

 \ll 18TH YEAR IN CIRCULATION \gg MARCH - 2024







Former Prime Minister Brian Mulroney, Winner of Back-to-BackMajority Governments in the 1980s,

Passes Away at the age of 84



Former Canadian Prime Minister Brian Mulroney passed away at the age of 84

By: Sivan Ilangko

∏businessman, lawyer, stateman who was elected as the eighteenth Prime Minister of Canada in 1984. He served the country for almost 9 years in that capacity with so much passion and dignity. He

prominent persons in Canadian history and most admired former Prime Minster of Canada. In 2021, he was also selected by a group of 50 prominent Canadians and Americans as the top ranked prime

Ton.BianMulroneywasadistinguished is widely considered as one of the most ministers and presidents of the last 100 years in the area of Canada-U.S. relations along with President Ronald Regan President George H. W. Bush. He died on February 29, 2024, at the age of 84 in Palm Beach, Florida, United States.

For full news, please see page 10





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CANADA NEWS



CAA launches guide to help air travellers during common flight disruptions

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The Canadian Automobile Association (CAA) launched an easyto-use guide to help air travellers navigate the rules when they run into some of the most common problems, such as flight delays, cancellations, lost bags and getting bumped from a flight.

Luggage in airport terminal. (CNW Group/Canadian Automobile Association)

"Travelling can be complex, and the rules protecting air travellers are complicated. CAA is stepping up by providing Canadians with the information they need when things go wrong," says Ian Jack, vice-president, public affairs for CAA National.

Canada has had federal rules governing air passenger rights for several years now, but they are complicated and long, running to over 60 pages. CAA's Air Passenger Help Guide provides a plain-language guide that answers questions about the most common flight disruptions in five clicks or less. Air travellers wondering what, if anything, the airlines owe them can consult our guide for help.

"CAA runs one of Canada's largest leisure-travel agencies and has been a strong advocate of strengthening passenger protections. CAA has been pushing the federal government to simplify the rules to make them easier to use," says Jack. "But until then,



CAA's Air Passenger Help Guide will be there to help air travellers when something goes wrong."

According to a recent CAA survey, over six in ten (61%) Canadians say they or someone they know has experienced a flight disruption in the last two years.

As a strong advocate for the travelling public, CAA has also been pushing the government to live up to its commitment to publish statistics on airline performance on topics such as on-time or baggage loss, so Canadians can judge for themselves how everyone is doing. Over 80% of Canadians agree, saying they want more transparency through the publishing of statistics by the federal government and airlines.

CAA's Air Passenger Help Guide can be found at CAA.ca/ AirPassengerHelpGuide. Travellers are encouraged to consult the guide the next time something goes wrong to find out the rules that apply to them.

The latest CAA findings are based on a poll of 2,503 Canadians carried out from October 20 to 30, 2023. A

probability sample of the same size would yield a margin of error of \pm -2%.

About CAA

CAA is a federation of eight Clubs providing 7 million Members with exceptional emergency roadside service, complete automotive and travel services, Member savings and comprehensive insurance services. CAA also advocates on issues of concern to its Members and all Canadians, including road safety, the environment, mobility, infrastructure, and consumer protection. CAA has been ranked among the most trusted brands for seven years in a row by the Peter B. Gustavson School of Business at the University of Victoria.

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PUBLISHER'S DESK

MONSOON JOURNAL a parfait media publication

Unlearning Learned Helplessness

By Harrish Thirukumaran

relationship is like a pendulum. They swing Aacross multiple behaviours ranging from positive to negative ones. Often, this can create feelings of helplessness for those who experience the more difficult sides of a friend, colleague, partner, family member and so forth. Helplessness is defined as the belief that there is nothing that anyone can do to improve a bad situation.

It relates to our understanding of control in our environment. In this case, helplessness is a belief that control over the situation or its outcomes is impossible. Like all beliefs, helplessness is learned according to American psychologist, Martin Seligman. Learned helplessness is tied to the belief that our outcomes are locked by fate, chance, or luck. As I've come to learn, these patterns of behaviours can stem from our closest relationships initially, namely our parents or primary caregivers. This article serves to highlight this issue among readers to increase their awareness of it within themselves and for those around them.

Common symptoms associated with learned helplessness include feeling a lack of control over the outcome of situations as well as feelings of frustration, according to Medical News Today. The organization has gone onto say that it is caused by a response to stressful situations or traumatic experiences in which a person feels they have limited control over the outcome. For adults, Medical News Today explains the following:

"People in this state typically accept that bad things will happen and that they have little control over them. They are unsuccessful in resolving issues even when there is a potential solution."

A point I would make is that for adults and their relationships, it can cause a bit of confusion in that these types of situations do not necessarily bring you to dislike the other person. Rather, it is their behaviour or action that you dislike, which causes the distress that leaves you feeling helpless. Children, in another instance, may learn that they cannot change their situation when their caregivers do not respond appropriately to their needs for help. Some characteristics for learned helplessness in children include low self-esteem and low motivation.

Although it is a difficult condition to experience as an individual in their relationship, there are ways to overcome feelings of helplessness. Psych Central advises us to understand how trauma affects the

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body and mind. This is what they had to say:

"Trauma physically and mentally impacts our mind and body the moment it happens....

When pressed by the impact of trauma, your mind will work to problem-solve, sending messages to your body, its muscles and organs, to be ready to fight the problem or flee from it. Sometimes trauma causes a third option where your mind dissociates, fragments or shifts into denial. When this happens, your body goes numb, limp or stops in its place like a deer in headlights."

Focusing on self-talk; sharpening your awareness about stressful triggers; and recognizing patterns are also strategies to manage helplessness. Manage is an important word here because it's not necessarily about eliminating those feelings, but rather recognizing them for what they are and understanding them with a heightened sense of awareness. Overall, learned helplessness happens, but that does not mean it has to remain.

CANADA NEWS



Tracking Symptoms and Activities Can Play Key Role in Managing Life with Arthritis



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s spring approaches and Canadians Astart getting outside more, Arthritis Research Canada is sharing research findings about tracking symptoms and daily activities to help people better manage their arthritis. Join us for a free webinar on Wednesday, March 6, at 10 a.m. PT.

Everything a person does in their day from how much exercise and sleep they get to what they eat and the medications they take – can impact their symptoms and overall health. However, arthritis can fluctuate over time, making it difficult to identify what is helping or hindering someone's quality of life.

"Information is power, and for people with arthritis, the information is within themselves," said Dr. Linda Li, a Senior Scientist at Arthritis Research Canada. "Having a record of symptoms and activities

creates a full picture and is useful in helping people manage their disease and overall health."

Regular tracking also allows people to present a full picture to their health care providers so they can better prescribe and recommend treatments.

At Arthritis Research Canada, scientists are working with patient partners and health professionals to develop tools and strategies to help people living with arthritis track their symptoms, disease activity, exercise levels and daily activities.

The free webinar is part of Episode 13 of Arthritis Research Canada's Arthritis Research Education Series. Learn more about tracking research, resources, patient stories and more on the organization's website or by signing up for the free webinar.

To sign up for the Keeping Track: Life with Arthritis webinar, go to: https://us02web. zoom.us/webinar/register/5317053439243/ WN_2Wh3Tb3xTKiXCkrY5kDefQ#/ registration.

To watch Episode 13 of the Arthritis Research Education Series, go to:

https://www.arthritisresearch.ca/ arthritis-research-education-series/keepingtrack/videos/.

ABOUT ARTHRITIS RESEARCH CANADA:

Arthritis Research Canada is the largest clinical arthritis research institution in North America. Our mission is to transform the lives of people living with arthritis through research and engagement. Arthritis Research Canada's scientific director, Dr. Diane Lacaille, is leading a team of over 100 researchers, trainees and staff whose life-changing research is creating a future where people living with arthritis have the knowledge and tools to triumph over pain and disability. Arthritis Research Canada is now conducting arthritis research from coast to coast with centres in British Columbia, Alberta, Quebec, and Nova Scotia and scientists affiliated with seven major universities: University of British Columbia, Simon Fraser University, University of Calgary, Université Laval, McGill University, Université de Montréal, and Dalhousie University. Arthritis Research Canada is leading research aimed at preventing arthritis, facilitating early diagnosis, finding new and better treatments, and improving quality of life.

The Significance of the Lenten Season.

The Lent season starts on Ash Wednesday (14/02) and extends up to the Resurrection Day on March 31st. This period is most significant in the lives of Christians as Jesus Christ fasted and prayed for 40 days for the redemption of humanity. Some Christians fast during these days as fasting is indispensable for divine guidance and blessings. Participation in fasting and

worshipping inculcates the right values in its adherents. The values are Remembering the futility of human existence, Reflecting on the purpose of life, Resisting the devil by the truth, Repentance and desiring change, Reconciliation and using it for forgiveness, Renewal, and finally rejoicing. The ultimate value of worshipping is Rejoicing in the Lord - "Perinpam".





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CANADA NEWS

MONSOON JOURNAL a parfait media publication

Government of Canada introduces legislation to combat harmful content online, including the sexual exploitation of children



The Online Harms Act would establish a baseline standard to keep young people safe online and uphold freedom of expression. Now, more than ever, online platforms must take responsibility—and be held accountable—for protecting kids from the harms embedded within online platforms. Everyone in Canada deserves to be safe in all aspects of their lives, including online.

The digital world can pose significant risks. Social media can be used to sexually exploit children, promote self-harm to children, incite violence, put people's safety at risk and foment hate. Online harms have real world impact with tragic, even fatal, consequences.

On Feb 26, 2024, the Honourable Arif Virani, Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, introduced Bill C-63, the Online Harms Act. The Bill would cre stronger online protection for children and better safeguard everyone in Canada from online hate and other types of harmful content. The Bill sets out a new vision for safer and more inclusive online participation. It would hold online platforms, including livestreaming and adult content services, accountable for the design choices made that lead to the dissemination and amplification of harmful content on their platforms and ensure that platforms are employing mitigation strategies that reduce a user's exposure to harmful content.

For too long, we have tolerated a system where online platforms have offloaded their responsibilities onto parents, expecting them to protect their kids from harms that platforms create or amplify.

Everyone in Canada should be able to access an online environment where they can express themselves freely, without fearing for their safety or their life. The Government will always uphold Canadians' constitutional right to freedom of expression, which is essential in a healthy democracy. There is also an urgent need for better safeguards for social media users, particularly children. This is why the new framework is focused on seven types of the most damaging and extremely harmful content online: content that sexually victimizes a child or revictimizes a survivor; intimate content communicated without consent; violent extremist and terrorist content; content that incites violence; content that foments hatred; content used to bully a child; and content that induces a child to harm themselves.

Online platforms, including livestreaming and adult content services, must be transparent

and they must be held accountable. The safety of everyone in Canada, especially childrensociety's most vulnerable depends on it.

Quotes

"I am the parent of two young boys. I will do whatever I can to ensure their digital world is as safe as the neighbourhood we live in. Children are vulnerable online. They need to be protected from online sexual exploitation, hate and cyberbullying. Now more than ever, especially given the evolving capabilities of AI, online platforms must take responsibility for addressing harmful content and creating a digital world where everyone can participate safely and freely. This legislation does just that."

> — The Hon. Arif Virani, Minister of Justice and Attorney



WORLD NEWS





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15th World Tamil Teachers' Conference

Objectives of the conference

- * To examine new pedagogies and ideas for the teaching and learning of Tamil language
- * To identify pedagogy for teaching learners of Tamil as a second language.
- To explore new ideas on how to incorporate and leverage information, communication, and technological tools in the teaching of Tamil language.
- * To discover teaching and learning methods for speaking fluency.
- * To understand the importance of learning the Tamil language and finding the ways to do so.
- * To create networking opportunities among the international community of Tamil language teachers.
- * To actively promote the institutions teaching/wanting to teach Tamil language.



15th World Tamil Teachers' Conference

Research Paper Titles

- * Using linguistics to learn and teach the Tamil language.
- Methods of teaching for students learning Tamil as a second language.
- * Using elements based on heritage, culture and the arts for the teaching and learning
- * Teaching the pronunciation of the Tamil language in a unified manner.
- * Easy techniques to avoid spelling mistakes.
- * Creating & teaching Tamil words using the syllabic method and its benefits.
- * The consequences of teaching Tamil with the aid of foreign languages.
- * Tamil language learning and teaching resources based on content relevant to contemporary issues.
- * Leveraging information and communication technology for teaching the Tamil language.
- * Papers that are written on another topic in relevance to the theme of the conference.

Papers

- * Research papers must be based on data derived from academic or class room-based research.
- * The conclusion of the research papers must contain recommendations for improving the teaching and learning of Tamil language.
- * Papers which include empirical evidence based on research conducted on current students, together with video recording are welcome.
- * The papers should be a guide to face the challenges and difficulties encountered when teaching.
- * Papers which include demonstrative aspects may be submitted.

Synopsis of research papers

- * Research paper synopses should be within 100 150 words (UNICODE encoding)
- * Important details such as your full name, email and phone number should be indicated.

Full versions of the selected research papers must be submitted by 3rd March 2024 to the organizers.

30 Mins Introduction of the presenter 5 Mins

To register for the World Tamil Teachers Conference, kindly visit our website padimuraitamil.com and complete the online registration form.





WORLD NEWS

MONSOON JOURNAL a parfait media publication

Can Macao Become Asia's Las Vegas?



Macao's casino operators have been assigned old districts to redevelop. Locals hope their non-gaming investments will also help protect Macao's architecture and promote the local culture. (Photo courtesy Dora Sui Jennings)

acao, the former Portuguese colony that Lhas become the world's biggest gambling city in recent years, is embarking on an experiment to remake itself, but it's unclear if it will succeed.

Visitors to the city see a difference compared to 10 or 20 years ago.

There are new and bigger casino resorts - from The Londoner to MGM Cotai — and they no longer offer just slot machines and gambling tables. They feature non-gaming entertainment — from water

slides to concerts. There's even a zipline.

The city that has relied on gaming revenue for decades has been betting on nongaming attractions to lure non-gamblers, in hopes of diversifying its economy.

But behind the water splashes and zipline rides, Macao is struggling to live up to its nickname: Las Vegas of the East.

Although its gaming revenue has exceeded that of Las Vegas by three-fold before the COVID-19 pandemic, unlike its U.S. counterpart in Nevada - whose casino earnings are 70% non-gaming and 30% gaming — Macao's mix is just 5% non-gaming and 95%

gaming, according to IGamiX, a Macao-based consultancy.

That's far from China's wishes when the city returned to Chinese sovereignty in 1999 and soon after, ended the casino monopoly, opening the sector to foreign competition in hopes of turning Macao into a leisure and entertainment

"I don't think anyone realized when they let he genie out of the bag, that the market would be predominantly mainland China," said Ben Lee, a gaming analyst at IGamiX. "In the past 20 years, instead of transforming into a world center for tourism, all Macao has become is a world center for Chinese gambling. It was never meant to be that. The intention was to make Macao into Vegas."

Beijing has urged Macao to end its dependence on gaming. It has tried to reduce the number of Chinese gamblers flocking to the only place in China that allows gambling, by restricting the number of visits Chinese residents from some provinces can make to Macao to only six per

Beijing has also tried to stem the flow of an estimated \$150 billion a year in Chinese capital, especially corruption money, to Macao, and banned promoting overseas gambling on the mainland.

Those measures and President Xi Jinping's crackdown on corruption have significantly

reduced Macao's gross gaming revenue from the record high of \$45 million in 2013 to \$22 million last year.

But Macao is still heavily dependent on gaming, which accounted for more than 50% of its GDP before COVID-19 and 60% of government revenues in 2023, according to official figures.

So last year, Macao's government began requiring casino operators to diversify their customer base and invest heavily in non-gaming projects, as a condition for renewing their concession licenses. That's on top of a 40% casino

The six concessionaires — Wynn, Sands, SJM, MGM, Melco, and Galaxy — have pledged to invest a combined \$13.6 billion to explore overseas customer markets and develop nongaming projects, including conventions and exhibitions, entertainment, and performances.

However, a year later, it's unclear whether this new approach will work.

Observers said many casino operators remain reluctant to shift their focus from gaming, an easier money-maker, to less profitable nongaming ventures.

> We have been living with casinos for decades. It's not that easy to say I want to diversify the company. You have to cultivate a mentality for this kind of diversification. It will take time," said community leader Miguel Senna Fernandes. "I don't see this yet."

> Analysts pointed to "half-hearted" attempts by some casinos to meet the government's mandate: simply opening retail shops or holding concerts by oldies singers transplanted from Vegas.

Casino operators have not accepted VOA's requests for interviews.

In a statement to VOA, the Macao Government Tourism Office said, Macao has seen an increase in the number of non-gaming visitors "and the government's efforts to diversify the tourism attractions have

received positive feedback.'

Macao's casino operators have

agreed to the government's request

to diversify their customer base to

attract more non-Chinese tourists

and to invest heavily in non-gaming

attractions (Photo courtesy Ralph Jennings)

> It said exit surveys found visitors' top three reasons for being there were shopping, sightseeing and gastronomy.

But the most recent statistics show gaming still accounted for nearly 80% of tourism revenue in 2022.

Experts say it may be difficult to replicate Vegas.

'Since early years, Vegas has had an alternative economy. You have a leisure industry which makes Las Vegas so diversified; it's not just gambling. My friends go to Las Vegas, they don't go to gamble. They say it's totally different from Macao, which is casino, casino, casino," Fernandes said.

He and others see the government's requirements on casinos to promote non-gaming as a positive move.

"Now there's a chance to change the rules of the game," said Fernandes, head of the Macanese Association, which hopes Macao's unique mixed-race culture can also be promoted.

Some casinos are starting to catch on to what draws visitors. Galaxy organized a 23,000-ticket concert by the Korean girl group Blackpink last year that sold out within seconds.

"That jolted the entertainment scene. That's massive," Lee said. "They could've had two weeks of Blackpink instead of two nights."

But what keeps more overseas tourists from



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In recent years, Macao's casinos have built non-gaming attractions such as water parks, ziplines and arcades. There are plans to build more attractions under conditions for renewing new licenses. (Photo courtesy of Studio City)

visiting may be few direct flights to Macao, competition from casinos opening elsewhere in Asia, tourism services geared toward Chinese speakers, and a transportation system that struggles to cope with massive numbers of tourists, many of whom must wait in long lines for an insufficient number of taxis or crowded buses, especially during public holidays.

Amid these growing pains are concerns the government's "meddling" in casino operations, by cracking down on cross-border recruitment of Chinese high rollers and specifying how many gambling tables and slot machines casinos can have, could hurt earnings.

"The Communist Party of China ... has never been comfortable with legal gambling. So, they have decided they will use carrots and sticks to reshape the world's largest casino market," gaming expert I. Nelson Rose wrote in a blog. "Perhaps the greatest danger to the free market casinos of Macau is the government's meddling in their day-to-day operation," he added.

For now, casino operators are complying by trying to attract visitors from other countries, building more recreational facilities, including a new water park and theme park, and organizing more performances.

Each concessionaire has also been assigned an old district to redevelop, from piers and



Macao's casino operators have been assigned old districts to redevelop. Locals hope their non-gaming investments will also help protect Macao's architecture and promote the local culture. (Photo courtesy Ralph Jennings)

shipyards to a fortress neighborhood and a former firecracker factory.

"It's kind of like a big experiment that hasn't happened in this way anywhere else," said Tim Simpson, author of Betting on Macau: Casino Capitalism and China's Consumer Revolution.

"There's an interesting social and economic experiment to see if they can be tasked with revitalizing areas, attracting different tourists to the city, and providing sporting or music events. It would be interesting to see the outcome of this big experiment that is happening here."

It may mean lower profitability and more work for casinos, but there seems to be no choice and no turning back.

"At the end of the day, it is good for Macao. It's what we should've done in the first 20 years,"

If Macao succeeds, it may live up to its moniker — the Las Vegas of Asia.



WORLD NEWS

Giving Up on US, Haitian Migrants **Opt for 'Mexican Dream'**

t wasn't his first choice, Lbut Mexico is now home for Evens Luxama — along with thousands of other Haitians forced to put their hopes of migrating to the United States on hold.

The 34-year-old is one of a growing number of people from the crisistorn Caribbean nation pursuing what activists have described as the "Mexican dream," building a life in a land that migrants traditionally hurried through.

"I wanted to go to the United States, but I don't think there's another country that offers the opportunity that Mexico does right now," said Luxama, who hopes his partner and young daughter will join him in the Mexican capital soon.

"In Mexico, they accept you, not only Haitians, but all foreigners," he told

"They do everything to get you regularized, so that you have your papers, and with your papers, you can bring your family to live with you," he

Haiti, the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere, has seen years of worsening security due to raging gang violence, with its political, economic and public health systems also in tatters.

Luxama fled overseas last year after a gang kidnapped a cousin and the sister of his girlfriend, who were released after paying a ransom.

At the time, the Mexican Embassy was the only one open in Port-au \cdot Prince to process his visa request.

Luxama now works in Mexico City as an editor at a video production company — one of an unprecedented 141,000 people who sought refuge in the Latin American nation in 2023, mostly from Haiti, Honduras and Cuba.

In a recent video call to his parents in Haiti, he asked about the situation back home.

"You already know, son — a lot of problems," his father replied.

Haiti has spiraled deeper into chaos since President Jovenel Moise was assassinated in 2021.

Gangs run rampant in large swaths of the country, and homicides in Haiti



Haitian migrants work in a construction site in Mexico City, Mexico on Jan. 27, 2024. Some 141,000 people sought refuge in Mexico in 2023, a record number. Most were from Haiti, Honduras, and Cuba. They often work in the low-paid construction and commerce sectors.

more than doubled last year to nearly 4,800, according to a U.N. report released last month.

In October, the United Nations Security Council authorized the deployment of a multinational force to help restore order.

"It's almost impossible to live in Haiti," said Luxama, who fears that he will be powerless to help his family when danger comes.

'Mexican dream exists'

Migration from Haiti is not a new phenomenon for Mexico.

In September 2021, after a deadly earthquake in their country, thousands of Haitian migrants crowded into the Mexican border city of Ciudad Acuna hoping to cross over to the United States.

There were already Haitian communities in Tijuana on the Mexican-U.S. border and the southern city of Tapachula, where thousands gathered seeking permits to travel through Mexico to the United States.

These days, Haitians are also a growing presence in Mexico City. many of them working in low-paid, informal jobs.

Some sleep on the streets in makeshift camps.

Rule changes and the "militarization" of the southern U.S. border are among the reasons prompting migrants to stay in Mexico, said Rafael Velasquez, country director at the humanitarian group International Rescue Committee.

"Many people arrive and when they see that there is an opportunity (in Mexico), that the Mexican dream exists, they decide to give it a try," he said.

Although the United States is allowing thousands of Haitians with expired travel documents to stay on, it only applies to those who arrived before November 6, 2022.

On a street in the Mexican capital, five Haitians drilled the pavement to install pipes near an abandoned cinema.

One of them, who gave his name as Jony and speaks Spanish, acts as an interpreter between the bosses and the rest of the workers, who speak Haitian Creole.

He was part of a wave of Haitians who arrived in Brazil after a devastating earthquake in Haiti in 2010 that left more than 300,000 people dead.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, many of them headed north from Brazil as well as Chile, citing discrimination and difficulty obtaining legal status, according to New Yorkbased Human Rights Watch.

Every day, Jony travels several hours by subway to and from his workplace, and sometimes spends days waiting to be paid his salary.

Although he originally wanted to go to the United States, he said he stayed in Mexico because "it's easier to return to Haiti one day."



SPECIAL FEATURE

(Continued from Page 1)

Former Prime Minister Brian Mulroney, Winner of Back-to-Back Majority Governments in the 1980s, Passes Away at the age of 84



Former Prime Minister Brian Mulroney's insights are invaluable – and always welcome, states Hon. Justin Trudeau, Canadian Prime Minister. At PM office during June 2023, before the Atlantic Economic Forum.



Former Canadian Prime Minister Brian Mulroney – seen here in a 1993 photo – passed away at the age of 84



Brian Mulroney and wife Mila on election night 1984

For Tamil Canadians, Mr.Mulroney is held in high regard and a special place in their hearts due to his actions when 155 Tamil refugees landed on the shores of Newfoundland in 1986. The late Capt. Gus Dalton (a recipient of the Canadian Tamil Congress's Leaders for Change Award) and his crew rescued and brought them ashore. The Tamil boat peoples' arrival was not without controversy, as there was pressure on the Mulroney government to deport them. the controversy heated up, Prime Minister Mulroney muted those who called for the return of the refugees back to Sri Lanka where they would have faced persecution. He was unequivocal and he spoke for all Canadians when he told the national media "we are not in the business of turning away refugees".

Within days, all of the 155 Tamils were settled in Montreal and Toronto, where they started careers, families and new lives. This single act has changed the lives of many Tamils whose population in Canada is over 300,000 now.

Hon. Mulroney was born in Baie-Comeau, Quebec on March 20, 1939. In 1973, he married Mila Pivnicki and both have four children. He attended St. Thomas College high school, Chatham, New Brunswick He obtained his undergraduate degree from St. Francis Xavier Antigonish, University, Nova Scotia and a law degree from Université Laval in Quebec City. In September 2019, St. Francis Xavier University in Nova Scotia inaugurated the Brian Mulroney Institute of Government, a one hundred-million-dollar initiative designed to provide undergraduates – sustained by a large scholarship program – with degrees in public policy and government. He practiced law in before entering politics and after resignation as Prime Minister.

Hon. Mulroney was presented with several awards, including Canada's highest honor, Companion of the Order of Canada, the highest honor of the Government of Quebec, Grand officier de l'Ordre national du Québec, Global Citizen Award by the United Nations Association in Canada, George Bush Award for Excellence in Public Service, Environment International Bureau Award for "outstanding and responsible leadership on both global and national environmental policies and issues. He will be missed by all Canadians.

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Dr. Adeel Sheikh treats benign prostatic hyperplasia (or enlarged prostate) at Markham Stouffville Hospital using the GreenLight laser.

Lighting the way

Markham Stouffville Hospital's new GreenLight Laser is reducing hospital stays and wait times for prostate surgeries. BY GLYNIS RATCLIFFE

Bradley Steele has a normal

sleep routine again, thanks

to surgery at Markham

Stouffville Hospital.

n a darkened operating room, Dr. Adeel Sheikh, a urologist at Oak Valley Health's Markham Stouffville Hospital (MSH), dons purple-tinted goggles, as do the rest of the medical professionals that surround him. Dr. Sheikh is handed a surgical instrument - a long, slim tube attached to a machine, which a nurse turns on – and it lights up neon green, casting the room in a futuristic glow.

It's the first time Dr. Sheikh and his team are using the hospital's new GreenLight Laser, and they're about to make the life of Bradley Steele, a 59-year-old risk insurance specialist, a whole lot easier.

Like many men in their late 50s, by the time Steele realized that his prostate was the source of his discomfort, he was feeling the reverberations in all aspects of his life.

"You don't notice it because it's happening every day and ramping up very slowly," he notes. "Then all of a sudden, you're going, 'Wait a second, I'm getting up every hour and a half to go to the bathroom! What's going on here?"

In some ways, it's like the analogy of the frog in water: place a frog in a pot of water and slowly turn up the heat until it boils. The frog won't realize anything is wrong until it's too late.

FAR-REACHING EFFECTS

Steele was experiencing a very common condition in men (or people assigned male at birth) as they age - benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH), or enlarged prostate. The prostate encircles the urethra, but when it increases in size, it starts to constrict the urethra, resulting in a long list of symptoms related to urination. These include decreased flow and an inability to completely

empty the bladder, which often causes the person to feel an increased need to urinate, and in some cases, experience pain.

In Canada, more than 50 per cent of men in their 60s experience symptoms of BPH, and that increases to approximately 90 per cent for men in their 80s and 90s. Sometimes medication can control the condition, but when that doesn't work, surgery is needed to hollow out the inner part of the prostate.

It may not seem like much, but that continual anticipation of needing to urinate can have a serious impact on a person's quality of life. In Steele's case, he was constantly anxious about whether he would be able to get to the bathroom in time, or disturbing people around him in theatres and on planes. But while the mental burden was significant, it was the physical impact that drove Steele to seek medical advice in the spring of 2023.

"I went to see my family doctor, and I said, 'Look, I can't handle this anymore. This is not a good life," he recounts. "I was up every 15 to 20 minutes some nights and tired all the time."

Steele's family doctor referred him to Dr. Sheikh at MSH, who specializes in minimally invasive surgery. Dr. Sheikh performed a quick consultation and told him he was a great candidate for surgery, and it just so happened that the hospital had recently acquired a GreenLight Laser, funded with the generous support of the community through

> the Markham Stouffville Hospital Foundation. He asked Steele if he was willing to be one of the first patients, and he said yes.



The most common surgery for BPH is performed endoscopically through the urethra, during which the surgeon hollows out the prostate by shaving tissue away with a cautery

of bleeding, and patients need to stay in the

In recent years, however, the GreenLight Laser has become the tool of choice because it enables surgeons to essentially vaporize prostate tissue instead, eliminating most of the bleeding. Even better, the surgery is now an outpatient procedure, allowing surgeons to discharge patients the same day and free up much-needed hospital beds.

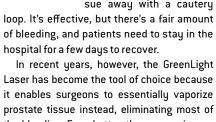
"When you tell patients that they have to have surgery, their first question is, 'How

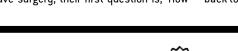
long do I have to stay in hospital?" notes Dr. Sheikh. "And to be able to say, 'This is just a day procedure,' it really puts their mind at ease and helps them accept the need for the surgery. And they're quite satisfied afterwards, so it's a very gratifying procedure."

Dr. Sheikh estimates that about 70 to 80 per cent of BPH-related surgeries at MSH will be done with the GreenLight Laser moving forward, with endoscopic or open surgery used for other cases where a tissue biopsy is needed. The move will increase the hospital's capacity to treat this common problem and subsequently reduce wait times. MSH's Department of Surgery is approaching the task of increasing capacity and reducing wait times from multiple angles—opening a ninth operating room in 2024 and kicking off a fundraising campaign to acquire new surgical robotics equipment.

As for Steele, he can't believe the difference this surgery made. He can sleep through the night and no longer worries about getting to a bathroom when he's out.

"This has been a game changer for me," he notes. "It's the physical thing, but it's also really eased some of that mental pressure as well—the anxiety and the potential embarrassment. Dr. Sheikh gave my life back to me."





In 2023, Markham Stouffville Hospital's surgical team received two prestigious awards from the American College of Surgeons.







SPECIAL FEATURE

HOLI KE SAATH BHI, HOLI KE BAAD

This Holi, win a year's supply of stain remover



Brightly coloured dyes, music, dancing, and cheers of 'Holi hai' are just some of the fond memories we share around the colourful festival of Holi!

This year, as you prepare to immerse yourself in the vibrant colours of Holi, we invite you to join us in the celebrations by showcasing your most dazzling festive outfit and sharing how you revel in the spirit of the festival. Whether you're splashing friends and family with colours, indulging in delicious sweets... we want to hear all about it,

especially if it's playing with colours! Share your best & brightest Holi moments using #HoliWithOxiClean on Instagram and you could have a chance to win a year's supply of OxiCleanTM MaxForce Laundry Stain Remover Spray and OxiCleanTM Versatile Stain Remover Powder! For contest details, visit us @ OxiCleanCanada on Instagram.

Nobody likes stained clothes and there are times when you'd rather enjoy the moment than worry about cleaning them. Likewise, when you celebrate Holi this year, enjoy the colour of every moment without worrying about your clothes getting stained. OxiClean's™ water-activated formula unleashes bubbling oxygen power for safe, effective cleaning − all while being gentle on your clothes. These incredible chlorine-free, colour-safe stain fighters use the power of oxygen to get tough stains out of your laundry − while also boosting your laundry water's pH to improve your detergent's cleaning ability.

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Remember to elevate your Holi experience and have the chance to win an amazing prize. Share your joy, your colours, and your stories with us using #HoliWithOxiClean, and let's make this festival of colours even more memorable together!

To learn more about the contest, check the details on @ OxiCleanCanada on Instagram.

Wishing you a very happy Holi, from $OxiClean^{TM}$.



4

Aviation & Airlines

SPECIAL FEATURE



FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION – IS IT A FAILING OR A FAILED AVIATION ADMINISTRATION?

I am sure that most of us are familiar with the term FAA – Federal Aviation Administration, an agency created solely to be an independent Regulatory Body, which functions within the US, a



forerunner, and a Global leader in aviation. This is an arm of the US government that functions as a policeman, and a law enforcement agency, for the safety of the aerospace industry, and receives its funding from the US government. There are remarkable and eye-catching words describing their mission, vision and objectives, and hope it is not an illusion. Mission is to facilitate one of the safest and best efficient aerospace systems in the globe. Vision is to be a leader in aviation safety, maintain great integrity and answerable to the American public and world of aviation. Website elaborates safety as the main passion, whether it is on ground or in the air for all space travelers to travel to their destinations safely. The FAA trumpets it as a multifaceted, independent agency, with an independent staff office, directly reporting to the FAA administrator, monitors airports, air traffic control, investigations, aviation safety, issuance of certificate of airworthiness for aircraft pilot certification, functions as a licensing authority of all aviation personnel, conducting evaluations, and examinations. I still hold on to the FAA course material and the hand book that I studied. FAA is a "Big Brother" of the US aviation and aerospace industry.

It is not superfluous to say that the FAA was created accidentally,in 1958, the result of a major accident in US aviation, in June 1956, over the Grand Canyon involving TWA & United airlines mid-air collision, 130 people died from the time of Wright Brothers. This prompted

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senator Mike Monroney D-Oklahoma to introduce the "Federal Aviation act of 1958, and was signed by President Dwight Eisenohver as a legislation,to create an independent body for the efficient use of US airspace.

Part of this FAA act is an oversight role, that assures an aviation organization or designee complies with and uses safety standards and procedures in their business endeavors. A separate entity was created NTSB-National Transportation Safety Board, to investigate accidents, incidents, and make recommendations to the FAA, but not to enforce its findings as law. This rests only with the FAA. In short, NTSBs hands are tied. The FAA is tasked to promote and encourage aviation development and civil aeronautics. This language is a little ambiguous as lots of aviation analysts vehemently feel, including myself, since it indicates a profit motive inadvertantly over the safety and ethics. I sincerely view this as a real conundrum with events that unfolded in the wake of Lion Air 610 crash, October 2018, and five months later later Ethiopian airlines 302 over Addis Ababa, involving a Boeing 737 MAX-8 in both, loss of 356 people. FAA was acting in a slow mode after the Lion air crash, MAX was still flying, and

even after the Ethiopian crash, for reasons best known to them. After lots of hue and cry, FAA grounded the B 737 -MAX . Utter shame! Why did the FAA behave like this? This prompted someone in the Capitol Hill to label the FAA as a "Tombstone Agency", since it acts only when death occurs. Frightening, isn't it?

Look at the murky waters, both the FAA and Boeing are in now. The FAA, an independent agency headquartered at "Independence Avenue", Washington DC, Did it function "Independently or Interdependently"?, is my question?. What I am going to narrate paints a different picture, quoting Bloomberg investigative reporter Peter Robison, and many other publications I have traveled through, after the horrific 737 MAX crashes. I cannot fathom how the FAA allowed its moral compass to falter?,



in a country that prides itself as the first in the world,to have had a "Man on the Moon". Why did the FAA relinquish its oversight responsibilities

to the manufacturer?, whom they are supposed to"Police". Can any one give a plausible answer? as I am dumb founded. Did they do it willingly or forced to, because of certain constraints? Quoting Peter Robison: Engineer, Richard Reed, was recruited in 2011, to work for the FAA's Boeing Aviation Oversight Office who after looking at the organizational charts said, "the Regulators were in the service of Boeing and not to police them". In 2009 safety Guard Rails were removed, When FAA used the Boeing engineers to monitor their own work, and report to the FAA supervisor for certification. It means ,FAA should not burden the manufacturer with restrictions but to expedite the production of aircrafts and sell quickly. This is where, all the floodgates opened, and the flying public started to face the music. Thomas McSweeny, who was director at the FAA certification office had told a reporter, "after the delegation of the oversight to Boeing, we don't know whether we exist in the role we were supposed to do". Later when McSweeny became a lobbyist, he was approached by Boeing officials for an early issuance of an airworthy license for the airplanes.But why? No one knows, the answer is on the wall.

FAA administrators are appointed by the US Federal government. With the new incumbent President or Congress, either Republican or Democrat, a new face heads the agency. The FAA's foremost responsibility is towards the American people and the flying public. President George Bush's choice in 2003, Marion Blakey for the FAA, while addressing the staff, stressed a customer service attitude the agency should follow in its day to day operations. Well, what she meant was, quoting well placed sources, "the FAA should treat the Manufacturer as a customer and not the flying American public". It was said, she wanted the agency to be a Business oriented organization rather than a law enforcement agency, and a quality control inspector. It is alarming.





Readers should understand the policy of the major parties that set the agenda. Republicans always want less government interference in business activities, so as to enhance profits. Democrats want strict control and a system that is answerable to the

public. Democrats believe in more funding to the agencies. I wonder whether the deregulation fervor brought by Regan in 1982, swept through all the Federal agencies and restricted their activities? The Answer is yes, as subsequent Republican party led administrations followed this policy. This was a big blow to the FAA and to its workforce. Did deregulation bring all the maladies? It is crystal clear. Looks like the agency functioned as a rubber stamp only.

After the fatal MAX crashes, Congressional hearings revealed the playbook of the Regulator and Boeing, from some of the employee's emails. FAA came under intense heat and scrutiny for its coziness and dereliction of its oversight role. Former NTSB chairman JIM HALL, said a great deal of influence is wielded through fundraising activities to members of Congress. So will there be an impartial code of conduct



Regulatory Agency? Some of the emails by the Boeing employees is evident of what was happening in this unholy partnership. One of the employees mocked his colleagues and the Regulator agency, Quoting: "737 MAX is designed by clowns who in turn are monitored by monkeys". Scary, please don't fly on Boeing planes, it says. This brought a strongly

between Boeing and the

worded criticism from then Senator Tom Udall, D-New Mexico, "this will go down in US history as one of the biggest blunders" (But did not say Collusion).

I could not believe when prominent Texas Republican Senator Ted Cruz, during a Senate hearing termed the FAA as a "Captivated Agency" When you read these, did the FAA pay any attention? Alaskan airline MAX-9 incident, 2 months back is proof of the agency's blatant disregard.

It looks like a sad saga for the flying public, who believe every flight will be a smooth landing when you fly. Can anyone rein in the Federal Aviation Administration?

My humble suggestion to the US Congress and the Senate is, when you have an administrator who functions with utmost integrity to manage the agency, keep him irrespective of the party affiliations and provide them with enough cash flow and tools to manage it. The ultimate responsibility of any government in the world should be "the safety of its people". If this Paradigm is maintained at the highest level, then it will be a breather for the aviation industry.

Will new FAA chief Mike Whitaker keep the flags flying for the FAA straight and level?

I hope and pray earnestly that Mike will not allow the FAA to fly into stormy clouds for the sake of Global Aviation and Travelers.

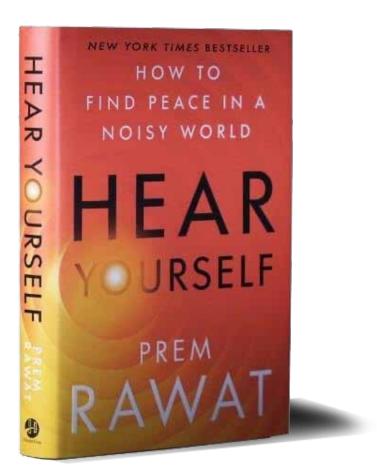
K.N. Sivagnanasunderam (Blue)Former Flight Operations Officer,
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SPECIAL FEATURE

Words of Peace

Understanding of ourselves



Modern life can be deafening, making us feel frazzled and overwhelmed. We long for a way to dim the noise and find still, calm moments of peace.

In this warm, wise book renowned global teacher and author Prem Rawat reveals that we all carry within us a hidden resource for doing just that — finding peace — but we have not been taught how to use it. He shows how we can turn down the noise and 'hear ourselves' — listening to the subtle but strong song of peace that sings inside each of us. Once we learn to truly listen to the voice within, we can retain that peace as we face the world.

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FEATURE & OP-ED





usatoday.com

By: J A Rajah

A. The Hamas Attack:

Tistory has the phenomenal character of repeating itself. There have been conflicts off and on in Eastern Europe off and on between countries and races causing immense hardship and loss of lives. The Eastern Question in European History bears ample testimony for this repeated conflict. The sudden attack by the Hamas militants on Israel caused the continuing massacre of innocents and destruction of infra-structural facilities challenging the peace of the world at large. When the Hamas attacked Israel 1,139 Israelites were killed. Israel counter-attacked and killed nearly 29,000 Palestinians and displaced 1.8 million Palestinians. They almost bombarded all parts of Gaza, mainly the West Bank. The Palestinians moved to the South and found shelter in Raufah.

B. The Intent of Benjamin Netanyaho:

Israel under its Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu was hell-bent on driving the Palestinians. Many women and Children were massacred. The people were left hunting for food and



shelter. Even the hospitals and health workers were attacked and it raised protests from all parts of the world. The Nasser Hospital caring for the wounded and the helpless Palestinians was not

spared. Aid coming from European countries through Egypt was blocked. This is the worst harm done to humanity by revenge-seeking humans similar to the times of Hitler. The UN and other peace-seeking organizations are trying to put an end to this massacre, but Benjamin is not listening to any pleas. He is going after the Hamas militants who are now operating from underground dungeons as well as hiding

Some Arab nations like Qatar with the help of the US, France, and Egypt are trying to stop the war through mediation.

C. The Need for Negotiated Settlement:

The Israeli prime minister knows very well that Qatar has been committed to mediation efforts to end war and

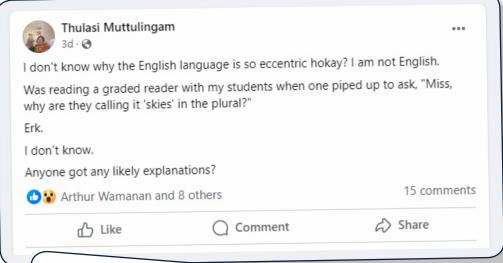


in populated areas. Israeli drone strikes are killing Palestinians unexpectedly and they are unable to take shelter anywhere. Though the European nations are trying to help with food and ammunition, the Palestinians are unable to get them easily. Even Arab countries like Lebanon are not able to come to the aid of the Palestinians. The cruel war had now escalated to uncontrollable proportions and even the US, UK. France, and Germany were not able to stop the ongoing destruction of humanity and infrastructure facilities. The US has been supplying arms and ammunition to Israel but has not been able to stop the Israeli prime minister in his craze to erase Gaza.

free hostages. This was evident by the success of the previous humanitarian truce in freeing 108 hostages proving that meditation is the only method in securing the return of hostages, de-escalation, and probably regional security. The Israel Prime Minister accuses Qatar is funding Hamas in full. Qatar should continue its mediation efforts and not be deterred by rhetoric and statements that can only be understood in the context of escaping from the Israeli Prime Minister's political agenda. Qatar should focus on the path of negotiations that should ensure the security of the region and end the ongoing tragedy of war.







24 Funny Illustrations That Show The Cultural Differences Between The East And The West.

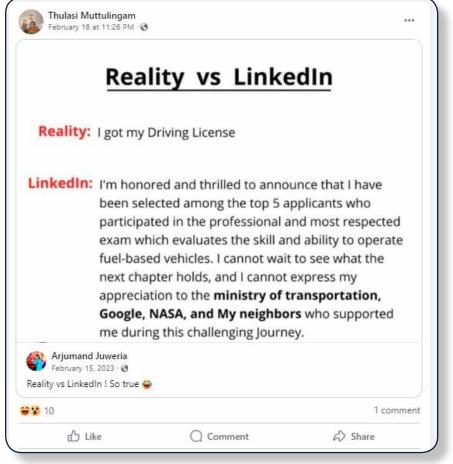
"Attitude towards punctuality"











Things native english speakers know but don't know they know:

Adjectives in English absolutely have to be in this order: opinion-size-age-shapecolor-origin-material-purpose Noun. So you can have a lovely little old rectangular green French silver whittling knife. But if you mess with that word order in the slightest you will sound like a maniac. It's an odd thing that every English speaker uses that list. But almost none of us could write it out. And as size comes before color, green great dragons can't exist.

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SPECIAL FEATURE



International Women's Day and Thirukkural

By: Kumar Punithavel



The earliest reported Women's Day observance, was called "National Women's Day', and was held on February 28th 1909, in New York City, organized by the Socialist Party of America. There have been claims that the day was commemorating a protest by women garment workers in New York on March 8th 1857. However, this statement is very much challenged.

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In 1911, Austria, Denmark, Germany, and Switzerland were the first to celebrate the international women's day on March 11th. More

than a million people attended rallies focused on suffrage, representation in education and women's rights. After much stumbling starts, the United Nations began celebrating Women's Day in 1975, which had been proclaimed the International Women's Year. In 1977, the United Nations General Assembly invited member states to proclaim March 8th, as an official UN holiday commemorating women's rights and world peace.

It is appropriate to see what the Thirukkural, great Tamil book of moral living authored about two thousand years ago had to say about the rightful place of women in the society. Such an analysis will give an insight of the social structure of the Tamilian race during that time.

A person starts life and grows up to a matured person to face the world. It is the period one learns the trade to make a living and in the case of females they learn the art of managing the future home. When reaching adolescence, the two join together and become interdependent, when men venture to earn the wealth while women manage the home. This was the norm all over the world. The two world wars did make a profound impact in the lifestyle of humans around the world. As men went for war women had to get involved in the production of their country.

Thiruvalluvar had been clear in classifying the social structure into two. The book has three sections namely, Virtue, Wealth, and Love. It is the foundation of Virtue, on which the other two are built. Next the wealth is earned to enjoy the pleasure of love. In the section of wealth in no uncertain terms he had declared that all beings are equal at birth, be it race, creed, cast or gender should fragment humanity. The variation happens depending on work they do for a living. In no uncertain terms he says at birth men and women are same and equal, variation begins with the work they perform. Here is that couplet 972;

பிறப்பொக்கும் எல்லா உயிர்க்கும் சிறப்பொவ்வா செய்தொழில் வேற்றுமை யான்

All beings are the same in birth, But work decides their varied worth.

972

Hence in no uncertain terms in Tamilian society in those days men and women were treated as equals. That said in the first section on virtue in couplet #54., he goes on to ask an interesting question as to what is the greatest fortune for a man to have than a chaste woman. It is not gold, diamond, or wealth which he goes out to earn, but for the man it is the chaste woman who stays at home will be a boon. All other wealth will be of no avail. Here is that couplet;

பெண்ணின் பெருந்தக்க யாவுள கற்பென்னும் திண்மைஉண் டாகப் பெறின்?

What greater fortune is for men, Than a constant chaste woman?

54.

Thus, the men in the Tamilian society considered women as of immense value. Having raised the question as to whether there is anything better in the first section virtue, in the second section wealth he compares the men and women and says in couplet 907 that a woman is more esteemed than men in couplet #907. Here is that couplet;

பெண்ணேவல் செய்தொழுகும் ஆண்மையின் நாணுடைப் பெண்ணே பெருமை உடைத்து

Esteemed more is women bashful Than man servile unto her will.

The Tamilian society two thousand years ago considered a shy servile woman more esteemed despite the submissive countenance. Essentially not to be carried away by her appearance, but she is strong willed, which he observes in the third section on love. In its couplet #1137, he observes a woman who can bear up her pain and keep her chin up is the greatest. There is no one better than her. One should notice it is the responsibility of the woman to take care of the house is of primary concern.

I guess I should set a small backdrop to Tamilian society two thousand years ago. When a boy likes and loves a dame, and if the girls refuse his pursuits or if the parents refuse their relationship, the frustrated boy in order to get the sympathy and consent from his lover or parents and his relatives will take a Madal 'மடல்' ride. Madal is an artificially made horse from Palmyra palm leaves. Palmyra horse or 'มนด์' is a torture expressive of the burning passion of the lover to the beloved. The lover's body is laid on a tough pricking palmyra bed and he is carried along the street with songs of love pangs. The dame or parents of the lovers first may reproach them but finally consent to the marriage. Invariably the dame, despite all the hurt and sadness, never tries riding on 'Madal' tactics. Thus, Thiruvalluvar observes her self control is the greatest, and surpasses that of men.

கடலன்ன காமம் உழந்தும் மடலேறாப் பெண்ணிற் பெருந்தக்க தில்

Her sealike-lust seeks no Madal, Nothing greater than serene is woman's self-control. 1137

The obvious question not only me but also you the male readers too could have is cannot men achieve such greatness. I glanced through Thirukkural's 1330 couplets, and noticed on the second section wealth in the chapter 98 titled 'Greatness', he had written a couplet suggesting if a man wants greatness like a chaste woman who is singularly focused, he too should lead a life of veracity like her. Here is that couplet # 974;

ஒருமை மகளிரே போலப் பெருமையும் தன்னைத்தான் கொண்டொழுகின் உண்டு

Like chaste women, greatness too, Exists while guarded by self-veracity.

In conclusion we may say though women may be more apt to do nurturing, they are as great as or even greater than men in serving this world. Let us all celebrate Women's Day this March 8th 2024, and try to make them get equal rights and equal opportunities.



SPECIAL FEATURE

Fear of Beggary



- smartvocab.in

By: J A Rajah

Even from close friends, who will gladly help, it's worth, a crore not to beg. If the creator, intended that some people should beg to eke out their livelihood, may he too wander about in such a world and perish. Nothing's harder than the foolishness of the man who believes his poverty will vanish with begging. The universe is too small to hold the dignity and greatness of a person, who refuses to beg to relieve even utter destitution. Even one's own then will taste as nectar, provided one has earned it, by the tol and sweat of his brow.

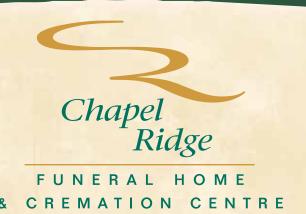
"Irappan irapparai ellam irappn, Kappar iravan enru'. இரப்பன் இரப்பாரை எல்லாம் இரப்பின் கரப்பார் இரவன்மின் என்று

One may beg from the right people; but if one needs to beg at all, avoid those who are known to hoard and deny charity. The rudderless boat of insecure mendicancy will just split on impact when it strikes the rock of harder oh the uncharitable hoarder. The heart melts with distaste and distress at the thought of begging, but if it's attended with denial, the heart perishes. On hearing words of denial, the life of the beggar ebbs away; the life of him who refused where does t go and hide?

(Kural: 1061-1070)



Valluvar's Views

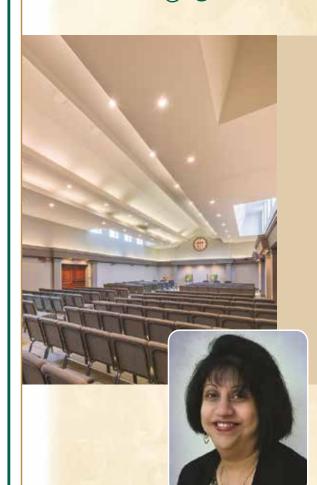


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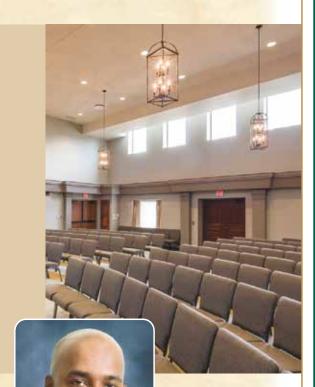
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EDUCATION & CAREER



By: Raya Thushyantan Grade 6 student

usic is the art of expressing ideas and emotions \mathbf{WL} in sounds by using the elements of rhythm, melody and harmony. We use these elements through our voices and instrumental music. We take sounds and create music. Development of music is affected by people around us. We take the context of songs and relate them to our daily lives. Although music affects us all differently, most melodies have a similar meaning. Music helps us focus and concentrate. Music is physically good for our hearts. An event wouldn't be complete without

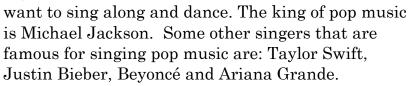


music. Did you know that even animals enjoy music? An animal psychologist discovered animals enjoy music. They enjoy speciesspecific music. This type of music includes many pitches, tones and tempos. There are different types of music,

which are known as genres. Some music genres are pop, classical, reggae, rhythm and blues, rap, and rock. Genres are important to artists. When genres are identified, it informs their branding. Now let me tell you about these genres...

First, we have pop music. Pop originated in the

mid 1950's in the **United States** and the United Kingdom. According to the latest Music Consumer Report, 64% of 19,000 people surveyed liked pop the best. Pop music is popular because there are many catchy rhythms. These catchy rhythms make us



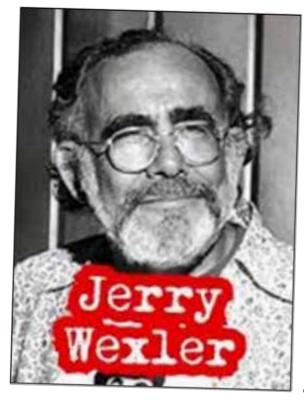
Secondly, there is classical music. Classical music originated during the 5th century CE in Europe.

Most of the classical music was used at religious ceremonies. Classical music is the most memorable melodies. Around the 1750's to the 1820's is when classical music was popular. Classical music is some of the most complex music



EDUCATION & CAREER

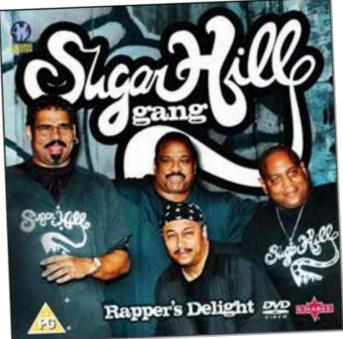




to play. Apparently if you listen to classical music, it decreases pain, fights of depression and blood pressure. A famous person that sang classical music songs was Ludwig Van Beethoven.

Thirdly, we have reggae music. Jamaica's gift to the world is reggae music. Reggae originated in Jamaica in the late

1960's. The term reggae is a Jamaican phrase that means rag or ragged clothing. Reggae music speaks about overcoming struggles. In the Caribbean, February is reggae month. In addition to its positive lyrics, the rhythmic beats have shown to have a calming effect on our bodies. Many people say Bob Marley is the king of reggae music. Other singers that sing reggae music are Sean Paul, Buju Banton, Shaggy, and Sizzla.



Then, we have rhythm and blues music. Rhythm and blues is known as R&B. Jerry Wexler invented rhythm and blues music. Rhythm and blues have slow beats, soulful singing and a strong backbeat. In the 1950sRobert Palmer said R&B is any music that

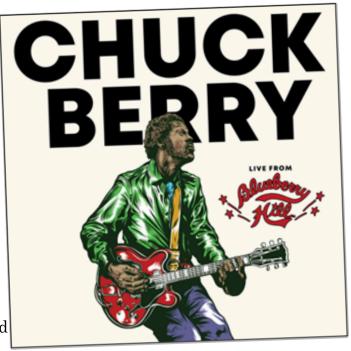
was made by black

Americans. Rhythm and blues originated in the United States in the 1940's. The first rhythm and blues hit was in 1944 by Louis Jordan. The song was, "Is You Is or Ain't My Baby." Did you know that rhythm and blues music replaced the name "race music" in the 1940s. A couple famous R&B singers are SZA, Usher and Micheal Jackson.

Now, we have rap music. Rapping is when someone sings lyrically generally to an instrumental beat. At the start the term rap meant to strike or hit. Rap music began in the 1950's in African American parts of New York. DJ Kool Herc invented rap. Young kids started developing rap music when gathered. The first rap song hit was "Rapper's Delight" by the Sugarhill gang. Rap music is known to help overcome depression.

Lastly, we have rock music. Rock is known as rock'n'roll. Rock and roll originated in the United States. With a strong backbeat and usually 4/4

rhythm. Rock music will get you moving. The first rock and roll hit was "Rock Around The Clock." Rock music has a lot of energy in the songs. Chuck Berry invented rock'n'roll in



the early 1950's. One of the most successful rock bands is the Beatles. Typical instruments in rock music are the guitar, bass, drums, keyboards and piano. As opposed to jazz, the drums in rock usually stick to a tight pattern.

As you can see, there are various genres of music. There are over 1,300 music genres in the world. There are many genres because there are subgenres of subgenres and so on. Personally, my favourite genre is pop music and my favourite artists are: Taylor Swift, Ariana Grande, Meghan Trainor, Selena Gomez, and Dua Lipa. Now, what's your favourite genre of music and favourite artists?



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COMMUNITY WATCH



Premier Ford holds press conference to deliver \$25.5M for new housing in Brampton



Brampton City Hall, Premier Doug Ford announced the Province will be investing \$25.5 million in Brampton through the Building Faster Fund as the City is on track to meet 2023 housing targets set by the provincial government.

Funding from the Building Faster Fund can be directed toward housing-enabling infrastructure and other related costs that support the creation of complete communities including being used towards the City's Housing Incentive Program, which supports affordable housing and purpose-built rental housing.

Eligible expenses are determined following consultations between the Province, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, the City of Toronto and the Housing Supply Action Plan Implementation Team.

Municipalities reaching 80 per cent of their annual target each year are eligible for funding based on their share of the overall goal of 1.5 million homes.

The Province's announcement can be found here.

As the fastest growing of Canada's 25 largest cities, Brampton needs to ensure its infrastructure meets the demands of a rapidly growing population. Last year, between new housing starts and additional residential units, the City created 7,397 new spaces to call home in Brampton.

In March 2023, the City of Brampton launched its Municipal Housing Pledge outlining the City's commitment to the Province's goal of achieving 1.5 million new housing units by 2031, with Brampton's target set at approving 113,000 new

residential units over 10 years.

Attainable housing is the cornerstone of socio-economic stability. Prioritizing more housing choices is a crucial step for sustainable growth and equitable development.

In 2023, Brampton realized \$2.3 billion in construction value through building permits issued – of which \$1.3 billion was for residential development. Brampton's overall construction values increased by 17 per cent from 2022 and showed a 37.5 per cent increase from 2021.

To learn more about the City's action on housing visit www.brampton.ca/housing.

"I want to thank Premier Ford and the Province of Ontario for the funding received today, as part of the Building Faster Fund. This is a significant step toward improving Brampton's housing supply crisis by providing more attainable housing options for residents, creating a future that is more stable and secure. Last year, the City made significant strides toward hitting our housing target and this year, we anticipate building activity will continue to be strong. As the fastest growing big city in the country, investing in housing isn't just about building the structures, it is about building communities and ensuring residents always have somewhere to call home."

- Patrick Brown, Mayor, City of Brampton

"As the Chair of Planning and Development for the City of Brampton, I am thrilled to share that Brampton is at the forefront of Peel Region's remarkable population growth, with 90% of the region's

increase coming from our vibrant city. This growth is a testament to Brampton's allure as a destination where businesses are eager to invest and build homes. In response to our continued growth, our Council has been proactive and unwavering in its commitment to fostering a community where living, working, and flourishing is a reality for all. Under my stewardship in Planning and Development, we are not just meeting, but exceeding our provincial housing targets. This is a clear indication of our dedication to advancing residential projects throughout the City. Despite the nationwide housing challenges, Brampton stands out as a city that is effectively managing the housing demand, ensuring that our residents can proudly call Brampton their home for generations to come."

- Michael Palleschi, Regional Councillor, Wards 2 and 6; Chair, Planning and Development Committee, City of Brampton

About of Brampton

As one of the fastest-growing cities in Canada, Brampton is home to nearly 700,000 people and more than 90,000 businesses. People are at the heart of everything we do. We are energized by our diverse communities, we attract investment, and we are embarking on a journey to lead technological and environmental innovation. We partner for progress to build a healthy city that is safe, sustainable, and successful. Connect with us on X (Formerly Twitter), Facebook, LinkedIn and Instagram. Learn more at www. brampton.ca

The City of Brampton seeks innovative approaches to charge personal-use electric vehicles

The City of Brampton has launched an Expression of Interest (REOI) to provide companies with an opportunity to test innovative technology and infrastructure to support electric vehicles (EV) for personal-use. As part of its goal to promote the adoption of environmentally friendly alternatives to traditional cars and lower their carbon footprint, the two-year pilot project will also promote economic development and environmental sustainability.

This REOI further aligns with the regulations on electric vehicle sales mandates in Canada, outlining a Government of Canada goal to eliminate the sale of gas-powered vehicles by

2035. The market for EVs in Canada continues to expand rapidly. For the technology to become an integral part of a successful, sustainable transportation system and contribute to the decarbonization of the transportation sector, public access to EV charging is imperative to facilitating widespread EV adoption.

As a leading city making significant contributions to the zero-emission vehicle (ZEV) sector, with major investments and developments from key players, including Magna and Stellantis, Brampton is well-positioned as a hub for innovation and progress in sustainable transportation.

Currently, the City of Brampton owns and operates 64 Level 2 EV charging stations on City properties, including City Hall, West Tower, Rose Theatre and several recreation centres.

The City of Brampton continues to be a leader in environmental innovation and is taking steps to achieve a zero-carbon transition in Brampton and a more sustainable future for residents. Learn more about the City's green initiatives here.

Prospective proponents are invited to download the EOI at https://letsconnect.brampton.ca/ev-eoi.



www.monsoonjournal.com

COMMUNITY WATCH



Brampton's Seedy Saturday and Garden Show sprouts for 12th year

Explore horticulture in Brampton with activities for kids, a seed swap and more

The City of Brampton's Seedy Saturday **▲** and Garden Show is returning for a 12th year to kick off the 2024 gardening season. Every March, in partnership with the Brampton Horticultural Society, Brampton residents are invited to this free event to:

- access gardening resources
- share, swap and buy seeds
- enjoy the Seedy Café
- explore the Kids' Zone

Participants will also hear from gardening experts, including;

- Carol Pasternak presenting In the Butterfly Garden
- Paul Zammit presenting Feeding the Garden from the Garden
- · Sean James and Anne Maria presenting From Seed to Soil: Planting and Early
- Shawn Patille presenting Building a Refuge in the Garden

Vendors will be at the event to offer insight, seeds, tools and tips to help participants enhance their gardening skills.

The Seedy Saturday and Garden Show is open to all ages. No matter the gardening skill level, this event will introduce non-gardeners to the world of horticulture and experienced gardeners will have an

opportunity to build on their skills.

Gardening is a great physical activity that also supports overall health and well-being.

For more information about The Seedy Saturday and Garden Show and a list of vendors, visit www.brampton.ca/seedysaturday.

Save the Date

Seedy Saturday and Garden Show

Saturday, March 9, 2024

10 am - 3 pm

Century Gardens Recreation Centre 340 Vodden Street East, Brampton, ON

"Gardening is a rewarding activity that not only cultivates fresh produce and flowers, but also joy, growth and lasting memories. As we celebrate the 12th year of Seedy Saturday and Garden Show, we are fostering a love for gardening, community connections and supporting 33 small businesses. Thank you, Brampton Horticultural Society for your partnership in the long-standing success of this event. I encourage everyone to attend and learn how to turn their thumb a shade greener."

> - Patrick Brown, Mayor, City of Brampton

"Each small seed has the potential to bloom into healthy fruits and vegetables and beautiful flowers to nurture our communities. As we dig into the 2024 gardening season, the Seedy Saturday and Garden Show welcomes families and gardening enthusiasts to explore the vibrant world of horticulture right here in Brampton. From seed swaps to expert presentations and activities for kids, this event is a bloom-filled celebration of family fun and community spirit. Let's plant the seeds of connection and grow together!"

- Rowena Santos, Regional Councillor, Wards 1 and 5; Chair, Community Services, City of Brampton

"The City of Brampton is a community striving to work together to ensure a healthy and sustainable environment. The Seedy Saturday and Garden Show provides a valuable learning platform by inspiring individuals and families to dig into new skills in gardening. Thank you to the staff, guest speakers and local vendors for making a 12th year of this event possible."

> - Marlon Kallideen, Chief Administrative Officer, City of Brampton

Registration for City's 2024 spring recreation programs opens March 4

The City of Brampton offers a wide ■ variety of enjoyable recreation programs that encourage healthy and active lifestyles and reflect the diversity of our community. Starting on Monday, February 19, City of Brampton recreation patrons can view upcoming 2024 Spring programs and Brampton Sports League information online to find their desired program and plan ahead.

Key dates

- Registration for Brampton Sports League will begin on Monday, February 26, at 6 am. Adult (18+) spring leagues include ball hockey, volleyball and ultimate frisbee.
- Registrations for most spring programs, including sports, Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math (STEAM) and general interest programs, will begin on Monday, March 4, at 6 am.
- Registration for Learn to Swim and Learn to Skate programs will begin on Monday, March 18, at 6 am.
- · Non-resident program registration begins on Sunday, March 24, at 6 am.

To view helpful tips for spring program registration, visit Brampton Recreation's FAQ page. Alternatively, patrons are encouraged to call 311 (or 905.874.2000 if outside of Brampton) or email recreation@ brampton.ca for registration support. For information about withdrawing from a registered program, visit www.brampton.ca/ withdrawal-refunds

In-person registration

Patrons can visit a recreation centre to register for programs. In addition, laptops are available at select recreation centres for City staff to support residents during registrations. They include:

- Bob Callahan Flower City Seniors Centre
- Cassie Campbell Community Centre
- Chinguacousy Wellness Centre
- Gore Meadows Community Centre
- Paul Palleschi Recreation Centre
- Susan Fennell Sportsplex

Online Registration

To help ensure a seamless online registration process, residents are asked to:

- Make sure you can log in to your online account in advance.
- Check your personal information on your account to ensure accuracy.
- · Browse programs in advance of registration day and make a shortlist.
- · Add your credit card information to your account in advance. We can no longer accept financial information over the phone or via email.

- Use date range filter and select the next session date to browse available courses.
- Do not refresh the page while payment is being processed.
- The Google Chrome browser provides the best user experience.

Patrons will be added to a virtual waiting room on the day of registration to ensure a fair and equitable process and help improve the online registration experience.

Financial Assistance for Residents

ActiveAssist, generously sponsored by 407 ETR and Capital Power, is a fee subsidy program offered by the City of Brampton, designed to help low-income individuals and families in Brampton participate in recreation programs. This program is available for Brampton families who qualify.

Apply for Brampton Parks and Recreation jobs

The City of Brampton is hiring for seasonal jobs in Parks, Maintenance and Forestry and part-time work in Recreation. To learn about the positions available for the Summer 2024 season and to stay updated, visit www.brampton.ca/rec-jobs.



FEATURE & OP-ED

Short Story

WHERE IS HUMANESS

Original in Tamil by Sugunamani Sanmugenthiran English version by Siva Sinniah

Pillaiyar temple bell rang with a metallic sound. This announces to the villagers that it is 4:00 a.m. Indrani changes her sleeping position and February month's chill makes her body to shiver. She looks at her last daughter Kauthami, sleeping by her side chewing her two fingers and crouching because of the cold. She'll be 14 by this May. Body development is beyond her age. God has shown Mercy on her by giving boundless Beauty but forgot to give her mental development. Dark, black wavy hair on her head, with beautiful eyes extending up to the ear. Prominent nose and rosy cheeks. Always smiling face. Mother was afraid that her beauty maybe a danger to her. Whenever she sees her there is a big sigh and an unknown pain. She pulled her fingers from the mouth and covered her with the bed sheet.

She took her false right leg, lying by the side and fixed it properly. Eelam war took her leg and made her life questionable. She who won the first price in Baratha Natyam during her school days, is now lame. she opened the window and let the morning Breeze into the room.

The oldest girl Meera and the youngest Narmatha are sleeping near the window. The cruel war demolished Meera's dream to



Indra's married life was enjoyable at the beginning. Her husband Kandeepan was an assistant director of a volunteer organization. He met Indra at a refugee camp, when she was working as a volunteer.

become a teacher to serve the community. She had to stop her higher studies due to the responsibility, she was forced to take and made her a sanitary laborer. This is the fate of the family.

The war clouds made the Tamils as refugees in their own land. Precious lives and properties were lost and made their suffering worse. People of the North and East of Sri Lanka were punished for crimes they never committed. Human rights lost its place in these areas.

Indra's married life was enjoyable at the beginning. Her husband Kandeepan was an assistant director of a volunteer organization. He met Indra at a refugee camp, when she was working as a volunteer. He fell in love with her at first sight. He felt that she was

born for him. She told him that she lost her leg during the army attack on Jaffna. He never minded that as a deformity and married her, as per Hindu rights, with the consent of both parties.

Indra lost her mother when she was young and treated her mother-in-law as her own mother. She called Lakshmi as Amma.

A bunch of swallows on the Jasmin tree in front of the house, disturbed her thoughts of the past memories. They were having a fun time. The rights of these birds were never written or forbidden. They are living their life, the way they wanted to live with joy and finally die.

What else you need in life? But a man with six senses does not know how to live as a human being.

Meera got up and came out. She had a long hair in a bundle. She was like her grandmother, beautiful with yellow color. Broad forehead., long eyelashes and prominent nose, indicating her acute knowledge. Round eyes and slim body. Always a peaceful face. She should be in the University now.

All the other children left home. Indra with Kauthami was seated on a log in front of the house. The postman's whistle was heard. Letters sent by Kandeepan was received. She accepted the letters with reverence, while tears filled her eyes. Opened the letter and started reading.

Her husband was arrested on suspicion 14 years back and her endless life goes on as a serial drama, with lots of sufferings and pain.

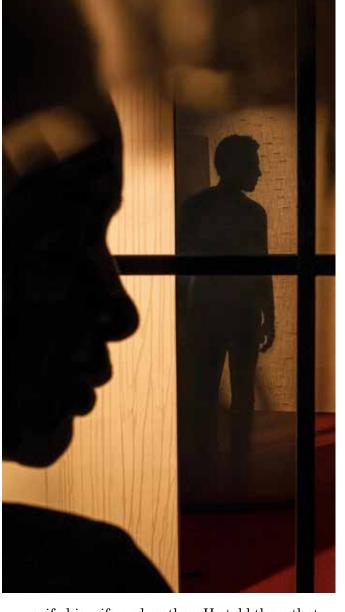
Meera was born after one year of marriage. Kandeepan was double happy because of a girl. His philosophy was girls are deities born as gifts and they understand the pains of their fathers. Even Lakshmi Amma was very happy to get a girl as their heritage. After 3 years Narmatha was born as the princess of the family.

Indra expected a boy. Kandeepan pacified her by saying that, we have to be thankful to God for giving us children, instead of getting none. Boys are expected to be duty-bound and take the family's responsibilities and performed last rights for the father. These are the foolish thinking of our people. Even girls can do all these.

Most of the Tamils send their boys to foreign lands and live in seniors home and long-term care homes and die, longing for them. This is the norm now and don't expect a boy, was his philosophy. Indra was satisfied with the explanation given by her husband.

Time passed by swiftly. Indira was expecting her third child and prayed to God for a son. But the fate decided otherwise.

Kandeepan was asked to come to the police station for an inquiry. He found it difficult to



pacify his wife and mother. He told them that since he has not committed any offense and will come back, after explaining the situation.

The next day he was taken to Colombo for further inquiry. The entire family was devastated by this. Indira and Lakshmi Amma cried aloud along with their children. Laxmi Amma pacified Indra and told her not to cry, while expecting a child.

Indra and Lakshmi Amma having left the children in the care of their relative, went to Colombo to meet with Kandeepan. His boss Parathan also accompanied them.

At the PTA (Prevention of Terrorism office) detention centre, they were allowed to meet Kandeepan. He was not able to control Indra who was crying from the time she entered the office.

She asked him "your neck, face and hands are swollen. Did they beat you?"

He replied in the negative.

"You had to be peaceful now, for the sake of the child you are having. Your feelings will affect the child in you" advised Kandeepan.

Having wiped her tears from the eyes, he embraced her like a child. Indra continued sobbing. He told his mother to look after the children and Indra carefully until his return.

"It is my responsibility to get Kandeepan released soon. Don't worry," said Parathan. Indira brought her palms together as though worshiping him. Lakshmi Amma started crying holding his hands.

Two months passed by but Kandeepan's inquiry was not over. Indra was admitted to the hospital because of high blood pressure. Doctors performed a cesarean operation and got a baby girl.

Kandeepan was transferred to magazine prison, a remand prison.

Laxmy amma got ready to go and meet her son. Indra was also adamant in going with her but Laxmy dissuaded her from traveling. Finally entire family left for Colombo.

On seeing their children and wife, with his mother Kandeepan was choked with grief. He controlled his sadness and pain with much difficulty. Indra was seen crying with hiccups

Short Story

FEATURE & OP-ED



and sobbs. He was not able to control her. She was lean and dark. Holding Kauthami in his hands he drew Mira and Narmada towards him and embrace them. Kissed his children and started crying. Laxmi Amma wiped his tears with the tail end of her saree and started crying too.

"Pillaiyar will help us don't cry." The mother was comforting her son.

"Appa come, we will go home" Narmada

Allocated time for visitors was over, before all could share their feelings. So they all left the place with heavy heart.

When Kauthamy was two years old, doctors identified her as a special need child and Indra was not able to accept it. Such children are born to mothers, who are exposed to shocks and extreme sadness during pregnancy.

Doctors advised her that Kauthamy could be cured with special care and treatment. This news about her was a great blow to Indra who was reeling with the unfortunate position of her husband. She lost hope in praying to God anymore.

In order to get her husband released, she with one leg, walked to many politicians and prominent people, who promised to help her in vain. Many letters many Appeals, and many pleadings were all futile. She was met with deceit.

Eight years passed by since Kandeepan was arrested. Indra paid the lawyers by selling all her jewelry. She was only left with her Thali (wedding chain) on a yellow string.

Indra met a new lawyer in the courthouse, who promised to help her after hearing her pathetic flight.

The lawyer told her to submit some documents along with five lakhs of rupees in order to get Kandeepan released. Nobody had that amount of money during those days. Hence Amma decided to sell two lachchams of land out of five lachchams, where they are living now. Entire family wanted Kandeepan to be released at any cost, So they sold the land and paid the lawyer. Indra was walking up and down with one leg and after much difficulty submitted all the documents asked by the lawyer and let out the size of relief.

His hearings came and went but there was no sign of a solution. In order to continue the case more money was demanded.

At that time they had more signs of an impending war. People were ordered to move from their homes to safe locations.

"We have only this house to live, we have nothing else. No one to help us even if we die, we will stay here," said Indra.

"With this grown-up girls, it is not advisable to stay here. We will also move" said Amma. But Indra was adamant in staying back and told her that we may face more problems in the new places.

There were only 10 families in that Village. They had no alternative plans or did not have the mind to leave. They ate by sharing with each other, rice and coconut turned into a porridge and was able to satisfy their hunger.

Six months passed by like six decades. Villagers who Moved returned to their places after losing many of their relatives. They lost whatever they had and underwent untold hardships. They paid a heavy price to breathe freedom.

There were three letters from Kandeepan. Since there was no regular postal delivery all of them were received together.

Meera read them one by one, and Indra and grandmother were crying.

Luxmi Amma wanted to see her son. That was a surprise to Indra because all these days she was only writing letters. This time she wanted to go before Indra. October 12th was National Prisoner's Day, so the family decided to travel to Colombo.

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After much suffering, Kandeepan's heart began to beat faster when he met his family. Kaushalia has grown up. There were traces of sadness in Indra's face. His mother looked suddenly old. Kauthamy was embracing her father. Indra started crying uncontrollably. He held her hands together and comforted her. "Be brave Indra, you have to educate the children, don't make this as a punishment for our children." He looked at his mother who was in a silent and in a deep pensive mood. He drew her towards him and embraced her. She started crying like a small child. A person who was a source of strength to all, broke down and cried. Did not speak any word. She gently rubbed her son's cheek with both of her palms and cried.

The family returned to Jaffna from the prison the next day. Luxmi Amma handed over her Thali to Indra in a box. Indra inquired as to why she's doing that, to which she replied to keep it safe. Indra was puzzled.

The next day she had fever, and no medication brought the temperature down. She refused to go to the hospital. On the third day she did not get up from her sleep in the morning. She passed away that night in her

The world came to an end to Indra. The only relations the family had was Amma. She was a pillar to them through thick and thin of their life. Indra started beating her head with her hands and cried aloud. The children also joined her. On hearing the news, neighbors in the village turned up and part took in the family's unrollable grief.

Since the family was alleged to have been involved in a terrorism activity, none of the relatives came forward to do the last rites for Amma. So, Indira decided to do it herself. After the cremation was over, all the relatives left one by one, leaving the family in deep distress.



The lawyer told her to submit some documents along with five lakhs of rupees in order to get Kandeepan released. Nobody had that amount of money during those days

"

Because of the war Kandeepan got the news of her passing only after three days. He was upset and cried. He was deeply distressed to find that he was unable to perform the last rites of his mother. His friends in prison comforted him.

When Luxmi Amma was living, she was receiving pension and hence the family was at least able to eat. Now even getting food became a big problem. Indra found it difficult to manage the expenses of children's education and husband's lawyer's fees. Added to this special medication for Kauthami. She was even thinking of committing suicide with the children.

She started looking for work since there was no other alternative. Finally found work in the field. After one week her only one leg refused to corporate. Then she switched to cooking at a home. They found out that her husband was arrested on a terrorism case and terminated her cooking work. Again, she started to look for a work. Nothing was available.

After a long search, found work as a cleaning lady in a women's hostel. She found it difficult to clean the marble floor and the

bathrooms, but still because of her children and husband she struggled. With the money she received, she was able to manage the expenses for food and children's education. She sent out Kauthami to a special school because of her safety.

One day she got up in the morning and was not feeling well. Because of the pain and suffering, she was not able to eat for two days. She was feeling lonely and destitute was worried about the children's future. She was forced to go to work even with her sickness. After signing in the attendance register, she was immersed in the work. After a few hours she felt dizzy and fell down on the floor.

On waking up in the hospital the doctor told her, there is a fracture on the left leg. She felt as though someone beating with a hammer on her head. Indrani returned home in the evening with bandages, in an ambulance. Children were shocked to see their mother in that position.

She was unable to even walk. misery was chasing them Non-Stop.

Meera stopped going to high school, having sacrificed her future goal and dream and went to her mother's work. She found it difficult in the beginning. But to feed the family she was forced to work. Fate made her too carry brooms instead of books.

Indra was able to get up and walk slowly after three months. The family received two letters from Kandeepan Meera wrote to the father of the pathetic situation of their mother. She thanked God for, to feed the family.

Time passed by quickly and Narmatha performed well, in high school and was selected for admission to Law College. The news of her selection to Law College spread rapidly, all over the village and newspaper reporters visited the home to interview her and praised her for her achievements.

The following report was flashed in the local newspapers next day:

A noteworthy achievement by a village girl for having been selected to Law College, was acclaimed by all living around her house. The girl is Narmatha and what she told us in her interview is as follows:

I am from a very poor family. We struggled to even have three meals a day, since my father was arrested 14 years back on a suspicious complaint by an unknown person, as he is having connection with the terrorist group, tigers. my mother who is a disabled person, found it difficult to manage our daily living. She was working as a cleaning woman in a women's hostel and got sick and as a result my oldest sister, who was in the advanced level, gave up her studies and went to work, to feed all of us. Because of my mother and older sister, I was motivated to concentrate on my studies and was able to come out with flying colors in my exam. I am really indebted to my family for their support and encouragement.

I miss my father very much, who has been in prison for so many years, without being accused of any crime. Innocent people are being arrested under this Prevention of Terrorism Act, which discriminates against Tamil people, especially because of this ongoing War. People are being held in remand prison for any length of time, without being any court order. There seems to be no justice and fair play in this country. Once I pass out as a criminal lawyer, I have determined to offer my services to innocent people, like my father and help them to exonerate themselves.

I am indebted to my family and my teachers for their loving care and encouragement to do well in studies. Thank you all for giving me this opportunity to express my views.



COMMUNITY WATCH

MONSOON IOURNAL a parfait media publication



Durham Tamils Association Serving Our Tamil Community Over 20 Years

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

DTA'S HOMELAND PROJECTS

DTA is proud to announce that we have completed 47 homeland projects as of Dec 31st 2023. Watch out more for this year as we wish to continue this momentum and provide more opportunities back home.

Thank you to Mr. Subramaniam Kathirithamby & Mr Maylvahanam (Sri Lanka) for coordinating this project.

DTA EVOLVING ELDER CARE IN HOME SUPPORT

We are proud to announce that DTA will be providing Evolving Elder Care in Home support. This will allow us to provide these services to any Seniors in need in Durham. We can provide following service:

- Meal Delivery
- Transportation
- Volunteer Drop offs:
 - Grocery Assistance
 - Doctors Appointments
- Friendly Visits
- Light House Keeping Assistance

For more information please contact our office Mon-Fri (647) 968 9549 or (647) 286 9549. You can also visit our website @DTAseniorsinhome support.ca

DTA and the volunteers have graciously given rides to our seniors to temples on auspicious days and have delivered hot meals to more than 300 seniors with this program.

Durham Tamil Association Evolving Elder Care In-Home Support Senior /Transportation Service

www.monsoonjournal.com



Seniors Onboard: A volunteer-based service for eligible seniors with low-Income and vulnerable, aged 55 and up.

OUR SERVICE



- Church Drop off (Drop off / pick up)
- Medical Appointment (Drop off/ pick up)
- · Grocery shopping (Drop off / pick up)

CONTACT US

Office Hours: Monday through Friday 9:00am - 5:00PM

Contact Number:

- (647) 968-9549
- (647) 286-9549

For More Information Visit Our Website:



dtaseniorsinhomesupport.ca



DTA SENIOR'S MARCH MONTHLY MEETING

DTA Senior's March monthly meeting will be held on Sunday March 31, 2024 at 5:00 pm at DTA Centre.

•••••

66B Harwood Ave S, Ajax L1S 2H6.

Event Time: 5-9 pm

Please all Senior (ages 55+) members attend the meeting.

Register online:

durhamtamils.org

Members who were born in March, please mention in the comments section to organize your cake-cutting at the meeting.

Durham Tamil Association Evolving Elder-care:

Training

- · Free Training with Certification
- Volunteer Travel Expense \$0.58/km
- · Unlock valuable life skills with Free Standard Cpr and First Aid Training

Benefits

- Shape your future
- · Providing up to 50 volunteer hours
- · Free Vulnerable Check

Contact US

Office Hours: Monday through Friday 9:00am - 5:00PM

Contact Number:

- · (647) 968-9549
- (647) 286-9549

Durham Tamil Association

66 Harwood Ave, S.Ajax L1S 2H6

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VOLUNTEER

making a positive impact on seniors' lives in Durham!

Volunteer Gala: Twice a Year!

- · Summer Gala 2024
- Winter Gala 2024
- Spring Gala 2025
- September Gala 2025

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RECRUITING VOLUNTEERS (ADULTS & YOUTH) FOR THE FOLLOWING **PROJECT:**

www.monsoonjournal.com

EVOLVING ELDERCARE - IN-HOME SUPPORT FOR SENIORS

Next training sessions are:

Workshop 2 -March 9th (4 hours in-person) & 10th (6 hours virtual zoom class).

Workshop 3 -March 17th (4 hours in-person) & 18th (6 hours virtual zoom class).

You can register for either one of the workshops. Do not miss out on this great opportunity!

At Durham Tamil Association, we enable our volunteers with free training and a certificate of completion from Computek College in Ajax. Join us to make a positive impact on seniors' lives while gaining valuable skills and experiences. Together, let's shape a brighter future!"

Training Details:

- Free Training with completion certification
- Unlock valuable life skills with Free Standard CPR and First Aid Training to shape your future.
 - 50 Volunteer hours placement.
 - Free Vulnerable Check.

Volunteer Travel Expense reimbursement: \$0.58/km

Please complete the following volunteer application form: https://forms.gle/GBrfmq9sSQZLYfS9A (https://forms.gle/GBrfmq9sSQZLYfS9A)

For additional details please visit the website below: https://dtaseniorsinhomesupport.ca/

COMMUNITY WATCH



TAMIL SCHOOL

Tamil class registration is open for the School Year from 2023-2024!

In-person or Virtual class options are available!



Offers the option of either veg or non veg

- Hot, Freshly Prepared Meals
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CONTACT US:

Office Hours: Monday through Friday **Contact Number:**

> (647) 968-9549 (647) 286-9549

Please place your order a minimum of 5 days before the delivery date. Eligibility: Vulnerable and Low-Income Seniors: Ages 55 and Up

Wisit Our Website to Register: dtaseniorsinhomesupport.ca



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DTA thanks our annual sponsors Computek College of Business, Healthcare & Technology Nava Wilson LLP. Chapel Ridge Funeral Home & Cremation, and all our sponsors for your continued support throughout the year. If you are interested in being annual sponsor please reach out to the below contacts.

For more information on all DTA's Community Support Programs and Sponsor contacts please visit

www.DurhamTamils.Org

Tel 905.428.7007 Unity Is Strength



The Durham Tamil Association introduces "Evolving Elder Care In-Home Support," a volunteer-based service for eligible seniors with low-Income and vulnerable, aged 55 and up.

OUR SERVICE

- Meal Delivery
- Transportation
- · Volunteer Drop-offs:
- -Grocery Assistance -Doctors Appointments
- Friendly Visits
- Light House Keeping Assistance

CONTACT US:

Office Hours: Monday through Friday Contact Number:

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FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT OUR WEBSITE:



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MARCH 2024

COMMUNITY WATCH

Waterloo used to be a housing champion. Can the city emerge from its slump?

Observers cite several reasons Waterloo is falling behind in adding new homes, but they can also see a way forward

By Jeff Outhit,

Reporter for Waterloo Region Record Thursday, February 22, 2024

A decade ago Waterloo was a housing champion. Between 2014 and 2018 the city attracted more than one-third of regional housing starts despite being home to just one in five residents.

Today, Waterloo is falling farther behind Kitchener and Cambridge in ending a housing crisis that has escalated rents and costs and contributes to homelessness.

Last year, Waterloo achieved just over half the housing starts sought by the province as part its 10-year housing plan. Cambridge met three quarters of its annual housing target. Kitchener exceeded its target, the province said Thursday.

Waterloo falters in housing

Housing observers point to a lack of space in Waterloo for new suburbs, a slowing market for campus-area housing, the increased desirability of housing in Kitchener, and economic headwinds such as higher borrowing costs that lead builders to delay projects.

"Waterloo is more maturing as a market whereas many areas in Kitchener are what I would call emerging," said Larry Masseo, an urban planner who is president of the Waterloo Region Home Builders' Association.

"There's only so much growth that's



going to happen overall. So that just means Waterloo has a lesser share than they had

Waterloo is the first local city to run out of empty land for new suburbs. Apart from a few pockets, it must build up rather than out by intensifying and redeveloping land.

This kind of infill development can involve higher construction costs, greater planning challenges, and longer construction timelines.

"The complexity of what Waterloo has to do to stay within their boundaries is much greater," said Kevin Thomason of Smart Growth Waterloo Region, a community group that advocates to save farmland and use resources more efficiently.

"There's probably a greater degree of risk and uncertainty," Masseo said.

Waterloo's share of housing starts in Waterloo Region

The transition to higher, denser housing has led Waterloo to slash the addition of

detached family homes. Over the last five years the city has started just one in 10 detached houses in the region. Two decades ago it started one in three.

For a few years Waterloo added highrise apartments instead, catering in part to student demand in campus areas. But apartment starts peaked in Waterloo in 2014 and have tumbled steadily over the last three years.

Masseo suspects the market for new student housing is slowing. "There's still product coming but I don't think it's to the same extent as it was," he said.

Meanwhile, apartment starts are surging in Kitchener even as it faces the same economic headwinds as Waterloo. Masseo points to public investments that have helped make Kitchener and its downtown a more desirable place to live.

Thomason does not see Waterloo's housing slump as a failure of smarter growth.

'The immediate need is safe spaces' for homeless women in Cambridge

A webinar hosted by YWCA Cambridge on women's homelessness Wednesday featured elected politicians.

By Paige Desmond,

Waterloo Region Record Thursday, February 1, 2024

Bridging the gap between apathy and empathy when it comes to helping homeless women was a topic Wednesday during a webinar organized by YWCA Cambridge.

Roz Gunn, director of communications and advocacy at the YWCA, moderated the online event and asked the panel why there seems to be resistance to creating safe spaces in Cambridge.

City Coun. Sheri Roberts said a lot of people fail to understand that women

experiencing homelessness are people's daughters, sisters and loved ones.

"I believe that apathy is really coming from a lack of understanding," she said.

Regional councillor for Cambridge Pam Wolf said the city is in desperate need of a dedicated women's shelter but, in the meantime, there are possible solutions.

She suggested buying four or five homes that could serve as emergency shelter for different female demographics, with eight to 10 people in each. They could serve youth, seniors, gender-diverse people, women with children and women experiencing substance use disorders.

"The immediate need is safe spaces for homeless women," she said, adding it will take all levels of government to make change.

North Dumfries Mayor Sue Foxton, however, said too often people look to government for solutions. "Yes, government has a responsibility but I feel when we put

"As the only shelter in Cambridge, we are aware of the sometimes hidden number of women in need of emergency shelter that they view as safe. These women are members of society in Cambridge and deserve a space in Cambridge and should not be told they have to travel to Kitchener to secure such a space. Cambridge needs a Cambridge based solution to the crisis of women's homelessness."

everything on government people back off and say 'Oh, the government's supposed to do it." she said.

By the numbers

Almost 80 people participated in Wednesday's meeting, which discussed research completed by YWCA Cambridge in the fall of 2023 on the specific challenges and needs of women experiencing homelessness in the city.

Just 78 of the roughly 500 shelter beds in Waterloo Region — 13.8 per cent — are dedicated spaces for women. None of them are in Cambridge. Other data for Cambridge,

(Continued on Page 39)



COMMUNITY WATCH



Citing harassment of staff, governance concerns, Waterloo Region halts arts fund

To support artists and art organizations in the interim, a one-year partnership with Waterloo Region Community Foundation will streamline \$350,000 in regional arts funding.

By Bill Jackson,

Waterloo Region Record Thursday, February 22, 2024

The Region of Waterloo Arts Fund will undergo a third-party review and council members on its board of directors have resigned due to concerns about governance and harassment of regional staff.

In a news release issued following a closed-door council meeting on Wednesday evening, the region said it will undertake a third-party review of the funding model and distribute \$350,000 in funding to local artists and groups through the Waterloo Region Community Foundation in 2024 instead.

"Obviously, we take harassment of our staff very seriously," said regional Coun. Michael Harris, chair of the administration and finance committee.

Council members on the art fund's board of directors — regional Chair Karen Redman and Coun. Kari Williams — have resigned.

Harris wouldn't describe details of the alleged harassment.

"It's difficult to share any more than that as it is an HR matter," said Harris, "but I would say to you, in addition to that, there is a governance issue here, too. It's about accountability and stewardship of public funds and we were made aware of decisions that were made outside of the board's policies and procedures, and this will also be reviewed by the third party."

The Region of Waterloo Arts Fund is an independent organization governed by a volunteer board, funded and supported by the region, which has provided \$5.5 million for local artists and arts organizations during the past 20 years.

Raechele Lovell, board chair, was critical of council's decision to cut discretionary grant funding by 10 per cent in 2024 in an attempt to reduce the overall tax increase.

"Your defunding is not only detrimental to our community's well-being, but also hinders our arts fund's progress and growth," she said as a delegation before the finance committee earlier this year, during which her criticism of a regional staff member was halted due to a point of order.

The Record reached out to Lovell for comment about Wednesday's decision. She said she planned to issue a formal statement, however it wasn't received by late Thursday afternoon.

Lovell was brought on as chair of the arts fund last summer and said she's been unable to proceed with equity work recommended in a report commissioned by the former board back in 2021 due to administrative delays.

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A new board was put in place last year following the voluntary departure of previous board members, however regional council representatives remained.

Redman and Williams submitted their letters of resignation on Wednesday.

"I do not make this decision lightly," Redman stated in her letter.

"In recent months, concerns have been raised over the board's conduct with Region of Waterloo staff and the overall transparency of the

administration of the fund. These concerns have not been remedied. As such, I cannot continue in good faith to be a part of the Region of Waterloo Arts Fund board."

Following a board meeting on Feb. 1, "it became clear that the board membership and myself are at an impasse," Williams wrote in her letter of resignation.

"Despite shared goals, it has become challenging to adequately scrutinize and discuss ideas in the way I feel is consistent with board governance and my past experiences on several community boards," Williams' letter states.

"I continue to have serious concerns about the way recent decisions have been made, particularly with respect to the allocation of funds. This, and my personal treatment over the last year, has led to my decision to resign effective immediately."

Williams put forth the motion to cut funding for discretionary grants during budget deliberations, which was supported by Redman and a majority of council.

It's been a challenging budget year, noted Harris, who voted in favour of the 10 per cent reduction.

"We have to look at the core deliverables and expectations of ratepayers and taxpayers in our community to deliver those services that we need and expect," Harris said.

"We, as directors and stakeholders of (the arts fund) demand accountability from our elected representatives," Lovell said as part of her delegation to council. "We deserve to at least be consulted in full transparency with the region about matters that pertain directly to us."

There was an overhaul of the art fund's board that brought in a majority of equity-seeking directors from the community, Lovell noted.

"Our mandate was to implement all of the recommended equity recommendations from our report, as well as to move forward with further consultation. Unfortunately, this process has been delayed due to administrative failures and also councillors delegating directly against our implementation and the money we wish to spend from our operating budget in order to see this consultation completed."

A letter was sent to local arts groups via email Friday, Feb. 16, on behalf of the Waterloo Region Arts Fund. It sought to recruit "community consultation hosts" to support the implementation of pilot projects aimed at becoming a more equitable funder, as recommended by the Department of Imaginary Affairs, a consulting firm that spoke with racialized artists. The consultants found less than seven per cent of grant funding distributed in 2022 and early 2023 was awarded to Black, Indigenous and people of colour, queer or disabled, "which is not the goal we're striving to reach," Lovell said in a past interview.

"We encourage any practicing artists who live and work in the Region of Waterloo to apply to become a community consultation host," reads the letter sent out Feb. 16, requesting expressions of interest by end of the day, Feb. 19. "Priority will be given to equity-deserving applicants."

The letter states that each community consultation host would receive an honorarium of \$1,500 and, if selected to be a "peer reviewer," there would be an additional honorarium of up to \$2,000. Individuals not selected would still receive \$100.

However, with a third-party review of the region's arts fund to get underway shortly, a one-year partnership with Waterloo Region Community Foundation (WRCF) has been established to streamline \$350,000 in regional arts funding in 2024, the region's news release states.

The community foundation will administer grant applications for 2024 as part of its annual arts grant fund, with the region providing funding to the recommended artists and collectives.

More details will be shared this spring, the release states.

(Continued from Page 38)

including research by Statistics Canada and the Women's National Housing and Homelessness Network, shows:

- 1,582 women-led households are in desperate need of transitional, supportive or affordable housing, based on estimates from the national women's network that 28 per cent of such households need that housing;
- 5,650 one-parent families are women-led, compared to 1,575 led by men;
- 6,200 women are low-income, meaning they are at risk of or already experiencing

some form of homelessness;

- None of the 38 transitional housing units for women in the region are in Cambridge; none of the 86 supportive housing units earmarked for women are in Cambridge;
- While Cambridge makes up about 27 per cent of the region's population, it has at most 14 per cent of the current emergency shelter, transitional housing and supportive housing.

City Coun. Scott Hamilton said the stigma around homelessness in the city is strong.

Bob Howison is a member of Citizens for Cambridge, a grassroots group focused on promoting more affordable housing in the city. As part of the panel, he said part of the challenge is that people are looking for a quick fix to homelessness, which isn't going to happen.

Currently there are more than 1,700 people without homes in Waterloo Region.

"Short-term fixes like disrupting encampments doesn't solve the problem," he said.

He urged residents to "Just be kinder in how you view and interact with these folks experiencing homelessness."



COMMUNITY WATCH



City invests \$4.7 million to support community, culture and live music in Mississauga

Mississauga City Council approved \$4.7 million in grant funding to support various community and cultural groups, including live music presenters in Mississauga.

As a nod to the City's 50th anniversary, this year's Culture Projects Grant

theme is Celebrate 50. This theme is designed to help arts and culture groups celebrate Mississauga's rich and diverse communities through their unique cultural practices. It encourages projects that share underrepresented stories and histories related to Mississauga, including those that emphasize Indigenous worldviews, creative and artistic methods and presentation practices.

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2024 also marks the second year of the Live Music Grant pilot program, which supports for-profit concert presenters as a part of the City's Music Strategy.

Community Grant Program

The Community Grant program assists Mississauga-based, not-for-profit community groups by providing multiyear, annual operating and project grants to improve the quality of life for residents. The grant program aligns with the strategic priorities of the Culture, Recreation, Parks and Forestry and Environment divisions.

Arts and Culture Grant Program

Grant funding for this program supports emerging and established, not-for-profit, professional and community-based arts, culture, and heritage organizations in Mississauga. The grant supports the development of exemplary arts and culture programs and services that improve participation, knowledge, understanding and an appreciation of arts, culture and heritage for residents of Mississauga.

Cultural Festivals and Celebrations **Grants**

The Cultural Festivals and Celebrations grant program provides funding to offset expenses associated with providing a clean and safe venue for the presentation of arts, heritage and cultural festivals and celebrations to residents and visitors. This grant supports a range of events that reflect the City's many cultural traditions.

Culture Project Grants

The 2024 Culture Projects Grant program aims to support arts and culture initiatives highlighting the City's 50th anniversary. With the focus this year on "Celebrate 50", the theme helps arts and culture groups celebrate and recognize the origins, transformations and potential of the City's rich and diverse communities through their unique cultural practices and encourages projects that share underrepresented stories and histories related to Mississauga.

Live Music Grant Pilot Program

The Live Music Grant Pilot Program is a two-year pilot intended to increase the number and frequency of live music events in Mississauga. 2024 marks the second year of the program. The grant will provide \$45,000 per year for a maximum of \$90,000 in total funding over the two years. This grant stream is the first City Culture Grant open to for-profit businesses with the potential to increase tourism and cultural growth.

About the City's 50th anniversary

In 2024, the City of Mississauga celebrates its 50th anniversary. This anniversary marks the City of Mississauga's incorporation in 1974. A part of the Treaty and Traditional Territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, The Haudenosaunee Confederacy, the Huron-Wendat and Wyandot Nations, Mississauga is one of Canada's largest and most diverse cities.



Mississauga welcomes provincial investment in two important transit projects

On Feb 8, 2024, the Provincial government announced plans to support two key transit priorities for Mississauga – enhancing GO Train service along the Milton Line with twoway, all-day service and reinstating the two-kilometre Downtown Loop as part of the Hazel McCallion Line (Hurontario LRT). The City of Mississauga looks forward to working with the Province, Metrolinx and the Federal government to implement these key city-building initiatives.

'All-day, two-way GO Train service on the Milton Line is a game changer for Mississauga. It has long been a top transit and city-building priority for our city," said Acting Mayor Joe Horneck. "For too long, the train has travelled the wrong way for Mississauga residents and businesses. Along with the federal commitment made two years ago, this project can finally move forward. It is our hope that the federal and provincial governments can work together to make this project a reality as soon as possible. On behalf of City Council, I want to thank the province for these investments in Mississauga."

On the Hurontario corridor, the addition of the downtown loop is welcome news for the City as it will support the growth of Mississauga's downtown core, which is projected to double in population in the next 20 years. More than 70,000 people and more than 10,000 new jobs will come to Mississauga's downtown. People will need to move to and from the core and the downtown loop will be an important way to do this.

"Mississauga is also very pleased that the Province is moving ahead with the reintroduction of the Downtown Loop to the Hazel McCallion Line," said Shari Lichterman, City Manager and Chief Administrative Officer. "Like all-day, two-way GO service on the Milton Line, this has been a priority for many years. It is essential for Mississauga to reach its provincial housing targets and to build a sustainable community."

Regionally connected public transit is essential to support the City's future growth and development. When Mississauga signed the provincial housing pledge in March 2023 and released its housing plan, "Growing Mississauga," the City requested the provincial government make investments in essential infrastructure, like the downtown loop and all-day, two-way GO service on the Milton Line. The City has long advocated for both projects and is pleased to see them green lit to proceed.

COMMUNITY WATCH



Mississauga honoured for two projects that contribute to the city's economy

The City of Mississauga's Economic Development Office (EDO) has been recognized for its contributions supporting the economy of the city. Last week, the Economic Developers Council of Ontario (EDCO) presented the City of Mississauga's EDO with one prestigious award for innovative and impactful projects that support economic development and, by extension, the city's economy. The two projects recognized are:

• Equity and Diversity Collaborative (EDC) – Received the Award of Excellence in the category of Inclusive Based Initiatives & Programming

o In 2021, the City of Mississauga's Economic Development Office (EDO), in collaboration with the Healthcare Businesswomen's Association (Canada Region), established the Equity & Diversity Collaborative (EDC) – a consortium of healthcare and life sciences companies dedicated to driving gender equity and diversity. EDC's mission is "To achieve gender parity (50 per cent) and significant representation (30 per cent) of other under-represented groups, including racialized persons, people living with disabilities, and members of the LGBTQ2 community at all levels of organizations and on Canadian board(s)."

• IDEA Square One – We were recognized as finalists in the category of Building Initiatives, Brick and Mortar projects

o Launched in May 2023, IDEA Square One is a central entrepreneur hub that brings together a network of supports to help entrepreneurs grow, scale and commercialize their ideas and businesses. The hub reduces barriers to entrepreneurship and increases the access and visibility of Mississauga's Innovation assets to all businesses and residents.

"This award and recognition indicates the City of Mississauga is making in economic development

as leaders in the field," said Acting Mayor Joe Horneck. "Our Economic Development team works hard to identify actions and opportunities that contribute to Mississauga's business community and economy. They work to create an environment where businesses of all sizes can grow and succeed. I congratulate them on this prestigious recognition."

"As an organization committed to advancing equity and inclusion, the HBA is proud that HBA Canada's work as part of the Equity and Diversity Collaborative is being honored by EDCO. Beyond the significant impact of the EDC's work, the visibility that comes from recognition of the award will help to raise greater awareness of the critical importance that inclusion and belonging play in the workplace and in the greater community," said Mary Stutts, CEO, Healthcare Businesswomen's Association.

The EDCO Awards of Excellence

The EDCO Awards of Excellence is an annual program that aims to seek distinctive ideas and initiatives that can become future economic development best practices. Recipients of the EDCO Awards of Excellence are viewed as leaders in economic development and are often asked to present their efforts and accomplishments at speaking engagements, including the EDCO Conference and Showcase.

This recognition among our peers validates our work and its positive impact on our business community" said Christina Kakaflikas, Director, Economic Development. "With Council's strong support and direction, the City of Mississauga's Economic Development team is dedicated to providing programs and resources that help our businesses grow and prosper while also contributing to our strategic priorities."

The team provides site location assistance, sector development support, research, industry analysis



Left: Christina Kakaflikas, Director of Economic Development, and Right: Donna Heslin, Manager of Small Business Entrepreneurship and Innovation.

and marketing as well as offering guidance and support to entrepreneurs and small businesses.

About EDCO

The Economic Developers Council of Ontario supports the economic development profession through a variety of learning events and conferences. Each year they have an awards call-out to communities and organizations to submit new, innovative and impactful projects that support economic development. To learn more about growth and development opportunities and why businesses continue to choose Mississauga.

visit thefutureisunlimited.ca.

For more information about supports for small business,

visit ideamississauga.ca



SPECIAL FEATURE

SRI KALAHASTISWARAR TEMPLE, KALAHASTI, TIRUPATI DIST. ANDHRA **PRADESH INDIA**

Compiled by Kidambi Raj

INTRODUCTION

The Sri Kalahasti Temple is located in the town of Kalahasti in Tirupati district in Andhra Pradesh in India. This temple is famous for Vayu Lingam (Wind Lingam) and is one of the Pancha Bootha Sthalams. This is also regarded as Rahu-Ketu Keshetra.

Sri Kalahasti got its name because in days of yore, a Spider (Sri), a Serpent (kala) and an Elephant (hasti), worshipped Siva with great



A spider lived in the inner sanctum and worshipped the Lord by weaving elaborate temples and images. One day a breeze came up and caused the altar fire to destroy the spider's offerings. The spider became angry and was about to gulp down the flame, (realize the Self) endangering its (ego's) life. Appreciative of its devotion, Siva appeared and granted the Spider a boon. The spider requested moksha, release from the cycle of births and deaths. Accordingly it became one with Siva, the Self.

A Cobra worshipped Lord Siva by offering rare gems, pearls and rubies that it brought from Nagaland, a mythical place where Nagas (serpents) dwell. Serpents are one of India's most visible symbols of the spiritual power of the self. The spiritual power of the self, called Kundalini, the latent electricity of

Consciousness, is hidden in the dark recesses of the unconscious like a snake hidden deep within the earth. After the snake had worshipped, an elephant fresh from its purifying bath in the nearby river, came to worship. In preparation it sprayed the altar with the water from its trunk, scattering the gems. It then proceeded to decorate the altar with the leaves from a holy tree. When the cobra returned it was angered to see its offerings disrespected and replaced by mere leaves. So, it replaced the

leaves with gems. This charade repeated itself until the Cobra became fed up and decided to punish whomever was destroying its offerings. When the elephant returned to worship with its leaves the cobra slithered up its trunk and injected its venom. In agony the elephant dashed its head on the stone altar in an attempt to kill the snake. The snake fell out of the trunk and died from its wounds and the elephant succumbed to the poison. Understanding that both had sacrificed their lives for the sake of their love for the Lord, Siva resurrected them, gave them liberation and took them into His

At the foot of the Linga, one can see a Spider, two Elephant tusks and a five-headed (representing the five elements) serpent to remind the devotees of these acts of Supreme Devotion.

LEGENDS

In primordial times, the Wind-God, Vayu performed penance for thousands of years to the Karpoora Lingam, the lingam of Siva made of Camphor. Pleased with Vayu's penance, Siva manifested before him and bestowed him three boons. Vayu was blessed to be everywhere in the world in the form od air and that it would



be an integral part of every being in the form of Vayu. Further, the Linga Vayu worshipped was named Vayu Lingam after him and was declared to be worshipped by various beings.

Another legend narrates that Siva's Consort Parvati was cursed by Him to discard Her divine form and assume human form. To atone, Parvati performed penance at Serialists and Siva was pleased. Siva granted Her a heavenly body, hundred times better than Her previous divine form. Parvati is worshipped here as Shiva-Gnanam Gnana Prasunamba or Gnana Parasurambika Devi.

Cursed to become a ghost, Ghanakala prayed at Srikalahasti for 15 years and after chanting Bhairava Mantra, Siva restored her original form.

Mayura, Chandra and Devendra were also freed from their curses after taking bath in the river Swarnamukhi and praying at Srikalahasti.

According to another legend, Vayu and Shesha had a dispute to find out who is superior. To prove the superiority Shesha encircled Mount Kailas, the abode of Lord Siva. Vayu tried to remove this encircle by creating a twister and because of that twister, 8 parts of the mountain fell into 8 different places and they are: Trincomalee, Srikalahasti, Thiruchiramalai,

SPECIAL FEATURE

Thiruvenkoimalai, Rajathagiri, Neerthagiri, Ratnagiri and Suwethagiri Thirupanggeli.

Another legend has it, that Kannappa, the hunter who turned into a devotee of Lord Siva and became one of 63 Saivite saints called the Nayanmars, willingly offered his eyes to stop the blood flowing through Lord Siv's Lingam. When Lord Siva came to know about this,

immediately stopped him from doing that and granted his release from the neverending cycle of birth and death.

RAHU - KETU **POOJA**

According Hindu Astrology, Rahu and Ketu indicate the two crossing points of the ways of the Sun and the Moon. They move around the divine

circle. The way that obscurations happen when Sun and Moon are at one of these focuses offers the fantasy of gulping of the Sun.

Rahu is one of the nine well known astronomical bodies in Indian texts. Rahu is a shadow entity, unlike the other eight bodies. It is the one that causes eclipses and is also believed to be the King of meteors. Rahu represents the ascension of the moon in its processional orbit around the earth.

According to some accounts in Hindu mythology, Ketu belongs to Jaimini Gotra, whereas Rahu is from Paiteenasa Gotra. Thus, both are totally different entities having distinct characteristics but are two parts of a common body. Ketu is generally called as a shadow planet. It is believed that it has a tremendous impact on human lives and the whole creation as well.

Rahu is of female and Ketu is of neutral. Rahu is the significator of other worldly information and Ketu is the karaka or significator of Moksha or the last freedom, as relationship significator. Rahu overseas maternal grant parents and Ketu indicates fatherly grandparents.

Rahu signifies illusion, mystery, secrets, desires, ambitions, aspirations etc. It plays an important part in the life of an individual and hence should be carefully examined. Rahu-Ketu Pooja is performed to reduce the force of the ill effects of Kala Sarpa Dosha. Thus, performing Rahu-Ketu pooja can ensure relief from sorrows and bondage. Save you from unexpected losses and misfortunes.

The Rahu Ketu Pooja can be performed daily at the Sri Kalahasti temple from 6 am to 6 pm. However, certain days are considered particularly auspicious for this ritual. These include, every Sunday, Full Moon Day, New Moon Day, as well as days of Lunar and Solar Eclipses.

ABOUT THE TEMPLE

Around the 11th century AD, the Chola emperor Rajendra Chola I, renovated the temple and constructed the main structure.

Kulottunga Chola I, contrived and built the beautiful gopurams, located at the entrance facing south, during the 11th century AD. Inscriptions of Rajaditya Chola, Rajaraja Chola I, Rajadhiraja Chola I, Kulottunga Chola I, Kulottunga Chola III are found across the temple. The temple received contributions from various ruling dynasties like the Chola

18 TH YEAR IN CIRCULATION



Dynasty and the Vijayanagar Empire. The 120 feet (37 m) high main Gopuram and the Hundred Pillared Hall with intricate carvings were commissioned during the regime of Vijayanagara Krishnadevaraya during 1516 AD.

The main gopuram built by King Krishnadevaraya, collapsed on May 26, 2010. As per the Archaeology Department, the temple tower stood on a foundation that had a depth of only one and a half feet and had a thin crack



25 years before it collapsed, which expanded as years passed by. The Raja gopuram was reconstructed on its original form at the same location with a budget of 45 Crores and was consecrated on the 18th of January 2017.

The temple itself is a great architectural piece of art. One can see that the inside pillars are fresh



as they were hundreds of years back because they were hidden from degradation by nature. King Krishnadevaraya built a huge gopuram just a few feet away from the entrance to the temple. The entrance to the temple is crowned with a smaller tower. There is an underground Ganapathi shrine in the outer Parakram, while in the innermost Parakram are the shrines of Lord Siva and Goddess Parvathi. This ancient gopuram over the main gate is over 120 ft. (36.5 m) high and the entire temple are covered with beautiful carvings.

The vast west facing Kalahastiswara temple is built on an adjoining hill and on the banks of the river Swarnamukhi. At some points, the hill serves as the wall of the temple. The temple Prakarams follow the contour of the adjoining hill and hence the temple plan is rather irregular. North of the temple is the Durgambika Hill, on the south is Kannappar hill and on the east is Kumaraswamy hill.

RELIGIOUS SIGNIFICANC OF THIS **TEMPLE**

Ghat leading to Swarnamukhi River is revered as one of the Pancha Bhootha Sthalam, where the presiding deity is worshipped as Vayu Linga. This temple is considered the Kasi of the South. Saivite saints of the first century sang about this temple. This is the only temple in India which remains open during Solar and Lunar eclipses, while all other temples remain closed. This temple is famous Rahu-Kethu pooja. It is believed that this pooja will ward the people from astrological bad effects of Rahu and Kethu. As per Hindu legend, Kalahastheeswara was worshipped at this place by Brahma during all four Yugas. Arjuna, the Pandava prince

> during Mahabharatha is believed to have worshipped presiding deity.

This temple is revered as one of the Pancha Bhoota Sthalams, where the presiding deity is worshipped as Vayu Linga (Air Linga). The temple is considered as Kasi of the South. Saivite saints of the first century sang about this temple. The temple also finds mention in the works of Nakeerar and the

Nalvars, namely, Appar, Sundarar, Sambandar and Manickavasagar in the canonical works of Tirumura. As the temple is revered in Tevaram, it is classified as Paadal Petra Sthalam, one of the 275 temples that find mention in the Saiva canon.

The temple follows the Saivite tradition. Maha Sivaratri is the most important festival when lakhs and lakhs of devotees come and offer prayers to seek the blessings of the Lord. Mahasivaratri Brhmotsavam is celebrated for 13 days during which the Utsava Murtis of Siva and Parvathi are taken on Vahanams around the temple streets.

The other specialty of this temple is that, it is the only temple in whole of India that remains open during Solar and Lunar eclipses.



COMMUNITY WATCH

A New Dawn in Batticaloa:

CELEBRATING THE LAUNCH OF THE CANADA-BATTICALOA FRIENDSHIP FARM

On the 22nd of February 2024, a significant stride was made towards economic sustainability and job creation in Thiraimadu, Batticaloa, with the inauguration of the Canada-Batticaloa Friendship Farm, Kail T Rajah Project. This landmark initiative, a collaborative effort between the Canadian Tamil Congress and the North and East Economic Development (NEED) Centre, is not just about agricultural innovation but a step towards economic independence for the local community.

The centerpiece of this collaboration is the Moringa model farming project, chosen for its potential to bring about economic stability and create employment opportunities in the area.

The inauguration of the Canada-Batticaloa Friendship Farm marks the beginning of a new era of prosperity for the local community. By focusing on sustainable farming practices, this initiative not only promotes the well-being of the environment, but also ensures a steady creation of job opportunities. The project is a beacon of hope for the surrounding areas, promising to usher in economic growth and stability.

The event was a testament to the power of collaboration, bringing together individuals and organizations from various backgrounds to support a common goal—economic independence through sustainable development. The Canada-Batticaloa Friendship Farm is more than just a farm; it's a symbol of unity and the collective aspiration for a self-sufficient future.

The inauguration ceremony was graced by the presence of numerous high-ranking officials, underscoring the importance and potential impact of this initiative.

Canadian Deputy High Commissioner for Sri Lanka and Counsellor Daniel Bood, Batticaloa Government Agent J. J. Muralitharan, Former Batticaloa Mayor Thiyagarajah Saravanapavan, Canadian Tamil Congress Executive Director Danton Thurairajah, Treasurer Thirukumaran Thirunavukarasu, Former President Sutharamoorthy Umasuthan, Sri Lanka Projects Thushyanthan Thurairatnam, Coordinator NEED Centre Board of Directors Mylvaganam Yogeswaran and S. Piratheepan were some of the many on attendance. This project's significance

in fostering international cooperation and its attended, demonstrating a strong local and national commitment to sustainable development and economic revitalization. Their presence highlighted the collective effort and shared vision towards creating a self-sustaining community in Batticaloa.

This initiative is a call to action for everyone who believes in the power of agriculture to transform lives and create a self-reliant community. By supporting this project, we are not just investing in a farm but in the future of our community and its people.

The journey has just begun. The success of the Canada-Batticaloa Friendship Farm and its vision for economic sustainability relies on the continued support of the community, partners, and advocates of sustainable development. Join us in nurturing this seed of economic independence and prosperity. Together, we can make a difference.

Looking Ahead: Building a Sustainable and Economically Independent Community.

News by Canadian Tamil Congress, Toronto









































FEATURE & OP-ED

JOINT SUPPORT BY FETNA & CTC TOWARDS EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT IN SRI LANKA

The good hearts of the **▲** Tamil Canadians represented by Canadian Tamil Congress along with The Federation of Tamil Sangams of North America (FeTNA), at my request, funded the construction of a Science Laboratory & provided equipment for the use of Advance Level students at Dehiowita Tamil Maha Vidyalayam. The TPA appreciates this generous act which will benefit the children of the marginalized plantation residents, within the recent Indian origin Hill Country Tamil Sri Lankan community. The Canadian High Commissioner for Sri Lanka & Maldives, Eric Walsh & CTC Executive Director Danton Thurairajah jointly declared open the science lab to the children. Miles apart but close at heart! Thank you CTC! Thank you FeTNA! Thank you Canada!

Courtesy by Mano Ganesan, MP for Colombo in Parliament of Sri Lanka. Leader of Tamil Progressive Alliance & Democratic Peoples Front (from X, formerly Twitter on March 4, 2024)









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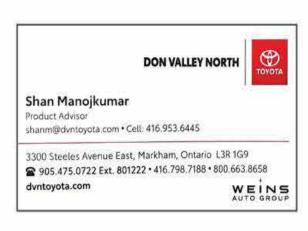
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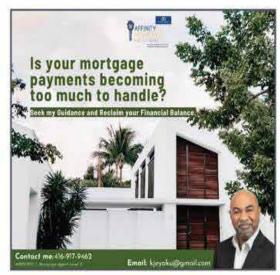
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