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# Worldwide protests on Russian aggression in Ukraine Economic sanctions on Russia by Western powers

By Siva Sivapragasam

Worldwide protests are taking place in several countries on Russia's attempt to capture the independent state of Ukraine

As "Monsoon Journal" goes to Press, heavy fighting near the Ukrainian Capital city of Kiev is reported between Russian and Ukraine forces in the war.

The invasion has so far killed at least 198 Ukrainians and the United Nations says that more than 150,000 Ukrainians had fled for Poland, Moldova and other neighbouring countries and warned the number could grow to 4 million if the fighting escalates. Civilians have been seen hiding in subways to avoid aerial and missile attacks in the capital city of Kiev.

Russian President Putin has not dis-

closed his ultimate plans, but Western officials believe he is determined to overthrow Ukraine's government and replace it with a regime of his own.

Western powers have imposed financial sanctions against Russia after the EU, US and their allies agreed to cut off Russian banks from the main international payment system of Swift. Russia is heavily reliant on the Swift system for its oil and gas exports, and analysts say its economy will be hit hard.

The assets of Russia's central bank will also be frozen, limiting the Kremlin's ability to access its overseas reserves. The measures will further isolate Russia from the international financial system.

Russian President Putin attempts to justify the invasion by saying "neo-Nazis" rule Ukraine and threaten



Ukrainians hide in subways to avoid aerial and missile attacks. (Picture Courtesy" NDTV)

Russia's security - a charge Kyiv and Western governments say is baseless propaganda.

Meanwhile, President Putin has

ordered his military to put Russia's nuclear deterrence forces on high alert in response to "aggressive statements" by NATO countries.

## Bob Rae invokes Civil Rights analogy in defense of Ukraine

On February 23, 2022, His Excellency Ambassador Bob Rae, Permanent Representative of Canada to the United Nations (UN) delivered a speech to the UN General Assembly.

Critically, this was made in response to the gradual massing of military troops from Russia onto the borders of Ukraine, which has now led to a crisis between Russia and Ukraine. Addressing this ongoing crisis, Ambassador Rae drew a comparison between the fundamental purpose of sovereign equality enshrined in the UN Charter and the civil rights movement in the United States. He specifically invokes the impact that Rosa Parks had in that movement regarding racial segregation in city buses during the 1960s.



If the UN Charter is to have any sort of meaningful application in our current international system, it starts with ensuring that all states, regardless of their significance, are treated equally.

Full text of the speech delivered by Ambassador Rae can be found on page 15.

## Canada's housing market is breaking records at an alarming rate

Sky-high prices, low mortgage rates and a short supply have yet to slow things down

by Cassandra Drudi

February 16, 2022:

Who could've predicted it would take a global pandemic to push the Canadian housing market into overdrive? After setting sales records across the country in 2020, 2021 saw those records toppled once more and demand remains at a fever pitch, continuing to outstrip the supply of available properties and driving prices up. Throw in inflationary pressures and, according to the government's December fiscal update, it will take "years" before the market can correct itself and return to normal, pre-pandemic conditions. With



each passing month, Canada's red-hot housing market continues to burn with no real signs of slowing down.

Please go to Pages 32 & 33 for Full Article

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CANADA NEWS 

## Ontario Requiring Employers to Disclose Electronic Monitoring

### Proposed changes would require large employers to tell their workers if, how and why they are being monitored



February 24, 2022

### Labour, Training and Skills Development

KITCHENER — The Ontario government is working for workers and plans to introduce new legislation later this month that would require employers to tell their workers if and how they are being monitored electronically. If passed, Ontario would become the first province to require electronic monitoring policies and protect workers' privacy by requiring employers be transparent on how employees' use of computers, cell phones, GPS systems and other electronic devices are being tracked.

"Today, businesses have more ways than ever before to monitor where their workers are and what they are doing. Whether you are a delivery person being followed by GPS, a construction worker using a company phone, or an office worker logging in from home, you deserve to know if and how you are being tracked," said Monte McNaughton, Minister of Labour,

Training and Skills Development.

"The future of work is changing, which is why our government is leading the country to ensure workers remain in the driver's seat."

Under the proposed changes, employers with 25 or more workers will be required to have a written electronic monitoring policy in place for all their employees. The policy would need to contain information on whether the employer electronically monitors its workers, and if so, a description of how and in what circumstances the employer does this. In addition, the employer would need to disclose the purpose of collecting information through electronic monitoring.

This proposal, and others to be unveiled in the coming days, follow legislation introduced in the fall to remove unfair and discriminatory barriers against foreign-trained professionals, create the "Right to Disconnect", and ban the use of non-compete clauses, all designed to make Ontario the best place to live, work, and raise a family.

Via news.ontario.ca

## Ontario Providing Support for the People of Ukraine

February 24, 2022

Office of the Premier

TORONTO

The Ontario government is assisting the people of Ukraine by providing \$300,000 in humanitarian aid during this difficult and challenging time.

"Last night we witnessed a violent attack on a sovereign nation as Vladimir Putin launched a war of aggression against Ukraine," said Premier Doug Ford. "The bonds between Canada and Ukraine run deep, and generations of Ukrainian-Canadians have helped build the Canada we know and love. This morning I spoke with the Consul General of Ukraine and assured him that the people of Ontario stand shoulder to shoulder with the people of Ukraine."

"I am deeply concerned about the escalating situation in Ukraine and condemn the unprovoked actions against Ukraine," said Parm Gill, Minister of Citizenship and Multiculturalism. "Ontario is home to more than 375,000 people of Ukrainian origin and they have made our province a better place. Our government stands in solidarity with the Ukrainian community in Ontario and with the people of Ukraine."

Ontario's monetary support will be donated to the Canada-Ukraine Foundation and will be used to support humanitarian purposes, including providing medical aid, emergency shelter and food security in Ukraine.



The Canada-Ukraine Foundation will ensure the donation will be used to provide assistance quickly and efficiently to people and families in need.

Ontario will also be ready to assist anyone fleeing from Ukraine who is in need of settlement services. Settlement agencies support newcomers and refugees to find housing, employment, health services and more when they arrive in Ontario.

"We share Premier Ford's concern over Russian aggression into Ukraine. We know the required humanitarian support will be significant and we are grateful to the government and the people of Ontario for supporting this worthy endeavor," said OrestSklierenko, President of the Canada-Ukraine Foundation. "We hope to continue to work with the province of Ontario in the coming weeks as we support the people of Ukraine during this trying time."

Via news.ontario.ca



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## International Day of Happiness 2022: As we mark this 10th Anniversary Milestone, Let's Recognize The State of Happiness in Ontario and Canada Today and Work Together to Spread it Further Through the Sustainable Development Goals

By **Harrish Thirukumar**

Gross National Happiness. This has been an economic concept that was introduced to the world by Bhutan as a measure of a country's performance for its people rather than Gross National Income. It has been something that the country has focused on since the early 1970s.

The General Assembly of the United Nations in its resolution 66/281 of 12 July 2012 proclaimed 20 March, the International Day of Happiness. It values the relevance of happiness and well-being as universal goals and aspirations in the lives of human beings around the world. It has become increasingly recognized in public policy objectives. In that sense, there is a growing need for a more inclusive, equitable and balanced approach to economic growth that promotes sustainable development, poverty eradication, happiness, and the well-being of all peoples. And this global conversation has been started from the forward-thinking mindset of Bhutan.

Bhutan also hosted a High-Level Meeting on "Happiness and Well-Being: Defining a New Economic Paradigm" during the sixty-sixth session of the General Assembly. In 2015, the UN launched the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, which seek to end poverty, reduce inequality, and protect our planet – three key aspects that lead to well-being and happiness.

During 2017, the United Nations organized a global public awareness campaign with the Smurfs as symbols of positive attitude and boundless

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**ACTION FOR HAPPINESS**

energy to celebrate the International Day of Happiness by promoting these Sustainable Development Goals. The Goals aim to protect people and our planet, so we can all live the happiest lives possible as the Smurfs themselves represent.

2022 is especially significant for International Day of Happiness as it will mark 10 years of the World Happiness Report being in effect. The World Happiness Report is a publication of the United Nations Sustainable Development Solutions Network as a survey on global happiness. In recognition of this event, a webinar will be held where the World Happiness Report will release its 10th Anniversary Edition on March 18, 2022 after its 2021 edition looking at the COVID-19 pandemic.

As we mark this 10th anniversary milestone, let's recognize the state of happiness in Ontario and Canada today and work together to spread it further through the Sustainable Development Goals.

## Canada Historic Milestones

March 13, 1927

Parliament passes legislation establishing the country's first old-age pension. The \$20 monthly pension is financed by the federal and provincial governments. It goes to British subjects 70 years of age or older who have lived in Canada for 20 years or more.



**"It's a victory when the weapons fall silent  
and people speak up"**

- **Volodymyr Zelensky** ((b: January 25, 1978) President of Ukraine)

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

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# Ontario Eliminating Licence Plate Renewal Fees and Stickers

## Province is cutting costs and making life more convenient for millions of vehicle owners



February 22, 2022

### Office of the Premier

TORONTO – The Ontario government is making life more affordable and convenient for nearly eight million vehicle owners by eliminating licence plate renewal fees and the requirement to have a licence plate sticker for passenger vehicles, light-duty trucks, motorcycles and mopeds, effective March 13, 2022.

“As the cost of living continues to go up, our government is cutting costs for families to make life more affordable,” said Premier Doug Ford. “Eliminating the fee to renew your licence plate and refunding the cost of doing so for the past two years is a concrete way we can put and keep more money in the pockets of hard-working Ontarians.”

The government is introducing red tape legislation later today that would enable the province to refund eligible individual owners of vehicles for any licence plate renewal fees paid since March 2020. Upon passage, vehicle owners will receive a cheque in the mail starting at the end of March and throughout the month of April.

“Our government is taking strong action at a time when the cost of living and doing business in Ontario is sky-

rocketing,” said Caroline Mulroney, Minister of Transportation. “For many families, driving is an absolute necessity. Eliminating licence plate renewal fees and stickers is part of our government’s commitment to support drivers as we continue to build Ontario’s transportation network, including by building the Bradford Bypass and Highway 413.”

To receive a refund cheque, vehicle owners who have moved recently will need to confirm that their address information on their vehicle permit or driver’s licence is up-to-date at [Ontario.ca/AddressChange](http://Ontario.ca/AddressChange) by March 7, 2022, and pay any outstanding fees, fines or tolls. For more information and/or assistance with changing an address, vehicles owners can call ServiceOntario’s dedicated line at 1-888-333-0049.

“Our government is putting money directly back into the pockets of Ontario families and workers to help make life more affordable,” said Ross Romano, Minister of Government and Consumer Services. “Eliminating these fees and stickers is just one of the ways we are reducing the burden on Ontarians and making it easier, quicker, and simpler for Ontarians to access critical government services.”



Under the proposal, renewal fees will also be eliminated for passenger, light duty commercial vehicles, motorcycles and mopeds that are owned by a company or business. However, no refunds will be given for the period of March 2020 to March 2022.

“Small businesses play a vital role in fostering Ontario’s economic growth,” said Nina Tangri, Associate Minister of Small Business and Red Tape Reduction. “Starting next month, eliminating renewal fees for vehicles owned by a company or business is just one of the many ways we are supporting small businesses across the province so they can continue to thrive and contribute to their communities.”

Vehicle owners will still be required to renew their licence plate every one or two years at no cost to confirm their automobile insurance is valid and pay any outstanding Highway 407 tolls and other municipal fines. The government is working with partners to develop a new, more user-friendly process that will continue to validate automobile insurance requirements, support law enforcement efforts and collect municipal fines and unpaid Highway 407 tolls.

The Ontario government is also investing in Automated Licence Plate Recognition (ALPR) technology as part of its commitment to provide police with the tools they need to do their jobs, improve public safety and strengthen roadside law enforcement efforts across the province. An ALPR system can read thousands of licence plates per minute allowing officers to process more information on licence plates. It also has the capability of capturing vehicles of interest such as amber alerts, drivers with a suspended licence, and stolen vehicles.

Renewal fees and requirements for licence plate stickers for heavy commercial vehicles and snowmobiles remain unchanged.

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

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# Statement by NATO Heads of State and Government on Russia's Attack on Ukraine



February 25, 2022

Ottawa, Ontario

We have met today to discuss the gravest threat to Euro-Atlantic security in decades. We condemn in the strongest possible terms Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, enabled by Belarus. We call on Russia to immediately cease its military assault, to withdraw all its forces from Ukraine and to turn back from the path of aggression it has chosen. This long-planned attack on Ukraine, an independent, peaceful and democratic country, is brutal and wholly unprovoked and unjustified. We deplore the tragic loss of life, enormous human suffering and destruction caused by Russia's actions. Peace on the European continent has been fundamentally shattered. The world will hold Russia, as well as Belarus, accountable for their actions. We call on all states to condemn this unconscionable attack unreservedly. No one should be fooled by the Russian government's barrage of lies.

Russia bears full responsibility for this conflict. It has rejected the path of diplomacy and dialogue repeatedly offered to it by NATO and Allies. It has fundamentally violated international law, including the UN Charter. Russia's actions are also a flagrant



rejection of the principles enshrined in the NATO-Russia Founding Act: it is Russia that has walked away from its commitments under the Act. President Putin's decision to attack Ukraine is a terrible strategic mistake, for which Russia will pay a severe price, both economically and politically, for years to come. Massive and unprecedented sanctions have already been imposed on Russia. NATO will continue to coordinate closely with relevant stakeholders and other international organisations including the EU. At the invitation of the Secretary General, we were joined today by Finland, Sweden and the European Union.

We stand in full solidarity with the democratically elected presi-

dent, parliament and government of Ukraine and with the brave people of Ukraine who are now defending their homeland. Our thoughts are with all those killed, injured and displaced by Russia's aggression, and with their families. NATO remains committed to all the foundational principles underpinning European security, including that each nation has the right to choose its own security arrangements. We will continue to provide political and practical support to Ukraine as it continues to defend itself and call on others to do the same. We reaffirm our unwavering support for the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognised borders, including

its territorial waters. This principled position will never change.

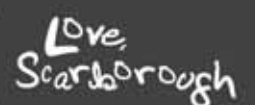
In light of Russia's actions, we will draw all the necessary consequences for NATO's deterrence and defence posture. Allies have held consultations under Article 4 of the Washington Treaty. We will continue to take all measures and decisions required to ensure the security and defence of all Allies. We have deployed defensive land and air forces in the eastern part of the Alliance, and maritime assets across the NATO area. We have activated NATO's defence plans to prepare ourselves to respond to a range of contingencies and secure Alliance territory, including by drawing on our response forces. We are now making significant additional defensive deployments of forces to the eastern part of the Alliance. We will make all deployments necessary to ensure strong and credible deterrence and defence across the Alliance, now and in the future. Our measures are and remain preventive, proportionate and non-escalatory.

Our commitment to Article 5 of the Washington Treaty is iron-clad. We stand united to protect and defend all Allies. Freedom will always win over oppression.

Via [pm.gc.ca](https://www.ppm.gc.ca)



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# CARLO FIDANI REGIONAL CANCER CENTRE THE FIRST IN EASTERN CANADA TO USE INNOVATIVE CANCER TREATMENT TECHNOLOGY

## New technology improving quality of care and access to radiation treatment



February 17, 2022 (MISSISSAUGA, ON) – The Carlo Fidani Regional Cancer Centre at Trillium Health Partners (THP) is now the first hospital in Eastern Canada to treat patients using HyperArc, an innovative cancer treatment technology that will improve health outcomes, reduce wait times and increase accessibility to treatment.

HyperArc is a hardware and software platform that delivers highly precise radiosurgical treatment to patients with multiple brain metastases, tumours which result from cancer spreading from one part of the body to the brain. Prior to implementation of HyperArc, radiosurgery at THP required treatment of one brain metastasis at a time. With HyperArc technology, THP can treat patients

with multiple brain metastases in a single treatment. As an example, for a patient with seven brain metastases, HyperArc reduced the total planning and treatment time from an estimated

31.5 hours to 9.5 hours.

“This new technology will help us deliver even better care to our

patients and result in more positive experiences throughout their cancer journey, while also benefitting our growing community by increasing access to treatment,” said Dr. Joan Murphy, Vice President, Patient Care Services, Oncology, Trillium Health Partners & Regional Vice President, Ontario Health

(Cancer Care Ontario). “We are committed to continue to find innovative ways to improve the quality of care and quality of life of cancer patients at the Carlo Fidani Regional Cancer Centre.

Our priority is to deliver high quality, accessible and sustainable care to shape a healthier tomorrow.”

By significantly reducing the treatment time of each patient, HyperArc technology will increase capacity on the linear accelerator (LINAC) devices used for radiosurgical treatment and reduce the impact on hospital resources. THP’s radiation program operates longer and treats more patients per LINAC than any other radiation program in the province.

“We are proud to be the first cancer centre in Eastern Canada to use this innovative technology, and the

first in Canada to treat patients with more than five brain metastases,” said Dr. Anthony Brade, Division Head – Radiation Oncology, Trillium Health Partners & Regional Radiation Oncology Lead, Regional Cancer Program. “This will not only improve our patients’ experience and outcomes but it will help us ensure we have the much-needed capacity to deliver high quality, safe and efficient cancer care to our growing community.”

“The treatment was so quick and easy to go through. It’s amazing to be able to have all those spots treated in one visit so close to home,” said Terena Burton, one of the first patients at THP to receive cancer treatment using HyperArc. “I would have been facing five or six hours of treatment in three visits otherwise. I’m so impressed with the radiation team at Trillium Health Partners.”

### Quick Facts

- Brain metastases affect up to 30 per cent of all cancer patients.
- Any type of cancer can spread to the brain, but the most common types of cancer that spread to the

brain are lung (accounts for about half of all brain metastases), breast, melanoma, kidney, and colorectal.

• Each LINAC at THP is operated for 13 hours a day, the average across Ontario hospitals is 10.2 hours a day. At THP, there are almost 11,000 treatment visits per LINAC annually, the provincial average is about 6,000 treatment visits per LINAC annually.

### Trillium Health Partners

Trillium Health Partners is one of the largest community-based hospital systems in Canada.

Comprised of Credit Valley Hospital, the Mississauga Hospital and the Queensway Health Centre, Trillium Health Partners serves the growing and diverse populations of Mississauga, West Toronto and surrounding communities. Trillium Health Partners is a teaching hospital affiliated with the University of Toronto and is an associate member of the Toronto Academic Health Science Network.

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## WORLD NEWS

# Ukraine crisis: Terrified families seek shelter underground in capital

25 February 2022

### Peace and Security

Amid reported deadly missile attacks from Russia's so-called "special military operation" in Ukraine, including the capital Kiev and other cities, terrified families have been forced to seek shelter underground, the UN said on Friday, adding that at least 100,000 people have likely been displaced by the violence.

"There have been major attacks in Kiev that have created greater fear and panic among the population, with families really scared, moving alongside their children into subways and shelters, and this is clearly a terrifying moment for children across the country," said Afshan Khan, UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) Regional Director, Europe and Central Asia, speaking in Geneva.

#### Wrong but 'not irreversible'

The development follows renewed condemnation for the Russian move by UN Secretary-General António Guterres, who on Thursday appealed for peace and allocated \$20 million from the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) to meet urgent needs.

The use of force by one country against another is "the repudiation of the principles that every country has committed to uphold," which applied to the military offensive in Ukraine, Mr. Guterres insisted.

"It is wrong. It is against the Charter. It is unacceptable. But it is not irreversible."

#### Civilian deaths confirmed

Two days since Russia launched military operations inside Ukraine, the UN rights office, OHCHR, confirmed that confirmed that many civilians have already been killed and injured.

"We've received reports of at least 127 civilian casualties; this includes 25 killed and 102 injured in Ukraine, caused by shelling and airstrikes...this is very likely to be an underestimate," said Ravina Shamdasani, OHCHR spokesperson.

Communities are already in need of aid relief, too, UN humanitarians warned.

#### Fuel, cash, medical supply shortages

"When we look at shortages, we're talking about fuel, which has been well reported in the media, we're talking about cash, because often in humanitarian situations, cash assistance would be our first support to families, so obviously there's been a drawdown on banks," said UNICEF's Ms. Khan.

Echoing that message and in an appeal for guaranteed humanitarian access to the most vulnerable individ-



© UNICEF/Aleksey Filippov

On 6 February 2022, a nine-year-old girl stands in front of the conflict-damaged exterior of her home in eastern Ukraine.



© ICRC/C. Granier-Deferre

A man stands in a school that was damaged by constant shelling in Oleksandrivka, near Donetsk, Ukraine. (file)

uals, the World Health Organization (WHO) highlighted concerns that medical teams face being overwhelmed.

"We don't have reports yet from the hospitals, when we look to particular injuries and the details of medical," said Jarno Habicht, WHO Representative in Ukraine.

"Where our focus has been now, is that the prepositioned medical kits. We will run out of them soon, so what is important currently...is how to ensure new supplies to come and...[that] there are humanitarian corridors from the neighbouring countries available."

#### Priority needs

UN agencies have been active in Ukraine for many years, particularly since Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014 – a move in large part rejected by the international community.

Immediate priorities include assessing what already vulnerable communities need in eastern regions of Donetsk, Luhansk and other oblasts.

"We are still trying to monitor what the situation is vis-à-vis civilian infrastructure," said UNICEF's Ms. Khan.

"As you know, there has been hits of critical infrastructure in the east, particularly in Donbass for some years and they have been cut off, hence the UNICEF water trucking [operations]. In the current scenario we are still trying to see which civilian infrastructure has been hit [and] where."

Announcing the \$20 million emergency funding allocation for the Ukraine crisis, Mr. Guterres underscored that the UN and its humanitarian partners are "committed to staying and delivering, to support people in Ukraine in their time of need."

#### Lives shattered

Forced mass displacement has also begun, the UN refugee agency (UNHCR) confirmed.

"There are more than 100,000 who we estimate have lost their homes and are displaced inside [the] country and we are also aware of several thousand who have crossed international borders in the region, and we've seen those really just happening since the onset of the situation," said UNHCR spokesperson Shabia Mantoo.

"We're seeing these reports and we've seen for instance yesterday that there were about 5,000 refugee arrivals in Moldova already, but the other movements are being reported in Poland, Romania, Slovakia and the Russian Federation."

#### Russian protesters warned off

While the UN Human Rights Office (OHCHR) warned that Ukraine's people were "terrified of further escalation," agency spokesperson Ravina Shamdasani flagged concerns inside of Russia.

"Reportedly more than 1,800 were arrested...it's impossible at this point to know to know exactly how many people there were," Ms. Shamdasani said referring to anti-war protesters.

"It is unclear whether some of them have now been released. What we understand is that among those who were arrested were also some journalists, and they were arrested in over 50 cities across Russia."

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



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# UN Calls for More Human Rights Reforms in Sri Lanka

February 25, 2022 3:01 PM

by Lisa Schlein

GENEVA

U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet is raising concerns about the lack of accountability in Sri Lanka after gross violations of human rights.

“The reason why we are highlighting these issues is because we have very serious issues,” she said. “I mean, the militarization, the ethno-religious nationalism, the continued lack of accountability. And you couple that with a pattern of surveillance and harassment of those who try to speak out — civil society organizations, human



FILE - U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet attends a session of the Human Rights Council at the United Nations in Geneva, Switzerland, Feb. 27, 2020.

In a report, Bachelet said human rights violations and abuses were continuing to spread throughout the country. She attributed that to the failure of the government to carry out necessary reforms to its legal, institutional and security sectors.

The high commissioner's spokeswoman, Ravina Shamdasani, said the government had shown some willingness to initiate reforms. However, she said the steps taken so far have done little to address past human rights violations or redress the harm done to victims.

Since the 1980s, an estimated 60,000 to 100,000 people from all ethnic and religious communities have disappeared. To this day, the fate of thousands of those who have gone missing remains unknown.

Call for reparations, justice

Shamdasani said the suffering of the families of the disappeared was immense and must be acknowledged by the government. She said that victims must receive reparations and that perpetrators of these crimes must be brought to justice.

rights defenders, journalists — and it is a recipe for further human rights violations.”

Shamdasani said the Prevention of Terrorism Act amendment bill, which was presented to parliament on February 10, was an important initial step.

“We welcome the proposed increase of magistrates' powers to visit places of detention, the speeding up of trials and the repeal of the section which imposes serious limitations on publications,” she said. “However, other proposed amendments do comply fully with Sri Lanka's international human rights obligations, and it leaves intact some of the most problematic provisions of the PTA, the Prevention of Terrorism Act.”

Shamdasani said the high commissioner had shared her concerns with the Sri Lankan government. She said the government had engaged constructively with her office and had made some relevant comments.

The report will be presented to the U.N. Human Rights Council, which begins a five-week session next week.

Via voanews.com



# Modi Urges End to Violence in Phone Call With Putin



Russian President Vladimir Putin and India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi arrive ahead of their meeting at Hyderabad House in New Delhi, India, Oct. 5, 2018

February 24, 2022 6:17 PM

By Anjana Pasricha

NEW DELHI —

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi has urged an end to violence in Ukraine in a phone conversation with Russian President Vladimir Putin, according to the Indian government.

The call between the two leaders took place after Russian forces launched the invasion of Ukraine.

“The prime minister appealed for an immediate cessation of violence and called for concerted efforts from all sides to return to the path of diplomatic negotiations and dialogue,” the Indian government said in a statement late Thursday.

It said that Modi had reiterated to the Russian leader “his long-standing conviction that differences between Russia and the NATO group can only be resolved through honest and sincere dialogue.”

Earlier on Thursday, Igor Polikha, Ukraine's envoy to India, urged New Delhi to intervene, saying he was “asking and pleading” for its support.

“India should fully assume its global role whenever a totalitarian regime commits aggression against a democratic state,” he told reporters.

So far, India has not condemned Russia for the military operation

against Ukraine as it treads carefully in the unfolding crisis, which poses a diplomatic dilemma for New Delhi.

While India and the United States have built close strategic ties, New Delhi also maintains a security relationship with Moscow, which still supplies India with the bulk of its military equipment.

The situation is “complicated” and “evolving,” and “no country saw it coming,” Indian Foreign Secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla told a press briefing on Thursday.

Meanwhile, India is stepping up efforts to evacuate its citizens from Ukraine. The Foreign Ministry said Thursday that teams of Indian officials have been sent to Ukraine's borders with Hungary, Poland, Slovakia and Romania to assist about 16,000 Indian nationals who are stranded.

The issue of the safety of the Indian citizens, especially students, was raised by Modi during his phone call to Putin.

“The prime minister conveyed that New Delhi attaches the highest priority to their safe exit and return to India,” according to India's statement.

Putin paid a high-profile visit to India in December 2021, during which both countries reaffirmed their partnership.

Via voanews.com

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India abstains on UNSC resolution that condemns Russia's 'aggression', seeks 'immediate and unconditional' withdrawal of forces from Ukraine

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Russia vetoes UN Security Council resolution that called on Moscow to halt attack on Ukraine, withdraw troops, reports AP

6:11 PM · Feb 25, 2022 · PTI\_Tweets

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via twitter.com





# India Sends Wheat to Afghanistan through Pakistan

NEW DELHI —

India on Tuesday sent the first consignment of 50,000 tons of wheat that it has pledged to give Afghanistan, where more than half the country is grappling with hunger.

The grain is being transported via Pakistan in a rare instance of the archrivals setting aside their deep differences to allow desperately needed humanitarian aid to reach conflict-ridden Afghanistan.

A convoy of 50 Afghan trucks loaded with about 2,500 tons of wheat and bearing banners that read, "A gift from the people of India to the people of Afghanistan," was waved off by Indian Foreign Secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla at the Attari-Wagah border crossing between India and Pakistan.

The wheat will be handed over in Jalalabad to the United Nations' World Food Program, with which India has signed a pact to distribute the aid in Afghanistan.

The Attari-Wagah border crossing has been virtually closed to all exports from India since August 2019, when Islamabad suspended trade ties with New Delhi, but Islamabad allowed the shipment through its territory after a request from New Delhi.

It, however, took them nearly three months to sort out the logistics of the transportation.

Afghan trucks are carrying the wheat because Islamabad did not want Indian trucks to travel through its territory, according to reports. Pakistan has said it is opening the land route as an exception for the humanitarian aid.

Shringla said that India will fulfill its commitment to supply 50,000 tons of wheat in two to three months.

In a tweet, Afghanistan's Karzai administration-appointed ambassador to India, Farid Mamundzay, who was present at the ceremony when the trucks rolled out, said, "I thank the Indian government for the generosity displayed at a time when more than 20 million Afghans are facing crisis or the worse levels of food insecurity in more than three decades." He said the wheat committed by India is "one of the largest food contributions done by any country in this difficult hour."

The director of the World Food Program in India, Bishow Parajuli, who was also present at the ceremony, said, "All the help Afghanistan receives will be of extreme value and therefore this help coming from India is really timely and very important."

After the Taliban takeover of Af-



India's foreign secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla, 2nd left, and Afghanistan's ambassador to India Farid Mamundzay, left, flag off the trucks carrying wheat from India at the Attari-Wagah border between India and Pakistan, near Amritsar, India, Feb. 22, 2022.



An Afghani truck driver ties a rope as trucks carrying wheat from India wait to pass through the Attari-Wagah border between India and Pakistan, near Amritsar, India, Feb.22, 2022.

ghanistan last year, India, which had helped build key development projects in the country, was largely sidelined and suspended its diplomatic presence in Kabul. New Delhi, however, has reiterated it will continue humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan, with the Indian Foreign Ministry saying in a statement on Tuesday that "it remains committed to its special relationship with the people of Afghanistan."

New Delhi has sent five consignments consisting of half a million doses of coronavirus vaccines, along

with 13 tons of essential medicine and winter clothing -- the latest being dispatched on Saturday.

In its annual budget presented earlier this month, India also allocated about \$26.5 million for aid for Afghanistan -- but the figure is at a lower level compared to last year, when it committed \$40 million.

Political analysts say the humanitarian aid is a diplomatic route for India to build some links with the Taliban, which has welcomed India's offer of help.

In January, the United Nations asked the international community for \$4.4 billion for Afghanistan for 2022 -- its largest ever appeal for humanitarian assistance for a single country.

U.N. aid agencies have described Afghanistan's plight as one of the world's most rapidly growing humanitarian crises.

About 23 million people there face acute food insecurity, and 9 million are on the brink of starvation, according to the World Food Program.

Via voanews.com



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## SPECIAL FEATURE



# Bob Rae invokes Civil Rights analogy in defense of Ukraine

*(Full Text of Statement on the Russian Invasion of Ukraine, delivered by His Excellency Ambassador Bob Rae, Permanent Representative of Canada, United Nations General Assembly February 23, 2022)*

Thank you very much Mr. Vice-President, We meet at a time of a direct threat to the peace and security of the world community. Over the last several months, we have all seen an unprecedented increase of military activity in and around Ukraine by the Russian government. We are seeing the greatest massing of troops, of missiles, of artillery, and of aircraft capability since 1945.

This period has also been marked by, as my colleague from Liechtenstein pointed out, hostile cyber operations on Ukraine and several other countries, the forcible and unjustifiable removal of civilian populations from Ukraine to Russia, and a steady flow of propaganda and disinformation from Moscow and Russian-controlled outlets on every conceivable social media platform in the world.

It has been eight years since Russia invaded and illegally occupied Crimea in a flagrant violation of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and in clear breach of the UN Charter itself.

In 1945 the Soviet Union was present at the drafting and at the adoption of the Charter. Today, the Russian Federation is a member of a "Group of Friends" – we all know Group of Friends in the UN – a "Group of Friends of the Charter" so we can only assume that they know perfectly well what the Charter says and what it means.

So – I happen to have brought my copy of the Charter with me – what does the Charter say? Article II, it says, "The Organization [that's to say the United Nations] is based on the principle of the sovereign equality of all of its members". What does that mean? It means that there are no second-class states in this organization.

There is no back of the bus in the United Nations. There is no nation that's less integral, or less sovereign, than any other nation. And no nation has the right to undermine the integrity of any other nation. That's what it means, that's what the "sovereign equality" means.

It goes on to say, "All Members shall settle their international disputes by peaceful means in such a manner that international peace and security, and justice, are not endangered." So when we say desist, dialogue, de-escalate, we're not asking someone to do us a

favour, we're asking them to do what they're actually signed up to do. And that's the challenge.

And finally. "All Members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, or in any other manner inconsistent with the Purposes of the United Nations." This is not an option. This is not something to say, well if you'd like to do this perhaps you'd like to consider doing it this way. We're not asking any nation state, any member state, to do us a favour. We're asking them to follow the rules, and to follow the law.

We strongly condemn the recognition by Russia of the so-called Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republics and its decision to move troops into Ukraine under what they call peace-keeping, but anyone else who understand the meaning of language would call "warmaking". They're not peace-keepers, they're soldiers who are there to invade. Their actions violate several treaties and international agreements to which Russia is a signatory, including the Budapest Accords, the Minsk Agreements, and of course the Charter. These come with obligations – obligations that Russia is clearly rejecting.

As demonstrated today, Canada and the international community are united and steadfast in our support for Ukraine and for its people. We are implementing responsive measures, including economic sanctions. If Russia further escalates, we will follow with more severe measures Russia and its acolytes can spin and can contort all they want, but the violations of international law are theirs: the loss of life, the wounding, the pain and suffering, are all their responsibilities.

As it's been said, this is President Putin's choice. We shall respond to any further violations of the UN Charter collectively with our allies, and with great determination. It is never too late to stop, it's never too late to make a turn to diplomacy, to dialogue and to negotiation. Together with our partners in Europe, in NATO, and the OSCE, Canada has made it very clear and I repeat today, we are prepared to talk directly about mutual reductions in threats to the peace of Europe, to ensure peace, prosperity, and progress



for all peoples living in this region that has, in this past century, known too much hardship, too much tragedy, too much loss of life.

We are steadfast in our commitment to Ukraine's sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence. It's clear that the Russian Federation's actions directly threaten this sovereignty, this territorial integrity of Ukraine, and undermine the entire rules-based international order.

Russia's hostile actions have to stop. Ukraine is not a mistake. Ukraine is a sovereign nation. Its autonomy must be respected and its territorial integrity restored. It is a solemn and considered decision of a people who have sought freedom and prosperity on their own terms.

Most of us have referred to President Putin's speech of Monday. I noticed that my colleague from the Russian Federation did not. But in that speech it's clear he denied the existence of the other, and when he did that, he made it apparent to the whole world that this is not about NATO, this is not about the European Union, this is about the existence and the right to existence of a member state of this organization.

Mr. President, each and every member state that is here, we all, each and every one of us, has an obligation to uphold the territorial integrity of other states, to oppose invasions and to insist on the peaceful resolution of disputes. That's what we've all signed up for. We didn't sign up for it just for ourselves.

Speaking as a proud Canadian I can say we worked for peace with justice in Korea, we worked hard during the Suez Crisis in 1956, and again when we said there was no legal basis for

the invasion of Iraq in 2003. These were not easy decisions, they were not necessarily popular in all quarters, or even among some of our allies, but they were based on a powerful belief in law, in rules, in common decency and in multilateralism that is now embedded in our bones.

We need to remember that invasion and war bring with them terrible losses and terrible hardships. There is no cause for celebration and triumph in these wars, there is only the squalor, the poverty, and the heartache of irreparable loss. There has been much talk about legacies. Let's be clear, that will be the only legacy of those who are responsible for this entirely avoidable conflict.

All those countries formerly under the yoke of tyranny, communism, empire, they share this right with Ukraine. Canada's history, and our proud association with all the people of Eastern Europe have led us to this point. We are partners in peace, we are partners in the quest for security and prosperity, and partners in the struggle for a world bound together by peaceful, friendly relations among nations and a common commitment to democracy and the rule of law.

Mr. President, in closing, I would say this: in the darkest days of World War II, it is said that a representative of the United States government, Harry Hopkins, was having a meeting with Winston Churchill, and at the end of that meeting he said, "Whither thou goest I will go. Whither thou lodgest I will lodge. Thy people shall be my people."

And so Canada says to Ukraine and to all those who are challenged, "Whither thou goest, we will go"

Thank you Mr. President.



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# Black Canadians have new, safe space to talk about COVID-19 vaccines with doctors from their community

*Scarborough Health Network's popular VaxFacts service partners with the Black Physicians' Association of Ontario to create dedicated stream for Black communities*

Scarborough Health Network (SHN) is proud to be collaborating with the Black Physicians' Association of Ontario (BPAO) to launch a dedicated offering for Black communities through its virtual VaxFacts service.

"It is important to acknowledge the history and current reality of systemic racism in health care, as well as the heavy burden of COVID-19 on our Black community," said Michele James, Vice President, People and Transformation, SHN.

"We must build trust and find more innovative ways to extend outreach and care in order to address disparities in COVID-19 disease and increase vaccine confidence."

Since SHN's VaxFacts service launched last spring, people from across Canada have booked a one-on-one phone appointment with an experienced physician to make an informed decision regarding vaccination. Approximately 80 per cent of VaxFacts clients scheduled their COVID-19 vaccine appointment by the end of their session.

With leadership from Dr. Trudy McFarlane, a member of the BPAO, the new VaxFacts stream provides members of Black communities in Scarborough and across Canada with access to speak with Black

physicians and have richer, culturally informed conversations about the COVID-19 vaccine. This is a judgment-free space to ask questions and express concerns with a trusted doctor who is also from the Black community.

Dr. McFarlane is a family physician and expert in community medicine. She is passionate about advocacy, mentorship, and representation in leadership amongst the Black community.

"As physicians from the Black community, we understand why vaccine hesitancy exists within our communities," said Dr. McFarlane.

"It is so important that members from Black communities are able to address their concerns in a culturally competent and safe space, with physicians they can trust. I am thrilled that we are able to offer access to this service to Black communities throughout Canada.

With this new stream, members of Black communities can go online to [shn.ca/vaxfacts](http://shn.ca/vaxfacts) to request a phone consultation with a Black physician. The VaxFacts team will then follow up to schedule an appointment within a week.

"My colleague Dr. Sekyi-Oto has referred to the ABCs of vaccine hesitancy: access, belief and confidence; I believe this service will be able to address all three

effectively," added Dr. McFarlane.

The first of its kind in Canada, SHN's VaxFacts service was created to provide an easy access service for individuals who have not gotten the vaccine, or those who are unsure about second doses, boosters, mixing vaccines, or paediatric doses for kids, to have their questions answered in a safe and judgement-free way. The service gives all community members the opportunity to set up a one-on-one phone call with an experienced physician, ask their questions, and make an informed decision.

## VaxFacts

For members of Black Communities



Our VaxFacts Clinic is partnering with the Black Physicians' Association of Ontario to provide a dedicated service for members of Black communities who would like to discuss vaccines with a trusted healthcare provider also from the Black community. Our doctors are ready to talk, listen and help you get the facts.

REQUEST A PHONE CONSULTATION

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SHN's VaxFacts service supports phone calls in more than 200 languages, is free to use, and only takes seconds to book a consultation at [shn.ca/vaxfacts](http://shn.ca/vaxfacts).

## Do You Want Your Kids to Know About Real Life Super Heroes?

**If you answered "Yes" then your kids will adore this activity book!**

Specially designed for kids to learn about different career opportunities in healthcare, **Hospital Heroes** highlights Scarborough Health Network (SHN) staff, medical staff, and volunteers and the vital role they play in the health and safety of our patients, families, and our community.

Illustrated by renowned Canadian artist and Scarborough native Robert Small, each page celebrates the people and professions that make up our rich and culturally diverse health network. Robert Small lends his characteristic style to help create a window through which children of all ages



can see themselves as future healthcare heroes.

This book contains colouring and activity pages of a variety of healthcare professions including:

- Nurse
- Physician
- Pharmacist
- Social Worker
- Environmental Support Worker
- Medical Lab Technologist
- Registration Clerk and more!

The idea for this book came from Michele James, SHN's Vice-President of People and Transformation who is passionate about diversity, equity and inclusion. James worked closely with Nick Smith, SHN's Interim Director of Communications and artist Robert Small to bring the idea from vision to reality.

With funding from the SHN Foundation, these books have been given to patients at SHN's COVID-19 Vaccine Clinics and inpatient and outpatient paediatric services. The 22-page activity book is easy to download and print at home, so you can have your very own copy of

### **Hospital Heroes!**

Those included in this booklet represent the spirit and strength of thousands of individuals across Scarborough Health Network.

If you know a child who loves coloring and wants to know about real life heroes, check out Healthcare Heroes!

### **About the Illustrator**

Robert Small has sketched notable Black Canadians for Ontario's official Black History Month poster every February since Black History Month was officially recognized in 1995. He has also designed posters for Asian Heritage Month and Women's History Month.

<https://thelegacycollexion.com/>

In 2021, Robert Small was appointed to the Order of Canada for his long-standing commitment to highlighting the accomplishments and contributions of Black people in all sectors of Canadian society.





## From heart attack to heart health:

# what recovery really looks like

There are many life changes a person needs to make after suffering a major heart attack. For cardiac patient Shakeel Shaikh, his life changed 180 degrees.

When Shakeel first arrived at Scarborough Health Network (SHN) in 2018, he was in the worst shape of his life, suffering a heart attack, with one coronary artery completely blocked.

Up to this point, Shakeel had not considered how his lifestyle was impacting his health.

"I used to do whatever I wanted to do. I could eat what I wanted, as much as I wanted without thinking of the consequences," he remembered.

Then he stopped breathing during his heart attack.

"They had to perform CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation) on me to bring me back to life – and finding that out was very scary for me," he recalled. "I knew I had to change my way of life."

It was quite the journey before Shakeel was back on his feet. To help clear the blockage and regain his heart's strength, Shakeel needed a coronary intervention procedure, including a stent placement. This treatment was performed at SHN's cardiac centre and saved his life, but Shakeel would need to make some drastic lifestyle changes.

Fast-forward to 2022: with the help of SHN's Regional Cardiovascular Rehab program, Shakeel is better managing his risk factors and is continuing to improve his heart health each day. Since enrolling, he's received critical life coaching to help make better-informed decisions about his lifestyle. This included new tailored exercise plans, as well as education on diet, nutrition, medications and heart disease.

Shakeel's life today requires a lot more discipline and work than before, but he knows the

stakes are higher than ever.

"I don't eat red meat anymore. I stick to chicken, fish, and vegetables – all portion controlled – and I walk each day," he explained. "It's very hard, but I know if I don't follow these guidelines, it will hurt me. And that's the big difference."

Through the Regional Cardiovascular Rehab program, exercise therapists work with patients in restoring their heart health through activity and exercise, being mindful of physical or mental limitations brought on by heart disease. Cardiac patients, like Shakeel, also meet with staff nutritionists to ensure a healthy diet is a part of their lifestyle.

When the COVID-19 pandemic started, the Regional Cardiovascular Rehab program moved to offering virtual exercise and education classes online, with a focus on building "heart at home." Shakeel has also learned to adjust his habits throughout the pandemic.

"After my ICD surgery, I went to the gym for my classes and continued walking. Now, I still walk and use the elliptical in my home for at least 10 to 15 minutes; whatever I can do," he said. "My exercise therapist was amazing. She taught me exercises, what to do while at home, and encouraged me to document and journal my activities."

Exercise therapist Kristen Doucette has played an integral role in helping Shakeel regain his heart health. She said he was an inspiration to work with.

"He never gives up. Shakeel has experienced several major setbacks over the past few years, including his heart attack back in 2018, a heart failure diagnosis, and his implantable cardioverter defibrillator (ICD) procedure for



a heart rhythm abnormality, just recently. The pandemic has posed several challenges for our cardiac rehab patients, and despite these challenges, Shakeel continues to demonstrate he is driven to get better. He should be extremely proud of himself for his dedication to living a heart healthy life - I know I am!"

The Regional Cardiovascular Rehab program not only provides day-to-day advice, but education that is the pillar for a lifelong heart healthy journey.

"We want to see you succeed after you complete the program," explained Kristen. "We hope we can teach you to take charge and control of your life, and make decisions to improve the quality of life."

As for Shakeel, he continues to take it one day at a time.

"I am forever grateful to SHN and the amazing cardiovascular rehab team. They have taken amazing care of me. They've gone above and beyond the call of duty, and day by day, I continue to improve."

*Heart disease is preventable. For more information about the Regional Cardiovascular Rehab program, visit [gethearthealthy.com](http://gethearthealthy.com).*

## Scarborough patient celebrating life after first in-human use of Ringer™ Perfusion Balloon Catheter

It's late January, in the midst of a stressful global pandemic, but cardiac patient Vernetta Calvin-Smith is waking up renewed. Her family is in the next room, with the sounds of children at play, and a lively energy fills the air. Today, Vernetta has a lot to celebrate.

It's been several months since the vibrant 77-year-old Oshawa resident walked out of Scarborough Health Network's (SHN) regional cardiac centre at Centenary Hospital, after undergoing a life-saving, historical medical procedure: the first-ever, in-human use of a Ringer™ Perfusion Balloon Catheter.

Her journey to better heart health started while searching for help with breathing problems and chest pains; she had an undoubted self-awareness that something was critically wrong.

Vernetta was right. Ninety-five per cent of her right coronary artery was blocked and she needed medical care, right away. Little did she know, after being referred and sent to SHN, she would soon make medical history.

As home to the regional cardiac centre servicing Scarborough, Durham and other communities across the Central East region of Ontario, SHN offers closer-to-home specialized care from some of the country's leading cardiac experts, including interventional cardiologists Drs. Christopher Li and Ram Vijayaraghavan.

They were each a part of the compassionate cardiac care team delivering exceptional, innovative, and life-saving care to Vernetta, whose artery was too blocked to implant a stent — a tiny mesh tube that helps open up the artery — simply because the mesh wire could not penetrate.

Vernetta was advised that due to her age, open heart surgery would not be advisable; instead she would undergo a procedure to help open her artery — making it possible to insert a stent.

When arriving for her procedure at one of SHN's three catheterization labs, Vernetta said she was in a different headspace. Nervous, scared, but optimistic for the outcome.

### Deciding to use the Ringer™ Perfusion Balloon Catheter

Catheterization procedures involve guiding a thin, flexible tube (catheter) through a blood vessel into the heart to diagnose and treat heart conditions, including clogged arteries. During her procedure, Vernetta had a calcified lesion with mild bleeding that had to be dealt with right away. This led Dr. Li's quick-thinking team to insert a Ringer™ Perfusion Balloon Catheter to manage any hemorrhaging.

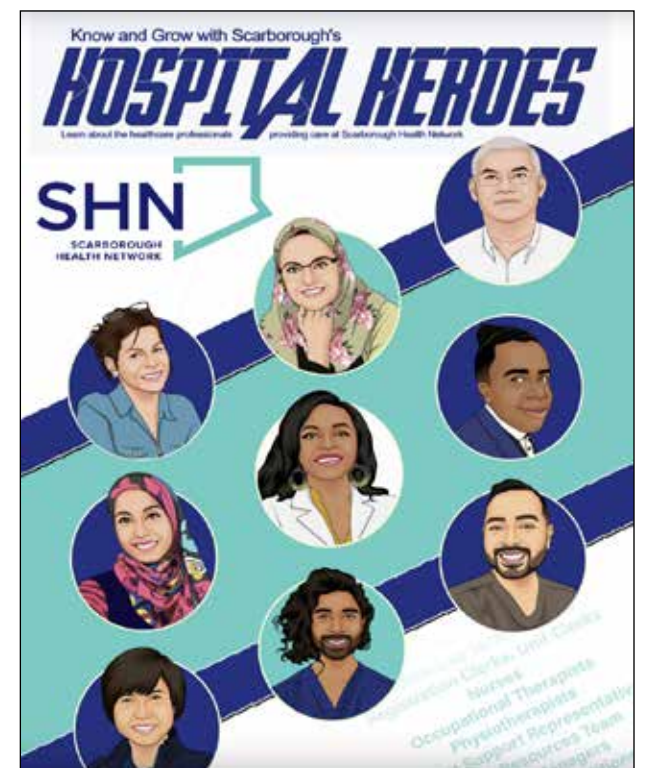
"The Ringer™ Perfusion Balloon Catheter is like 10 to 15 doughnuts stacked together, so there's a hole in the middle. When you inflate the balloon, it seals off the side wall to stop the bleeding and you still have the hole in the middle to allow blood to flow to the heart. The patient won't have any chest pains, heart attack or other complications," explained Dr. Li.

SHN is one of three hospitals that is part of the University of Toronto's Chronic Total Occlusion (CTO) research group, which stocks the Ringer™ Perfusion Balloon Catheter under the Special Access Program (SAP) of Health Canada. Previously bench tested in a lab, the Ringer™ Perfusion Balloon has not yet been authorized for sale in Canada, but through SAP, health care professionals may access these medical devices.

"This collaborative group works with complex and high-risk cases. So, to have access to this device, and its positive outcome, is a fairly big deal," said Dr. Li. "Since we presented our findings in November at the Transcatheter Cardiovascular Therapeutics (TCT) conference - the biggest of its kind each year - more Canadian hospitals are asking for this device."

Dr. Li added this type of technology is great news for Canada, but there is still work and research that needs to be done.

"We only have limited experience," he explained. "There's an ongoing study about it in the United States, but I predict, it will be used more and more in the future. SHN is at the forefront of testing,



and reporting our data to the rest of our colleagues around the world."

### Positive Patient Outcome

As for Vernetta, she was discharged the next day. "I thank God that this ringer perfusion balloon fixed the problem. I was the first person in the world to receive this particular treatment, and it worked," she said. "SHN's cardiologists have the knowledge and experience that make the difference, and now I feel significantly better." Vernetta said she feels very special and has a deeper perspective and appreciation for life. "I feel blessed. So many people tell you that you're going in for something routine, so you shouldn't worry. But you can never be sure anything is ever routine," she said. "I don't just take anything for granted. I am thankful to God who placed me in the gifted and experienced hands of the brilliant cardiologists working at Scarborough Health Network. Life is wonderful."





## WORLD NEWS

### Foreign Minister Peiris to lead Sri Lanka's delegation to the UNHRC



The 49th Session of the United Nations Human Rights Council will take place from 28 February to 1 April, 2022 in Geneva. During the Session the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights will present a written update on Sri Lanka to the Council and there will be an Interactive Dialogue on Sri Lanka on 3 March, 2022.

Foreign Minister Prof G.L. Peiris will lead the Sri Lanka Delegation to the

49th Session of the UN Human Rights Council. During the visit the Foreign Minister will address the High Level Segment of the 49th Session of the Council and thereafter speak at the Interactive Dialogue on Sri Lanka. The Foreign Minister is also scheduled to have meetings with the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and other dignitaries during his visit.

-via: news.lk

### Strengthening Economic relations the focus of several Sri Lanka FM meetings in Paris



27 Feb, 2022, Colombo: Foreign Minister Prof. G.L Peiris met with Minister Delegate for Trade and Economic Attractiveness Franck Reister at the Foreign Ministry in Paris to discuss French support for the expansion of economic relations with Sri Lanka in a variety of sectors. A Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the two Ministers at the conclusion of their discussion.

The Foreign Minister attended several meetings at the Chamber of Commerce of France. He met with Counsellor Bernard Quinet and Head of International Business Networks Estelle Gillot at the Chamber of Commerce. The main focus of discussion was networking arrange-

ments between French and Sri Lankan companies and French expertise for educational programmes in entrepreneurship, business management and related subjects.

Minister Prof. Peiris held discussions with Francois Corbin of MEDEF International, the largest association of companies in France. Among representatives of the corporate sector he met in Paris were Secretary General of the company M21 Life Sciences Christian Leroux and Vice President of Marketing Strategy Thales DIS Jean-Claude Perrin.

- via: news.lk

### Canada and G7 partners prohibit Russian Central Bank transactions

February 28, 2022 - Ottawa, Ontario - Canada continues to take action in opposing the Russian Federation's unprovoked invasion of Ukraine. Russia has violated Ukraine's sovereignty, territorial integrity, and independence.

Today, the Honourable Chrystia Freeland, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, announced that, effective immediately, all Canadian financial institutions are prohibited from engaging in any transaction with the Russian Central Bank. In addition, Canada is imposing an asset freeze and a dealings prohibition on Russian sovereign wealth funds. This follows the Prime Minister's February 26, 2022 joint statement with the European Commission, France,

Germany, Italy, the United Kingdom, and the United States to implement further restrictive economic measures on Russia.

Banks in countries implementing this sanction are barred from transacting with the Russian Central Bank in any manner, which will prevent Russia from deploying its international currency reserves. By eliminating the Russian Central Bank's ability to convert foreign denominated reserves, Russia's use of these assets to manage its economy, buffer its financial system, and finance its invasion of Ukraine will become severely restricted.

- via: Canada.ca



Nicholas Kristof  
@NickKristof

No Western politician understands Ukraine and Russia better than @cafreeland, Canada's deputy prime minister (a Ukrainian-Canadian whose mother helped write the Ukrainian constitution), and Freeland's push to sanction Russia's central bank was a great move.



Matthew Kaminski  
@KaminskiMK · 21h

How @cafreeland led the fight to sanction Russian central bank. Hard to think of anyone in politics who has a more intimate and deep understanding of both Russia and Ukraine. [politi.co/3BYWOMF](https://politi.co/3BYWOMF)

9:56 PM · Feb 27, 2022 · TweetDeck

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## The Deadliest Air Crash in Sri Lankan Aviation History



I remember the beautiful evening on the 12th April 1974 when I went to work at the Katunayake airport to our Air Ceylon Flight Operations Office for my night duty at 630 pm, which was on the First floor on the right wing of the building. That particular night while on duty I had to file an ATC flight plan for a PIA flight, Boeing 707, which was coming from Singapore around 1140 pm and en route to Karachi. I climbed to the tower around 945pm, filed the ATC flight plan, was chatting with my air traffic Controller friends. Martin Air flight 138 contacted the tower and reported its position after being handed over to the Approach control (Katunayaka) by our Area Control, the Ratmalana tower,. When any aircraft enters the Sri Lankan airspace first they will have to contact the area control, who will hand them to the approach control as a procedure. I remember the names of both the ATC controllers on duty, Mr. Mahesh de Silva (lives in Negombo) and Sarath Suraweera (lives in Gampaha).

Martin Air is a subsidiary of KLM Dutch Air Lines, a charter Carrier, registered in the Netherlands, PH- MBH, was chartered by the Indonesian Govt. to fly the Haj Pilgrims from Surabaya to Jeddah for the Pilgrimage. Indonesia with the largest population of Muslims in the world, could not hope with its national carrier, Garuda alone to fly all the pilgrims, so every year they Charter different airlines to operate these flights. Flight 138, a DC- 8-55F aircraft, was piloted by Captain Hendrick Lamme, a Dutchman his co-pilot another Dutch, Robert Blomsa, and a flight engineer was in the cockpit flying on that ill-fated night in our aviation history, entered our air space through the east coast and contacted Ratmalana around 945pm to report their position, informed 130 nautical miles from the airfield Katunayaka. The weather was very good that night, CAVOK, means in aviation parlance, ceiling and visibility was ok more than 10 nautical miles and was a starry night. Since it was a long flight of more than 11 hours from Surabaya, they were coming to Colombo for refueling a "Technical Stop". After entering Sri Lanka it was said to have flown over Talawakele at 32,000 feet and about 12,000 feet above Castelegragh bridge. At 1015 pm the aircraft hits one of its wings on the mountain and the pilot try to steer the aircraft to the left and is supposed to have hit on the 5th Virgin Hills mountain. The impact was the greatest with its jet speed and exploded into pieces in no time with no chance for any survivors. I remember the controllers were saying this aircraft was long overdue from its reported ETA (estimated time of arrival) and in concurrence with the area control reported the aircraft as missing. Those days,

no internet, cell phones and all these modern communication systems. So it took sometime before we were told in the early hours of the 13th morning that this flight with 191 people plus 9 crew members crashed in the mountains and it was a very sad day for all of us on duty that night at the airport.

The search party consisted of the Air force personnel, the police and the people of Laxapanna, since the crash took place about 5000 feet, it was a very tedious, cumbersome and hectic process to reach the site. They found the Black Box & the, cockpit voice



recorder. The Indonesian Government flew its representatives to oversee the efforts and to bury the victims. No one could be identified due to the horrific nature of the crash. The accident investigators from Netherlands, Martin Air representatives arrived 3 days after and assisted in the investigation, since the aircraft was registered in the Netherlands they had the jurisdiction over the property of the aircraft.

The immediate conclusion by the aviation personnel in Sri Lanka that the DC 8 descended too low, too soon on its approach to the airfield at Katunayaka. After few months when the Black Box and the CVR recordings were analyzed in the Netherlands the final Accident report was released. The investigators found out the copilot was in charge of this flight, CGK to KIA as he may be trained to do a landing in an un known terrain. Capt. Lamme had a total of 25,000 hours of flying, on DC-8 itself had about 3,500 hours. The report further said that the said co- pilot had never flown on this route before, leave alone to Sri Lanka's mountainous terrain. Capt. Lamme had flown to Sri Lanka in WW II for the British Army, but don't know whether he flew even after that, no records to lay my hands on, am sure it is negative. Further it was sad to say that Katunayaka airport was poorly equipped with the navigational facilities at that time which Martin air should have

been aware before they choose to stop over for refueling. We did not have Radar facility to see where the flight was or to track it, only a DME, distance measuring equipment, which could have given the exact distance from the aircraft to Katunayaka. The main navigational facility we had was a VOR (Very High Frequency Omni Directional Range) NDB and was on test. Their flight operations officer did a shoddy job, flight planning officer should plan the flight when choosing the stop over or an alternate thinking the safety of the flight first. Pilots

were mainly relying on the Doppler System of Navigation to gauge the distance to the airport from the aircraft, which was not the best, but given the circumstances no other choice was left.

I feel that when the aircraft was handed over to the approach control, pilots would have had been descending to 6,000 feet and, were 14 miles from the airfield Katunayaka. ATC controller had no way of ascertaining this since there was no Radar available. ATC might have assumed that position was correct and could have requested

the pilots to descend to 2,000 feet and to report when the runway was in sight 04/22. But that was not the case to be, it crashed in the "Seven Virgin" hills or SaptaKanya, near Maskeliya closer to Norton Bridge.

As I conclude this very sad incident which was catalogued as the First Major 4 jet engine air crash in Sri Lanka, looking back the whole blame can be said as "pilots error", I will not absolve our Navigational facilities,



which cannot be said as "second to none" even though our highly dedicated Air traffic Controllers at all times did the best job with all these limitations. As we approach the 48th anniversary in a month we shall say a special prayer for all those poor souls of the 12th April night 1974.

*May God bless their souls!!!*

**K.N. Sivagnanasunderam (Blue)**  
Former Flight Operations Officer,  
Air Ceylon Ltd,  
Kanesiva6@gmail.com



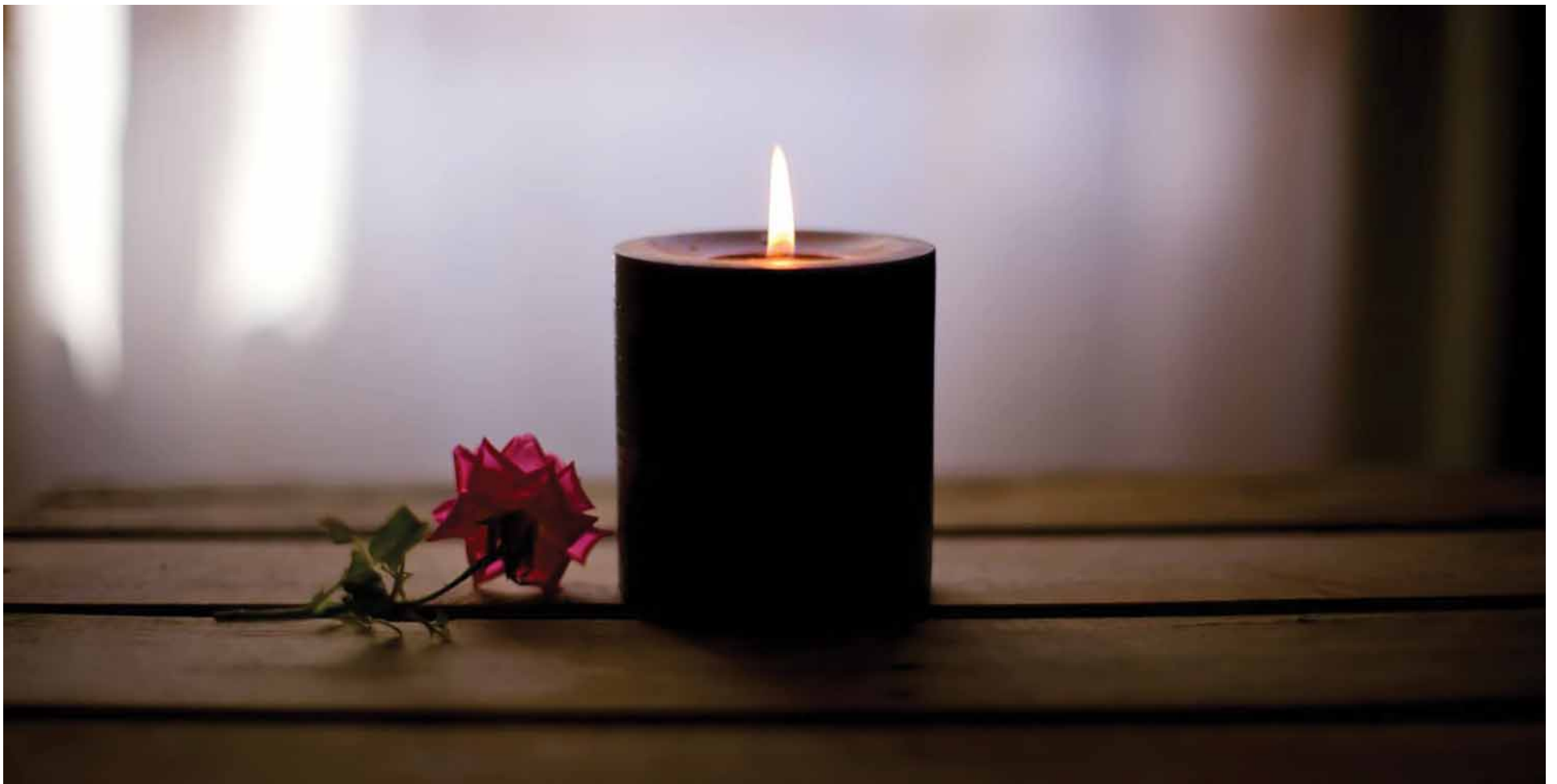


*SPECIAL FEATURE*

**Words of Peace**

# The Proof that You Make a Difference

**“There’s a fundamental rule of nature. Take two candles - one candle is lit, and one candle is unlit. Bring them together. The lit candle will light the unlit candle.”**



So, when I say “we,” when I say to you, “you can make a difference,” do you believe me? Why? Shouldn’t I prove it to you? Should I prove it to you? I can prove it to you. I can. You want me to prove it to you? Yes? Come on, yes or no? There you go. See, in the world of absence, you can just go “Uhm....” And in the world of presence, you go, “Yeah, prove it to me!” So, there is a fundamental rule. This is my proof. There’s a fundamental rule of nature. Take two candles. One candle is a lit candle, and one candle is an unlit candle. Two candles. Okay? Unlit.Lit. Bring them together. What will happen? One is unlit and one is lit. And when you bring the two candles together, what will happen? You see, the world of presence, and the world of absence. What will happen? The lit candle, the lit candle will light the unlit candle. Not the unlit candle will extinguish the lit candle. Do you agree? So, that is the proof that you make a

**Sometimes we think we are insignificant, but that’s because we don’t understand life’s possibility...**

difference if you are a lit candle. You have this incredible, incredible, incredible power to light an unlit candle. Now, how big do you have to be? How big does the unlit candle have to be to get lit? And how big does the lit candle have to be, even if it is right down to almost nothing, but it’s lit. It’s good. It can light an unlit candle. It doesn’t have to be this big. It doesn’t have to be decorated. It doesn’t have to be green. It doesn’t have to be purple. It doesn’t have to be yellow. It doesn’t have to be any of those things. All it has to be is lit.

You carry this power. If you’re a lit candle, you can light an unlit candle. And how many times can you do that? Is there a limit? Till your lit, you can keep lighting. it’s not like, Oh, I’m too old. I can’t

light anything. No. If you’re lit, that’s all it takes. Keep lighting. Keep lighting. Keep lighting. Keep lighting. This law, by the way, is 4.5 billion years old. It was there. Not 200,000 or 6,000 years old—4.5 billion years old.

And this is the possibility. This is the possibility. In your life, goodness awaits. The Divine for you awaits to be discovered. Joy, treasured.

Hey, listen, you have no limit for joy. Pain, you do. After a little while, it’s too much. “Ahhh, I want out.” Joy? No limit. You can be joyful every day for the rest of your life, not a problem. Not a problem, not a problem. Sadness every day? You will find a big cliff somewhere. That’s what people do. A lot of people think they’re insignificant. Right? “I’m nothing.”

Ahh, but this is where the Divine lives. This is where the light lives. This is where the goodness lives. This is where compassion lives. This is where kindness lives. What are you talking about, insignificant? The only reason why you would want to pretend to be insignificant is so you can offload your responsibilities. “I’m not good...I can’t do anything. You know when you go to bureaucracy, go to office, you’re getting something, you want something done and the person doesn’t want to do it. “Oh no, no. I’m just junior. You have to go see the senior.” But you say, “Okay, 10 rupees?” “Okay, okay, I can do it. So why are you abdicating your responsibility in life? But you don’t need to do that. Why? Why are you not understanding what this possibility is, called life?”

- **PremRawat**

www.premrawat.com

www.timelesstoday.com





BY THULASI MUTTULINGAM



**Sri Lankan Skeptics**  
20h · 5

Humanity

We take a break from discussing the funny side of religion (the whole concept of religion is funny, come to think of it), to share a story about true humanity. The image was sent to us by a page follower, and the incident involves a bus on the kandy-Katugastota road several days ago.

The Buddhist monk was said to have been seriously ill, and had begun vomiting. Sadly, when none of the "api Bauddhaya" Buddhists stepped in, a Muslim walked up and started massaging the monk's back, providing comfort. Later, we were told, he had even volunteered to accompany the monk to a hospital.

Much respect to this unknown hero.

Imagine a world without differences like race, religion... Just humanity?

#respect  
#humanity

1 Share

**Thulasi Muttulingam**  
★ Favorites · Yesterday at 4:46 PM · 6

**Terrified for Ukrainian women, children (and the wildlife) that didn't sign up for the ravages of male greed.**

**Vaishnavi Sundar**  
Yesterday at 6:48 AM · 6

**Thulasi Muttulingam**  
★ Favorites · February 20 at 1:23 PM · 6

I need to stop drinking milk.  
I wish I could do more to ensure a world this didnt happen in.

**He's calling for his mum.**

**From the slaughterhouse.**

**Jayaseelan TD**  
February 20 at 10:52 AM · 6



**Thulasi Muttulingam**  
★ Favorites · February 19 at 5:04 PM · 6

**Toni Armstrong Jr.**  
February 16 at 9:14 PM · 6

It's a great time to remember **WILMA RUDOLPH**. She was acclaimed the "fastest woman in the world" in the 1960s and became the first American woman to win three gold medals in a single Olympic Games. Due to the worldwide television coverage of the 1960 Summer Olympics, Rudolph became an international star.

Her achievements are memorialized in a variety of tributes, including a U.S. postage stamp, documentary films, and a made-for-television movie, as well as in numerous publications, especially books for young readers.

Like Comment Share

**Thulasi Muttulingam**  
★ Favorites · February 17 at 2:06 PM · 6

Good to see women's led initiatives on our shores, especially collaborations and empowerment schemes successfully carried out by diaspora women for local women, make it to the news ❤️

Great initiative **Tara Jeyaratnam!** You are a star.  
Loved reading the informative and introspective interview. 😊

**Tara Jeyaratnam**  
February 16 at 2:25 PM · 6

**Greendreamswomen** was featured in **TamilCulture**, a Toronto based online platform that highlights and celebrates the global Tamil community. I speak about my motivation and inspiration for starting GDW, our progress thus far and how we were able to function as a safety net for our employees during the almost 2 years of the pandemic. Our mission and which pressing issue we hope to address next as we move from a post-war to a post-Covid world was also part of the discussion.

Give it a read and do share widely. Thank You **TamilCulture** for the opportunity to share the resilience and perseverance of our women who have not only borne the brunt of war but also of abandonment, abuse, domestic violence and now the physical, mental and economic insecurities brought about by the pandemic.



TAMILCULTURE.COM Tharani Jayaratnam's Non-Profit GreenDreamsWomen Is Helping Women-Led Households Escape Poverty

**Thulasi Muttulingam**  
★ Favorites · February 17 at 3:57 AM · 6

**YALPANAM**

*Land of my sires with tall waving palm,  
Land of the plains and roaring winds warm,  
Land of the blue skies, and birds that do trill,  
Love I thee now, and evermore will.*

*Land of the eyeless poet of yore,  
Who thee as prize with song and harp bore;  
Land of sand dunes, and heathery waste,  
How have thy sons thus changed thee so chaste!*

*Where are thy kings so mighty and brave?  
Sangly's throne and Kangesan's slave?  
Gone are they all, their land knows them not;  
Set is their sun, and woe is our lot.*

*Rise up, ye scions of Yalpanam's land!  
Rise up, O sons, with mighty right hand!  
Langour and swinish sleep overthrow,  
Rise to a life which ever shall grow!*

*Land of great men so brave and so bold;  
Strangers hold thee in thrall'don's vile hold;  
Yet my heart leaps and bounds for thee still,  
Love I thee now and evermore will.*

C. R. W.

**Mahendran Thiruvarangan**  
February 16 at 3:53 PM · 6

An anti-colonial poem steeped in a certain Yaalpana (Jaffna) patriotic consciousness that appeared in one of the 1934 editions of the Jaffna College Miscellany. The poet is, from the initials that appear at the end, C. R. Wadsworth.

Thanks to Noolaham.  
(<https://noolaham.net/project/875/87474/87474.pdf>)

**Thulasi Muttulingam**  
★ Favorites · February 14 at 2:05 PM · 6

Rest in Peace Appa.  
Thank you for this **TSounthar Sounthar** and daughter. You drew this before he passed away and he liked it so much, he made it his profile picture ❤️

**TSounthar Sounthar**  
February 14 at 11:59 AM · 6

அன்பிற்கும், பெரு மதிப்பிற்கும்ரிய தோழர் சண்முகம் முத்துலிங்கம் அவர்களின் 5 வது நினைவு தினம் சிறந்த மனித நேயர்.மார்க்சிய - செனிஸிய, மாடு அபிமானி.  
Drawings by my daughter and me.2017

**Irene Platt - The Book Hangout Spot**  
February 13 at 2:57 PM · 6

**"One glance at a book and you hear the voice of another person, perhaps someone dead for 1,000 years. To read is to voyage through time."**

— Carl Sagan

**Humanity And Peace**  
February 11 at 11:06 PM · 6

— Carl Sagan





## SPECIAL FEATURE

# Taxing in Sangam literature

By: Kumar Punithavel

South India was traditionally ruled by three great Tamil dynasties. Their kingdoms were called Pandea, Chola and Chera kingdoms. This time period is referred to as the 'Sangam era' which is from BCE600 to CE200. Today this land is fragmented as different states and speak different languages other than Tamil. These languages like Kannada, Telugu, Malayalam and Tulu are the off spring of ancient Tamil language.

Once upon a time the Pandean kingdom was ruled by a great emperor called Arivudai Nambi. In this kingdom lived a great poet called Pisiranthayar. Anthiar was his birth name, and adding the name of his birth village Pisir, he was called as Pisirantahar. It was in vogue for eminent people to add the name of their village to the name. During this time Chola kingdom was ruled by Kooperum Cholan with Uraiyoor as capital. The friendship between Pisiranthaiar and Kooperum Cholan is legendary which we will read at some other time.

Taxing is necessary in any country and is the responsibility of the rulers. When they do it responsibly the country thrives well. In those times in Tamil kingdoms, not only the ministers counselled the emperors, but also the learned took it to be their duty to advice the king when they felt the king rules with unfairness and fellow citizens suffered. In the case of Arivudai Nambi, the emperor of the Pandian kingdom, the ministers were like the reeds in flowing water, tilting in the direction of the flow and the confederates of the emperor joined him in the wrongdoing and plunder the citizens with heavy levies. All his actions made his subjects to suffer more and more. The king kept on burdening them with increased taxes. Having no one to help them, the people approached Pisiranthaiar and he reached out to the king, to save them from their suffering. Our learned poet studied the situation and found the emperor was surrounded with cronies who further encouraged him to increase the tax so that, they too could squander the collection. The emperor was more interested in fun and having a good time than ruling the country justly.

Anthaiar realized it was his duty towards his mother land to counsel the king, and correct his ways. When he went to the palace the emperor received with due respect, as he was aware of the learned poet and the respect, he commanded among other kings of Tamil speaking land. The learned poet addressed the king with much respect and presented an appeal in the form of a Tamil poem, which to this day will be an advice to all rulers around the world. The meaning of the poem goes as follows:

If one harvested the paddy from the field and fed an elephant in bolus it would last for many days. Instead, if allowed the elephant to graze on its own, it will trample the crop by its legs and will destroy more paddy than what goes through its mouth. Similarly, if the king levies taxes heeding to the need and ability of his citizenry will prosper and he will gain fame.



But if he surrounds himself with worthless cronies and tax his people without compassion and fairness, the nation will soon be like the paddy field trampled by the grazing elephant. No one will benefit and the nation too will suffer, he said.

Listening to the poem, the king realized his folly and thanked Pisiranthaiar profusely and checked his actions. He became loved by his people. The lesson in this poem which is more than two thousand years still resonates with the needs of this world. Hopefully our leaders will head to the advice of Pisiranthaiar. Let us study the poem line by line;

காய்நெல் அறுத்துக் கவளங் கொளினே,  
If harvested and fed in bolus

மாநிறைவு இல்லதும், பன்நாட்கு ஆகும்  
Even a small area will last many days

நூறுசெறு ஆயினும், தமிழ்த்துப்புக்கு உணினே,  
Even hundred acres if elephant enter to graze

வாய்ப்பு வதனினும் கால்பெரிது கெடுக்கும்  
More than consumed will be trampled by its legs

அறிவுடை வேந்தன் நெறியறிந்து கொளினே  
Informed king if follows the rule and tax

கோடி யாத்து, நாடுபெரிது நந்தும்  
Millions it will yield and nation prosper

மெல்லியன் கிழவன் ஆகி, வைகலும்  
Becomes ignorant if king daily

வரிசை அறியாக் கல்லைன் சுற்றமொடு,  
Surrounds with heartless cronies,

பரிவுதப எடுக்கும் பிண்டம் நச்சின்,  
Callously if he desires amass levy,

யானை புக்க புலம்போலத்,  
Like field trampled by grazing elephant

தானும் உண்ணான், உலகமும் கெடுமே.  
Shall not benefit him, and destroy the nation

Let us now read this poem as a whole and see how well the great poet had



*If harvested and fed in bolus  
Even a small area will last many days  
Even hundred acres if elephant enter to graze  
More than consumed will trampled by its legs  
Informed king if follows the rule and tax  
Millions it will yield and nation prosper  
Becomes ignorant if the king daily  
Surrounds with heartless cronies,  
Callously if he desires amass levy,  
Like field trampled by grazing elephant  
Shall not benefit him, and destroy the nation*

Purananuru 184

காய்நெல் அறுத்துக் கவளங் கொளினே,  
மாநிறைவு இல்லதும், பன்நாட்கு ஆகும்  
நூறுசெறு ஆயினும், தமிழ்த்துப்புக்கு உணினே,  
வாய்ப்பு வதனினும் கால்பெரிது கெடுக்கும்  
அறிவுடை வேந்தன் நெறியறிந்து கொளினே,  
கோடி யாத்து, நாடுபெரிது நந்தும்  
மெல்லியன் கிழவன் ஆகி, வைகலும்  
வரிசை அறியாக் கல்லைன் சுற்றமொடு,  
பரிவுதப எடுக்கும் பிண்டம் நச்சின்,  
யானை புக்க புலம்போலத்,  
தானும் உண்ணான், உலகமும் கெடுமே.

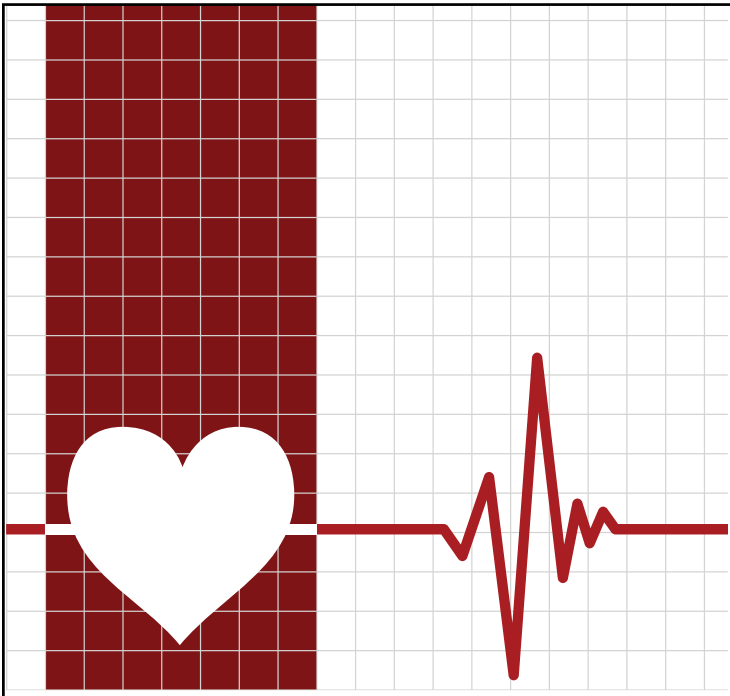
புறநானூறு 184

It will do well for the rulers of this day to take heed to the advice given by Pisiranthaiar and not plunder the wealth of the citizens but be fair in their taxation and make their country a better place to live in.



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# THE OFFICER'S PREDICAMENT

## C. Kamalaharan

The morning was cold and misty  
The roads with potholes dusty  
The officers on two wheelers hasty  
To reach their offices for duty

Beating the red line was his only thought  
Leaving behind the item to be brought  
The carefully prepared file which he ought.  
To bring, failing he remained distraught.

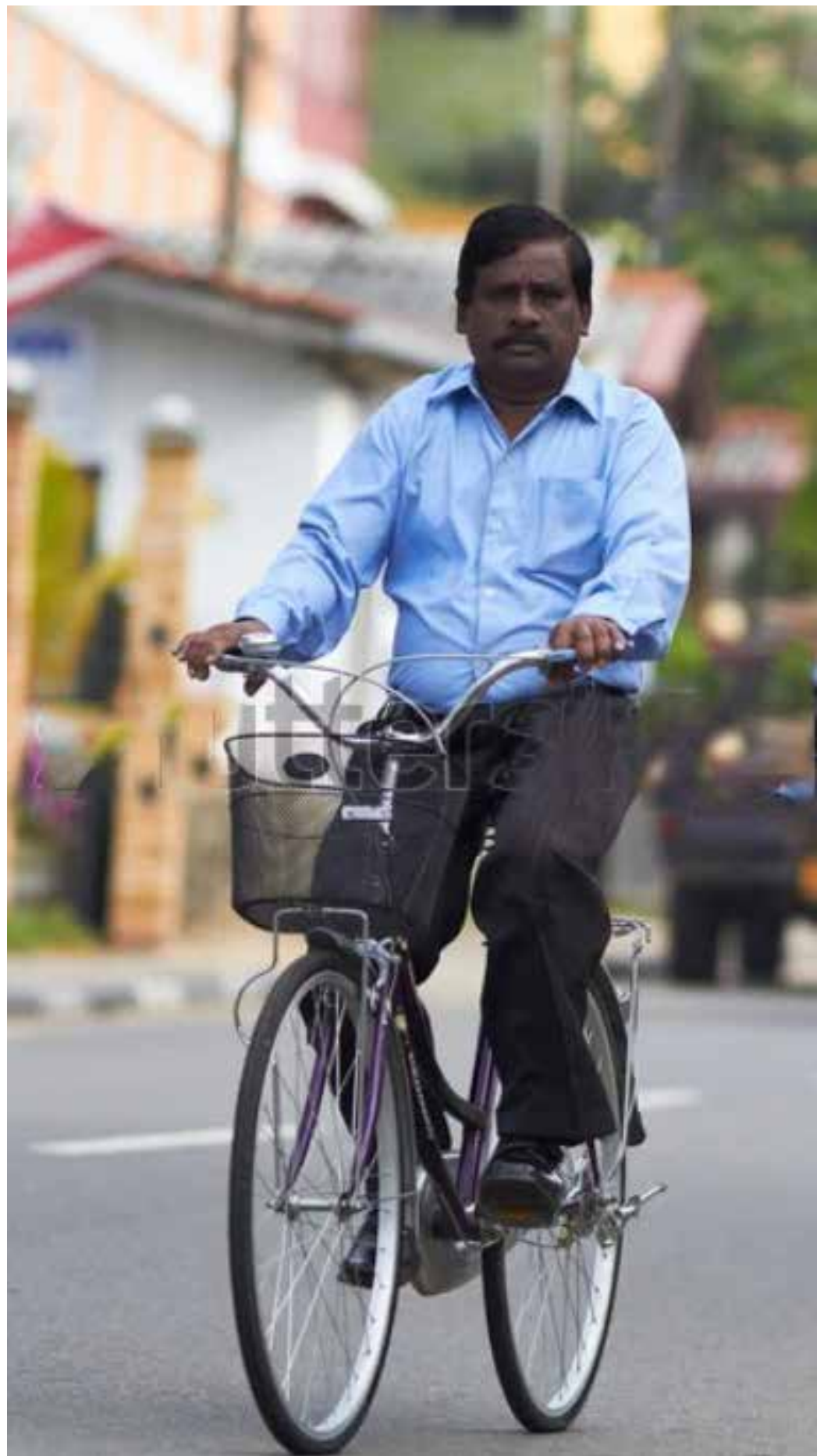
“Very sorry Sir”, he humbly pleaded  
“It’s my silly mistake Sir”, he lamented  
“Such mistakes Sir, I never intended  
Saying so he left sadly repented.

“OK, hereafter never take files home  
Neither any official letter nor form  
Strictly follow the official norm  
Be honest in what you perform”.

“Yes Sir, I’ll strictly follow as you say  
And do justice to my monthly pay  
Hereafter I will not betray  
Or never attempt to disobey”.

“Look Kumar do your usual work  
Without any attempt to shirk  
During dispute never go berserk  
Do honest work and be awake”.

After sorting out matters successfully  
Kumar left the boss’s office beamingly  
To complete the remaining work quickly  
And leave for home happily.







# Judging from Appearances



By: J.A. Rajah

A man should be able to gauge what is in the mind of another's even before they could say it. It will be an asset to this changeless world. Who can, without sense and assess fully the thinking and feelings of others, may be counted as godly in his accomplishment. Such a person is gifted with outstanding attributes. The man who can judge people's intentions from their looks should be used in councils, whatever be the cost. The people who can sense things from appearances, even without words, although in human form, are a class apart. If the eye does not gauge inner significance from outer appearances, among the organs and senses, it serves no useful purpose.

The Book of Proverbs (Tamil-Pazhlamozhli) asserts that eyes are sharper than arrows. "Ahathin alagu muhathil theriyum". Face is the index of the heart.

*"Adduthathu kaatum parlingupol nenjam,  
Kadduthathu kaadum muham"*

“அடுத்தது காட்டும் பளிங்குபோல் நெஞ்சம்  
கடுத்தது காட்டும் முகம்”

Even as a crystal reflects what comes near what comes near, within its line of sight, the face reflects the offending thoughts of the heart. Cicero asserted that countenance is the portrait of the soul. There is no subtler index of a cultured mind than the face, which immediately reflects pleasure and pain.

*"Muham nokki nika amaiyum aham noki,  
Uttathu unarvaipperin"*

“முகநோக்கி நிற்க அமையும் அகநோக்கி  
உற்ற துணர்வார்ப் பெறின”

If one has a counsellor, with emphatic understanding of one's thoughts and feelings, it is enough to look at such a person's face alone. A counsellor with empathy and understanding will be an asset. Hatred or love could be read off from the eyes themselves, by those familiar with the language of the eyes. The measuring rod of subtle discernment by counsellors, of unspoken situations will be an asset to the recipients. Eyes are essentially the index of the heart, and it is very helpful in understanding one's acquaintances and friends with them.

(Kural: 701-710)



Valluvar's Views



# SOCIAL MEDIA-THE INDEX OF MODERN VISUAL COMMUNICATION

By: J A Rajah

## A. Instruments of Social Media:

Social media has revolutionized the life-style of the people of the modern world. The main instruments of social media are Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. The social media provide chances for people to connect to each other. It enables the world to be at our finger tips. These are very useful as a medium of education. Live lectures are now possible through the social media. People can gather news from the social media. Users can become socially aware of world's major issues. The social media helps to strengthen the bonds with your loved ones. The social media has now become the hub of advertising. It connects advertisers with the customer.

## B. The Facebook:

Face book has 2.4 billion users. Other social media platforms are you tube and what's up. They have more than one billion users each. The social media has its disadvantages. It could be harmful to the society. If it is not monitored, it will lead to grave consequences. The Facebook could invade your privacy. Children should be warned of predators and hackers. Students waste their time on social media instead of spending time on studies. They are always seen glued to their i-phones without caring about direct conversations. Some adults also succumb to this habit. They could be misguided by fake news. Some of the information they gain from the social media may change their morals and disturb their mental stability. Excess use of social media could be disastrous to young minds. You could find a large number of kids permanently glued to their social media-i-phones. The habit of using these devices will affect their academic performance and physical exercises. They will be absorbed in these devices and their interest in sports activities may also be curbed.

## C. Other Instruments:

Instagram is a photo sharing app that connects with celebrities through lectures. Twitter is microblogging system that allows you to send and receive short posts called tweets. Tweets can be 140 characters long and can include links to web-sites.

On-line gaming is another aspect of social media that has affected the life-style of the young as well as the adults. It started as a cheap past-time activity but now it has developed as a money-spinning sport. Affluent children are engaged in video gaming in i-phones, computers, and other gaming centers. Parents were careful in allowing their children to play video games. Some children however found time to engage in this activity during their spare time and some even at the expense of their study time and sports activities. The Corona lockdown has worsened the situation and even tempted the parents to engage in video games. Since all other sports and past-times have been curtailed many have become addicted to on-line games.

## D. Data Statistics and Social Media:

Data statistics assert that 64% of the people



between the ages of 18 to 54 are now engaged in video games. Majority of the income from video games come from mobile gaming. People do not hesitate to buy expensive devices to play video games. Console, Virtual reality play are some of the expensive devices and they are sold by companies like, Nintendo, Densen and Microsoft. These devices provide high speed internet and high bandwidth. In addition to spending on devices they have to purchase expensive accessories expansion packs. They accelerate the playing of special games like Deloitte India, Survey Buddy, Rummy, Poker and Quiz. There are mixed feelings about the impact of these games. Some feel they increase multi-tasking skills, decision making, in addition to reducing stress and better capacity to make increased money. There are others who feel that video gaming adds to one's weight, mental strain, cruel actions in addition to loss of money. However, e-gaming has become a facet of daily life. Many have developed a liking to e-sports. Many organizations are telecasting and advertising these activities. The growth of these games cannot be eliminated but people should see that their normal life- work, education, family relationship, economic pursuits- are not seriously affected.

## E. Evaluation of the Impact of Social Media:

Social media use has skyrocketed over the past 15 years. In 2005 only 5% reported that they were using social media, now to has gone up to 70%. Policy makers, teachers, parents and clinicians have shown keen interest on social media's effect over our lives and psychological well-being. One particular concern is whether time spent on social media is eating away face to face time, a phenomenon known as social displacement. It is replacing our face-to-face time with our close friends or family. However, the fear is not very real. We tend to interact with our loved ones in several other modalities- texts, e-mails, phone-calls and in-person time. However social media is popular among teens. It is definitely having an impact on teenager's cognitive development, and psychological well-being. Though it is beneficial to teens by why way of expanding their social network with their friends and family and express themselves creatively, teens are reported to being cyber bullied. Social media can also be a conduit for

accessing inappropriate content like violent images or pornography. About two-thirds of the youth come across racist, sexist, homophobic or religious based hate in social media. Parents and teachers should monitor the on-line activities of their teens and give them timely guidance and advice. Too much of involvement in social media might bring about a degradation of human feelings and relationship. It is always wise to exercise restraint in using social media guarding against becoming a slave to it. Nowadays people become pre-occupied with social-media gadgets and forget to have direct relationship with immediate human associates making the very word social-media a misnomer.

## F. Galvanized Sharing of Information:

To sum up, social media has both merits and demerits. It is basically social. It has spread connectivity. It has ensured freedom for expression. Netizens have a new found freedom of expression. The entire standard of society has increased. Small businesses have a new marketing platform. Hence the economy is flourishing. The standard of living has increased. There is unhindered spread of awareness. It has improved society as a whole. Face- book, Twitter, WhatsApp or Instagram have all been effectively propelled the degree of public knowledge and awareness. The social media has reduced happiness into an all-time low. Social media has increased depression. The expectational gap raises the level of happiness. We ignore our own reality and stay unhappy. Fake news spread like wildfire. The ease of sharing has boosted literacy. Cases of mobile lynching happens every day. Children and teenagers become victims of cyber-bullying. Privacy has become hard to maintain. Facebooks and even e-mails have been hacked. The value of personal relationship has decreased. We can easily swap relationship whether it is parental, platonic or romantic. The value of individualism or personal privacy has now undergone severe challenges so much so that one wonders whether social media is worth it.





## Benefits of Cycling as a Primary Mode of Transportation



By: Mithusha Partheepan

Cycling is an amazing hobby which produces both long and short-term benefits. It is an enjoyable activity which involves being outdoors and away from less beneficial pursuits, such as watching television, using the computer, and binging at one's refrigerator. It is a vigorous interest that people of all ages can participate in, not limited to youth. Children as young as toddlers as well as the elderly can cycle. In addition, provided that they have the proper equipment, people with disabilities can cycle as well. Cycling fits into a person's lifestyle easier than many other physical activities because it can be used practically, to go from one place to another. This is unlike swimming, which is fun, but mobility is limited by time of year and availability. Cycling is a low-intensity activity that is easier on one's joints in comparison to endeavors like jogging, allowing one to get from point "A" to point "B" much faster and with less effort. Cycling offers numerous benefits to oneself and the world, elevating one's mental and physical health while also being good for the environment.

Maintaining a proper body weight through activities like cycling is not just good for the ego, but benefits health in several, documented ways. One of the main health benefits of cycling is that it strengthens the heart, develops endurance, and improves circulation—which reduces one's risk of coronary heart illness, one of the leading causes of death. Gaining endurance additionally lowers the chances of contracting cancer and diabetes. Muscles are strengthened and toned from cycling, particularly those located below the waistline such as, the thighs, buttocks, and legs. Many of those who have weakened or injured joints, and are immobile as a result, turn to cycling as its low-impact nature makes the activity accessible. A cyclist is capable of

burning a great deal of calories, especially if they are riding a good distance at a moderate or fast pace.

Cycling also has the benefits of increasing one's metabolism, their inner engine, even after the ride has finished. Reducing body weight lessens the strain of joints, making cycling a dual benefit for those who suffer from weakened knees. Weight loss, like improved cardiovascular functions, lowers the risk for strokes and heart ailments. Eye-hand coordination is greatly enhanced by cycling. Stabilizing the body's weight, moving both legs in a circular motion, and using both hands to steer the bike is not an easy feat and is gradually improved on following every ride. The improvement of one's coordination thus improves agility, athleticism, and reaction time. These qualities are useful in everyday tasks, especially as one grows older. In accordance to the notion of one's age, it is noted that cycling is capable of increasing one's life span through the health benefits mentioned above. It is a fun and healthy way of adding years to one's life.

Beyond the physical benefits of cycling, this activity also improves one's mental health. Any form of exercise is proven to nourish and build one's brain. Peddling a bicycle not only enhances the amount of blood flowing through the heart, but to one's muscles and brain as well. The more blood that is pumped through the brain, the more effectively the organ can function. As a person peddles, it forces additional nerve cells to discharge, which increases the formation of proteins and other compounds. This action encourages new brain cells to form. Cycling can double—or even triple the number of neurons produced, further compounding how this activity can improve brain function. Additionally, exercise encourages the activity of neurotransmitters, increasing

the efficiency of communication between old and newly formed brain cells. Enhancing and developing brain cells while improving on the communication lines between them is increasingly vital as we age as the older one grows, the more those lines of communication naturally grow weaker. Cycling protects and restores the brain, allowing one to function effectively: "Adults who exercise display sharper memory skills, higher concentration levels, more fluid thinking, and greater problem-solving ability than those who are sedentary." (Yeager, 2014).

In addition to one's physical and mental health, cycling is shown to improve the wellbeing of the environment. This is particularly evident if one rides a bike as a means to commute. It reduces a person's carbon footprint and has been characterized as a green method of transportation, especially when compared to driving a fossil fuel burning car. Bicycles do not spew air pollutants like cars do, and reduce the nation's dependence on fossil fuels. According to the U.S. Census, nearly half of the population lives closer than five miles from their place of employment. The total amount of emissions released into the atmosphere would be reduced by more than five percent if those people utilized greener methods of commuting, such as cycling. Vehicles produce nearly one-third of all carbon

dioxide, and eighty percent of all carbon monoxide emitted into the air yearly. Shorter trips via car are proportionally worse when taking into account engine warm-up as well into the equation. Cycling to work, when practical and accessible, would make a big difference in the reduction of the gasses creating climate change. Cyclists, generally speaking, are in better physical condition in comparison to motorists, who tend to be obese. Cyclists use fewer energy resources in a range of areas such as food production and transportation ("Bicycle Buying," 2015).

The benefits of cycling are numerous, not just for the person peddling, but for the environment. Therefore, the entirety of society benefits from cycling as both a recreational activity and as a means of transportation. It is a hobby that enhances brain activity and reduces carbon gas release. It is also a fun outdoor activity, which stimulates the senses to compensate for moments in which they are dulled, such as staying indoors and using electronic technology to the extreme. Unlike both swimming and running, cyclists can enjoy conversation with a fellow rider. Cycling is easier on the joints than running and can be enjoyed during all seasons, unlike swimming. This activity is both fun and beneficial, making it worthwhile for everyone.



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## SCIENCE &amp; TECHNOLOGY



# DISTINCTIVE “MATH NEURONS” RECOGNIZED IN THE HUMAN BRAIN

## Math Neurons Fire Differently Depending on Whether You Add or Deduct

By OUE Research Institute

Some neurons become only activated when conducting addition, and others become active when working on subtraction tasks. The brain has neurons that fire precisely during specific mathematical processes. This is shown by a new study led by the Universities of Tübingen and Bonn. The findings specify that some of the neurons sensed are active absolutely during additions, while others are effective during subtractions. It does not care whether the calculation instruction is written down as a word or a symbol.

The results have now been circulated in the journal “Current Biology.” Most school children already know that three (3) plus two (2) add up to five (5). However, what happens in the brain during the calculations is still unknown. The current study by the above-noted Universities now sheds light on this issue. The researchers benefited from a particular attribute of the Department of Epileptology at the University Hospital Bonn. It concentrates on surgical procedures on the brains of people with epilepsy. In some patients, seizures always originate from the same brain area. The doctors insert several electrodes into the patients to localize this defective area. The probes can be used to decide the origin of the spasm accurately. In addition, the action of individual neurons can be computed via wiring.



### Math Neurons Fires

The study conducted using four (4) men and five (5) women subjects. They had electrodes fixed in the so-called temporal lobe of the brain to proof the action of nerve cells while the participants had to perform simple arithmetic tasks. “We discovered that distinctive neurons fired during additions than during subtractions,” explains Prof. Florian Mormann, Department of Epileptology at the University Hospital Bonn.

Some neurons reacted only to a “+” symbol and others only to a “-” symbol. “Even when we exchanged the mathematical symbols with words, the result endured the same,” explains Esther Kutter. She is doing her doctorate in Prof. Mormann’s research group. “For example, when subjects were asked to calculate ‘five (5) and three (3),’ their addition neurons jumped back into action; whereas for ‘seven (7) less four (4),’ their subtraction neurons accomplished.”

The cells were discovered to encode a mathematical command for action. The brain activity thus showed with great precision what kind of tasks the test subjects were currently computing. The researchers supplied the cells’ activity models into a self-learning computer program. They recorded the software whether the subjects were currently calculating a sum or a difference simultaneously. It accurately identified during which computational operation was recorded when the procedure was challenged with new activity data after this training phase. Prof. Andreas Nieder, University of Tübingen, supervised the study with Prof. Mormann. “We know from trials with monkeys that neurons precise to certain computational rules also exist in their brains,” he says.

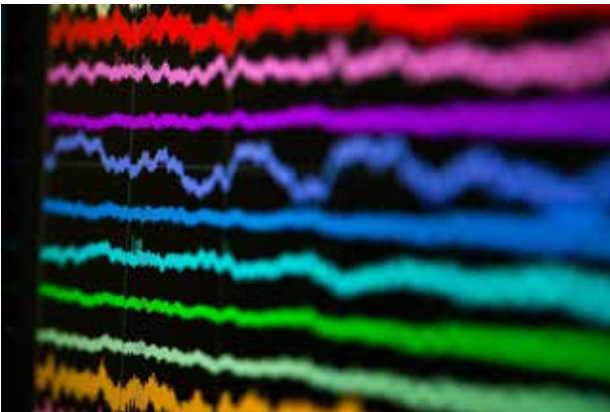


### Dynamic Coding

It is still largely unknown what happens in the brain during such calculations. “In humans, there is hardly any data in this regard.” During their examination, the two working groups came across an exciting experience: One of the brain regions studied was the so-called Para hippocampal cortex. The investigators discovered nerve cells that fired specifically during addition or subtraction.

“However, when summing up, different addition neurons became alternately active during one and the same arithmetic task. Figuratively speaking, it is as if the plus key on the calculator were constantly changing its location. It was the same with subtraction. Researchers also refer to this as “dynamic coding.”

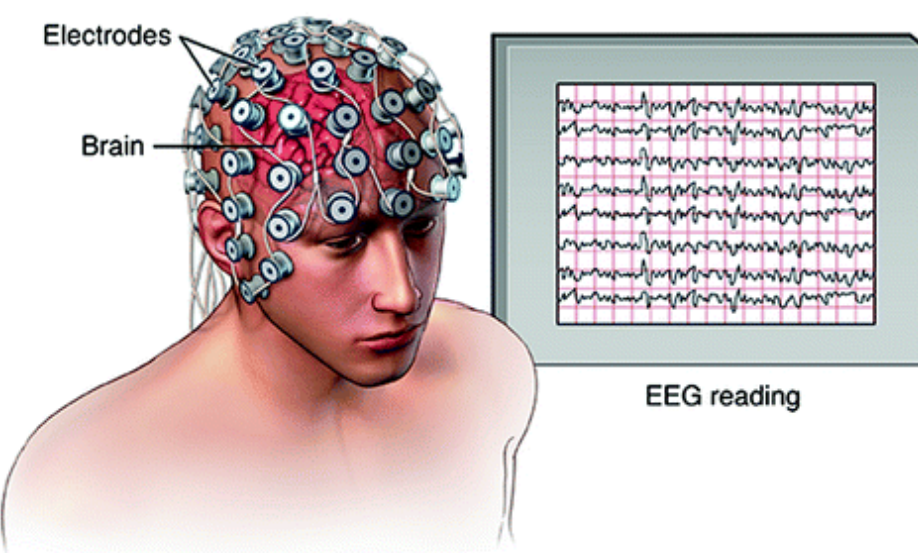
“This study marks an important step towards a better understanding of one of our most important symbolic abilities, namely calculating with numbers,” stresses Mormann. The two teams from Bonn and Tübingen now want to investigate exactly what role the nerve cells found play in this. The study was funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG) and the Volkswagen Foundation.



### Electroencephalogram (EEG)

Mathematics is a strange animal. It uses our language, but it is not quite the same. Our brains hear it entirely differently from ordinary speech. For example: when we hear a phrase like “cats like warm milk,” our brains handle that data mainly in

### Electroencephalogram (EEG)



the left hemisphere. Something like “eight (8) plus one (1) is nine (9),” though, will fire neurons in both.

This study has excavated even greater into your brain on math. It turns out that as far as your neurons are concerned, not all equations are created equal. This study marks a vital step towards a cleverer understanding of one of our most important symbolic abilities, namely calculating with numbers. To compute what was going on, the researchers recorded neural activity in nine volunteers by implanting electrodes into this area of their brains. For some people with epilepsy, as this procedure is technically known, intracerebral Electroencephalogram (EEG) is a valuable diagnostic tool.



### Summary

This experiment revealed some pretty astonishing insights. Different neurons fired through the temporal lobe depending on whether test subjects performed addition or subtraction. The outcome was so anticipated that a computer program could precisely recognize which process was being carried out based only on what neural activity had been recorded. The study points out that the medial temporal lobe sits right at the junction of several critical areas of the brain. It has become increasingly recognized as a hub of mathematics inside our heads. The authors said that the activity in this area “may represent a short-term memory of the arithmetic rule, whereas downstream hippocampus may ‘do the math’ and process numbers according to the arithmetic rule at hand.

Arithmetic is a cornerstone of scientifically and technologically advanced human culture, but its neuronal mechanisms are poorly understood. Calculating with numbers requires temporary maintenance and manipulation of numerical information according to arithmetic rules. Scientists explored the brain mechanisms involved in simple arithmetic operations by recording single-neuron activity from the medial temporal lobe of human subjects performing additions and subtractions.

Scientists found abstract and notation-independent codes for addition and subtraction in neuronal populations. The neuronal codes of arithmetic in different brain areas differed drastically. Decoders applied to time-resolved recordings demonstrate

a static code in the hippocampus based on persistently rule-selective neurons, in contrast to a dynamic code in the Para-hippocampal cortex originating from neurons carrying rapidly changing rule information. A miracle is known as “dynamic coding,” like a calculator where the plus or minus symbol keeps jumping about to different locations. It is fascinating implications for our understanding of how the brain processes arithmetic. The researchers describe it as a “foundation of scientifically and technologically advanced human culture.”





## SPECIAL FEATURE

# CANADA'S HOUSING MARKET IS BREAKING RECORDS AT AN ALARMING RATE

**Sky-high prices, low mortgage rates and a short supply have yet to slow things down**

by **Cassandra Drudi**

February 16, 2022:

Who could've predicted it would take a global pandemic to push the Canadian housing market into overdrive? After setting sales records across the country in 2020, 2021 saw those records toppled once more and demand remains at a fever pitch, continuing to outstrip the supply of available properties and driving prices up. Throw in inflationary pressures and, according to the government's December fiscal update, it will take "years" before the market can correct itself and return to normal, pre-pandemic conditions. With each passing month, Canada's red-hot housing market continues to burn with no real signs of slowing down.

Over the first 10 months of 2021 alone, more than 580,000 homes were bought and sold, surpassing the amount from the entire previous year, when a record 552,423 homes changed hands. Overall, the national MLS Home Price Index finished the year up a record 25.3 per cent from 2020.

Home prices in Toronto reached a new record for the month of November—up 28.3 per cent from November 2020. As the number of new listings declined some—by double-digits in the condominium market—the average sale price hit an all-time high of \$1.163 million, up 21.7 per cent from the previous year (the national average rose 19.6 per cent to \$720,854). In Vancouver, meanwhile, sales rose 11.9 per cent while between September and October, sales jumped 8.6 per cent, marking the greatest single month-over-month increase since July 2020.

Market watchers agree that the market, fuelled by historically low interest rates and a lessening housing supply, shows no signs of significantly slowing down.

"I think nationally prices will continue to increase, at least in the short term," says Martin Joyce, partner and national human and social services leader at KPMG. Although Joyce expects rising prices to include variability across markets in different provinces, the combination of low interest rates, strong inter-provincial migration and reduced supply on the market are likely to keep prices high for the foreseeable future.

At its January 2022 monetary policy review, the Bank of Canada maintained its overnight



rate at 0.25 per cent—where it has been since the beginning of the pandemic—and signalled that it is expecting to hold the rate steady until the middle quarters of 2022, however a January report from J.P. Morgan predicted that conditions in the labour market and other factors may lead the Bank to raise rates ahead of schedule.

With an overnight rate hike those considering entering the housing market may act with more haste if they had planned to get in before mortgage rates creep up, says Benjamin Tal, deputy chief economist of CIBC Capital Markets.

"If you were planning to buy a house over the next year or so, maybe you want to accelerate and take advantage of extremely low interest rates now. That's natural behaviour that we see every time interest rates start rising," Tal says, "and then it slows down. If history is any guide, the next few months will be relatively elevated in terms of activity and then will start slowing down into the second half of 2022."

Predicting the housing market over the course of the pandemic hasn't been easy, as it hasn't always behaved as people expected it to.

"Initially, we didn't think that there would be the housing boom that we've seen, because you see people being laid off, companies getting shut down—you wouldn't expect that people would be out buying houses," says Julie

Manna, a Calgary-based mortgage agent and CPA. "It did kind of catch us off guard in 2020 but, through 2021 we were expecting the ball to keep rolling. This past year was definitely an anomaly and a really busy year."

For Manna, the housing boom hasn't only brought more buyers into the market, but has also seen an increase in the number of people looking to capitalize on low interest rates and refinance homes they already own in order to take on work-from-home-friendly renovation projects. She adds that the past year has been unique for the frequency with which she is applying for rate holds (when a lender locks in a quoted interest rate) on mortgage pre-approvals.

"We've been underestimating the impact of millennials entering the home-buying age"

Manna says that, typically, she and her colleagues wouldn't submit for rate holds on pre-approved mortgages. But, as the five-year



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# SPECIAL FEATURE



fixed rates became more volatile near the close of 2021 (lowest advertised rates for five-year variable mortgages dropped to 0.85 per cent from 1.34 in a three-day span in November), she had been submitting almost every pre-approval for a rate hold, which usually run from 90 to 120 days for most lenders.

“We were doing a lot more rate holds,” she says, “and lots of panicked rate holds. Everybody was working until 10 o’clock at night.”

Tal attributes the strong pandemic housing market to the uneven economic impacts of the early shutdowns: lower-income Canadians, who tend to rent and are often younger, were the ones more likely to lose their jobs in the first extended lockdown, whereas higher-income workers were able to continue working virtually. Another factor contributing to the housing boom is demographics. According to a report from the Centre for Urban Research and Land Development, as of 2016 more than 700,000 millennials in Ontario’s Golden Horseshoe area alone were still living at home and likely to be aging into the market.

“I think we’ve been underestimating the impact of millennials entering home-buying age,” says Diana Petramala, senior economist at Ryerson University’s Centre for Urban Research and Land Development. “Millennials were holding less real estate but more cash in 2019 than generations before them. The ones that could afford to have clearly been saving for that down payment.”

Another factor is the presence of foreign buyers and large international real estate trusts in Canada’s housing market, for which Prime Minister Trudeau proposed a temporary ban in a December letter to Housing Minister Ahmad Hussen—in addition to other possible solutions like bringing an end to blind bidding.

As Hussen explained to reporters: “The point is to reduce the speculative demand in the market and help cool these astronomical increases in prices.”

Although a hot housing market can be good for sellers, it’s less helpful for the wider national economy. First-time homebuyers looking to live in Canada’s biggest markets, like Vancouver or Toronto, may find themselves pushed out to smaller regional areas by record high prices; a decision that affects where they spend their money and which can affect employment when people return to the office.

Tal believes that a market slowdown, encouraged by slow and steady rate hikes from the Bank of Canada, would allow the market to adjust without derailing.

“The acceleration and activity that we saw in 2021 is not very healthy from a long-term

perspective,” he says. “I don’t think the housing market should be a major contributor to economic growth.”

At its January monetary policy review, the Bank of Canada removed its “exceptional forward guidance.” Now that the economy has recovered from the initial shocks of COVID-19, the Bank’s main priority going forward is raising

borrowing costs to get inflation under control. “Everybody should expect interest rates to be on a rising path,” Bank of Canada Governor Tiff Macklem told reporters. “A path is not one move. A path is a number of steps.” In December, the Bank’s 74-page Monetary Policy Framework Renewal report noted that “a prolonged period of low interest rates could contribute to a buildup of financial

of affordable housing initiatives,” according to the city’s 2020 Empty Homes Tax Annual Report and has been accompanied by a 26 per cent drop in the number of vacant properties.

“You are 35-years-old, you are married, you have two kids and you are renting? Nothing is wrong with you.”

KPMG’s Joyce points to a recently adopted inclusionary zoning policy in Toronto that will require new residential developments to include a certain percentage of affordable housing units as “one of many solutions” to the issue.

“The further you go down this path of increasing house prices, the more radical the solutions will have to be,” he says. “Whether they get put forward or not, that’s a different story.”

Programs like the First-Time Home Buyer Incentive, which offers qualifying first-time buyers five to ten per cent of the cost of a home’s purchase price if the total amount borrowed is no more than four times the amount of a buyer’s qualifying income (or 4.5 times if the home being purchased is in Toronto, Vancouver or Victoria), seems out of step with the reality

in local markets. Manna, for one, says she doesn’t see the program being used as much as it could be.

“The cost of housing has increased so much that the program just doesn’t make sense for a lot of people,” she says. More helpful, from her perspective, would be extending the amortization periods on CMHC-insured mortgages



vulnerabilities.”

Jason Armstrong, a London, Ontario-based mortgage broker and CPA, has noticed an increase in the number of clients who require a co-signer to qualify for their desired mortgage and worries that people who have stretched themselves to enter the market while rates are low may be surprised at their lack of spending money once COVID-19 restrictions eventually ease up over time. [See Buying a home with a good friend? Read this first, if you’re planning on buying property with someone other than your partner or spouse.]

“Before, when you had a smaller house or you were renting, you had disposable income available to spend on travel and fun, frivolous things,” Armstrong says. “When that opens back up, it’s just a matter of time before they realize they’re worse off than they thought.”

The meteoric rise in prices has driven home ownership out of reach for many. The housing affordability crisis was a major issue in the fall election, with the Liberals pledging to invest nearly \$20 billion in social infrastructure, prioritizing investment in affordable housing over the next 10 years. In 2022, a one per cent national tax on vacant homes owned by non-resident, non-Canadians is slated to take effect. Vancouver enacted its own vacant homes tax in 2017, which has since raised \$86.6 million to support “a variety

to 30 years, which would allow first-time buyers to enter the market a little more easily.

The 10-year, \$72-billion National Housing Strategy is a good start at increasing affordability, but Ryerson’s Petramala says “it’s very small compared to the size of the problem” and could stand to be bolstered significantly.

Ultimately, the simplest solution could be a radical shift in mindset that would make owning a home feel like less of a necessity for more Canadians. An increased supply of purpose-built rental buildings and units—instead of a situation where the rental market and the condo market are one and the same—could help normalize renting as a viable long-term housing option.

“Purpose-built means that you basically introduce another element to the solution and you create a mentality in which you are 35 years old, you are married, you have two kids and you are renting? Nothing is wrong with you,” CIBC’s Tal says. “I think that’s a mentality that we have to develop.” - via: <https://www.epacanada.ca>

Pic via: @CMHC-ca (Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation)





## COMMUNITY WATCH

### Appointments & Achievements

#### Renuka Weerakoon has been appointed the new Director General of the Board of Investment of Sri Lanka

Weerakoon has been with the Board of Investment of Sri Lanka for nearly three decades. Prior to her promotion Weerakoon served as the Senior Executive Director of BOI. She received her primary education at St. Bridget's Convent, Colombo, and then got enrolled in the Colombo Law College. She holds a Postgraduate Degree in Business Administration and a Postgraduate Degree in Project Management from the University of Jayewardenepura.



#### "Never Have I Ever" movie star Maitreyi Ramakrishnan is among those to receive honours from this year's Canadian Screen Awards

Maitreyi Ramakrishnan made her professional acting debut as Devi Vishwakumar, the lead role, in the Netflix teen comedy series "Never Have I Ever." In 2019, she was chosen by Mindy Kaling out of 15,000 candidates who applied for an open casting call for the show.



#### Dr. Shivani, Professor of Physiology, Medical University of the Americas

Dr. Shivani is currently the Professor of Physiology, Medical University of the Americas. Dr Shivani has a total of 16+ years of teaching experience in the field. Currently works as the Professor of Physiology, Medical University of the Americas, Nevis.

She completed medical graduation with a Bachelor of Medicine and Surgery from 1995- 2001. Worked as junior resident in ICU in a multi-specialty hospital, combined Medical Institute, Dehradun, India from March 2002 to June 2002. She worked as junior resident in the Laparoscopic, General Surgery and Thoracic and Vascular Surgery.



#### Jalan-Kalrock consortium-owned Jet Airways appoints former SriLankan Airlines CEO Vipula Gunatilleka as the Chief Financial Officer

Gunatilleka served as the CEO of the SriLankan Airlines between August 2018 and January this year. Prior to joining SriLankan Airlines, he was the CFO and Board Member of TAAG Angola Airlines from November 2015 to July 2018 under Emirates Management.

A qualified chartered accountant, Gunatilleka, played a pivotal role to turnaround the loss-making national carrier of Angola.



#### Dharmika Attygalle appointed to Board of Directors of the Foreign Employment Bureau in Sri Lanka

Dharmika Attygalle is a Group Director of Upali Group of Companies, President Automobile Association of Ceylon, Member of National Council for Road Safety, Past President Chamber of Young Lankan Entrepreneurs (COYLE).



## Quotable Quotes - 2022

By: Siva Sivapragasam

“They said it”



“We don't believe in politicizing law enforcement. There are some countries do things that way and that would not be appropriate here in Canada”

– Public Safety Minister Marco Mendicino on Truckers protests



“We cannot remain at a heightened state of emergency forever. We have to begin to heal”

– Premier of Alberta Jason Kenney on the Pandemic



“Safety and security and tolerance are the qualities that make Canada... stand out on the world stage”

– Phil Soper, ROYAL LEPAGE CEO



“Vaccinating the world and leading an effective Global response is important for moral and ethical reasons. It's important for equity. But it's also important for self-interest.”

– Dr. Krishna Udayakumar, Director of the Global Health Innovation Center at Duke University



“My professional life has been spent in the business world and I look forward in returning to the private sector”

– Rod Phillips, former Long-term Care Minister who is retiring from politics





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## MONSOON KITCHEN

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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.

# Butter Masala

In modern days like these, convenience is key. With our rich palates, we desire deep flavours with little effort and variety to choose from. This butter masala recipe is perfect for when you can't decide what you want the main star to be – whether it is veg or not. We have a few options below the recipe to help you decide.

### Method:

**Step 1:** Soak the almonds and cashews in water just enough to cover the top of the nuts for a minimum of 20 minutes.

**Step 2:** On medium heat, add oil to the pan and 25g of the butter. Follow with green cardamom, cloves, black pepper, cumin, onions, green and red chillies and ½ tbsp of dried fenugreek leaves. Add ½ tsp of salt and cook until the onions are translucent. Leave to cool.

**Step 3:** Grind the nuts first and then add the cooked onion mixture and grind everything together to a paste.

**Step 4:** Place the pan back on the heat and add one teaspoon of butter. To this, add black cardamom pods and bay leaves. Once they begin to release their aroma, stir in the onion mixture along with the passata and let this simmer on a low heat for 30 minutes, stirring in between.

**Step 5:** Add approximately 300gms of your choice of protein according to your preference with 1-2 cups of water depending on the consistency of your sauce. Cook for 10 minutes adding the last of the butter and finish with cream (optional) and the remaining dried fenugreek leaves.

### Protein options:

**Paneer:** you can choose to grill your paneer or cut the paneer into cubes and soak it in hot water for 30 minutes. Strain before adding to the masala.

**Chicken:** cubes of boneless chicken works well with this. Again, you can use grilled/ baked chicken, or add it in uncooked and cook for 15 minutes with the sauce.

**Mushroom:** sauté the mushrooms in butter on a high heat for 3-5 minutes before adding to the masala.



### Ingredients:

- ✓ 1 small white onion, roughly chopped
- ✓ 300ml passata
- ✓ 3 green cardamom pods
- ✓ 2 black cardamom pods (optional)
- ✓ 3 cloves
- ✓ ¼ tsp black pepper
- ✓ ½ tsp cumin seeds
- ✓ 3 green chillies
- ✓ 3 dried red chillies
- ✓ 2 fresh bay leaves
- ✓ 1 tbsp of dried fenugreek leaves (kasoorimethi)
- ✓ 1 tbsp of cashew nuts
- ✓ 1 tbsp of skinless almonds
- ✓ 200g of butter
- ✓ 2 cups of water
- ✓ 300g of protein of choice (see below)
- ✓ 2 tbsp heavy cream (optional)
- ✓ 2 tbsp cooking oil
- ✓ Salt

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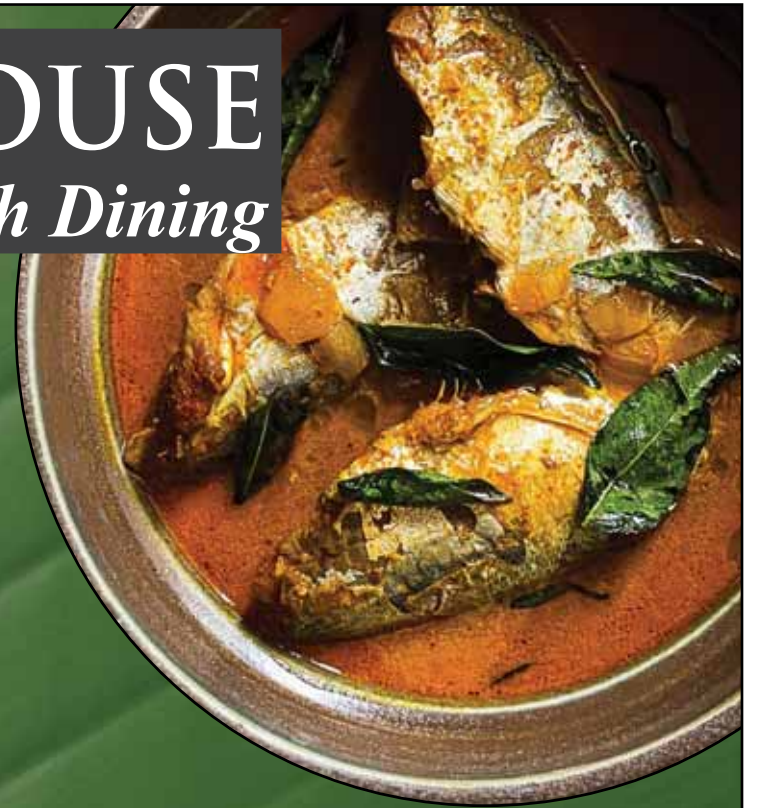
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**வீரகேசரி**

தமிழால் இணைவோம்

செய்தி வரலாற்றில் 9 தசாப்தங்களுக்கும் மேலாக வீரகேசரி செய்தித்தாளை வெளியிடும் எக்ஸ்பிரஸ் நியூஸ்பேப்பர்ஸ் நிறுவனத்தின் சகல பதிப்புக்களையும் மின்னிதழ்களாய் ஒரே தளத்தில் படித்திடுங்கள்.

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

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**Book Review****COMMUNITY WATCH**

# The Sadness of Geography

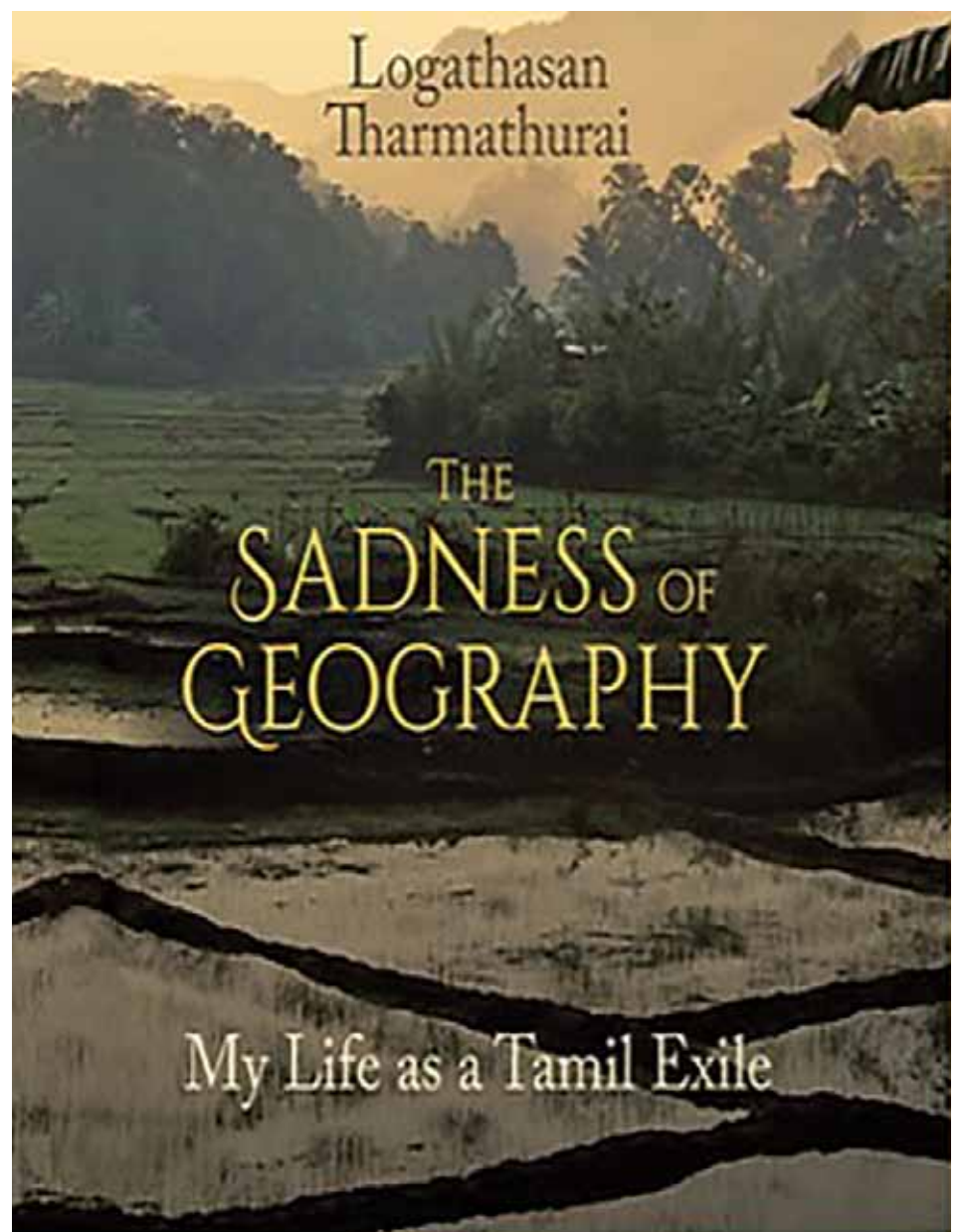
## - My Life as a Tamil Exile

**Author: Logathan Tharmathurai**

**Reviewed by: Siva Sivapragasam**



Author, Logathan Tharmathurai



“The Sadness of Geography” is a moving story of a young man who leaves his country of origin (Sri Lanka) to seek greener pastures in life because of the unsettled conditions prevailing in his country due to a continuing civil war.

Logathan Tharmathurai is a writer and information systems professional who decided to write his memoir thirty-two years after leaving Sri Lanka and settling down in Canada.

The book reflects the incredible true story of a young man who fled Sri Lanka in 1985, during the hardships and cruelty of the

civil war, and finally succeeded to make a life for himself and his family in Toronto, Canada.

The story moves any reader of the book to a compassion and deeper emotion to understand about the life of refugees and their struggles in the search for a better life.

The novel becomes a good read of a beautifully written story of an exile centering around family life, triumph and the turbulations associated with it.

This book is a reflection of the struggle many Tamil Canadians and other individuals leaving their homeland for freedom

have encountered. It is a book written to be read so easily and demonstrates the pride of being a Canadian.

Author Logathan in his narration of the story also takes the reader through the ground situation in the North during the days of the civil war and the fear among the civilians of the movement of the armed forces during day and night.

The book has all the elements that attracts a reader, especially for those who have been familiar with the civil war environment in the Northern part of

Sri Lanka. The reader becomes captivated by the variety of characters in the story. Author Logathan writes the story with touching words and gives vivid descriptions.

Logathan’s “The sadness of Geography” received the best novel Award for 2021 presented by The Tamil Literary Garden in Canada.

**Those interested in purchasing a copy can contact the Publishers at [Dundurn.com](http://Dundurn.com)**



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Donate to Scarborough Hospitals at [LoveScarborough.ca](http://LoveScarborough.ca).





# Brampton Fire and Emergency Services transitions Churchville area flood response to recovery efforts

Wednesday, Feb 23 2022

BRAMPTON, ON (February 23, 2022) – Today, the City of Brampton's Fire and Emergency Services Incident Commander, Fire Chief Bill Boyes concluded that the emergency portion of the Churchville area flood response and operations has transitioned to an ongoing recovery effort.

Today all Churchville area residents have been able to return to their homes.

The City's Public Works & Engineering Team and Brampton's Emergency Management Office will continue ongoing recovery operations including ice removal, clean-up efforts, and providing support to local residents with coordinating essential utility services.

The Churchville Bridge remains closed to vehicular traffic and Creditview Road is open to local traffic only. Churchville Park South remains closed at this time, and the City's Park's staff will be working closely

with Credit Valley Conservation on a restoration plan for the area. Any necessary repair work to damaged roadways and shoulders will take place in the summer months.

Further precipitation is not forecasted in the coming days, however weather patterns may change. Residents are encouraged to monitor changing patterns and any associated impacts on their property.

A Provincial Disaster Assistance Team will be on scene tomorrow to assess the area for potential financial assistance through the Disaster Recovery Assistance for Ontarians (DRAO) program.

The City of Brampton thanks our partner organizations Region of Peel, Peel Regional Police, Credit Valley Conservation, Electrical Safety Authority, Enbridge, Alectra, our community partners Global Medic and Khalsa Aid, and supporting contractors for their dedicated support during this emergency.

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



# City of Brampton celebrates International Women's Day

Thursday, Feb 24 2022

BRAMPTON, ON (February 24, 2022) – The City of Brampton celebrates International Women's Day on March 8 with in-person events to raise awareness of the achievement and impact of female Bramptonians who have contributed to Brampton being the livable, compassionate and prosperous city it is today.

International Women's Day Panel Discussions & Keynote Address

March 8, 5 – 7 pm

In partnership with the Zonta Club of Brampton-Caledon, the City of Brampton presents two, in-person panel discussions hosted by Jam Gamble and moderated by Councillors Charmaine Williams and Rowena Santos.

- Say No to Violence Against Women: Human Trafficking
- Local Women & How They Contribute to the Women's Empowerment Landscape in Brampton

Following these sessions, a keynote will be delivered by Samra Zafar, award-winning internationally renowned speaker, best-selling author and educator for equity, mental health, and human rights.

These sessions bring together experts and community partners to discuss these important topics.

Thank you to the event sponsor Coca-Cola Canada Bottling Limited.

For more information on the International Women's Day event, visit [brampton.ca/IWD](http://brampton.ca/IWD)

Experience Box

These limited edition, curated gift boxes feature products and services from local women-owned businesses. All boxes will include:

- Hydrating Face Masks by Moodgxl
- Affirmation Cards by The Sankalpa Project
- Bath Bombs by Aroma Comforts 4 U
- Herbal Bath Salts by Fruits and Roots Holistics
- And more!

Boxes will be delivered to the first 50 people who make a charitable donation of at least \$20 to The Ellen House.

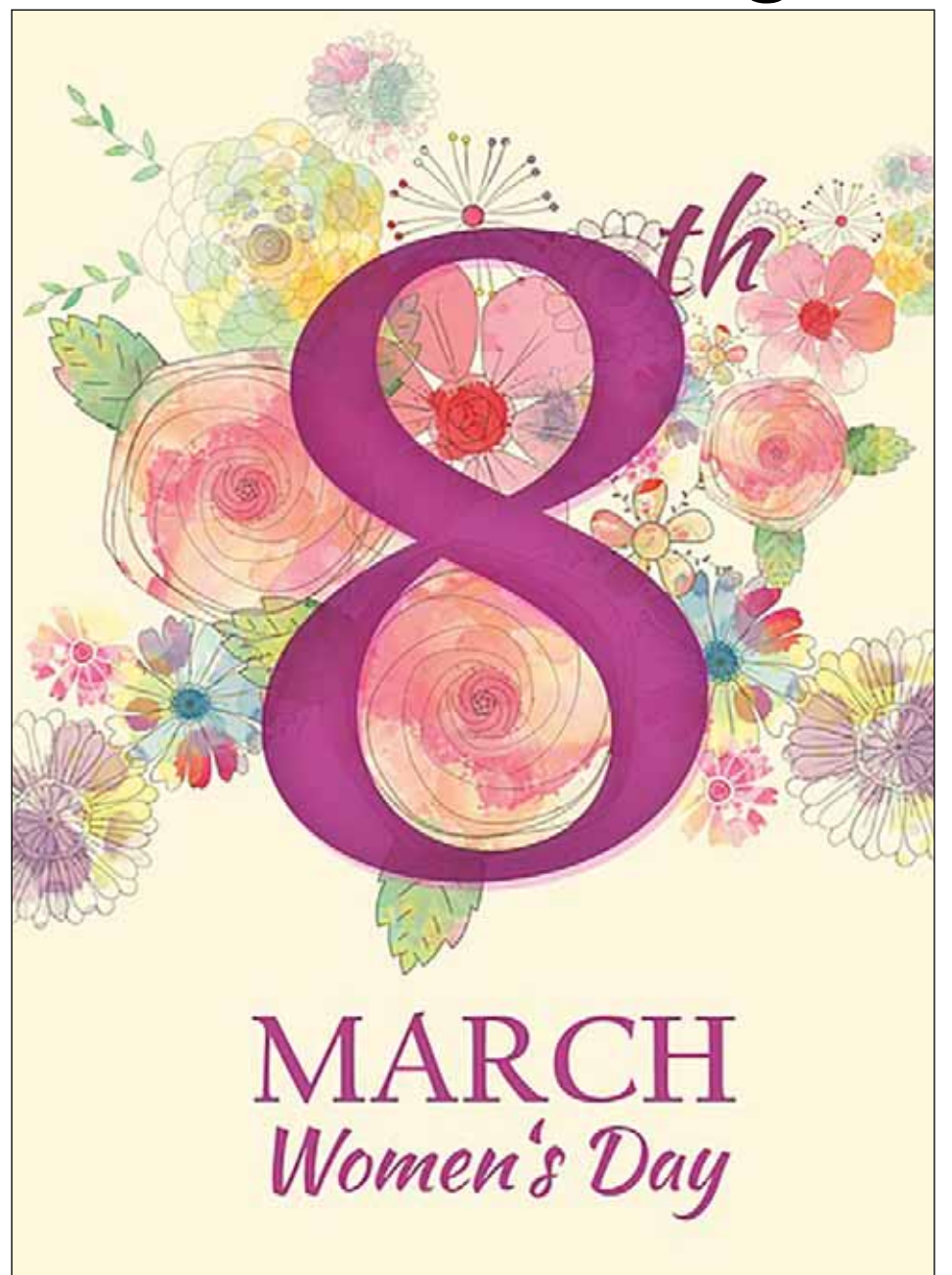
**Empowering Entrepreneurs**

The Brampton Entrepreneur Centre is pleased to support three upcoming events that spark discussion on accelerating gender parity, have meaningful conversations with trailblazing women leaders and celebrate the businesswomen in our community.

- March 2: InspiHer hosted by the Brampton Board of Trade
- March 9: #BreakTheBias The Changing Face of Canada's Workplace hosted by the Brampton Board of Trade

• March 10: IWD2022 #BreakTheBias hosted by StartUp Peel

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





## City of Brampton hosts automotive forum to discuss future of Brampton's automotive industry



Wednesday, Feb 23 2022

BRAMPTON, ON (February 23, 2022) – Last week, the City of Brampton hosted a Brampton Automotive Forum to discuss the importance of Brampton's automotive industry and create awareness about the need for investment in the Stellantis Brampton Assembly Plant by all levels of government.

The forum was attended by Members of Brampton City Council, Economic Development staff, Ministers, local MPs and MPPs, who discussed the future of Brampton's automotive industry and the wider automotive industries of Ontario and Canada.

The Stellantis facility in Brampton is an anchor of Brampton's automotive industry, and significantly impacts the local economy, providing approximately 3,000 manufacturing jobs. It also provides many indirect jobs across the province with suppliers, logistics and trucking companies and HVAC and electrical companies. It is estimated that for every one job at an automotive facility, as many as five to six indirect jobs are created.

Brampton's Advanced Manufacturing sector is the foundation for collaboration, partnerships and innovation across every industry. It is Brampton's largest industry by employment, accounting for almost a quarter of the city's workforce. 23 per cent of Brampton's Advanced Manufacturing sector workforce is in the automotive industry.

For more information on Brampton's automotive industry and the Advanced Manufacturing sector, visit: [www.investbrampton.ca](http://www.investbrampton.ca).

### Quick facts

- Brampton's Stellantis facility is the only plant across their global operations that produces the Dodge Chargers, Dodge Challengers, and Chrysler 300s.
- Over 90 per cent of the cars made in Brampton are exported with the vast majority going to the U.S.
- The automotive parts manufacturing industry in Brampton has several major companies including facilities owned by Magna, Martinrea, ABC Technologies and many others.

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

## Brampton Fire and Emergency Services safely evacuating residents in Churchville area due to extreme flooding



Thursday, Feb 17 2022

BRAMPTON, ON (February 17, 2022) – The City of Brampton is responding to a significant flood in the Churchville area and is working with Peel Regional Police to safely evacuate remaining residents in the following areas:

- Select areas of Churchville Road
- Martins Boulevard
- Church Street
- Victoria Street
- Adelaide Street
- Select areas of Creditview Road

While the majority of residents have already been evacuated from this area, this evacuation requirement will remain in place over night and reassessed tomorrow. Brampton Fire and Emergency Services, the Brampton Emergency Management Office, Brampton Public Works, Brampton Transit, Peel Regional Police, Region of Peel Human Services and Credit Valley Conservation remain on site and continue to monitor and respond to the situation.

If residents are in danger, they should call 9-1-1 immediately. To report localized flooding on municipal roads, blocked storm sewer grates or basement flooding, call 3-1-1.

### Flood Safety tips

Environment Canada has issued a special weather statement for Brampton, forecasting rain, freezing rain and snow into tomorrow morning. Credit

Valley Conservation has also issued a flood warning.

### Residents are asked to follow these safety precautions:

- Standing water may be electrically charged by indoor electrical systems and underground or downed power lines. Keep yourself, children and pets away from standing water and downed power lines.
- Floodwaters can move quickly and pose a risk of drowning. Protect your safety and do not drive or walk through floodwaters.
- Building structures can be affected and become unsafe. Leave your home if there are any signs of potential foundation and structural damage, including to porch roofs and overhangs.
- Floodwaters often erode roads and walkways. Roads may have weakened and could collapse under the weight of a car. Don't drive or walk through flood waters.
- Flood waters can contain sewage (may contain bacteria, viruses or parasites), chemicals and debris like broken glass. Avoid low-lying areas. Keep yourself, family and pets away from flood waters.
- Do not enter a flood area unless wearing appropriate personal protective equipment and clothing.

Residents can follow @BEMOPrepared on Twitter for the most current updates, and visit [www.brampton.ca](http://www.brampton.ca) for flood safety information.

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

## City Launches Free Brampton Transit Fares for Senior Residents beginning February 28

Monday, Feb 14 2022

BRAMPTON, ON (February 14, 2022) – Starting February 28, Brampton's senior residents can ride Brampton Transit for free with a Brampton Senior Identification Card and a PRESTO card loaded with an annual free pass.

As approved in the 2020 Budget, the free annual pass will provide unlimited travel for Brampton seniors at no cost on Brampton Transit.

Brampton Transit will no longer sell the \$15 senior resident monthly pass

or offer the \$1 senior resident cash fare. All non-resident seniors can continue to use their PRESTO cards and pay the senior e-purse fare at \$1.60.

Brampton Transit is committed to providing affordable and sustainable transportation. The free Brampton Transit pass for Brampton seniors builds on the Term of Council Priorities and improves transit access for seniors in Brampton.

This free pass comes after the success of the \$15 senior resident monthly pass that was introduced in September 2019, which resulted in an

Starting February 28  
Brampton Senior Residents  
**RIDE BRAMPTON  
TRANSIT FOR FREE**

*Brampton Transit*

increase in seniors obtaining Brampton Senior Identification Cards.

For details on eligibility and where

to get your cards, visit [www.brampton-transit.com](http://www.brampton-transit.com) or call 905.874.5120.

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





## SPECIAL FEATURE

# SPREAD OF HINDUISM AND HINDU TEMPLES IN MAURITIUS ISLAND

Compiled by : **KIDAMBI RAJ**

### INTRODUCTION

**M**auritius, is a subtropical island country in the Indian ocean, just over 1,130 kilometres east of Madagascar, off the south-eastern coast of Africa. It is known for its volcanic island lagoons and palm-fringed beaches with coral reefs surrounding most of its coastline. The mountainous interior includes Black River Gorges National Park, with rainforests, waterfalls, hiking trails and wildlife like the flying fox. Capital, Port Louis has sites such as the Champs de Mars Horse track, Eureka plantation house and 18<sup>th</sup> century Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam Botanical Gardens.

France took control of this island in 1715, renaming it *Isle de France*. In 1810, the island was seized by Great Britain, and four years later France ceded Mauritius and its dependencies to Britain. Mauritius is secure and safe. There is very little violent crime in Mauritius. It is the safest country in Africa and ranks highly on Global Peace Index and the Legatum Prosperity Index (The Legatum Prosperity Index is a framework that assesses countries on the promotion of their residents' flourishing, reflecting both economic and social wellbeing) above many European countries. In short, one can live a life without worrying about the safety of their family. Mauritius is a multi-ethnic society, with notable groups of people of South Asian (notably Indians), Sub-Saharan African (Mauritian Creoles), European (White/European Mauritian), and Chinese descent, as well those of a mixed background from any combination of the aforementioned ethnic groups. According to the 2011 census, approximately 48 percent of the population is Hindu, 26 percent Roman Catholic, 17 percent Muslim and 6 percent non-Catholic Christian groups including Seventh-day Adventists, Anglicans, Pentecostals, Presbyterians, evangelical Protestants, Jehovah's Witnesses. Hinduism is the primary religion in Mauritius with around 52% identifying as Hindus. Christians make up about 28% of the population (26% Catholics and 2% Protestants) and 16.6% of residents are Muslims. Hinduism is the most practiced religion and percentage wise ranks third in the world after Nepal and India.

Hinduism came to Mauritius when Indians were brought as indentured labour to colonial French and later in much larger numbers to British plantations in Mauritius and neighbouring islands of the Indian Ocean. The migrants came primarily from what are now the Indian states of Tamil Nadu, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand, Maharashtra, Telangana and Andhra Pradesh. The indentured people brought from India included primarily Hindus, but also included Muslims and Christians. They were subject to indenture, a long-established form of contract which bound them to forced labour for a fixed term. The first ships carrying indentured labourers from India left in 1836. Sugarcane, a crop that is native to India, does not grow in cold latitudes such as those found in Europe, but grows in tropical latitudes, were grown in large colonial tropical plantations to meet the growing European and American demand. It is these sugarcane and other tropical cash crop plantations that brought the indentured Hindus and other migrants from India to Mauritius, and other island countries such as Fiji, Jamaica, Trinidad, Martinique, Suriname and others. By the time Mauritius gained independence from the British Empire, a majority of its population were from Indian heritage. According to Patrick Eisenlohr, about 70% of Mauritius' total population is of Indian origin. Those who identify themselves as Hindus constitute about 48% of the total population, or about 69% of those of Indian origin. The major languages spoken by Hindus in Mauritius, at home and in commerce are, Creole, Bhojpuri, Tamil and Hindi.

Ties between India and Mauritius under Mauritian

Prime Minister, Pravind Jugnauth and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi have solely soared. Indians are extremely happy with the diplomacy prolonged to the Vanilla islands, because it strengthens India's naval place towards China's invasive and belligerent ambition within the Indian Ocean.

### Major Hindu Festivals

One of the biggest Hindu festivals on the island is *Maha Shivaratri* (Great Night of Shiva). During this annual Hindu celebration, which takes place in the months of February-March, four to nine days of ceremony and fasting lead up to an all-night vigil of Shiva worship.

Other important Hindu festivals in Mauritius are:

- **Thaipusam** - festival devoted to Lord Muruga. This is observed by the Tamil Hindus.
- **Ganesh Chaturthi** - a festival occurring on a public holiday assigned to the extensive Marathi speaking community, celebrating the birth of Ganesh. Tamils also celebrate this.
- **Durga Puja** - celebrated over nine days in honour of titular goddess Durga.
- **Diwali / Deepavali** - the festival of lights. This Hindu festival is a national public holiday in Mauritius. It is popular, cuts across ethnic barriers, with Mauritius Christians observing it as well.
- **Ugadi / Gudi Padwa** - a Hindu New Year.
- **Holi** - the festival of colours and
- **Thai Pongal / Makara Sankranti** - harvest festival.

### MARITIUS: Island of Hindu Temple

The island paradise in the Indian Ocean is known among holidaymakers. But what is little known is that it is home to over 300 Hindu temples, making Mauritius a land rich in Hinduism. From small shrines in the sugar plantations to huge structures scattered across the 1,860 sq. km. island, the Hindu temples in Mauritius cater to the Indian population of 670,000, a figure that is slightly higher than that in Singapore. Most of the temples in the sugar plantations are about 100 years old built by the Tamil labourers who worked there.

#### 1. Maheswarnath Shiv Mandir



Located in Pamplemousses at the northern end of the village of Triolet, Maheswarnath temple is the largest Hindu temple in the island. It is locally known as *Grand Shivala Triolet*. This temple was founded in 1888 by Pandit Shri Sajeebunlall Ramsoondur, who came from Calcutta. This temple is famous for its association with the first pilgrimage to Ganga Talao, the sacred lake found in the centre of Mauritius. This is the biggest and one of the oldest of its kind in the island. It is also composed of a group of small temples of different sizes in

perfect harmony with each other. The mixture of colours of the temples is once again captivating and promises one, a magnificent souvenir picture. You will be invited to penetrate into the heart of the great temple where the smell of incense diffuses in the air and brings a serene and religious atmosphere at the place, providing one with a unique spiritual experience within one's reach. The temple pays homage to Gods, Shiva, Krishna, Brahma, Vishnu, Muruga and Ganesha. Built in the Bengali style of temple architecture, the grand edifice is a variation of the Pancha-Ratna or a five-flowered temple built on a platform. Another avatar of Shiva, Lord Bhairava also resides in the complex. Apart from the main temple structure, there are many additional temples in the complex devoted to Goddess Lakshmi, Lord Nataraaja, Lakshmi Narayana, Lord Hanuman, Lord Jagannath, Goddess Kali, Goddess Saraswathi and Goddess Durga.

#### 2. Ganga Talao



Ganga Talao, commonly known as *Grand Basin* is a crater lake situated in a secluded mountain area in the district of Savanne, deep in the heart of Mauritius and it is about 1,800 ft. above sea level. The lake rests in the crater of an extinct volcano. It is said that the water inside the lake communicates with the waters of the Holy Ganga River in India. The Hindu community performs a pilgrimage every year on the Maha Shivratri. Grand Basin was discovered in 1897, when the Hindu priest Pandit Jhummon Giri Gossagne Nepal, who lived in the village of Triolet, in the northern part of Mauritius. Together with a priest from Goodlands, Sri Mohanprasad had a dream in which he saw the Holy Lake. Connected to the sacred river Ganges. It was in 1972 that some holy water from the *Ganges River* was mixed to its water in order to establish a symbolic connection between the two sacred places. At the same time, the lake was renamed *Ganga Talao*. The Lake was still known as the *Pari Talao*, because only in 1998 it was declared a *sacred lake*. When you arrive at the lake, the first thing you can see is an enormous statue of Mangal Mahadev, a 108 ft. tall statue of the Hindu God, Shiva the destroyer who stands with His trident at the entrance of Ganga Talao. Once you enter the Grand Basin you can immediately feel the tranquility and the peace of this site. Hindu pilgrims young and old carry hand-made *kanwars*, which are some kind of mobile altars decorated, and perform their own private prayer ceremonies with offerings of fruit, flowers, incense sticks and lamps to deities.

#### 3. Sagar Shiv Mandir

Sagar Shiv mandir is a Hindu temple, located in the Eastern coast of Mauritius. It is a place of worship for Hindus and other religions in Mauritius. The temple is worth visiting as it is found on an island surrounded by sea with



## SPECIAL FEATURE



beautiful scenery all around. It is recently constructed in 2007 with the monetary aid from the Ghunowa family, who invested a huge amount of money to construct this religious site. The temple is built on a small islet off the coast of Poste de Flacq, on the east coast of Mauritius and it is united to land by a thin land-bridge. What makes this temple unique, the people say is the water surroundings gives the temple a composed atmosphere which is definitely worth experiencing especially during sunrise. This temple boasts a bronze-colored statue which is roughly 98 ft. in length which guards the temple resembling the statue of Ganga Talao.

### 4. Shri Prasanna Venkateswara Temple



This temple is one of Mauritius's rare hidden gems. This stunning temple is dedicated to Lord Venkateswara, a form of the God of protection, Lord Vishnu. The temple went through a lot of renovations and the most recent one was in 2010 with the help of skilled artisans from South India. This temple attracts a lots of devotees and tourists alike. The highlight of this temple is the large statue of Lord Venkateswara covered in gold and other precious gems like rubies, pearls and more. If one wants to visit Hindu temples in Mauritius, this should be included in their tour.

### 5. Pandurang Kshetra Mandir



This Hindu temple is relatively smaller in size as compared to the other temples in Mauritius. This is located in Cascavelle at the West part of the island. This was constructed in 1902 by labourers coming from Maharashtra in India. This is dedicated to Lord Ganesha. This temple is unique in its utilization of carved volcanic rock sourced from the vicinity for its construction. The Marathi community in Mauritius maintains this place and visits it often. There three domes on its rooftop. Though Lord Ganesha is the main deity in this temple, it also houses idols of other Gods.

### 6. Sri Siva Subramanya Temple (Mountain Temple)

Sri Siva Subramanya Temple, also known as Mountain Temple on the Corps de Garde Mountain, is in Port Louis. It is a Dravidian wonder constructed in 1907 by an Indian

labourer who wanted to build a temple on the flanks of the Corps de Garde Mountain. Now a days, the temple is a prime place of worship for the followers of Lord Muruga, the warrior God. Several Hindu celebrations are hosted at this



location. The most important and grandest of all is the *Thaiposam Kavadi Festival*, a very important one for people from South India and is celebrated in the month of January. During this festival, devotees climb hundreds of steps to reach this impressive temple on the mountains to worship Lord Muruga, thus making it a significant pilgrimage site for Hindus.

### 7. Sri Sockalingam Meenatchee Amman Kovil



Sri Sockalingam Meenatchee Amman Kovil, also known as *Kayalasson Temple*, is yet another Tamilian temple in Mauritius dedicated to Lord Shiva, the Destroyer of evil. It was built in 1854 in Sainte Croix, near Port Louis and it stands as the oldest Tamil temple in Mauritius and is also listed as a heritage site. The temple structure has an impressive architecture which showcases the impeccable Dravidian culture. It is one of the very important place of worship for the Tamil community in Mauritius. The fascinating temple was actually built to symbolize the human body, with different organs being represented by six stations and the lotus representing the head. The overarching meaning of the architecture is that devotees should respect the temple as much as they do their own bodies.

### 8. Shiv Shakti Mandir



Shiv Shakti Mandir is one of the most prominent temple located in the centre of the island along Vacoas-Phoenix border. It was constructed in 1922 and is dedicated to the God of destruction, Lord Shiva, even though several other Hindu Gods are also worshipped at this temple. Shiv Shakti Mandir is the first Hindu temple in the Indian Ocean region to acquire the internationally recognized ISO 9001 certification in 2014. The Shiv Shakti Mandir follows several efficient techniques focused towards customer satisfaction, crowd management, preservation of the environment through minimization of pollution amongst others. The white colour of the temple provides a peaceful and soothing atmosphere, which makes it ideal for prayers and meditation, surrounded by the quietness and calmness of the temple. If one is looking for some inner peace and to indulge in pure positive vibes, then they should head straight to this

temple and also witness a glorious Shiva statue.

### 9. Hare Krsna Iskon Temple

Hare Krsna Iskon Temple is located in the village of Bon Accueil, in the Northeast side of the



island. Iskon has countless followers across the world. The temple can be described as a magnificent piece of art, resonating with the spirit of Lord Krishna, an incarnation of Lord Vishnu. The whole temple is adorned with paintings portraying the life of the famous Hindu God and narratives say that each of these frames took close to 6 months to complete. There are several trees bearing fruits around the temple, and with the great number of tourists and devotees visiting this temple, there are a few guest houses that provide accommodation for visitors. There is also a restaurant onsite that serves a variety of delicious vegetarian dishes.

### 10. Amma Tookay Kovil



Amma Tookat Kovil located at Riche Bois in the Southern part of the island is a fascinating and sacred Tamil temple. The temple is dedicated to Amma Tookay, who is worshipped for prosperity and good health. The history of this place goes back to when the indentured labourers coming mainly from India were working in sugarcane plantations. They built this place of worship in the middle of a sugarcane field in order to relieve themselves after an exhausting day. The initial structure of the place was made up of bamboo and straws but unfortunately it got damaged during a cyclone that hit the island in 1945. Surprisingly, the main statue remained intact. The temple was remodeled with wood and iron sheets. But this structure too was damaged in another cyclone. Eventually, a concrete building was built for Amma Tookay in the 1960s. The management of the temple was conveyed to the Savanne Tamil Benevolent Society. They later built a new temple of Dravidian nature and this charming and colourful temple is now one of the must-see religious places in Mauritius. Furthermore, the sugar cane fields around, add to the beauty of the place. There are number of other Hindu Gods like, Lord Ganesha, Lord Shiva, Lord Maruga and the Nava Grahas, Goddess Durga and Lord Hanuman are also there.

Even though there is a diversity of places to visit while on this paradise island, a visit to one of the above temples should certainly be on one's itinerary. The surroundings and the calmness of these temples is worth the experience. Furthermore, it is a great way of learning more about the Hindu culture and traditions in Mauritius.





## 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 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. Also, DTA's Tamil school continues to provide virtual Tamil classes for our students.

### DTA Distribute Covid-19 Rapid Test Kits



Durham Tamil Association handed out Covid-19 Rapid Test Kits to the Tamil Community in Durham. Also, we handed out personal care packages (1 per person) and DTA's promo Thermos Flask. Furthermore, we also gave 1 Trophy (2021 & 2020 Youth festival) to all performers and Youth MC's. Big thanks to CAREA for donating the Rapid test kits and personal care package. Thank you to all the volunteers as well. If you want to obtain the kit, please register on the website.

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

- JK, SK & Grade 1-8
- Subjects: Math, Language Arts, French, Science, History, etc...

- Drop-In Time: Monday (6:00-7:00pm) and Tuesday to Friday (7:30-8:30pm)
- This session is not limited to Homework help, but also for additional help on other subjects that volunteers may be able to help with. A big thank you to our youth volunteers.

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

### DTA's Unlock the Rubik Cube

Durham Tamil is presenting a free Unlock the Rubik's Cube program. It will teach everyone how to solve a Rubik's Cube.

Ages: 10-14

Time: Mondays 6:00-7:00pm

Class Requirement: 3x3 Rubik's Cube

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

Instructor: Kevin Jacob

### About Kevin Jacob:

Kevin is a proficient Speedcuber versatile in 3x3, 4x4 and 5x5 Rubik's cubes with a personal best solving time of 29 secs for 3x3 in the World Cubing Association competition held at the University of Toronto in August 2019. He has recorded his personal best single solving time as 9 secs and the best average of 5 solves as 12 secs. Kevin is preparing for his upcoming WCA competitions in 2022.

### What the Program offers:

The training offers a step-by-step breakdown of how to solve 3x3 Rubik's Cube for ages 10-14. You will learn cube notations, how to achieve different stages in solving a cube and several tips to minimize your solving duration. If you have passion for Speedcubing, this is the ultimate program for you.

### Tamil School

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

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

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

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

### DTA's Seniors

**Durham Tamil Association**

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## COMMUNITY WATCH

## Durham Tamils Association Serving Our Community



DTA SERVING DURHAM TAMILS DURING THESE UNPRECEDENTED AND CHALLENGING TIMES

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

**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 other sponsors for your continued support throughout the year.

For more information on all DTA's Community Support Programs and Sponsor contacts please visit [www.DurhamTamils.Org](http://www.DurhamTamils.Org) Tel 905.428.7007

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