable Quotes - 2021

By: Siva Sivapragasam

“They said it”



“

“It was particularly discouraging to see the leaders of two of the world's largest emitters, China and Russia, decline to even attend the proceedings. All of us who live in wealthy nations, those of us who helped to precipitate the problem-we have an added burden”

– Former US President Obama on climate change

”



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“Workers need to have more money in their pockets because they earned it.For many people,take home pay has not kept up with the cost of living.”

– Ontario Premier Doug Ford on the new minimum wage

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“As Chair of the Rogers Control Trust, it is my duty to ensure that the Company is properly governed on behalf of all Stakeholders”

– Edward Rogers, Chairman, Rogers Control Trust

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“The people who will judge us are children not born yet and their children,and now we are coming centre stage before a vast uncountable audience of posterity,and we must not fluff our miss our cue,because if we fail,they will not forgive us.”

– UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson, on climate change

”



“

“Everytime you come into a new Parliament...you start at the opportunity to say,how can we work together? And have those conversations with each party.You don't shut any doors”

– Mark Holland,Liberal Party House Leader on support from other parties in Parliament

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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.

Sugar-free carrot halwa

The winter festive season brings with it an abundance of carrots. Affordable and with so many dishes to make, we thought we'd share one with you that will keep you content and may even earn you brownie points with your aunts and uncles. Gajar ka halwa is typically made with white sugar, but with this version, you may find a new family favourite.

Method:

In a milk pan, bring the cup of milk to a boil and leave to one side. In a separate non-stick saucepan on medium heat, add 2 tbsp of ghee and grated carrots. Stir the carrots for a minute, then put the lid on and let it simmer for 2 minutes. After this, continuously stir the carrots until most of the water within it has evaporated. Add boiled milk to the carrots, stir well, then add milk powder. Incorporate the milk and milk powder well until the consistency of the carrots has thickened. Add sweetener, cardamom powder and saffron and gently mix. When you can see the ghee seep from the mixture, add the sliced almonds and pistachios, stir once more and it's ready to serve.

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



Ingredients:

- ✓ 5 very large carrots, grated
- ✓ 1 cup milk
- ✓ ½ cup milk powder
- ✓ ¼ cup powdered sweetener (or to taste)
- ✓ 3 tbsp ghee
- ✓ 1 tsp cardamom powder
- ✓ Few strands of saffron
- ✓ Sliced almonds and pistachios (optional)

At the Monsoon Kitchen,
Samayal Santhai

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SEASON'S

Greetings

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wishes everyone
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Merry Christmas
and a Prosperous
New Year

2022

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Sivan Ilangko receives the prestigious recognition as a Fellow of CPA Ontario

By Siva Sivapragasam

Sivan Ilangko who is a Chartered Professional Accountant and Chartered Accountant, is named CPA Ontario Fellow, the highest distinction bestowed upon a CPA in the Accounting profession.

The FCPA designation recognizes exemplary leaders for their outstanding impact in the world of business and in their communities. Fellows embody the core values of the profession while also driving innovation and progress in business, and beyond.

As Associate Partner at EY Canada, Sivan is a leader in the firm's financial services audit practice group and dedicates his time to promoting diversity and inclusion initiatives.

His journey to becoming a CPA was characterized by grit and determination. He requalified his credentials as a CPA in Ontario when he transferred to EY Canada in 2001 and overcame adversity as a student when civil war broke out in Sri Lanka, which disrupted his studies.

Sivan champions a culture of belonging at EY, where he was a member of the GTA Diversity Committee and served as EY Relationship Manager for Ascend Canada, promoting mentorship and opportunities for people to build together.

He is Co-Founder of the Centre for Leadership and Innovation, where he is also an advisory board member. Sivan remains active in the Tamil community as the President of the Canadian Tamil Congress and recently led the campaign to establish a first ever Chair in Tamil Studies in Canada at the University of Toronto, Scarborough. He was also a Vice President - Internal Affairs of the Canadian Tamils' Chamber of Commerce.

Ilangko is a family - oriented person and is married to Prema. They have a son and daughter named Ahillan and Athirai.





Tamil Literary Garden 2021 Award Recipients

The Annual Tamil Literary Garden 2021 Awards Event was conducted this year through Zoom on Saturday December 4th 2021.
Seen below are the winners



B. Kanmani

- Novelist Award for the novel "Edapam"



Dilipkumar

- Special Award for Literary Achievement



Logathan Tharmathurai

- Foreign Language Literature Award -
"The Sadness of Geography"



Poet Perundevi

- Poetry Award



Veerakathi Sutharshan

- Contribution for Tamil Award

**I will be making a substantial contribution to the
Tamil Literary Garden Awards event next year to
continue the good work they are doing" - Actor Sivakumar**



COMMUNITY WATCH 

Explainer via Reuters - Why does Sri Lanka want migrant workers to remit funds via banking channels?

By Uditha Jayasinghe

Dec 6, 2021: COLOMBO - Sri Lankan authorities will start to crack down on informal remittance inflows as the country seeks to bolster its reserves to meet more than \$4.5 billion in debt repayments due next year.

Central bank governor Ajith Nivard Cabraal said he has seen a \$300 million drop in remittances in just the last month, and vowed to use anti-money laundering laws to stop informal channels from funnelling away millions of dollars of vital foreign exchange reserves from the banking system.

Here are details of Sri Lanka's precarious forex position and the reasons it seeks to halt flows via informal channels:

WHY DOES SRI LANKA WANT TO BOLSTER REMITTANCES VIA FORMAL CHANNELS?

Remittances and tourism, traditionally among the top sources of foreign exchange earnings, have been hit hard by the pandemic. Tourism receipts slumped to \$92.5 million in the first nine months of 2021 from \$4.3 billion in 2018.

Remittances, which were robust in 2020, fell 9.3% as of Sept. 30 to \$4.5 billion from \$5.1 billion over the same period in 2020, and declines have accelerated since October.

Sri Lanka's sovereign ratings have been downgraded multiple times in recent months by major rating agencies as it struggled with low public revenues, sluggish growth and reserves that slumped to \$2.3 billion as of Oct. 31.

The country must make an estimat-



ed \$4.5 billion in debt and interest payments in 2022, including servicing a \$500 million international sovereign bond maturity in January. Meanwhile, its trade deficit in the first nine months of the year ballooned to \$6 billion from \$4.3 billion in the same period last year.

WHY HAVE REMITTANCE FLOWS INTO SRI LANKA VIA FORMAL CHANNELS SLUMPED?

In early September, as the Sri Lankan rupee weakened sharply the central bank directed banks to unofficially set the exchange rate at between 200 and 203 Sri Lankan rupees to a dollar.

However, currency pressure caused by an expanding trade deficit, limited foreign exchange earnings and concerns around debt repayments have resulted in the rupee changing hands at between 255 and 265 rupee per dollar via informal channels. Migrant workers remitted money via the infor-

mal "hawala" system, and remittances via official channels fell to \$353 million in September from \$703 million in the same month last year.

The central bank is now offering migrant workers 10 rupees extra for every dollar they remit via formal channels, but there are doubts this will work given the more attractive exchange rate in unofficial channels.

HOW DO INFORMAL CHANNELS WORK?

The "hawala" or "undiyaal" transfer system allows migrant workers to remit funds, usually cash in the currency they earn in is given to a middleman who in turn ensures that the person's family in Sri Lanka receives the equivalent amount in rupees.

The central bank is now threatening to freeze accounts that receive any unexplained cash transfers or deposits.

WHY SRI LANKA DOES NOT WANT TO LET THE RUPEE DEPRECIATE FURTHER?

Sri Lanka's retail inflation has accelerated to nearly a decade-high of 9.9% in November, well above the central bank's 4%-6% target range.

Allowing the rupee to float freely could sharply accelerate inflation for the largely import dependent island economy.

HOW DOES THE CENTRAL BANK HOPE TO FIX ITS WEAK FINANCES?

The central bank wants to boost reserves by capturing more remittance inflows and is counting on a revival in tourism.

Having a greater share of remittance flows is vital as it plans to securitise a portion of the remittances and use this as a guarantee to borrow additional funds. The country is also exploring swap deals with other central banks and credit lines to support imports of essential goods such as food, medicines and fuel.

(Editing by Euan Rocha and Jacqueline Wong) via: Reuters

CTCC Annual Christmas Mix and Mingle event on December 16th at Kennedy Convention Center

Canadian Tamils' Chamber of Commerce is celebrating this holiday season with a Christmas Mix and Mingle on December 16th at the Kennedy Convention Centre.

Santa and Mrs. Claus, Victorian Era Carolers, Raptors COURTSIDE tickets plus other exciting offers including a Dinner and dance.

The event is sponsored by CANTAM and Pace Law.





SPECIAL FEATURE

SRI SRINGERI SHARADA PEETAM

Compiled by : KIDAMBI RAJ

Location

Sri Sringeri Sharada Peetam is located amongst the lush green mountain ranges of the Sahyadri, Sringeri, located in the modern day, district of Chickmagalur in the state of Karnataka in India. Sringeri is about 85 km (53 mi) east of Udipi and 100 km (62 mi) northeast from Mangaluru across the Western Ghats and about 365 km (208 mi) west-northwest from the state capital, Bengaluru.

Four Peetams



Jagadguru Sri Shankaracharya

Jagadguru Sri Adi Sankar Bhagavatpada, the principal exponent of Advaita Vedanta, established the four Aamnaaya Peetams (seats of Vedic learning) in four corners of India called, **Chaturamnaya** Peetams to preserve and propagate Sanatana Dharma and Advaita Vedanta. These were **Sri-nger**

in Karnataka in the South, **Dwaraka Sharada Peetam in Gujarat in the West**, **Govardhan Peetam** in Puri, Odisha in the East and **Jyothishpeetam** in Badri, Uttarakhand in the North. Sringeri Peetam is the first amongst the four Peetams and established more than twelve centuries ago.

Selection of Sringeri, for the first Peetam



Jagadguru Sri Shankaracharya

Hallowed (made Holy or consecrated) for all times by **Sage Rishyashringa**, who stayed and performed Tapas here, Sringeri attracted Sri Adi Sankaracharya with a remarkable sight. Tradition has it that after the Acharya had dispersed all the non-Vedic creeds prevailing in the country, He was on the look out for a convenient and holy place where He could establish an institution to spread the truths of Advaita Vedanta. When the Acharya came to Sringeri, He saw an unusual sight on the banks of the Tunga River. A cobra was seen spreading out its hood over a frog in labour pains, to give it shadow from the scorching mid-day sun. Struck with the sanctity of the place, which could infuse love between natural adversaries, the Acharya chose this very location to establish His first Mutt. He then invoked the Divinity of Knowledge, Goddess Sharada and consecrated an icon of the Goddess. Thus, the Peetam He founded at Sringeri in South India for fostering the Vedas and the sacred traditions of Sanatana Dharma came to be known as the Dakshinaamnaya Sri Sharada Peetam.

Sage Rishyashringa



Sringeri Acharyas

Sringeri is made holy for all times by the ancient legend of the Sage Sri Rishyashringa, of Ramayana fame. **Sage Vibhandaka**, by a curious combination of circumstances became the father of a child, with a horn in the forehead, born of a deer. He found himself responsible for the proper upbringing of the child, whom he named Rishyashringa. He thought that the easiest way to keep his son innocent of the worldly ways was to keep him in a forest in isolation. He succeeded to such an extent that when the boy matured into manhood, he had never set eyes on any human being other than his own father. He was even unaware of sexual distinction. It so happened that a neighboring kingdom which was then ruled by a king named **Romapada**, suffered from a severe drought. The king was advised by his ministers that there would be rains if sage Rishyashringa, blessed his kingdom with the touch of his holy feet. So, King Ramapada sent a number of fair damsels to the forest to bring the sage. They were however afraid of sage Vibhandaka, and so approached the hermitage when he was away.

King Romapada, learning that the boy-sage had started from his hermitage towards his kingdom, waited to receive him at the frontiers of his kingdom. The instant the holy sage stepped on the soil, the heavens opened up and poured down life giving showers. The King, thankful for the favour conferred on him, showed his gratitude by offering the hands of his daughter, **Santha** in marriage to the sage. Rishyashringa accepted her as his wife and remained in the palace as an honoured guest for some time. It was during this period that Dasaratha, the King of Ayodhya, invited him to officiate in the yaga named **Putrakameshti**, by which he was blessed with four sons, Sri Rama, Lakshmana, Satrugna and Bharata. Sage Rishyashringa felt that his married life was not without its merits, as it gave him an opportunity to usher into this world Sri Rama, the personification of Dharma.



Sringeri Sri Sharadambal, Sri Bharati Tirtha Mahaswamiji & Sri Vidhushekhar Bharati Swamiji

The Linga

Though Sage Rishyashringa felt happy, that he was able to do some good, he felt that he should go back to his native forest with its holy atmosphere. So, he retired to the forest to spend the remainder of his life in divine contemplation. When he shuffled off his mortal coil, a lightning came out from his body and disappeared into the Linga he was worshipping as a symbol of formless Absolute.

This Linga can be seen even to-day in the temple at Kigga, a village about 7 km from Sringeri. Unlike others, this Linga is invested with a horn on its head, to commemorate the merger of the Sage Rishyashringa.

The Linga that Sage Rishyashringa's father, Sage Vibhandaka worshipped and into which he himself disappeared in the end is on the summit of a hill-

ock. This is situated in the centre of Sringeri. This Linga is known as **Malahanikareswara** (destroyer of the impurities of the Jiva) and is worshipped even today.

Primary Disciples of Jagadguru Sri Adi Sankaracharya

Among all the number of disciples who had the rare and inestimable privilege of serving the great Acharya Sri Sankara Bhagavadpada, four stand out prominent. Each one of them unrivalled in his own way: **Padmapada** for intense devotion, **Totaka** for exemplary service, **Hastamalaka** for supreme self-realization and **Sureshwara** for deep learning.

It is well-known that Jagadguru Sri Adi Sankaracharya established four Mutts in the four corners of India for the sustenance and propagation of Sanatana Dharma in the country. Each of these Aamnaya Peetams had their divinities, tirtas, sampradayas and so on established.

The above mentioned four disciples were later on installed as Acharyas of the four Mutts by Jagadguru Sri Adi Sankaracharya himself as follows:

- Sri Sureshwaracharya as the Acharya of the Sringeri Sharada Peetam in the South in Sringeri, Karnataka.
- Sri Hastamalakacharya as the Acharya of the Govardhana Mutt in the East in Puri, Odisa .
- Sri Padmapadacharya as the Acharya of the Dwaraka Mutt in the West in Dwaraka, Gujarat.
- Sri Totakacharya as the Acharya of the Jyotir Mutt in the North in Badri, Uttarkhand.

In establishing the four Mutts in the four quadrants of the country, opening temples, organizing halls of education, this mighty master left nothing undone in maintaining what he achieved. Among the four Mutts, two of them one in the East and the other in the West were set up on the sea shore, while the Mutts in the North and South were set up in the mountain regions. Sri Sureshwaracharya who hailed from the north was placed in charge of the Mutt in the South, while Sri Totakacharya who was from the South was sent to Badri in the North. Sri Adi Sankara made it mandatory that only the Namboodris from Kerala should perform Poojas at Badri, while the Brahmins from Karnataka were assigned for Nepal. Likewise, He ordained Maharashtra Brahmins to do the Poojas at Rameswaram. This shows what a broad mind He had when it came to leadership matters of national interest.

SRINGERI SHARADA PEETAM

Jagadguru Sri Adi Sankaracharya appointed His prime disciple, Sri Sureshwaracharya as the first Acharya of the Peetam. Since then, the Peetam has been blessed with an unbroken Guru Parampara, a garland of spiritual masters and Jivanmuktas representing Sri Adi Sankaracharya. The succeeding Acharyas have led a life of such austere penance that it had led disciples to adore in them the radiance of Sri Adi Sankara Himself.

Besides being a centre of spiritual power, Sringeri



Sri Mahaswamiji worshipping Lord Chandramouliswara

SPECIAL FEATURE



Sri Kappe Shankara - A Shrine on the banks of the Holy Tunga

also came to be known as a great place of traditional learning owing to the presence of Goddess Sharada and the erudition of the Acharyas of the Peetam. The Acharyas were instrumental in bringing forth commentaries on the Vedas and in further expounding the Bhashyas of Sri Adi Sankaracharya. The Acharyas also wrote a number of independent works related to Advaita besides producing a number of hymns underlining their ardent devotion to Advaita to the non-dual Supreme worshipped in multifarious forms. The Peetam thus came to be regarded as the *Vyakhyana Simhasana*, the Throne of Transcendental Wisdom. Consequently, the Birudavali hails the Acharya as the occupier of this throne. Many regard, Goddess Sharada Herself to be moving in the form



Contemporary painting of Sringeri

of the presiding Acharyas of the Peetam.

In the 14th century, royal patronage to the Peetam began with the founding of the famous Vijayanagar empire under the guidance of the 12th Acharya, Jagadguru Sri Vidyaranya. The austerity of the Acharya influenced the rulers to such an extent that they began ruling in the name of the Acharya and granted the Peetam the rights over secular administration of the land. At the ruler's request, the Acharya began conducting a Durbar during the Navaratri festival, an occasion deemed by the rulers to honour their Guru. Subsequently, the Acharya came to be known as the asana *Karnataka Simhasana Prathishtapanacharya* and the Peetam became a mighty institution, a

Samsthanam and is known to this day as the *Jagadguru Shankaracharya Mahasamsthanam* the *Dakshinamnaya Sri Sharada Peetam at Sringeri*. Over the succeeding



Sage Rishyashringa

centuries, a number of empires and rulers including the Mysore Maharajahs Hyder Ali and Tippu Sultan, the Nizam of Hyderabad, the Peshwas and the Keladi rulers and Travancore Rajas were drawn towards the Peetam and respected the Acharyas as their Guru. In the recent past, the Sharada Peetam has shone through the lives of the Acharyas, Jagadguru Sri Sacchidananda Shivabhinava Nrisimha Bharati Mahaswamigal, the re-discoverer of Sri Adi Sankara's birthplace at Kalady and the founder of the famous Patasala at Sringeri; followed by the renowned Jivanmukta, Jagadguru Sri Chandrasekhara Bharati Mahaswamigal; succeeded by the crest jewel of Yogis, Jagadguru Sri Abhinava Vidyatirtha Mahaswamigal.

With such a rich history associated with Sri Adi Sankaracharya's first and foremost peetam, many wonder at the aptness of the Acharya's choice of locating the Peetam at Sringeri, a spot replete with a

lengthy past, and bountiful with natural splendor and serenity.

Today, the Sringeri Sharada Peetam bedecked with an unbroken chain of Acharyas continues to uphold the principles of Sanatana Dharma with the 36th Acharya Jagadguru Shankaracharya Sri Bharati Tirtha Mahaswami acting as a treasure of spiritual wisdom and peace of all seekers.

The Sringeri Mutt is situated on the banks of the Tungabhadra River in Sringeri. The Mutt complex consists of shrines on both the northern and southern banks of the river. The three prominent shrines on the northern bank of the river are dedicated to the presiding deity of the Peetam and the divinity of Atma-vidya, Sri Sharada, Sri Adi Sankara and Jagadguru Sri Vidyasankara Tirtha, the 10th Jagadguru of the Peetam. The southern bank houses the residence of the reigning pontiff, the adhithanam shrines of the previous pontiffs and the Sadvidya Sanjivini Samskrita Mahapatasala.

The Peetam is traditionally headed by an ascetic pontiff belonging to the Dashanami order of monasticism, the Jagadguru Sankaracharya. The first pontiff of the Peetam was Sri Adi Sankara's eldest disciple, Sri Sureshwaracharya, renowned for his treatise on Vedanta, Manasollasa and Naishkarmya Siddhi. The current pontiff, Sri Bharathi Tirtha Swamin is the 36th Jagadguru in the since unbroken spiritual succession of Pontiffs.

The Peetam is one of the major Hindu monastic institutions that has historically coordinated Smarta tradition and monastic activities through satellite institutions in South India, preserved Sanskrit literature and pursued Advaita studies. The Peetam runs several Vedic Patasalas, maintains libraries and repositories of historic Sanskrit manuscripts. Along with other Hindu monasteries, the Sringeri Mutt has been active in preserving Vedas, sponsoring students and recitals, Sanskrit scholarship, and celebrating traditional annual festivals such as Sankara Jayanti and Guru Purnima (Vyasa Purnima). The Peetam has branches across India and maintains temples at several locations. It also has social outreach programmes.

Sringeri Mutt has preserved and been a source of ancient Sanskrit manuscripts to scholars. In the contemporary monastery, a library is located on the first floor of the Sharadamba temple. It has about 500 palm-leaf manuscripts and a large collection of paper manuscripts, most of which are in Sanskrit. These manuscripts are not only related to Advaita philosophy, but also to classical subjects such as Sanskrit grammar, Dharmasutras, ethics and arts.

The Sringeri Sharada Peetam has a network of branches in India. Some of the major branches include those in Varanasi, Haridwar, Nasik, Gaya, Mysore, Hyderabad, Madurai, Chennai, Kanchipuram, Tirupati, Coimbatore, Rameswaram, Kalady, Ramnad and Bengaluru.

WORKS OF SRI ADI SANKARACHARYA

Sri Adi Sankaracharya is arguably the most important philosopher in the history of Advaita Vedanta. It is Sankaracharya's interpretation of the source texts of Vedanta that lays the foundation for classical Advaita. He taught the universality of the Vedic religion and successfully rid it of the contradictions of its partisan adherents of different schools. He also synthesized the triple way of karma, bhakti and jnana assigning to each its proper and necessary



Siva Linga at Rishyashringa

place in the unitary method of achieving liberation from the ills of samsara. Adi Sankara pioneered in writing Bhashyam (Commentary) for Brahma Sutra (considered as the essence of the four facets of Vedas) and the Holy Bhagavad Gita. These laid foundations of strength to establish Hinduism with strong roots. All these stemmed from the philosophy of Advaita which He taught as the central truth of the Upanishads, the Brahmasutras and the Bhagavad Gita known as the *Prasthanatraya* of Indian philosophy. He explained this at length lucidly and cogently in a language characterized as prasannagambhira in His commentaries on all three of them.

A large number of short Advaita treatises called, *Prakarana Granthas* are also attributed to Sri Adi Sankara. These works are often used to teach beginners. A large number of Stotras are also attributed to Adi Sankara. These range from the famous *Bhaja Govindam* hymn to *Dakshinamurti Stotram*. Apart from the above-mentioned major works, Sri Adi Sankaracharya is also said to have written numerous other texts, like the *Yogasutra Vivarana Bhashya*



Main Sharadambal Temple in Sringeri

and a commentary on the *Adhyatma Patala of the Apastamba Dharmasutra* and commentaries on *Vishnu Sahasranama* and *Lalita Trishati*. A Sankhya work called *Jayamangala* and a Nyaya work called *Sthirasiddhi* are also attributed to Him.

Sri Adi Sankaracharya was not averse to using His yogic powers for temporal uplift of the unfortunate, as for instance, in His permanently enriching a poor woman by instant composition of the *Kanakadhara Stotram*, a hymn in praise of Goddess Mahalakshmi, which made Goddess shower Her bounty in the form of golden amalakas (gooseberries) into the house. Such instances of Sankara's innate boundless mercy abound in His short but effective life span.

The mysterious phenomenon of lotuses blossoming forth underneath Sri Sanandana's feet, as he strode across the swollen Ganga on hearing his Master's call out, even as others in the group scrambled towards the boatman is well known. The leadership here, really would be demonstrative, yet remarkably silent and effective use of His yogic powers to emphasize the qualities of Sri Sanandana, who certainly deserved his Guru's grace.



Sri Vidyashankara Temple in Sringeri

Men of realization are of two classes. Some continue in their state of self-absolution. They are charged with spirituality to their finger tips and they silently radiate spirituality to others. Others choose to live in the world, but are not of the world; they love men and objects of the world, not in deed for themselves, but for the infinite in them. By living in their proximity, by speaking with them, one can understand more than what texts could provide.

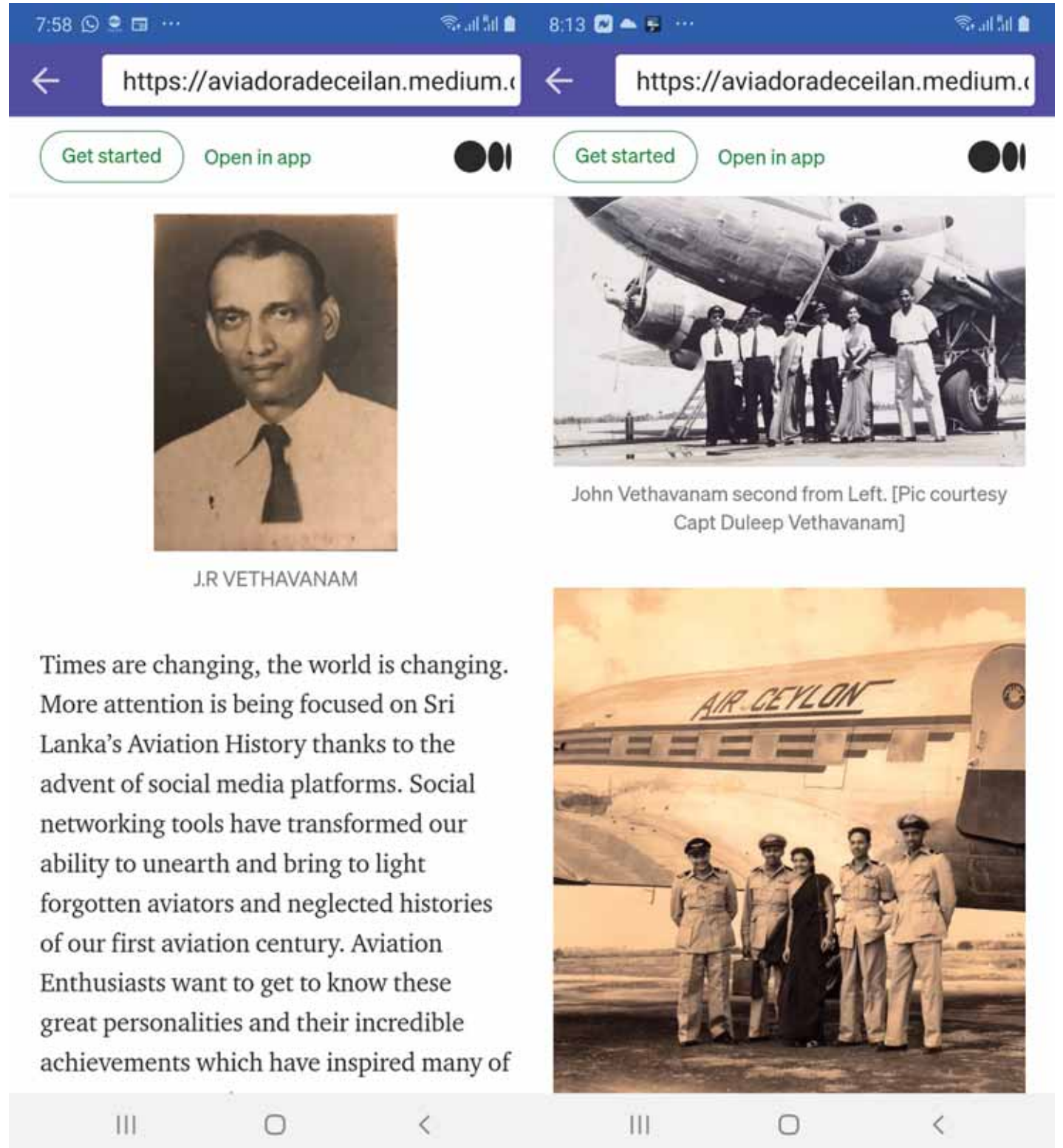
Sringeri Vidya Bharati Foundation (SVBF) in Toronto, Canada was inaugurated on Sunday, August 14, 2005 and was established as *an international extension of the ancient Sri Sharada Peetam, in Sringeri, India.*


COMMUNITY WATCH

On The anniversary of a Sri Lankan Aviation Pioneer, John Rajkumar Vethavanam

I would like to phrase it this way, after Charles Lindbergh made that historic solo flight across the Atlantic in 1927, the "Panchas or a Group of Five" at the Ratmalana airport decided to do a charter flight for the Ceylon Navy Personnel at that time. As in the words of JFK in 1962 when he mentioned about the mission to moon quote "We want to do this mission not because it was easy to do this but it was a difficult one" and the group of "Five chose it since it was a challenge". But their willingness to do this flight opened the flood gates & created history not only in the annals of Sri Lankan Aviation but also in South East Asia. The five comprised of Capt. Peter Fernando, FO. Mawalagedra, FE. Bunny Mollamurre, Steward D.L.Srimanne and the first ever Radio Officer J.R. Vethavanam. I was not born in the year Vetha and others created history in aviation, never dreamt even that one fine day my life will cross his path and would be working with him for a period of 4 memorable happy year's in my life as I began my journey in the field of aviation with the national Air Ceylon in 1971. Still remember shaking hands with another candidate Duleep Vethavanam who had a PPL at that time when I presented myself for an interview at the Air Ceylon head office in 1972 for the post of Flight Operations Officer never realising that his father will be the administrative officer for the flight operations department. On the first day itself got along well with him and was like a father to me also. Had a lot of respect and regards for this gent. Who was a stickler for rules and regulations? This unassuming gent was born in Jaffna, studied at St. Johns College Jaffna and then on to Trinity College Kandy where he played Cricket, passed his HSC exam, qualified himself as a licensed Radio officer and joined the national airline Air Ceylon, as its first Radio officer from inception in 1947. In the good days the pilots rely on navigation charts, navaids, NDB and DR. for flying. You could say it was their collective skills as a crew made their flying easy and momentous. When the navy personnel commissioned this flight to Sydney the group of 5 agreed to operate this flight with Capt. Peter Fernando at the helm.

The Group of five began their monumental flight on the 30th of May 1948 on the DC3 aircraft, named Sunethra Devi. They first flew to Madras, with a brief stopover continued their second leg of the journey to Calcutta. They rested, refueled and continued their journey to Rangoon. Took long rest here as their next phase of flight to Singapore was a long sector over the sea and the straits of Malacca. The DC3 aircraft had a limitation to fly at higher altitudes since the aircraft was not built with pressurized cabin. This was a heavy toll on the crew; the crew had to maintain a safe height 10/15000



J.R. VETHAVANAM



John Vethavanam second from Left. [Pic courtesy Capt Duleep Vethavanam]

Times are changing, the world is changing. More attention is being focused on Sri Lanka's Aviation History thanks to the advent of social media platforms. Social networking tools have transformed our ability to unearth and bring to light forgotten aviators and neglected histories of our first aviation century. Aviation Enthusiasts want to get to know these great personalities and their incredible achievements which have inspired many of



feet considering the safety of the crew in mind. As they continued to Singapore, the crew encountered severe bad weather conditions and turbulence. Captain climbed to a higher altitude even though their breathing was uneasy. They did not know where they were heading and lost their bearings. Since they could not get any response from the ATC stations on route due to severe weather. The crew was desperate to find out where they were and while all this was going on Radio officer Vetha. Kept on calling all the ATC's to tell their predicament. His untiring efforts finally paid off when Singapore, Kallang airport responded to the frantic calls of Vethavanam and they managed to land at Kallang with the guidance aircraft provided by the RAF and with bare minimum fuel left. It was a miracle they landed safely and in one piece on the 1st of June. I like to say the confidence in their flying skills and more over the sheer perseverance of Vetha's as messages to the ATC. They left Singapore on the 3rd of June, arrived in Darwin after a short stay continued on their final

leg to Sydney and landed on the 5th of June. It was a first for an Australian airport to have an airline from South East Asia on their soil. They finally flew back from Sydney on the 10th and arrived at Ratmalana on the 17th of June to heroes welcome. What a flight and what a story!

Want to say this of old Vetha (the way me and my ex-colleague GAF, Capt Fernando used to talk about) had a very high moral compass with which he flew his life at all times with the belief it will help him to fly to higher altitudes and sure it did. He created history even after he went to be with God. He passed the "Torch of Aviation" to his only son Duleep Vethavanam, retired as a captain of Sri Lankan airlines (whom I call my friend) who in turn passed it onto his only son Dinesh who currently flies with Etihad airlines. This feat, a first in Sri Lankan aviation where old Vetha produced 3rd generation of fliers. He never bragged about what he did, simply smiled it off as a Job he did and never had an ego about it. A regular search goer, with an ever ready smile and lived up to his

religious beliefs. I am sure, could have found more details from him in person, but lack of audacity & I regret it very much now.

I thought it is a fitting tribute to remember an old mentor (if I may say) and a father figure to me on his 10th anniversary. I still keep musing about old Vetha. I don't know whether it was a coincidence or Gods wishes that he passed away in to the "Blue Skies", just a day after his epic making return flight from SYD on the 10th of June. John Vetha went to be with God on the 10th December 2011 after a very brief illness with his family by his side.

I am sure old Vetha would be saying this to me with a big smile. "Blue, We All Did It Together and NOT ME."

This was the epitome of his character.

"To Sir! With All My Love, for the legacy you left behind for aviation and God bless your magnificent soul".

K.N.Sivagnanasunderam (Blue)
Former Flight Operations Officer, Air Ceylon Ltd.

COMMUNITY WATCH



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. We are continuing to provide free virtual activities almost every day for kids to seniors. 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.

DTA's Annual Christmas Party

DTA's Annual Christmas Party will be on December 11th, 2021 at 5pm.

The Photo Shoot with Santa Starts at 4:00pm.

Limited number of people only.

Please register online at durhamtamils.org

DTA presents a weekly Free Virtual Yoga Class for Kids & Teens (Members only)

Ages: 6-11 - Time: Saturdays 11:30am-12:30pm

AGES: 12-17 - Time: Saturdays 12:30-2:00pm

Start Date: November 6th

Yoga instructor:

Thayani Aerambamoorthy

Please register online at durhamtamils.org under virtual classes

DTA presents Virtual Storytelling/Read Along

Grade: K-8, Mondays & Wednesdays 5:00pm-6:00pm

Reading and sharing stories can help your child get to know sounds, words, language, and develop early literacy skills. It will spark your child's imagination and stimulate curiosity. It also helps develop your child's brain, ability to focus, concentration, social skills, and communication skills.

Thank you to all the amazing youth volunteers who run the reading club.

Please register online at durhamtamils.org under virtual classes

DTA presents ESL Classes for Adults

English as a Second Language class. It's never too late to learn.

Thank you to our teacher Abirami Srichandradas for volunteering her time. We truly appreciate it. Register online: durhamtamils.org

Free Virtual Chess Club (Members only)

DTA youth have been running the chess club very successfully. It has been happening on Saturdays from 3 pm-5 pm. If you haven't registered, please do so online.

Youth Leadership

The Leadership programs are free for members only. The program provides training for public speaking.

Age: 7-12 on Sundays from 3-4:30pm

Instructor: Pranavi Premkumar

Ages 13-17 are Biweekly on Saturdays from 5-7 pm.

Youth Leadership Club chair - Mr. Kathirithamby Subramaniam

Please register online: durhamtamils.org

ils.org

Free Homework and Tutoring help for JK, SK & Grades 1-8

This session is not limited to Homework help, but also for additional assistance on any subjects that volunteers could help with.

Free French Reading Practice

French Read Along for Students

- Grades 5 and up for Non-French Immersion Students

- Grades 2 and up for French Immersion

Instructor: Swaathi Ketheeswaran

Register at durhamtamils.org

Free Virtual Math Class

Grades: Kindergarten to Grade 12

Time: Thursday at 6:00-7:00pm

Register online under virtual class at durhamtamils.org

Thank you Raatha teacher for volunteering your time for DTA youth. Also thank you to the Youth volunteers who are volunteering for the Math class.

Padimurai Tamil - Proven Learning Method

New Tamil Classes started in September 2021, including a Tamil credit course. If you have not registered, please do so ASAP.

-JK to Gr. 8

-Gr. 9 to Gr. 12 (Tamil Credit Course)

-Adults

Those who never learned the Tamil Language are welcome to join! Even if you do not know how to speak Tamil, we will teach you to speak, read, and write.

Register at durhamtamils.org or Call: 905-428-7007

DTA's Seniors

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

Thank you to DTA's Annual Sponsors

DTA thanks our annual sponsors Nava Wilson Law, Computek, TSN Express, Chapel Ridge Funeral Home, Showtha Thushijanthan-RE/MAX, Ajax Crematorium, and Visitation Ctr, 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

Unity Is Strength

Durham Tamil Association

Free Yoga Classes for Kids

kids yoga lessons



Ages 6-11
Saturdays
Time:
11:30-12:30pm

Ages 12-17
Saturdays
Time:
12:30-2:00pm

Register Online Under Virtual Programs :
DURHAMTAMILS.ORG

Yoga Instructor :
Thayani Aerambamoorthy

Durham Tamil Association

Youth Leadership

PUBLIC SPEAKING

AGES 7-17




★ Free Program for Members Only

Register Online: DURHAMTAMILS.ORG

PUBLIC Speaking skills

- Mastering the Body Language techniques
- Overcoming Stage Fear
- Becoming an Excellent Presenter, Orator
- Speaking Impromptu
- Knowing the Audience

Ages 7-12

SUN 3:00-4:30PM

Ages 13-17

Bi-Weely- SAT 5:00-7:00PM

DURHAM TAMIL ASSOCIATION



FREE VIRTUAL CHESS CLUB

(MEMBERS ONLY)

Saturdays | 3PM - 5PM

ALL AGES AND TALENT LEVELS ARE WELCOME

REGISTER ONLINE AT DURHAMTAMILS.ORG

Durham Tamil Association

தமிழ் மொழி வகுப்புகள்

Padimurai Tamil Proven Learning Method

Read, Write & Speak

- ✓ Grade 1 - 9
- ✓ Gr. 9 to Gr. 12 (Tamil Credit Course)
- ✓ JK & SK
- ✓ Adults

தமிழ் மொழியை கற்போம்!

வளர் தழித் தலைமுறை!

Register Online: durhamtamils.org

For additional details Call 905-428-7007


COMMUNITY WATCH

Proposal for new taller Statue of poet Subramania Bharathi in Puducherry



Mahakavi Subramania Bharathi
(11 December 1882 – 11 September 1921)

Puducherry, Dec 4: Puducherry Lt Governor Tamilisai Soundararajan on Saturday suggested that a statue of national poet Subramania Bharathi, taller than the Statue of Unity” erected for Sardar Vallabhai Patel in Gujarat, be bult on the sea shore in the union territory to attract tourists and called for a comprehensive policy to develop the sector in the union territory.

Addressing participants at the one-day conclave of “stakeholders of tourism”, organised by the Department of Tourism here, she said Puducherry had rich potential to develop the sector. “Natural resources available here and also the promising spiritual and medical sectors also offer good scope for developing Puducherry into a spiritual and medical tourism centre,” she said.

The Lt Governor also said that a film city could be created in Puducherry so that movies and TV serials could be produced which would ensure flow of revenue to the exchequer. She said she had also made out a strong case for expansion of the

airport here and also operating ferry services between Karaikal and Jaffna (Sri Lanka).

“I made this plea while participating in the meeting of the South Zone Chief Ministers” conclave held in Tirupati recently. I will follow it up by requesting the Centre to expand the runway in Puducherry airport”, she said. “Tourism is a promising and most vibrant sector in Puducherry. A tall statue for Tamil poet Subramania Bharathi should be erected on the sea shore here on the same lines of Statue of Unity erected in honour of the veteran leader Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel in Gujarat,” she said.

The 182 metre statute dedicated to Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel at Kevadia in Gujarat, the world’s tallest, is a major tourist attraction. PWD and Tourism Minister K Lakshminarayanan, Cooperation Minister Sai Saravanan Kumar officials of Tourism Development department and legislators were among those who participated in the stakeholders’ meet.

- via PTI

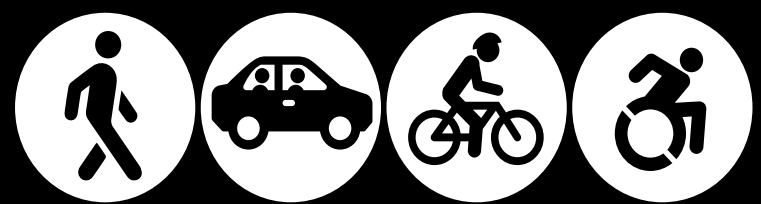
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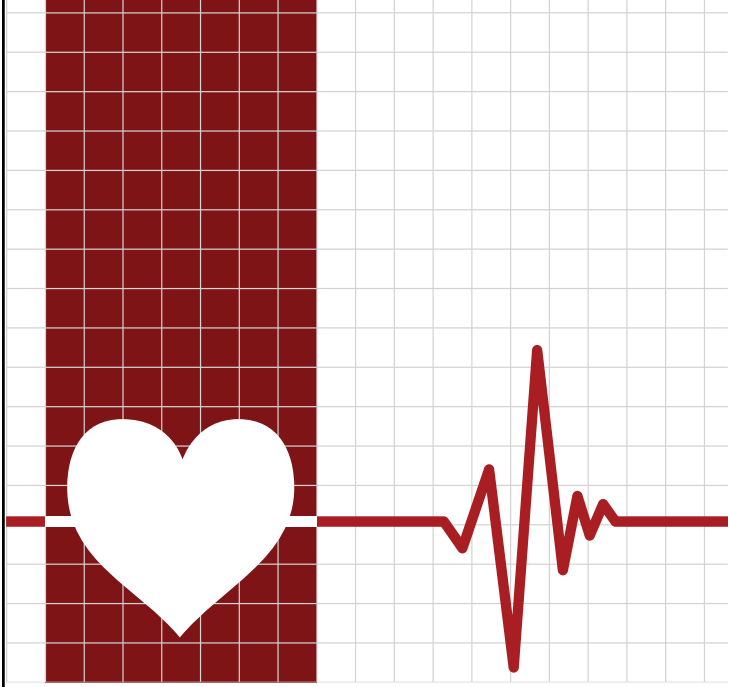
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