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CTCC Celebrates Resounding Success of Annual Awards Gala 2024



Hon. Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario from 2018, Leader of the PC Party of Ontario is the Chief Guest at the Canadian Tamils' Chamber of Commerce annual Awards Gala held on April 20, 2024 at the Hilton Suites Hotel, Markham. Hon. Doug Ford is seen here with President of Canadian Tamils' Chamber of Commerce Murali Sivaguru after congratulating and praising the achievements and contributions of the Tamil Community.



Hon. Gary Anandasangaree, Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, MP for Scarborough-Rouge Park since 2015, former Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, and Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage and Multiculturalism (Multiculturalism).

Tamils' Chamber of Commerce, and counsel to the Canadian Tamil Congress.

As an Honored guest at the Awards Gala, Hon. Gary Anandasangaree congratulates and presenting a special greeting to the President of Canadian Tamils' Chamber of Commerce Murali Sivaguru.

Murali Sivaguru is an entrepreneur with an impressive track record spanning nearly three decades, during which he has played pivotal roles within Hertz Canada Limited, culminating in his esteemed position as Senior Operations Manager and also proud owner and operator of two thriving businesses.

Murali's contributions to the CTCC are both extensive and meaningful, ranging from the noteworthy Building Project to generous financial support for numerous Tamil community events and fundraisers, including the Scarborough Health Network Foundation.

Canadian Tamils' Chamber of Commerce is thrilled to announce the resounding success of its Annual Awards Gala 2024, an evening filled with pride, celebration, and inspiration. The event, held on April 20th, brought together members of the community, distinguished guests, and sponsors to honor exceptional individuals and celebrate their outstanding achievements.
(For full details and photos, see pages 3, 5, 6 & 7)

Minister Anandasangaree is an internationally recognized human rights lawyer and community activist who has advocated tirelessly for education and justice.

He has served as Chair of the Canadian Tamil Youth Development Centre, President of the Canadian

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Amidst an atmosphere of enthusiasm and fellowship, attendees witnessed captivating speeches, inspiring award presentations, and memorable moments that highlighted the remarkable talent, resilience, and commitment within our chamber. The Gala was graced by the presence of Premier Doug Ford, whose attendance added a special significance to the evening, highlighting his support for our chamber and its initiatives.

CTCC extends heartfelt congratulations to the following deserving award winners:

Best Entrepreneur Award Winner

Ranjith Koneswaran of CTS Building Supplies

Best Women Entrepreneur Award Winner

Thushyanthini Thevarajah of Petit Delights

Best Young Entrepreneur Award Winner

KJ Kanesalingam of Monakko Developments

Best Marketing Award Winner

Shobika Santhalingam of Mint Media Social

Community Services Award Winner

Geetha Moorthy of SAAAC Autism Centre

Outstanding Professional Award Winner

Janani Shanmuganathan of Shanmuganathan Law

Each of these individuals has demonstrated exceptional talent, innovation, and dedication in their respective fields, serving as inspiring role models for the entire community.

CTCC extends its sincerest thanks to everyone who contributed to the success of the Awards Gala 2024. Your unwavering support, dedication, and participation are deeply appreciated, and we look forward to continuing our journey of growth and success together.

Some of the highlights from the event can be seen here.

Photos by: Ninaivukal.com & Iyah4U.com

See Page 5-7 for more event photos



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PUBLISHER'S DESK

Enjoy your May issue of the Monsoon Journal with a Cup of Tea on International Tea Day!!

By **Harrish Thirukumaran**

Tea, it holds a very special place in the hearts of many in the Tamil and South Asian population, including the core readership here at the Monsoon Journal.

I often see it as drinking from a cup of warmth and comfort. It's like a time machine to my childhood home because tea was a staple tradition of my family.

Even now as an adult, I try to keep in touch with that tradition every Friday with a cup of hot, cardamom tea. It's a perfect way to start my morning and relish in another end of a long, busy week.

It's interesting, however, because what can really be a simple cup of a hot beverage has so much more meaning and purpose than what we take at face value. Tea is the world's most consumed drink, after water, and the United Nations General Assembly has established May 21st as International Tea Day.

Tea, a beverage made from the *Camellia sinensis* plant, has varying accounts of its origin. One of the most popular tales is from China in 2737 BC, where Shen Nung, the emperor and renowned herbalist, was boiling his drinking water when leaves from a nearby tea shrub blew into his cauldron. He tasted the resulting brew, and the beverage of tea was born.

In that sense, one can't help but be in awe of the idea of how great things or inventions such as tea have emerged through blunders or accidents. I cannot think of times where these things such as tea were absent from the world. It goes to show how tea has been with us for a long time, and how commonplace it has been in our own lives.

However, tea demand has been decreasing in Canada and in many other traditional tea importing countries as well. It's losing its market. As a Canadian, it's so obvious that tea is not as popular as coffee among the Canadian population.

Certainly, coffee has gained a glamorous image for itself in this modern era. It acts as a symbol of our hustle culture with coffee shops sitting on nearly every corner of the streets in Toronto alone, luring in customers purely by the scent of it. Marketing and mass media through movies and television alike has contributed to the great popularity of coffee.

The production and processing of tea constitutes a main source of livelihoods for millions of families in developing countries. Also, it can bring health benefits and wellness due to the beverage's anti-inflammatory, antioxidant and weight loss effects.

Moreover, it holds a strong connection with the current challenge of climate change.

Changes in temperature and rainfall patterns, with more floods and droughts, are already affecting yields, tea product quality and prices, lowering incomes and threatening rural livelihoods. These climate changes are expected to intensify, calling for urgent adaptation measures. In parallel, there is a growing recognition of the need to contribute to climate change mitigation, by reducing carbon emissions from tea production and processing.

International Tea Day is intended to promote and foster collective actions to implement activities in favour of the sustainable production and consumption of tea and raise awareness of its importance in fighting hunger and poverty.

PUBLISHING TEAM

Managing Editor & Publisher :	Logan Velumailum, B. Sc. - editor4mj@gmail.com
Executive Editorial Board :	Harrish Thirukumaran Danesh Thirukumaran Krishni Narine Tashvir Narine
Graphics & Design :	Suren Rasadurai - suren8@gmail.com , Santosh Kumar - kasantosh@gmail.com
Photo Journalists :	Gnane B. Gnanendran, Rudy Ruthran
Health & Care :	Jeavana Sritharan, Andrea Shanmugarajah, Dr. Nuwan Fonseka, Dr. Shiyam Loganathan
Special Feature :	Raymond Rajabalan, J.J. Atputharajah, C. Kamalaharan, Sivanesan Sinniah, Kumar Punithavel, Nate Velumailum,
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Circulation Co-ordinator :	Edward Francis
Web & Digital:	Sam Daniel

For May 21, 2024, the UN is organizing efforts to promote “#TeaPower”, an online and event-based marketing program that advocates the benefits of including tea in every high-energy fitness regimen.

So please enjoy a sip of freshly brewed tea with this May edition of the Monsoon Journal filled with exciting stories showcasing the brilliance of our Tamil and South Asian community throughout the Greater Toronto Area. But as you take that sip, take a moment, and appreciate the massive impact it has across our community, society, and world overall.

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Tamil Genocide Remembrance Day

On the 15th anniversary of Mullivaikkal,
Let us honour and remember lives lost, and
Commit to justice, accountability, and peace.

தமிழ் இனப்படுகொலை நினைவு தினம்

முள்ளிவாய்க்கால் 15ஆம் ஆண்டு நினைவு தினத்தில், நாம் இழந்த
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நீதி, பொறுப்புக்கூறல் மற்றும் அமைதிக்காக எம்மை அர்ப்பணிப்போம்!



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Mother's Day

May 12, 2024

By: J A Rajah

Mother's Day holds immense significance as it provides an opportunity to recognize and celebrate the invaluable contribution of mothers to society. Mothers play pivotal roles in shaping the lives of their children in instilling values, providing support, and

nurturing growth. Mother's Day originally started in the USA on May 9th, 1905.

President Woodrow Wilson recognized the second Sunday in May as Mother's Day. White Carnation is the flower assigned to symbolize Mother's love. Mother's Day is a celebration of love and gratitude. It recognizes the

selfless services of mothers who sacrifice everything for the welfare of their children. They are there for us through thick and thin and their love is unconditional. Their hard work and dedication to raise a child is very much appreciated. Even if they are in dire straits, they will devote all they can for their children's betterment.

The Tamil proverb states that there is no temple greater than the mother -'

Thayit Siranthoru koyilum illai'.

Valluvar went further and said that a mother rejoices when cultured men acclaim her son as a person of exemplary virtue and culture. (*Saanron*).





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Annual Chinese Radiothon surpasses goal, raising **\$220,340** for Scarborough Health Network



Dr. Jason Fung, NYT Best-Selling Author and SHN kidney specialist, alongside Linda Tse, Director of Development at SHN Foundation, during the Annual Chinese Radiothon that raised over \$220,000 for Scarborough Health Network.



Alicia Vandermeer, President & CEO, SHN Foundation; Tulla Bateman, VP, Community Development, SHN Foundation; Linda Tse, Director of Development, SHN Foundation; and representatives from Scarborough Area No Frills.

Scarborough Health Network Foundation (SHN Foundation) is thrilled to announce that the 2024 Chinese Radiothon raised \$220,340, exceeding its fundraising goal of \$200,000. This event held on April 18 was presented by Scarborough Area No Frills and broadcast live on Sing Tao A1 Chinese Radio AM 1540.

The Radiothon supports various priority projects within Scarborough hospitals including the development of a world-class diagnostic imaging department opening this year and the ongoing Love, Scarborough campaign.

“We are profoundly grateful to the Chinese community and all our donors, volunteers, and sponsors for their overwhelming support,” says Linda Tse, Director of Development, SHN Foundation. “This event not only brought our community together but also significantly pushed us closer to our goal of equitable healthcare for all residents of Scarborough.”

The Radiothon featured special guest appearances by best-selling author Dr. Jason Fung, who shared insights into diabetes management and weight loss, Dr. Raymond Ng, who discussed his pioneering work in early detection of nasal cancer, and Dr. Paul Tam, who highlighted advancements in dialysis

treatment. Mayor Olivia Chow shared a special welcome video message in English and Cantonese.

Richard Rivera, Franchise Owner, and spokesperson for the Scarborough Area No Frills, emphasized the importance of community support healthcare close to home, “Being part of this community and contributing to its wellbeing through events like the Radiothon is a core value of ours. We are proud to help enhance access to healthcare for everyone in Scarborough.

SHN Foundation’s Chinese Radiothon has become a signature event within the Chinese community in Scarborough. Thanks to the incredible support of the community, this annual event has raised nearly \$2 million for Scarborough hospitals - Birchmount, Centenary, and General. Learn more at SHNFoundation.ca/Radiothon

About the Love, Scarborough Campaign


The Love, Scarborough campaign was launched by Scarborough Health Network (SHN) Foundation in 2022 to raise awareness and donations for Scarborough hospitals. Funds raised

support critical projects across the health network, including expanding emergency care, establishing new models of care in the Scarborough community, and advancing medical research and education. SHN does more than anyone thought possible with less than anyone could imagine. Imagine what they could do with more. Learn more at lovescarborough.ca

About Scarborough Health Network

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

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Festival of Colours Night Market brings community together to transform mental health care for the children and youth



Two-time Juno winner Kiran Ahluwalia took to the stage to get the crowd on their feet at Markham Stouffville Hospital Foundation's Festival of Colours Night Market

On Saturday, April 27, nearly 300 community members gathered at the Hilton Toronto/Markham Suites for Markham Stouffville Hospital (MSH) Foundation's Festival of Colours Night Market to stimulate much needed change for youth and adolescent mental health. This 'fun-raiser' presented by RBC and supported by The Nanji Family Foundation, was inspired by the community's diverse and vibrant cultures.

Health care is everchanging and so too is the community that Oak Valley Health's MSH serves. In recent years, the demand for mental health services at MSH has increased substantially and wait times are at a record high, especially among the youth population.

"Government funding is not enough, community giving is essential to deliver exceptional, patient-centred care," says Suzette Strong, CEO MSH Foundation. "Our community is one of fastest growing and most diverse communities in Canada and initiatives like the Festival of Colours Night Market help ensure we have the resources in place so our team of doctors, nurses, and allied health professionals can care for any child and their family when they need us, right in their own backyard."

Funds from the evening will support a new Child and Adolescent Inpatient Mental Health



Juno winner and Canadian R&B singer Sean Jones stole hearts with his soulful act at Markham Stouffville Hospital Foundation's Festival of Colours Night Market

Unit at MSH. A six-bed unit will enable the delivery of specialized treatment and help reduce wait times for children in crisis who need access to life-saving mental health care.

"As a community, we need to band together to continue to destigmatize mental illness while working together to bring innovation and mental health care close to home," says Dr. Rus Sethna, Chief of Psychiatry, Oak Valley Health.

Guests were inspired and immersed in an evening filled with a variety of fantastic food stations reflecting the diverse flavours of Markham and Stouffville. There was plenty to enjoy from henna stations, beer and tequila tastings, makeup bars, photobooth, and many giveaways.

Two-time Juno winner Kiran Ahluwalia took to the stage to get the crowd on their feet while fellow Juno winner and Canadian R&B singer Sean Jones stole hearts with his soulful act. To keep the party going, DJ Barbi who has shared stages with Lupe Fiasco, A-TRAK, Chromeo, Newclaus, and many more, delivered captivating music sets to close off the



HEALTH & WELLNESS



night. Entertainment guests also included world renowned electric violinist Nemesis, Dr. Draw and Canadian Box Champion Scott Jackson. Mysterion the Mind Reader mesmerized attendees with his intuitive perspective, as seen on America's Got Talent as well as Canada's premier Bollywood Dance School Canada.

Final fundraising results are being tallied as donations continue to be made. Relive moments of the event or donate at www.mshfestivalofcolours.ca

Markham Stouffville Hospital Foundation exists to enable the growth of Markham Stouffville Hospital by raising funds and awareness for its ongoing priorities and needs. Donations from the community fund life-saving medical equipment that helps to ensure the delivery of first-class health care at MSH.



Markham Stouffville Hospital Foundation's Festival of Colours Night Market Event Committee are committed to making a difference for children and youth mental health in community



The Nanji Family Foundation receives token of appreciation from Markham Stouffville Hospital Foundation L-R: Suzette Strong, CEO, MSH Foundation, Dr. Rus Sethna, Chief of Psychiatry, Oak Valley Health, Mayor Frank Scarpitti, City of Markham, Alisha and Azim of the Nanji Family Foundation, Jo-anne Marr, President & CEO, Oak Valley Health, and Mayor Iain Lovatt, Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville



Vivi White (centre), Regional Vice President, Markham Region, RBC receives token of appreciation from Markham Stouffville Hospital Foundation CEO, Suzette Strong (L-R) and stands with Mayor Frank Scarpitti, City of Markham, Mayor Iain Lovatt, Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville, Jo-anne Marr, President & CEO, Oak Valley Health, and Dr. Rus Sethna, Chief of Psychiatry, Oak Valley Health



Oak Valley Health's Mental Health team helps shine line light on mental health crisis for children and youth in community, urging for support of new inpatient unit at local hospital



AIR TRAFFIC CONTROLLER'S FATIGUE AND AVIATION SAFETY IN GLOBAL AVIATION

By: Kane Siva

The First Air Traffic Control Tower, and the airport I saw in my life, always left an indelible impression in my mind. 1958, in grade 5, at Jaffna Central College, our class teacher late Mrs. Richards, and others took us on a one day trip to the Palaly airport, and Keerimalai. This is the day I saw a control Tower. It never occurred to me, 14 years later, I would be working in coordination with these Air Traffic Controllers at Katunayaka Airport.

Air traffic controllers are an integral part of aviation, air safety, and can be termed as the two sides of a coin. No pilot in command should do an IFR flight plan without air traffic controllers. Air traffic controllers are always housed in a high tower, giving them a 360 degree view of the massive airport complex, and they use high powered binoculars to get a bird's eye view when necessary. The FAA states the primary purpose of the ATC system is to prevent a collision involving aircraft. Air traffic controllers are charged with, providing safe, and orderly flow of air traffic at all times. They help pilots to avoid mountainous terrain, and hazardous weather conditions, with the help of National weather services. Air traffic controllers provide invaluable services to the World of Aviation. There are three categories of air traffic controllers: Tower, Approach, Departure, and Enroute. Controllers in the tower monitor the movements of planes for up to about 25 to 30 miles, vehicles in the runways, accepting and filing ATC flight plans for departure of flights, providing weather, startup, and take-off clearances. Once an aircraft is airborne, departure and approach controllers take care of the flight, provide minimum separation, and assure that the flight path is clear of any hazards. Ultimately the enroute controllers make sure, the aircraft arrives safely at their respective destinations. Besides, there are Radar Controllers in Terminal Radar Approach Control Centers, who manage 50 or so km airspace as allocated.

Once the aircraft is in cruise altitude, and fly over different countries and states, enroute controllers with the help of Air Traffic Control Systems Command Center (ATCSCC) ensures smooth flow of air traffic to their destinations through their respective flight path. This shows us how difficult, and crucial is the role of the air traffic controllers for the safety of aviation. Due to the heavy workload, stress, and for the safety of human lives, Air traffic controllers should be given more ammunition and facilities to perform their pivotal role in a more conducive

environment, to ensure aviation safety and the passengers who take to the sky every second. Normally an Air Traffic Controller is recruited after the age of 21, and required to retire by 56 in the US. But this age rule can vary from country to country, 60 to 65 years too. But this is overstretching. Air traffic controllers' job is demanding and extremely challenging. They should have the ability to multitask, superb vision, memory, and split second decision making skills. ATC's job varies from area to area depending on the amount of air traffic. Basically air traffic controllers provide clearance for aircrafts to land, takeoff, start up clearance, directing aircraft to taxi, and are safely separated in a controlled air space. A flight plan is filed with the air traffic controller, before an aircraft is set to leave by the pilot or their authorized representatives (I was a part of this for many years). They (ATC) are the Air Traffic Cops.

Air Traffic Control services was started by a Missouri native, Archie William League, St. Louis, Lambert Airfield, USA, in 1929, who himself, was a daredevil pilot. He was hired to solve the problems of crowded runways with aircrafts. His tools were basically A Red Flag To Stop, A Checkered Flag To Go, A Folding Chair, and an Umbrella for the sun, and of course a Bottle of water. This is how Global air traffic control was born, and Archie is



always referred to as the "Father of the Air traffic Control" system. I believe, what Archie contributed painstakingly, should be improved by all means in modern technological era. The recent incidents, incursions on the runway, inaudible transmissions between the controllers and



the pilots, in the US where an arrogant pilot refused to pay attention to the ATC instructions, and many more day to day occurrences, causes alarm for the safety of aviation.

How the pilot's work environment, training, health, (physical and mental) and hours of duty are mandatory for the safe operation of a flight are important, the same yardstick should be applied for the air traffic controllers as well. Unfortunately scant disregard exists for the services of these "Unsung Heroes Of Aviation Safety" as it was indicated by the action of Cowboy President, Ronald Reagan in 1981, by firing 11359, striking Air traffic controllers, because they demanded better working conditions. Reagan proved he is a Cowboy, but plunged aviation safety to its core. Bravo Reagan! The FAA are in need of 3000 Controllers. Financial Times highlighted, the European Union too is having problems because of shortages of Air traffic controllers. This same issue was echoed in Australia, and Japan's Haneda airport incursion, and accidents highlight this problem. I wonder why the US, EU, Australia, Japan, and Global aviation countries are not paying utmost importance to the Air traffic controllers' grievances. It is obvious by recent incidents they are overworked, deprived of sleep, and stressed. The air traffic has increased multifold, but not the availability of controllers. Besides, controllers have to deal with equipment that is obsolete, some from 1950, and some facilities do not have the latest Navigational aid equipment. It all boils down to the funding provided to these facilities. It is shocking to see some ATC facilities in the US still use Paper Strips on a 6 inches metal strip, to track aircrafts, which I saw for the



"Archie W. League is considered to be the first air-traffic controller, preventing collisions between aircraft with his simple system of a red flag for 'stop' and a checkered flag for 'go.'" (Public Domain, courtesy of the FAA)

first time at Katunayake airport in 1972, when I used to file the ATC flight plan.

The FAA named a panel of experts a couple years back, to study the problems faced by air traffic controllers, especially the fatigue caused by long hours of duty, after a series of near-miss incidents across the US. In most facilities the controllers are working 6 days a week, 10 hours, and overtime to cover, if the other controller does not show up for duty. This is really a big safety hazard. Mark Rosekind, a sleep expert, and a former member of the National Transportation Safety Board, has been tasked by the FAA, to make valuable recommendations on the controllers fatigue,



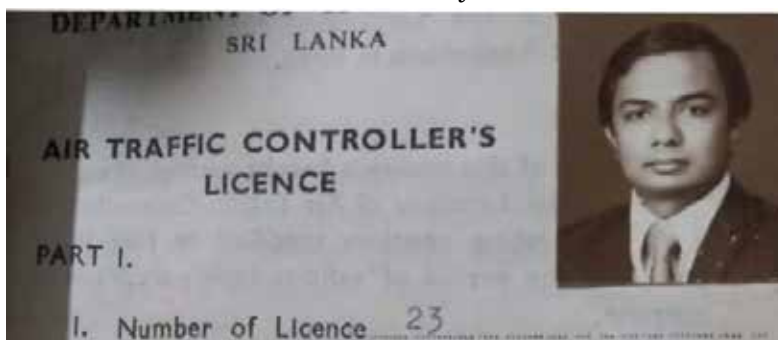
Pearson Air Traffic Control Tower

and near misses. This panel's findings will give a better idea for controllers scheduling, and working conditions. The FAA's head, Whitaker says almost more than 300, near fatal misses due to the controller's mistakes. Citing the FAA report, major US airport facilities have real air traffic controller shortages. This is an unacceptable norm for aviation safety. The FAA is training at their Oklahoma academy more air traffic controllers. One of the Instructors said, looking for people who are good at playing "Video Games", since they are good at making split second decisions.

They recruit Pilot license holders, as it is easy for them to get to the routine quickly.

The fatigue the air traffic controllers have to undergo everyday is enormous. Their duty time should be mandated and followed to the letter. If an accident occurs due to an ATC error, I would suggest, the insurance companies should not pay, if they ascertain that controllers have over worked. Air Navigation Regulations of each and every country who participates in safe air travel, must ensure the air traffic controllers are treated within these work guidelines, environment, so as to ensure the safety of the flying public. FAA and other civil aviation authorities must ensure the duty hours of air traffic controllers are incorporated into an act of legislation. They should not be dealt with, like another bureaucratic officer, but as someone who deals with life and death every minute, when an aircraft is in the air.

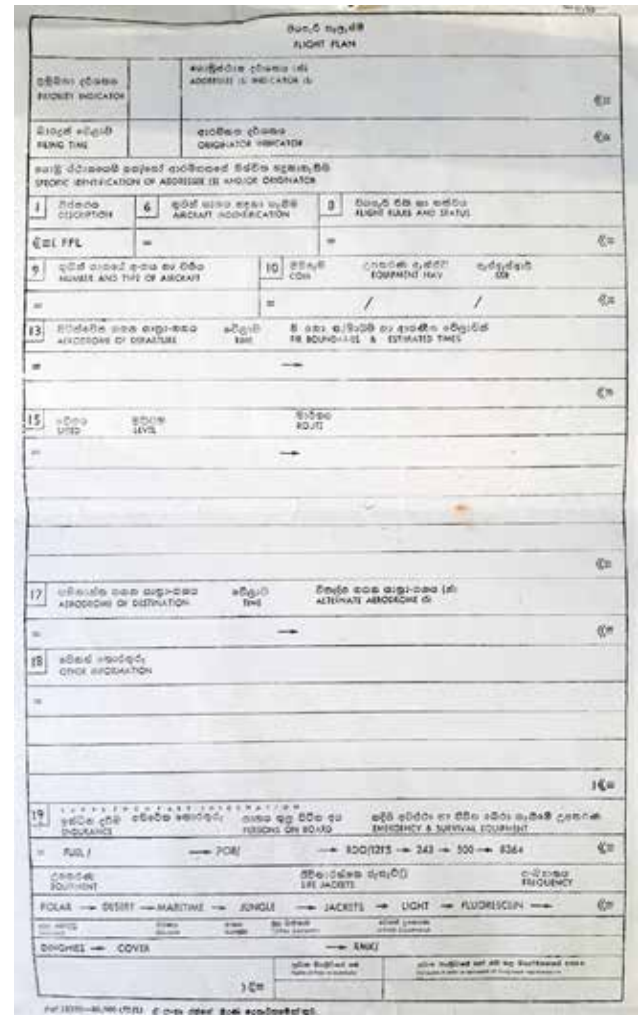
The air traffic controllers profession is a highly challenging, stressful job, it is compounded by outdated equipment, and ungodly working hours. I'm sure most of you must have heard the incident at CDG, when the Air Traffic Controller fell down on his knees and cried inconsolably, when the Concorde aircraft he cleared to fly crashed in



front of his eyes and perished. He underwent Psychotherapy, as he was so depressed and considered himself part of the crew.

Remember, The Air traffic controllers are the "Unsung Heroes Of Aviation Industry" and I urge any, and all Governments of The World, and the respective regulatory bodies to place greater significance to their invaluable services.

I want to sum up, by dedicating this article to all the air traffic controllers in Sri Lanka, my friends, I worked with for 10 years, as part of my Flight Operational Duties. Love to mention few of them Late John De Saram, Saravanapavan, Anton Rodrigo, Nada, M. Piyasena, Kingsley, Pulleperuma, and the living legends Nimal Ramachandra, Athula Dissanayaka, Sarath Suraweera, Duncan,



Captain. Senthorselvan, Mahesh Silva, and Thank All Of Them for their Yeoman, and Dedicated Services To Sri Lanka's Aviation. I consider this as honor and pleasure to have had worked with them.

A footnote

While I was signing off on this article, as a Testament for the above topic, ABC NEWS, US, today highlighted the incident at JFK International Airport, 17th April, involving a Swiss Air Flight 017, cleared for takeoff from runway 4L-22R, and at the same time, 4 other aircrafts are crossing the same runway one behind the other. Further 5 days back at Regan international airport involving a JetBlue and a Southwest Airline incident. Both incidents involving Air traffic controllers, and the cause points the finger to the fatigue of air traffic controllers.

WE don't want another Tenerife island incident, where more than 583 lives lost, 61 survivors, 27th March 1977, involving a Pan Am and KLM's Boeing 747.

IT IS HIGH TIME FOR THE FAA TO WAKE UP AND EASE THE SITUATION BY RECRUITING, MORE ATC AND REDUCE THEIR WORKING HOURS TO MAXIMUM 8 HOURS INSTEAD OF 10 HOURS.

A BIG THANK YOU TO THE FAA CHIEF.

GOD BLESS ALL OF The Air Traffic CONTROLLERS FOR THEIR SERVICES.

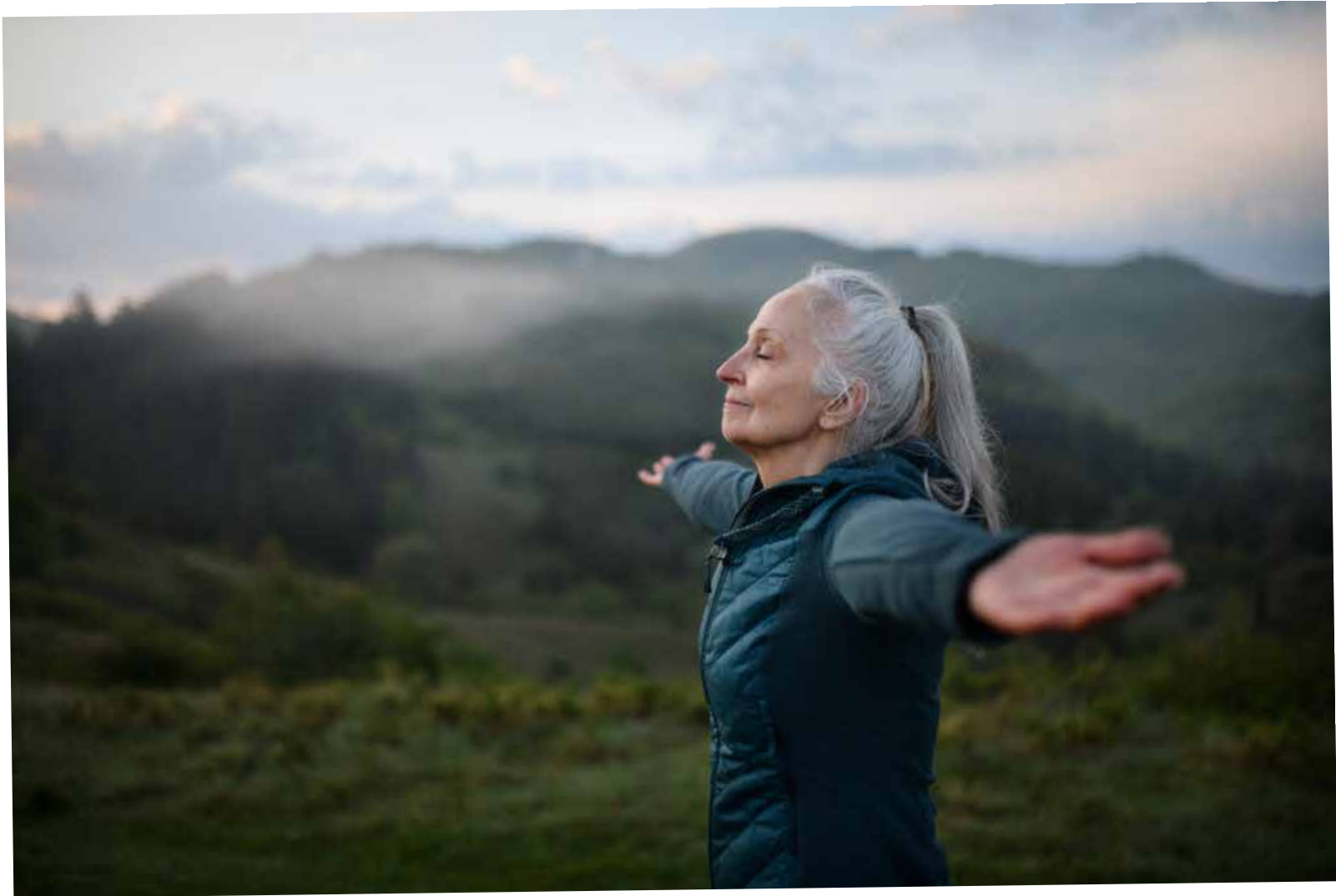
K.N. Sivagnanasunderam (Blue)
Former Flight Operations Officer,
Air Ceylon Ltd.
Kanesiva6@gmail.com



SPECIAL FEATURE

Words of Peace

We are complete



www.success.com

Gratitude comes from what is, not what might be.

That doesn't mean we must abandon our needs and wants, our wishes, hopes and dreams. But we don't need to wait for external success to arrive before we give thanks for what we already have. Our imagination and enthusiasm can achieve great things in the external world – for us and for others – but we don't need achievements to make us complete. We are Complete.

We always choose to accept things as they are, experience them as they are, appreciate them as they are. When we truly appreciate what is, our gratitude is infinite. Our contentment cannot be measured. Our joy, our Love, our understanding, Our happiness, Our inner peace cannot be measured. We cannot run a tape along their dimensions like a tailor and call out the numbers of their shape. We cannot put them on the weighing scales. They are infinite and formless but utterly real for us.

When we value every breath, this is reality. When we fully connect with the peace inside us, this is reality. All of this can only happen in the here and now. What is the good Karma for Now?. The good karma for now is consciousness. The good karma for now is joy. The good karma for now is gratitude.

Quite often I am asked, "What about the bad things happening in my life. Do I need to give Gratitude for them. For the confusion, for the suffering, for the pain?" No, but in those feelings there is also a sign pointing toward something good – life itself. Without life you can't be in pain. Without life, you do not get the opportunity to see the bad times turn good.

**Excerpts from Prem Rawat's Book
'Hear Yourself'**

www.timelesstoday.com

www.premrawat.com



Beauty



- unsplash.com

By: J A Rajah

A blemish less mind is the basis of all virtue; all else is empty show. Beholding a beautiful woman, Valluvar exclaims, “Is she an enchanting angel or a rare peahen, a charmingly bejeweled maiden, in my heart, I am bewildered”; When the beautiful lady deigned to return my look, it seemed as if her gaze, was backed by an assaulting army”; “I do not know the Lord of Death before but now I guess he assumes the form, of maiden with large battling eyes” ;

**“Kootamo kanno pinnayo madavaral,
Nokkam immoonrum udaithu”**

கூற்றமோ கண்ணோ பிணையோ மடவரல்
நோக்கமில் மூன்றும் உடைத்து

“Is it the Lord of Death or simply roving eyes or is she a frightened gazelle, the artless one gives me the impression

of all three”; “If her eyebrows unbend a little, and veil the darting glances from her eyes, my throbbing heart will not tremble so”;

The silken veil drawn over the bosom of the maiden to cover her firm young breasts is like the face -screen put over a rutting tusker”;

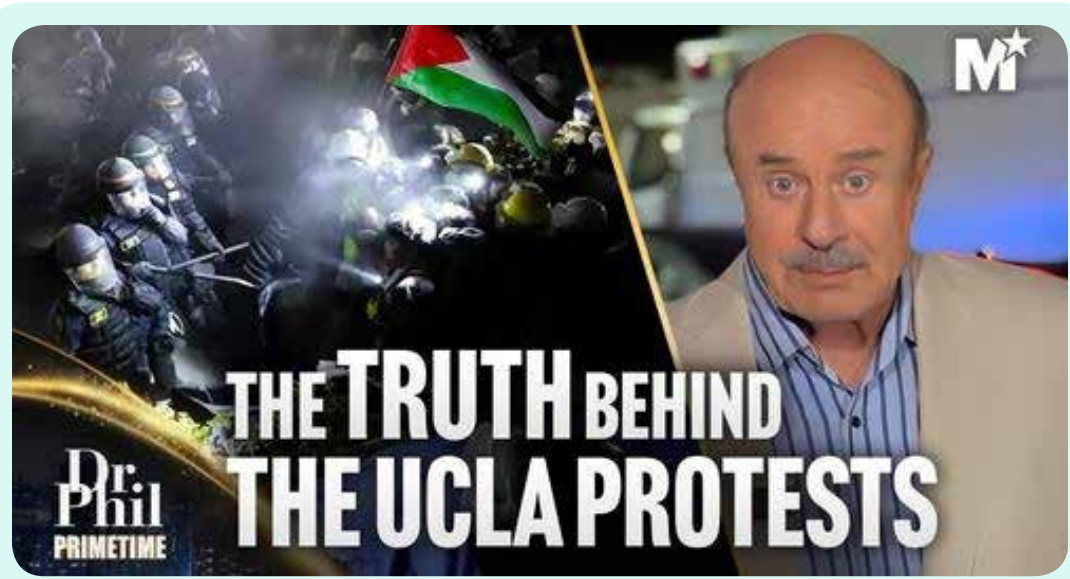
“My might which by sheer repute makes many a foeman quail, even before a confrontation, why should it tremble so before her lustrous brow”; “Possessing the guileless glance of the fawn, and her innate modesty, Why does she need any other external ornament”;

“Wine gives delight to those who drink; but it is love which alone inspires, joy at the very sight of the object of love too”.

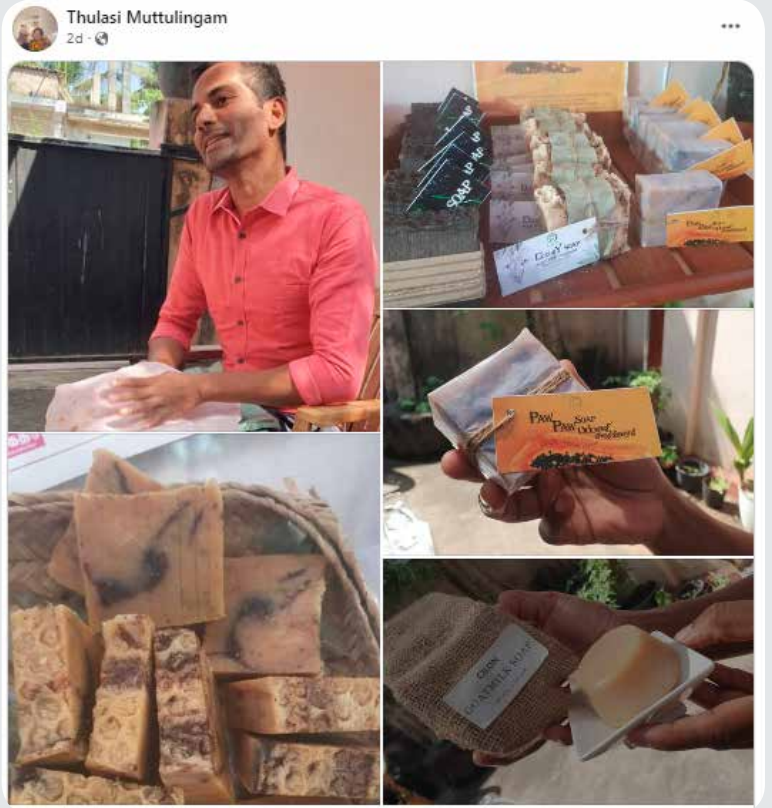
(Kural:1081-1090).



Valluvar's Views



Students are easily brainwashed to chant mindless slogans and become revolutionaries for causes they don't understand. There is a mass hysteria of sorts unfolding across college campuses in the West. I hope the authorities contain it before it gets out of hand. This bodes nothing good.



A friend told me about this guy making soap from goat's milk. I am a big fan of goat's cheese, for its strong pungent flavours. I was intrigued to meet this producer, and find out if the soap had the same USP as the cheese. Actually it didn't, it smelled very nice.

It turned out the goat soap was only one of his products. Others were made from the oils of Coconut, Olives, Castor seeds, Mustard and Sesame seeds. All handmade beautiful to see, to touch, and to sniff.

Tharshan, the artisan making these organic handmade products, has a very interesting story to tell. He left Sri Lanka during the war, a 6 year old child. He was adopted by a medical doctor and his wife, both white, in the Netherlands. There he was brought up by this couple, completing his education from degree to MBA, before moving to Chennai. Chennai, where his birth mother was living.

For 5 years Tharshan ran his business in Chennai making organic soaps, naturally dyed fabrics (using various vegetables and fruits including onions; avocado; pomegranate; beetroot). And he designed and made high fashion garments using his fabrics. In Chennai he employed 16 people.

In 2021 his mother wanted to move back to Sri Lanka, so he came with her. Tharshan's story needs more space than a FB post. I will write it more fully elsewhere. FYI I tested his soap in the shower, very pleasant.

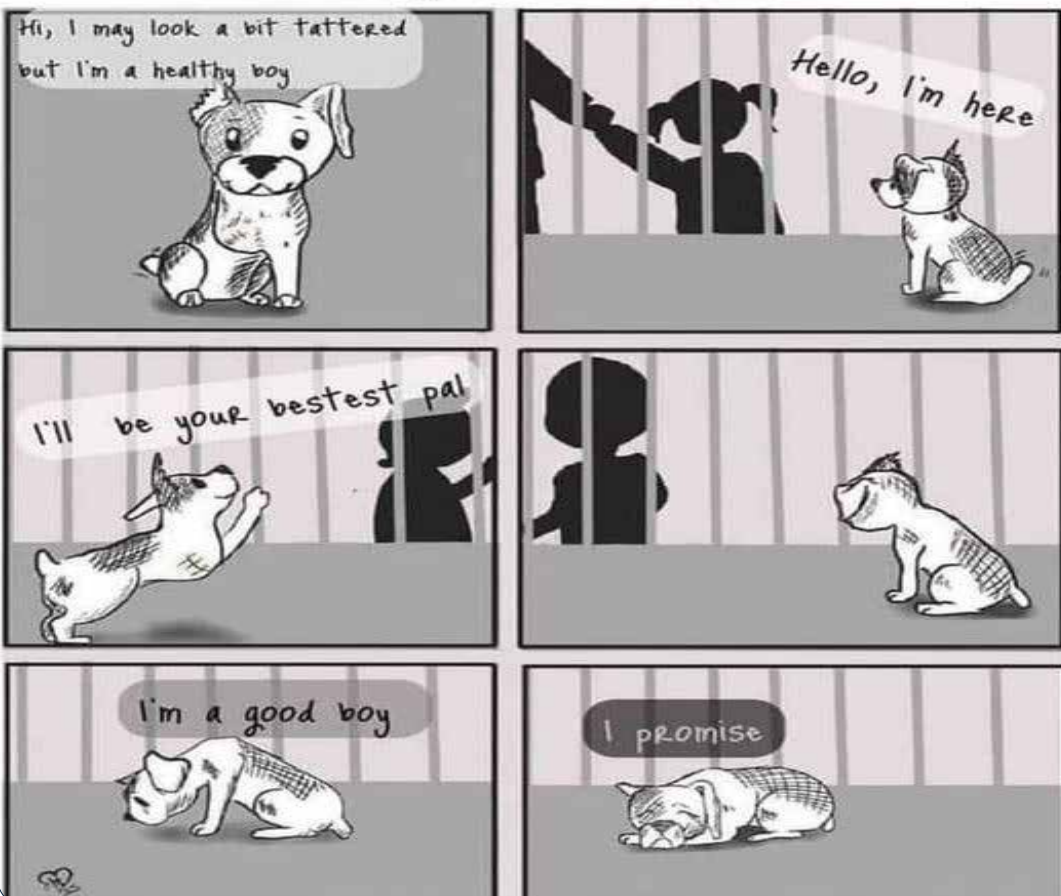
Though I have to curtail this tale, I can say here and now he is a great talent. With investment and linked with the right business partner, he can go far. His products are in my opinion (admittedly not an expert) on par with Spa Ceylon and other premium pampering products.

Tharshan trades through his company Siloam of Ceylon . He is based near St Patrick's College, Jaffna.

Thulasi Muttulingam 2d



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Sweet Return: Tim Hortons Markham and Stouffville brings back Smile Cookie and teams up with Markham Stouffville Hospital Foundation and commits half a million dollars



TimHortonsSmileCookie2024.jpg – Tim Hortons Markham & Stouffville restaurant owners and team members at Oak Valley Health's Markham Stouffville Hospital to announce the 2024 Smile Cookie in Markham and Stouffville and also have announced a commitment of \$500,000 to support Markham Stouffville Hospital. (L-R) Mark Singh, Ali Awan, Jordon Bond, Allan Bell (MSH Foundation), Allan Bond, Dr. Bear (Markham Stouffville Hospital), Gillian Fintelman, Ivan Chiu, Jeff Thompson, Mike Forbes, Matt Peate, Shauna Duff

The iconic Tim Hortons Smile Cookie Campaign is almost here with the annual campaign taking place from – April 29 to May 5. To kick off the launch, restaurant owners of Markham and Stouffville gathered at Oak Valley Health's Markham Stouffville Hospital (MSH) to celebrate the occasion with a \$500,000 commitment to the hospital. In recognition of Tim Hortons' generosity, MSH will proudly name a paediatric surgical waiting room in their honour.

Customers can support MSH Foundation by purchasing a Smile Cookie (\$1.50 plus tax) or any of the Smile Cookie products. The Smile Cookie program started in 1996 and over 20 years later, 100 per cent of proceeds from each Smile Cookie is still donated to charities from

coast-to-coast-to-coast, supporting the communities in which the restaurants operate. One hundred per cent of the proceeds from restaurants in our community will benefit families and children cared for at MSH.

“Our annual Smile Cookie campaign is a beloved and cherished tradition for Tim Hortons restaurant owners, team members and guests because of the amazing impact we can make together – while enjoying some delicious cookies,” says Axel Schwan, President of Tim Hortons. “Last year's Smile Cookie campaign raised a record-breaking \$19.7 million and I know our guests will be rallying with us again this year to support over 600 charities and community groups and the amazing work they do.”

Today, health care's complex landscape is changing, along with our growing, diverse community. With a renewed focus on the MSH of tomorrow, Oak Valley Health continues to deliver integrated care for healthier communities. Through dynamic partnerships and collaborations coupled with the purposeful adoption of technology, MSH will increase access and streamline services – made possible by community support.

“Government can't fund all the essential equipment our doctors, nurses, and allied health teams need to deliver exceptional, patient-centred care,” says Suzette Strong, CEO, MSH Foundation. “Dynamic partnerships and collaborations like this elevate health care and will help expand our critical programs and



stay on the forefront of technological advancements. The support made by Tim Hortons Markham & Stouffville Restaurant owners, and the Smile Cookie campaign, will enable extraordinary patient experiences and a lifetime of care, close to home.”

To learn more about the campaign and which local charities are being supported, visit www.timhortons.ca/smile-cookie. Smile Cookie personality pins return – Loopy, Buggy, Starry and Squirmy – and are available for purchase at participating restaurants for \$2 plus tax. Community members can also support by participating in MSH Foundation’s Smile Cookie Instagram and Facebook contests for the chance to win one of six \$50 Tim Hortons gift cards.

For contest details, visit: <https://www.mshf.on.ca/events/2024-tim-hortons-smile-cookie-week>

Markham Stouffville Hospital Foundation exists to enable the growth of Oak Valley Health’s Markham Stouffville Hospital (MSH) by raising funds and awareness for its ongoing priorities and needs. Donations from the community fund life-saving medical equipment that helps to ensure the delivery of first-class health care at MSH.

About Tim Hortons In 1964, the first Tim Hortons® restaurant in Hamilton, Ontario opened its doors and Canadians have been ordering Tim Hortons iconic Original Blend coffee, Double-Double™ coffees, Donuts and Timbits® in the years since. Over the last 55 years, Tim Hortons has captured the hearts and taste buds of Canadians and has become synonymous with serving Canada’s favourite coffee. Tim Hortons is Canada’s largest restaurant chain operating in the quick service industry with nearly 4,000 restaurants across the country. More than a coffee and bake shop, Tim Hortons is part of the Canadian fabric and guests can enjoy hot and cold specialty beverages – including lattes, cappuccinos and espressos, teas and our famous Iced Capp® – alongside delicious breakfast, sandwiches, wraps, soups and more. Tim Hortons has more than 5,100 restaurants in Canada, the United States and around the world.



TimHortonsSmileCookie2024.jpg– Allan Bond, Tim Hortons restaurant owner at Markham Stouffville Hospital, Suzette Strong, CEO MSH Foundation, and Dr. Bear mascot sharing smiles for the return of Smile Cookie



TimHortonsSmileCookie2024.jpg– Gillian Fintleman, Tim Hortons restaurant owner in Markham/Gormley and Suzette Strong, CEO, MSH Foundation piping smile cookies



TimHortonsSmileCookie2024.jpg– Oak Valley Health’s Surgical Team excited for the Tim Hortons Smile Cookie returning April 29 to May 5

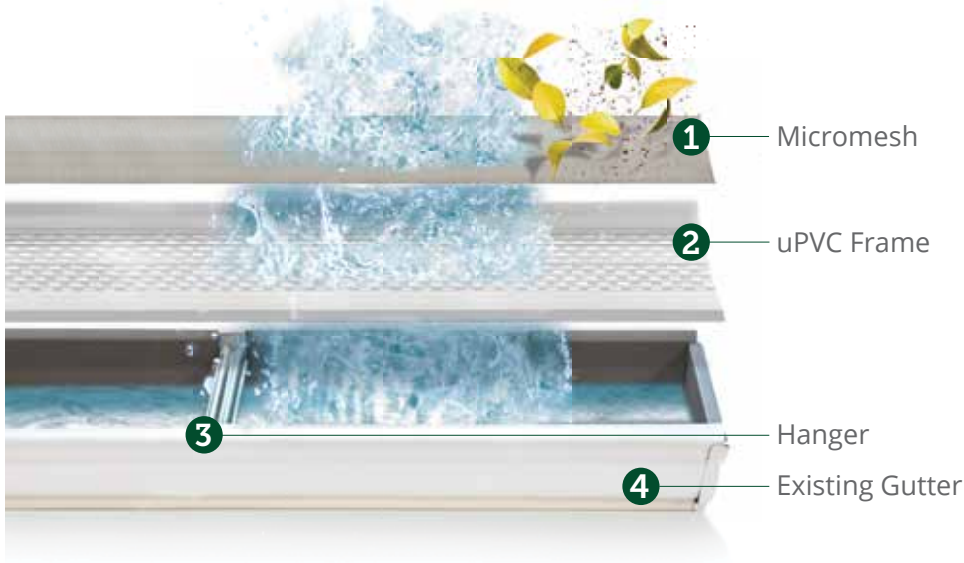
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SPECIAL FEATURE

The DVD and the Decline of Cinema Halls



- tucollegian.org

By: J A Rajah

A. The Nature of the Decline :

People watching films in cinema halls are declining. It can be attributed to several situations. When devices are available to watch films via streaming, televisions, DVDs, and even iPhones, people prefer to avoid visiting cinema halls. The decline started with the pandemic. The Cineplex lost millions during the pandemic. Another reason people avoid cinema halls is the cost of purchasing the tickets for the shows. However, bloc busters like Top Gun, Maveric, Jurassic World, Dominion and Minions, Avtar, and The Way of Water are best seen on the big screen. Besides, the popularity of TV serials keeps the seniors away from cinema halls. Statistics Canada finds that cinema hall owners need more public funding to keep afloat.

B. Cinema Halls in Yesteryears :

In those days people rush to cinema halls to watch films. Most cinema Halls become full when new films are released. Theatres

like Windsor, Wellington, Raneer, and Rajah in Jaffna registered house-full shows during weekends. In those days MGR films are very popular due to fighting scenes. I can remember when 'Marmayogi' was screened at Windsor, youngsters were rushing to see the film more than four or five times because of the attractive fighting stunts of MGR. Seated on a bug-ridden bench crushed up between two MGR fans was a real challenge those days. A gallery ticket costs only 60 cents !!-sometimes you become a victim of an MGR fan tempted to try his blows on you!! Even the Sinhalese who watched Tamil films said MGR is a great "Fightkaraya". Devadas-a tragic film ran for several months in Chennai. A theatre that advertised that they would screen Devadas but later postponed it was nearly burnt down. In those days seeing films was the only form of entertainment for the entire family and some guys visited all the shows during weekends. There were two matinee shows and two evening shows. Now the number of people going to cinema halls is on the decline. Cinema Halls in Colombo like

Elphinstone, Majestic, and Regal now have very few people watching films. Tamils in South India are very crazy about films. Most there's run to crowded houses. With the development of technology and IT, the numbers going to cinema halls are on the decline. Even in Chennai where there are massive cinema halls like Sangam, the number of attending films after Covid is on the decline, however, bloc-buster films still attract many filmgoers. It is said that many filmgoers in Bangalur and Chennai go for films at least 2 times a month.

C. The Innovations in Human Livelihood :

The world is changing. Innovations in technology are making it possible to live with more comfort, convenience, and ease. Entertainment has become a primary need and people indulge in it in a great way. If modern livelihood has become more absorbing, it is mainly due to new vistas of innovative living that improve the maximum happiness for people.

Now people prefer to view films in the comfort of their own homes.

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and pizza

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EDUCATION & CAREER

FOOD WASTE'S EFFECTS ON THE ENVIRONMENT

Food waste is a global problem with serious effects on the environment. It is estimated that over 40% of all food produced is wasted annually in the United States alone (<https://www.pbs.org>). This not only has negative effects on the economy, but it also exacerbates climate change and environmental damage.

Food wastes not just the food itself but also the water, energy, and land that were used in its production. Food waste finds its way into landfills, where it breaks down and releases methane, one of the main greenhouse gasses that causes global warming. Furthermore, food wastes resources that are required for food production, transportation, and packaging. This increases the environmental effect of food production.

In order to tackle this matter, several potential resolutions exist such as solutions that corporations, governments, and people can all put into practice. Educating people on the effects of food waste and promoting behavior change is one strategy. We can lessen the impact food waste has on the environment by informing people about the negative effects of food waste and offering advice on how to cut back on it.



By: Rajeswary Thayabaran
(Grade 6 Student)

Food waste is a serious issue with grave consequences for the environment. Food wastes resources that were used to produce it, including labor, energy, and water, in addition to having a negative effect on the environment.

The creation of greenhouse gasses is one of food waste's primary consequences on the environment. Methane, a potent greenhouse gas that contributes to climate change, is released when food waste decomposes in landfills. As a matter of fact, food waste accounts for around 8% of greenhouse gas emissions worldwide. Environmental problems are made worse by the fact that resources like water and energy that were utilized to manufacture the discarded food are also wasted.

Food waste also has a role in habitat damage and biodiversity loss. Instead of being spent on food production, the land may be conserved or used to save natural areas. Furthermore, when food is wasted, the fertilizers and pesticides used in food production can have a negative impact on nearby ecosystems.

Both structural and individual effort must be taken to mitigate the negative effects of food waste on the environment. Planning meals, just purchasing what they need, and storing food correctly to keep it from spoiling are all ways that individuals may avoid food waste. Policies and initiatives may be put in place at a systemic level to minimize food waste in the supply chain. Some examples include better techniques for transportation and storage, donating extra food to those in need, and composting organic waste.

Reducing food waste has the potential to provide financial benefits for businesses and organizations through cost savings and greater efficiency. Furthermore, a few companies and governments are looking at ways to encourage the decrease of food waste through initiatives like rebates for taxes or financial aid for food donations. In addition to preserving the environment, we can guarantee a more just and sustainable food system for all by tackling food waste.



Companies may significantly contribute to the reduction of food waste by integrating sustainable practices across their whole supply chain. This can involve actions like enhancing inventory control, putting extra food in food banks, and starting composting initiatives to keep food waste out of landfills.

Educating people on the effects of food waste and promoting behavior change is one strategy. By informing individuals about the negative effects of food waste and offering advice on how to minimize food waste, we can improve the sustainability of the food system for coming generations and lessen its negative environmental effects. Long-lasting benefits for the environment can result from encouraging a mindful eating culture and cutting waste.

Governments can enact laws and rules to cut down on food waste and encourage sustainable lifestyles. This might involve taking steps like outlawing food waste, providing tax breaks to companies who give extra food, and making infrastructural investments to enable food recovery and composting projects.

To sum up, food waste contributes to resource depletion and climate change, among other negative environmental effects. Together, we can limit food waste's environmental impact by pushing legislation reforms, enacting sustainable practices, and increasing public awareness.

In order to solve this urgent issue and ensure the health of our world and future generations, it is imperative that individuals, corporations, and governments work together and take action.





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TRIBUTE IN HONOR OF Nagalingam Ethirveerasingam



By: **Bala Abraham**

Toronto

It would be my esteemed honour to respond to the request by the Canada JCC OBA to pen a few words about our pride and joy, Dr. Nagalingam Ethirveerasingam. Ethir (as he was fondly addressed), passed away on April 18 at the age of 89, after a brief illness in Los Angeles, USA.

In a very unique manner, Ethir has been a part and parcel of Jaffna Central, from his early years as a student and an athlete, right up until very recently. During the past many years we have seen Ethir passionately involving himself in the wellbeing and advancement of various facets of JCC, including sports development, education advancement, playground development, building of the stadium, etc.

Ethir hailed from a family of superb all-round sportsmen. He and his brothers Ratnasingam, Rajasingam, Pararajasingam and Segarajasingam excelled in many sports at JCC.

Ethir's forte was the High Jump, in which he had developed an early interest from his young days. He was helped by his tall and lanky figure and adopted the earlier style of performing high jumps using the 'straddle' style. At that time the



current 'backflip' was not in practice. The 'straddle' jumpers had to land in sand unlike the present day air filled cushions.



While still being at Jaffna Central as a school boy, Ethir arose to international standards in High Jump. I recall a day I believe in 1954, when the entire school went to the Jaffna Railway Station to meet Ethir when he returned from his feats, I think at the Manilla 2nd Asian Games, where he jumped a new record height. Ethir was garlanded and brought back to the school perched on the back seat of an open car with folded back roof, accompanied with 'Mela-Natheswaram'. In the school hall my Father, Mr. Tommy Abraham, who was the Prefect of Games, then described Ethir's feats to us. Ethir then went on to compete at other World events and win more medals, including the first Gold Medal for Sri Lanka at the 1958 3rd Asian Games in Tokyo, Japan.

Ethir was soft spoken and caring. In spite of his talents, he did have to face some racial barriers by being overlooked at times for the various international competitions in Sri Lanka. However, some good hearted folks from different places in

Sri Lanka spoke up on Ethir's behalf and ensured that he was treated fairly, according to his merits.

Ethir had a burning passion to help and support the many Tamils who suffered from the racial divides in Sri Lanka. He and his family developed farms in the Kilinochchi area, which benefitted many living under various hardships.

We at JCC OBA Canada did have the privilege of having Ethir with us and listening to him in Toronto at an OBA function around 10 years ago. Also some years ago, my wife Thiru I had the pleasure of having dinner with Ethir and his wife Juliet in Jaffna.

Although Ethir has moved on, he would be regarded as a true legend of Jaffna Central College, who started with humble beginnings in Jaffna and made his mark as a self-made World class Sportsman, bringing much honour to his family and to Jaffna Central.

Professor S.K. Maheswaran from Minnesota, USA, another JCC stalwart, sent us the following message: "Ethir was a contemporary of mine at Jaffna Central College. He had a very distinguished career at Jaffna Central and excelled in Track and Field and Cricket. May his soul rest in peace."



Dailunews/Cadbury Sports Star of the year 1956. PM SWRD Bandaranaike presenting the Trophy.

BRAMPTON'S BUZZWORTHY APPROACH TO PROMOTING BIODIVERSITY WITH DANDELIONS AND WEED CONTROL EFFORTS

With the City of Brampton's spring grass cutting in parks and boulevards underway and flowers in bloom, including yellow dandelions, the City has begun weed control activities and introducing a new tool for residents.

Grass Maintenance Tracker Tool launching May 2024

Follow along with Brampton Parks Maintenance crews and the care for Brampton's lawns and green spaces. The new Grass Maintenance Tracker Tool allows residents to see live updates of the parks and boulevards that have been mowed. Using this tool, residents can check grass maintenance progress throughout the season. Residents will be able to access the tool by visiting Brampton.ca/parks.

New this year, to help keep Brampton's parks in the best shape possible, Brampton's City Council approved a 22 per cent grass maintenance budget increase. Grass within Brampton parks and along boulevards will be cut 14 times from May to October. This is an additional two cuts in comparison to last season. Learn more about park maintenance and all the beautiful parks Brampton has to offer at Brampton.ca/parks.

Weed and invasive plant control is underway

To support local biodiversity and create a thriving environment for all, City crews have begun managing weed growth in City parks, along roads, at sports fields, within parklands and at locations where invasive species, such as hogweed and poison ivy,

grow. The City is also dedicating staff to conduct enhanced dandelion and weed maintenance within local parks.

Longer grass and weeds support wildlife and pollinators such as butterflies, bees and hummingbirds who are essential to the production of 75 per cent of the staple crop plants that feed humans and 90 per cent of all flowering plants in the world.

As a Bee City, we all have a part to play in keeping Brampton a clean and green community while supporting pollinator habitat. Residents are encouraged to consider leaving dandelions to grow. If you prefer to manage them, there are natural ways you can:

- Mow at three inches.
- Mow regularly to remove the flower heads before they go to seed, therefore preventing seeds from spreading. Alternatively, pick off the yellow heads by hand.
- Mulch tree and shrub beds to prevent growth and seeds from establishing.
- Use a weeding tool to pull out the plant and the root by hand.

How dandelions benefit

Brampton's diverse ecosystem

- Dandelions are an early-blooming flower and are some of the first food of the season for pollinators, especially bees. Supporting pollinators is important, as they play a vital role in our lives by ensuring food security through crop pollination.
- Dandelions are part of a diverse ecosystem and provide food throughout

the seasons to support the local wildlife population. Dandelion leaves are eaten by rabbits and squirrels and the seeds are eaten by birds.

- Dandelions help improve soil health by providing vital nutrients and increasing aeration as their strong roots spread deep and break up hard soil.

The City is committed to keeping its more than 850 parks clean and green for residents to enjoy and is continuing to find additional ways to manage weeds and invasive plants, while striking a balance between beautification and natural processes.

Learn more about park maintenance and all the beautiful parks Brampton has to offer at Brampton.ca/parks.

Quote

"In Brampton, we recognize the importance of protecting our natural environment and supporting our pollinators. Dandelions and well-maintained parks and boulevards are essential contributors to the health and vitality of our city's ecosystems and create a more sustainable and biodiverse community for generations to come. Through meaningful weed control activities and with added transparency from our new Grass Maintenance Tracking Tool, we are doing our part to keep Brampton's parks and green spaces healthy and green." Ed Fagan, Director, Parks Maintenance

City of Brampton brings cricket to more youth in Brampton with new sports league



Mayor Patrick Brown, Regional Councillors Rowena Santos and Gurpartap Singh Toor and City Staff celebrate construction of new cricket field at Blue Oak Park

The City of Brampton announced a new initiative to bring the sport of cricket to more youth in Brampton. As a part of Brampton Sports League, an opportunity for individuals aged 18 and older of all skill levels to play recreational sports in a social and supportive environment, beginning July 2, the City will kick off the first-ever Youth Cricket League. This initiative aims to encourage youth to get active, lead healthy lifestyles and experience the power of sport.

In recognition of the Global T20 (GT20) Canada, a cricket tournament hosted in Brampton annually, the new cricket league will mirror the GT20 tournament format, with six teams in each age group. Each

team has 15 spaces made up of GT20 youth academy players and Brampton residents. The league will have three age groups for youth ages six to 15 and will run for nine weeks throughout the summer. Registration for the league is now open.

To support this new league and other recreation programming and to connect more Brampton residents to cricket, the City is building two new cricket fields and pitches at Blue Oak Park and County Court Park, with plans

to add additional fields as a part of its \$8 million investment in the 2024 Budget.

Brampton is the cricket capital of Canada. Cricket is the fastest-growing sport in Brampton and throughout the world. The City is committed to supporting individuals who play cricket in the community and to attracting new players to the game. The City of Brampton will continue to prioritize making the sport more accessible to all residents.

For more information about cricket in Brampton, visit Brampton.ca/cricket.

Register for the Youth Cricket League now!

Youth ages six to 15 are encouraged to learn a new sport and improve their cricket skills this summer. To register for the first-ever Youth Cricket League, visit Brampton.ca/cricket.

Cricket in Brampton highlights

- In the 2024 Budget, the City of Brampton committed to invest \$8 million in cricket infrastructure and programming.

- Brampton is home to 19 cricket sites and is growing!

- During summer 2023, the City of Brampton hosted the GT20 Tournament, welcoming some of the top international cricket players and some of the biggest names in the sport.

- The City's cricket amenities host 42 unique seasonal organizations, tournaments and individuals that book over 14,000 hours of field time.

- The City Lands project is a proposed redevelopment of the municipal-owned site at Kennedy Road South, Highway 410 and 407, at the CAA sports and entertainment facility that includes a new state-of-the-art, multi-purpose cricket facility.

Quotes

"As the cricket capital of Canada and arguably North America, Brampton is proud to bring the excitement of cricket to even

Sign up to receive a free Signal Blocking Pouch from the City to protect your vehicle from auto theft

The issue of auto theft is front of mind for many residents. With incidents becoming more violent and brazen, the City of Brampton is stepping up to protect and advocate for the community.

Sign up to receive a free Signal Blocking Pouch (SBP)

A Signal Blocking Pouch (SBP) may prevent a relay attack by blocking the radio signal given off by a vehicle key FOB, intercepting attempts to steal a vehicle while parked.

Generously sponsored by Performance Auto Group, Brampton residents can sign up and confirm if they qualify to receive a free Signal Blocking Pouch by visiting Let's Connect Brampton. Eligible Brampton residents will receive their free SBP in the mail beginning in June.

Telephone town hall on Auto Theft on May 7

On May 5, 2024., more than 8,300 households joined a telephone town hall to learn about the steps being taken to keep residents safe from auto theft. The telephone town hall also created a platform for residents to ask questions of elected officials and senior members of Peel Regional Police and provide their concerns and feedback. The telephone town hall was hosted by Mayor Patrick Brown, and Chief Nishan Duraiappah and included:

- Rowena Santos, Regional Councillor, Wards 1 & 5; Chair, Community Services, City of Brampton
- Gurpartap Singh Toor, Regional Councillor, Wards 9 and 10; Chair, Economic Development, City of Brampton
- Paul Vicente, Regional Councillor, Wards 1 and 5; Chair, Public Works and Engineering, City of Brampton
- Deputy Chief Nick Milinovich, Investigative and Emergency Services Command, Peel Regional Police
- Deputy Chief Marc Andrews, Community Policing Operations Command, Peel Regional Police

During the telephone town hall, the City announced an expansion of a pilot program that offered a free Signal Blocking Pouch to residents in five wards because of its success. The pilot program enabled a 37 percent decrease in auto thefts in the five pilot areas. Now, all eligible Brampton residents can



City of Brampton and Peel Regional Police host telephone town hall on auto theft. Left to right: Mayor Brown, Regional Councillor Paul Vicente, Deputy Chief Andrews, Regional Councillor Gurpartap Singh Toor

sign up to receive an SBP. The program is open to Brampton residents who live in townhouses, semi-detached and single-detached residential dwellings. One SBP can be requested per household (residential unit) and multiple key fobs can be stored in a single pouch.

In addition, 90 per cent of telephone town hall participants said that the issue of auto theft is very important to them, with a resounding 93 per cent of participants indicating that they would like to see the federal government install container scanners at ports to stop stolen vehicles from being shipped overseas.

Advocating for the safety of Brampton

In addition to hosting a telephone town hall, yesterday, Mayor Patrick Brown delegated to the International Auto Theft Conference in Mississauga, highlighting his recommendations on how to prevent auto thefts in Canada.

Last week, the Mayor met with Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Federal Minister of Public Safety, Dominic LeBlanc, bringing concerns about auto theft from Brampton residents.

Earlier this year, Mayor Patrick Brown joined the National Summit on Combatting Auto Theft led by Dominic LeBlanc, Minister of Public Safety, raising local concerns and advocating for institutional change and innovative solutions.

The City of Brampton will continue to bring forward potential solutions, advocate for the safety of residents and work collaboratively with all levels of government to create a safer Canada for everyone.

Auto Theft Prevention Tips

The use of SBP alone will not guarantee protection against auto theft. Additionally, there are other measures that, when done, in combination with the SBP can make your vehicle more difficult to steal.

Our community partners, Peel Crime Stoppers and the Peel Regional Police Service, have provided some helpful tips below:

- Park your vehicle in the garage, if possible. Lock your garage door. Ensure your property is well lit.
- Do not leave running vehicles unattended. Ensure you always lock vehicle doors and roll up your windows.
- Do not leave your keys by the front door; store them far away from your vehicle. Store keys in a signal blocking pouch when possible.
- Invest in security cameras for outside your home. Use theft preventative devices (steering wheel lock, an automatic engine shut-off, and/or a tracking device). Install aftermarket products like a GPS tracker, remote vehicle shut off devices and on-board data port locks to prevent thieves from cloning keys.
- Avoid storing valuables or packages in plain view in your vehicles (place them out of sight or in the trunk).

For tips on how to prevent auto theft and to learn more about how the City of Brampton and Peel Regional Police are working together to take steps to keep the community safe from auto theft, visit *Let's Connect Brampton*.

Continued from page 32...

more youth in our community. Our new Youth Cricket League provides an opportunity for young people to develop their skills and promotes active living and healthy lifestyles. I am thrilled to see this initiative come to fruition and look forward to the positive impact it will have on our youth."- Patrick Brown, Mayor, City of Brampton

"Cricket holds a special place in the hearts of Brampton residents, and the new Youth Cricket League represents

an exciting opportunity to further enhance our city's vibrant sports culture. By investing in new cricket facilities and launching the Youth Cricket League, we are fulfilling our commitment to providing additional amenities and opportunities to ensure our residents have access to play the sport they love."- Rowena Santos, Regional Councillor, Wards 1 & 5; Chair, Community Services, City of Brampton

About Brampton

As one of the fastest-growing cities in Canada, Brampton is home to nearly 700,000 people and more than 100,000 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



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- Private Balcony



COMMUNITY WATCH



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 50 homeland projects as of Feb 28, 2024. 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'S SENIORS SILVERLINES

Our Durham Tamil Seniors rocked Variety Show "Silverlines"! Congratulations to all the participants! It was great fun and showcased all the great talents of the seniors to show "Age is just a number". Keep up the good work and continue to showcase more talent. DTA seniors who won the dance competition was also honored that night.

Thank you to all the volunteers who helped this show run successfully!



FAMILY KARAOKE NIGHTS ON FRIDAY

Join us for every Friday night for family fun and music at our Family Karaoke Night!

Bring your vocal talents as we gather for a memorable evening filled with laughter, singing, and bonding. Whether you're a seasoned performer or a first-time singer, there's a song for everyone to enjoy.

We will provide your favorite tunes so get ready to create lasting memories. Don't miss out on this amazing opportunity to come celebrate your talents.



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 @ DTAseniorsinhomesupport.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.

DTA'S SENIORS

DTA is keeping our seniors fully occupied with multiple activities and programs. DTA is here to support you in any way. If you want to participate in our programs, please check our monthly calendars. Please register for virtual Seniors programs at durhamtamils.org. Thank you to our fantastic volunteers who do not expect anything and are serving the community voluntarily. DTA is truly grateful for your continued support.

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

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

OUR SERVICE

- Temple Drop off (Drop off / pick up)
- 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

Funded in part by the Government of Canada's Age Well at Home Initiative

DTA TRIP TO PITTSBURGH

DTA took a bus load of members to Pittsburgh for the 2 day trip. This was to cover the temple and the botanical gardens. Travellers had a great time and the trip was memorable for all of them. Look for more exciting trips being organized by DTA.

DTA'S ANNUAL EASTER EGG HUNT

We had a huge turnout! Happy to see all the families together. Everyone had a great time!

A Huge Thank You to all the Parents and Youth volunteers, you all did a fantastic job yesterday! We saw the willingness to help from many of the parents - it was an overwhelming Joy!! Unity is Strength!



Durham Tamil Association Evolving Elder Care -in Home Support for seniors

Training

- Free Training and a certificate of completion from Computek College in Ajax
- 50 volunteer hours placement

Benefits

- Free Vulnerable Check
- Unlock valuable life skills with Free Standard CPR and First Aid Training
- Volunteer Travel Expense \$0.58/km
- Join us to make a positive impact on seniors lives while gaining valuable skills and experiences.

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

Volunteers Needed!

Join our volunteer team and gain more than just experience - unlock valuable life skills while 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

Funded in part by the Government of Canada's Age Well at Home Initiative

Durham Region

Serving Eight Municipalities

- Brock
- Oshawa
- Uxbridge
- Clarington
- Scugog
- Ajax
- Pickering
- Whitby

Contact Us

For More Information Visit the website: dtaseniorsinhomesupport.ca



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

EVOLVING ELDERCARE - IN-HOME SUPPORT FOR SENIORS

Next training sessions are:
May 11th & 12th- Cohort #4
June 15th & 16th- Cohort #5
June 22nd 23rd Cohort #6

Saturday workshop - 4 hours in-person. Time: 10-2 pm.
Sunday workshop - 6 hours virtual Zoom class from 9 am - 3 pm.

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 Computeck 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

DTA SENIOR'S MAY MONTHLY MEETING

DTA Senior's March monthly meeting will be held on Sunday May 26, 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.

COMMUNITY WATCH



THANK YOU TO DTA'S ANNUAL SPONSORS

DTA thanks our annual sponsors Computeck 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*)

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 Join our yoga class. Make your body healthier and your mind calm.
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 AJAX, ON L2S 2H6
ZOOM
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 PASSCODE: 919277
DAY & TIME
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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/>

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

OUR FREE SERVICE

- Meal Delivery
- Transportation :Worship Places,(Temple, Mosque, Church) Malls & Restaurants etc.
- Volunteer Drop off/ pick up: -Medical Appointment, Grocery shopping, Hospital/Doctors Appointments etc..
- Friendly Visits
- Light House Keeping

CONTACT US:
 Office Hours: Monday through Friday
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 • (647) 968-9549
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FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT OUR WEBSITE:
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DURHAM TAMIL ASSOCIATION EVOLVING ELDER CARE IN-HOME SUPPORT
 Ages 55 and up
 Vulnerable and Low-Income seniors
 SERVING EIGHT MUNICIPALITIES IN DURHAM
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CITY OF WATERLOO TAKES ACTION TOWARDS CREATING 700 AFFORDABLE, ATTAINABLE UNITS



City of Waterloo council unanimously approved the direction to move towards rezoning lands at 2025 University Avenue E to support a new, mixed-income housing development that could support up to 700 affordable and attainable units. The lands, originally part of the purchase to support the construction of RIM Park, have been vacant for years. While currently zoned for employment use, evaluations indicate the 10-hectare property may better serve the community as an opportunity for affordable housing.

“People need affordable places to live,” said Mayor Dorothy McCabe. “The province told us that we need 16,000 new housing units built by 2031. The community told us they need more affordable options, more missing-middle housing, and more housing opportunities in general for families, individuals, seniors and youth of all socio-economic backgrounds. Housing is not just bricks and mortar. It’s about fostering thriving, sustainable communities and neighbourhoods. It’s about taking a large parcel of municipally-owned land and transforming it into the affordable and attainable housing Waterloo residents need.”

Since the adoption of the City of Waterloo’s Affordable Housing Strategy, staff have been looking for opportunities to use City-owned lands to support the creation of housing, including evaluating the feasibility of a land grant, lease or sale with the net proceeds allocated

to support affordable housing objectives. The money received from the federal Housing Accelerator Fund presented an opportunity for the City to explore ways to make municipally-owned lands available at low or no cost to private and not-for-profit developers to build affordable and attainable, mixed-use complete communities.

A study to estimate the potential for the property included a high-level concept plan focused on missing middle, four to six-storey buildings, such as stacked townhouses and mid-rise apartments. These buildings are compact and could maximize the number of housing units on the site, while still providing some ground-oriented built forms and options for larger households. The scale of development would permit wood frame construction which would also support lower construction costs and greater affordability.

The concept plan revealed the property could support an estimated 480 stacked townhouses and 250 apartment units for a total of 730 units or 73 units per hectare. The exact number of units and the proportion of units that are affordable/attainable, market/non-market and rented/owned will be determined in the future. The first step is to successfully convert the lands to support residential use, followed by a public procurement process to select an appropriate development design and building partner, before beginning the detailed planning, design work and

costing. To make the land available for residential development, the property (currently an open field) will need to be converted from employment use to residential. This can be done either through a Region-initiated review and amendment to their official plan or through a provincial Ministerial Zoning Order (MZO) under the Planning Act. The MZO process would be a single application, replacing three planning processes (amendment to the Region’s official plan, the City’s official plan and the City’s zoning by-law). With the urgency to see affordable and attainable housing development within our community, Waterloo staff recommended the MZO process to Council as the quickest way to facilitate the use of 2025 University Avenue for residential development. The City of Waterloo is committed to public consultation and transparency in this process, per the new submission requirements recently released by the Province for MZO requests.

The decision today is another way the City of Waterloo is addressing the issue of housing in our community: advancing the City of Waterloo Affordable Housing Strategy to increase the supply and mix of affordable housing, the City’s commitment to our provincial housing pledge of 16,000 units by 2031 and our Housing Accelerator Fund action plan. Residents can follow this project on Engage **Waterloo:** www.engagewr.ca/waterloo-haf-initiative-1.



Mississauga takes a big step forward on building housing at Lakeview Village



Lakeview Village – Image courtesy of LCPL

New agreement will see construction started on new homes, affordable housing, community benefits, parkland and more.

The City of Mississauga and Lakeview Community Partners Ltd. (LCPL) are moving forward with agreements that will allow the construction of new homes to begin at the 177-acre Lakeview Village development – a significant step towards realizing Mississauga’s housing targets.

On May 1, 2024, City Council approved a by-law to authorize a subdivision agreement which will enable LCPL to get shovels in the ground on the first 8,050 units on the site. This agreement, supported by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, ensures that LCPL meets the City’s parkland requirements, completes future transportation studies and commits to necessary traffic improvements, completes odour and noise mitigation measures, sets aside land for a Peel District School Board school site and provides a mix of housing units of which a minimum of five per cent are affordable units.

Council also approved a by-law to execute a community benefits agreement with LCPL. Under the agreement, LCPL will provide the City with a \$14 million contribution that will be used for the Lakeview Pier and other cultural amenities.

“This is a significant milestone. The City has been working closely with the Office of the Provincial Land and Development Facilitator and LCPL for almost a year to ensure the increased density assigned for Lakeview Village will be built in an appropriate way,” said Acting Mayor

Matt Mahoney. “We remain committed to attracting a new generation to live and work in Mississauga by doing what we can to support the transformation of this area into a liveable, walkable, waterfront community connected by parks, open spaces, cultural facilities and an innovative employment hub.”

Through a provincial facilitator, the City and LCPL, the site’s developer, have been working to finalize a number of agreements in order to proceed with the development. These agreements include important requirements needed to accommodate up to 16,000 residential units on the site in the years ahead. The site was originally zoned for 8,050 units, but an enhanced Ministerial Zoning Order (MZO) issued in May 2023, doubled that number to 16,000.

“We are pleased to be moving forward with the development of Lakeview Village so that we can get homes built and welcome new residents to one of Mississauga’s most important waterfront sites,” said Shari Lichterman, City Manager and CAO. “We’re pleased that LCPL has committed to ensuring the area has the schools, transportation infrastructure, affordable housing, parks and cultural facilities the community needs to thrive, and will be making significant investment into the community to support increased density on the site.”

The City will continue to work with LCPL and the provincial facilitator to finalize the remaining agreements for

development beyond 8,050 units by October 1, 2024.

Background

- Lakeview Village is a 177-acre site on Mississauga’s waterfront, formerly the Lakeview Power Generating Station.
- Planning for the area began in 2010 when the City launched Inspiration Lakeview to create a shared vision for the future of the site.
- The Lakeview Waterfront Master Plan was endorsed by Council in November 2019 and Council endorsed the draft plan of subdivision, rezoning and Official Plan Amendment applications in November 2021.
- On May 12, 2023, the Government of Ontario issued an enhanced Ministerial Zoning Order to increase the density at Lakeview Village from 8,050 units to 16,000 units.
- On May 12, 2023, a Provincial Land Development Facilitator was assigned by the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing to work with the City and LCPL to facilitate appropriate and timely development of Lakeview Village.
- On April 10, 2024, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing issued an Order under section 49.2 of the Planning Act outlining the agreements required for the appropriate development of the site.
- The 16,000 units proposed at Lakeview Village are part of Growing Mississauga the City’s Action Plan for New Housing.



COMMUNITY WATCH



RICHMOND HILL LAUNCHES ONLINE POLL TO SELECT A 'BIRD FRIENDLY CITY' BIRD

Community invited to vote for their favourite feathered friend until June 14, 2024



American Goldfinch.



Bald Eagle.

In celebration of birds and their importance to the community and environment, the public is invited to help select Richmond Hill's 'Bird Friendly City' bird.

The following six feathered friends have been chosen as the top contenders:

- American Goldfinch
- Bald Eagle
- Cedar Waxwing
- Great Blue Heron
- Red-winged Blackbird
- Sandhill Crane

Each bird was selected with input from City staff, the Richmond Hill Bird Team, and the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation and Hiawatha First Nation. These nominees are all birds you might see around the city's thriving green spaces (or your own backyard!) and represent Richmond Hill's rich culture, diversity and unique characteristics.

Anyone who lives, works, or goes to school in Richmond Hill is eligible to participate. Visit RichmondHill.ca/Birds for descriptions of the birds and to cast your vote.

Poll closes on June 14, 2024 and the winner will be announced shortly after.



Cedar Waxwing.



Sandhill Crane.



Great Blue Heron.



Red-winged Blackbird.

ABOUT RICHMOND HILL'S BIRD FRIENDLY CITY CERTIFICATION AND NATURE CANADA

Richmond Hill was recognized for its efforts to support and protect birds with a Bird Friendly City certification from Nature Canada in November 2023. Nature Canada is one of the oldest national nature conservation charities in Canada. For 80 years, they have helped protect more than 110 million acres of parks and wildlife areas, as well as countless species across the country. The Bird Friendly City certification celebrates cities that take action to reduce threats to birds, protect and restore their habitat, and engage the community in education and awareness.

MEDIA CONTACT
 Ash O'Malley,
 Communications Advisor,
ash.omalley@richmondhill.ca



SPECIAL FEATURE

NEW RAM MANDIR IN AYODHYA, UP., INDIA



Compiled by Kidambi Raj

INTRODUCTION

The **Ram Mandir** (Sri Rama Temple) is a Hindu temple complex in Ayodhya, Uttar Pradesh, India. Many Hindus believe that it is located at the site of **Ram Janmabhoomi**, the mythical birthplace of Sri Rama, a principal deity in Hinduism. The temple was inaugurated on January 22, 2024, after a **prana pratishtha** (consecration) ceremony.

HISTORY

The site of temple has been the subject of communal tensions between Hindus and Muslims in India for a long time, as it was the former location of **Babri Masjid**



Masjid mosque, built between 1528 and 1529. In 2019, the Supreme Court of India delivered the verdict to give the disputed land to Hindus for construction of a temple, while the Muslims were given land nearby in **Dhannipur** to construct their mosque. On August 5th 2020, the **Bhoomi puja** (ground breaking ceremony) was performed to begin the construction of Ram Mandir by **Narendra Modi**, the Prime Minister of India. The temple complex currently under construction, is being supervised by the Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Theerth Kshetra Trust. On January 22nd 2024, Narendra Modi served as the **Mukhya Yajman** (Chief Patron) of the rituals for the event and performed the **prana pratishtha** (consecration) of the temple.

THE LEGEND OF SRI RAMA, THE PRINCE OF AYODHYA

Sri Rama is a Hindu deity, who is considered by the Hindus to be a **Purnaavataara** (complete avatar of Lord Vishnu) and Hindus view Sri Rama as **Para Brahman** (The Ultimate Brahman). Rama

holds huge significance in Hindu religion and culture. In Rama avatar, Vishnu is not supposed to exhibit any of His divine potencies and lead life as a human. Therefore, based on the sixteen qualities of Rama mentioned by **Narada** to **Valmiki**, the author of Ramayana, the Hindus view Rama as **Purushottama** (the ideal man), **Vigrahavan dharmah** (the embodiment of Dharma). According to the ancient Indian **Itihasa** Ramayana, Rama was born in Ayodhya. Thus, Ayodhya is among seven most sacred cities to Hindus. For Astika Hindus, **Ayodhya** is like what **Mecca** is to Muslims and **Jerusalem** is to the Jews and Christians. Three places in Ayodhya are considered as prominent **punya kshetra** (virtue pilgrimage site) by Hindus. They are **Janmasthaana** (the birthplace), **Swargadwara** (the gateway to Heaven) and **Yajnashtala** (Place where Holy Sacrifices were performed). The **Trayodasaaksharee Mantra** (a 13 Character Mantra), also known as **Sri Rama Taaraka Mantra** (the Rama mantra for salvation) is: **Sri Rama Jaya Rama, Jaya**

Jaya Rama and many Astika Hindus believe that chanting it repeatedly lead to salvation. **Taraka** means something that carries or helps a **Jiva** (a living being) cross the ocean of Samsara. Ram Mandir is being built to commemorate the birth of Rama at His **Janmasthan** (birthplace). Therefore, the presiding deity of the temple is supposed to be an infant form of Rama. Rama in that form was referred to as **Ram Lalla** (child Rama) by **Tulasidas**. However, the idol of Rama that was placed in 1949 referred to as **Ram Lalla Virajman** (installed Child Rama) by the locals. As a new idol of the deity got installed in the sanctum sanctorum as the **Moolaviraat murti** (the main presiding deity), the Mandir Trust has informed that the Ram Lalla Virajman idol would be used as **Utsava murti** (the idol for festivals).

ARCHITECTURE

The original design of Ram Mandir was done in 1988, by **Sompura family** of Ahmadabad. They have designed over 100 temples worldwide for at least 15 generations, including the Somnath temple. Sompuras made some changes in 2020 per the Hindu texts, the **Vastu sastra** and the **Shilpa Sastras**.

Arun Yogiraj, a fifth-generation sculptor from Karnataka, crafted the idol **Ram Lalla**. He is credited with several notable sculptures, including the 30 ft. statue of Subash Chandra Bose in Delhi,

the 12 ft. effigy of Adi Shankaracharya in Kedar-nath and a 21 ft. tall figurine of Lord Hanuman in Mysore.

Interesting and special features of the Ram Lalla Murti are: A 140-million-year-old sacred Shaligram stone was used for the Idol of Lord Rama. This stone mostly found in the riverbed of Kali Gandaki, a tributary of the Gandagi river in Nepal. This is used because, the Shaligram stone is revered by Hindu devotees as they believe it to be a true representation of Lord Vishnu. The weight of the statue is around 200 Kg. Its total



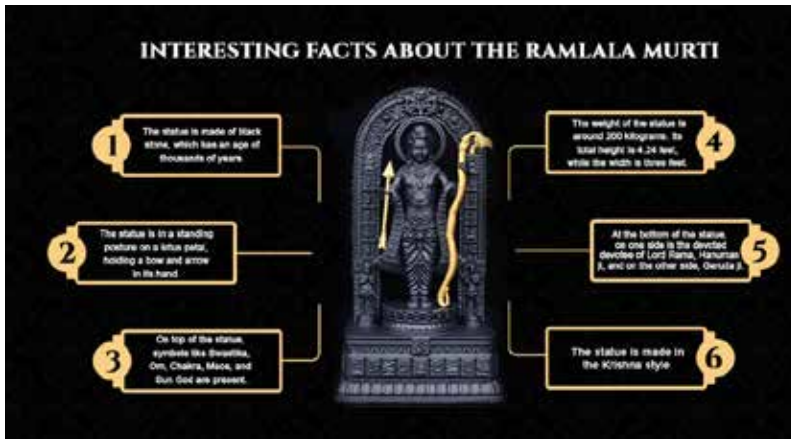
height is 4.24 ft and the width is 3.0 ft. The statue is in a standing posture on a lotus petal, holding a bow and arrow in its hand. The statue is made in the Krishna style. On top of the statue, symbols like, Swastika, Om, Chakra, Mace and Sun God are present. The right hand of Lord Rama is in a blessing posture. The statue depicts the 10 avatars of Lord Vishnu. At the bottom of the statue, on one side is the devoted devotee of Lord Rama, Hanuman and on the other side, Garuda. The tenderness



of a five-year-child is reflected in the statue. Applying sandalwood paste, vermilion etc. will not affect the shine of the statue. The statue will not be harmed by water.

The 51-inch-tall statue of Ram Lalla is of South Indian style. The statue is kept in an upright position so that people can see it from a distance. The idol of Ram Lalla installed is in the form of

SPECIAL FEATURE



a 5-year-old child. Since Sita had not entered Rama's life at that age, there will not be an idol of Goddess Sita in the sanctum sanctorum.

The temple will be 250 ft. (76 m) wide, 380 ft. (120m) long and 161 ft. (49m) high. Upon completion it would become the World's fifth largest Hindu temple. The temple's main structure has been built on a raised platform with three storeys. It has five mandapams in the middle of the *garbhagriha* (sanctum sanctorum) and an entrance passage. The Shri Ram Darbar, located on the first floor, comprises five halls: Nritya Mandap, Rang Mandap, Sabha Mandap, Prarthana Mandap and Kirtan Mandap. In Nagara style (Hindu temple architecture of North India), the mandaps are decorated with Shikaras. Adorned with deity statues, the temple includes dedicated mandirs for Surya, Bhagwati, Ganesha and Shiva at the corners. Annapurna and Hanuman temples are on the northern and southern arms. Accessibility is ensured with ramps, elevators and facilities for the elderly and differently-abled. Environmental focus preserves 70% of the 70-acres (28 ha) area as green space, emphasizing water conservation. The temple has total of 366 columns. The columns have 16 idols each to include the incarnations of Shiva, the 10 avatars of Vishnu, the Chausat Yoginis and the 12 incarnations of Goddess Saraswati. The width of the stairs is 16 ft. (4.9m). As per scriptures dedicated to the design of temples dedicated to Vishnu, the sanctum sanctorum is octagonal in shape. The temple covers an area of 10 acres (4.0 ha), while the remaining 57 acres (23 ha) of land has been developed into a complex with a prayer hall, a lecture hall, an educational facility and other facilities including a museum and a cafeteria. The site has a capability to handle 70,000 visitors. Larsen & Toubro offered to oversee the design and construction of the temple free of cost, and became the contractor of the project. The construction work has been accomplished with 17,000 Cubic metre (600,000 cft.) of sandstone from Baansi in Rajasthan. No iron or steel has been used in the construction of the temple, and the fusing of the stone blocks required 10,000 copper plates.

The Ram Mandir in Ayodhya has taken the fifth place among the Largest Hindu Temples in the world. The Top four ahead of Ayodhya Ram Temple are:

1. Pasupathinath Temple in Kathmandu, Nepal, with 2,460,000 sq.m.
2. Angkor Wat, Siem Reap Prov., Cambodia, with 1,626,000 sq.m.
3. Sri Swami Narayan Akshardham, New Jersey, USA with 740, 575 sq.m and
4. Sri Ranganathaswamy Temple, Srirangam, Tamil Nadu, India with 631,000 sq.m.

AYODHYA RAM MANDIR INAUGURATION

Prime Minister inaugurated the Sri Ram Janmabhoomi Mandir in Ayodhya, on January 22, 2024 with approximately 7,000 distinguished guests from various fields including actors, athletes, business leaders and politicians. The temple, designed and construct-

ed by Larson & Toubro, is envisioned to endure for a millenium. The primary construction material employed in the temple construction is the Pink Bansi Paharpur stones, procured from mines in the Bharatpur district of Rajasthan. A team of 1,500 artisans meticulously crafted intricate carvings on these stones, monitored using a stone tracking application equipped with QR codes for the 26,500 individual stones.

With a total of 390 pillars, featuring six Makrana marble pillars on each floor, adorned with over 10,000 idols and thematic carvings, the temple is a testament to exquisite craftsmanship. S.N. Subrahmanyam, Chairman and Managing Director of Larson & Toubro remarked, "This engineering marvel stands as a symbol of endurance, designed and constructed to last a thousand years". Commencing work in May 2020, Larson & Toubro implemented an innovative, multi-layered foundation devoid of metals like iron or steel to resist corrosion over time. Col-



laborating with IIT Madras, the company utilized a specially created engineering fill, a plain cement concrete raft foundation, and a plinth standing at 21 feet, composed of granite stones transported from South India.

MONKEY ENTERS RAM TEMPLE SANCTUM AND DEVOTEES SEE THAT AS HANUMAN SYMBOLISM

It was reported that, a day after the Pran Pratishtha of Ram Lalla at Ayodhya, a *nimble monkey* found its way into the sanctum sanctorum in the evening. At around 5:50 pm, the monkey seemingly unfazed by the sacred grandeur of the inner sanctorum, entered through the southern gate and approached the revered Utsav statue of Lord Rama. Security personnel stationed outside, initially alarmed by the unexpected guest, rushed towards the monkey fearing it might cause harm to



Tiruvavur V. Prakash Ilayaraja and his son, Kavin Prakash at the Ram Mandir

the statue. But instead of causing any disruption, it gracefully traversed the sanctum before heading

towards the northern gate. Finding it closed, the monkey turned eastward and moving through the throngs of awe-struck devotees, exited peacefully through the eastern gate. Many devotees interpreted the event as a sign of Hanuman's continued guardianship over Lord Rama and His blessings upon the newly established temple.

SRI RAMA'S BLESSINGS ON A FATHER & SON NADASWARA VIDWANS

There is no dearth of Nadaswaram players in South India owing to its divine-connect and the pious ambience it emanates in any sacred event. But, Nadaswara artiste, V. Prakash Ilayaraja, a Nadaswara artiste, V. Prakash Ilayaraja, a Thiruvavur-based artiste and Professor at Government Music College in Thiruvavur and his young son, Kavin Prakash seems to have had the Blessings of Lord Rama, for them to be able play Nadaswaram at the Ram Mandir on the temple consecration day in Ayodhya.

UNIQUE GIFTS FROM ACROSS INDIA & FROM ABROAD

There were, quite a collection of unique gifts that came from abroad and from across India for the *Prana Pratishtha* and here are the highlights of some of them:

1. In a culturally significant move, Thailand symbolically contributed to the Inauguration of the Ram Mandir, by sending soil to the Ram Janmabhoomi and building on their prior gesture of sending water from two rivers in Thailand to honour the temple.
2. Ramakrishna Nadar Vessels Shop in Eral, near Tuticorin, Tamil Nadu, sent a Bell, Single Cast Piece, easily the largest, 6ft. x 5ft., weighing 2,100 Kg. made of *Ashtadhātu*, a combination of 8 metals: Silver, Copper, Zinc, Lead, Tin and Mercury. It has nice Mangal Nada that can be heard up to 15 km.
3. A 108-foot-long incense stick weighing 3,610 kg. and 3.5 feet wide, prepared in Gujarat's Vadodara for over 6 months at an estimated cost of Rs. 5 lakhs
4. A diamond merchant from Surat, Gujarat had made a Necklace on the theme of Ram Temple using 5,000 American Diamonds and 2 kg. silver and it took 40 artisans 35 days to finish.
5. A Hyderabad man prepared a Laddu, weighing 1,265 kg.
6. A Silk bed sheet depicting Shri Ram Temple was created by a silk manufacturer from Tamil Nadu.
7. Shri Ambika Engineering Works in Ahmedabad, sent a 44 ft. Flag Pole weighing 5,500 kg. made of Brass and six other small flag poles.
8. All India Dagbar Samaj in Dariyapur in Gujarat sent a 56 in. *Nagaru* (temple drum) made of gold foil.
9. From Aligarh, a Lock and key weighing around 400 kg. made in 6 months was sent.
10. A Lucknow based vegetable vendor Anil Kumar Sahu (52) designed and gifted a Special Clock measuring 75 cms. In diameter and which denotes the time in eight countries at the same time.
11. 64 yr. old, Challa Srinivas Shastry of Hyderabad walked 1,307 kms to offer Gold Plated Footwear for Lord Rama.
12. The Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD), the official custodian of Sri Venkateswara Temple in Tirupati sent 1 Lakh Laddus for Pran Pratishtha day.

May Lord Sri Rama's blessings be with all of us!!!



HOUSE FOR RENT



**Original in Tamil by
Pon Kulendiran (late)**

English version by Siva Sinniah

“Hi, Sundari why you came in search of me? Asked Mathumati, who came to Jaffna from London with her husband.

“Sister, I must introduce myself to you. I am Sundari and when did you arrive from London?”

I have known you before, since you are the daughter of my mother’s cousin” replied Mathumati.

“Yes, you are right. actually, I am your cousin.”

“I think you are not my close relative,” said Mathumati.

“You can’t say like that sister because my mother was born and bred in this house, which you are about to rent. Your grandma and my grandma had different mothers but the same father, hence, we are cousins” said Sundari. “okay, now tell me what I have to do to you”.

“Your Arasady house was given to you as a dowry by your mom, since my mother told me this. Furthermore, the back portion of the land was given to your sister”.

“So you know all these details. Now what are you expecting me to do, tell me” asked Mathu.

“Nothing much, your mom’s only sister was my mom.”

“So what has that to do with the purpose of your visit now.”

“I understand that you are going to rent out this house. This is an old house built by my great grandpa in 1920. This is the first cement brick house in this area” said Sundari.

The same news was given to me by my mom. I also knew that my mom and your mom are sisters, but you were not living in Jaffna then and I never saw you in person.

“Yes, Akka (sister) this is the first time we are meeting. I was working as a teacher in

Kilinochchi and now I am transferred to Hindu Ladies College and looking for a house to

rent. “Okay, that’s good. Even my mom was teaching there.”

“Yes, I also heard that she was a very popular English teacher.

“Okay, come to the point, Sundari without beating about the bush. Tell me why do you want to rent this house.”

“First of all, your grandma and my grandma were living in this house, so I thought of living here. Secondly, this is close to Nallur Temple and Vira Maha Kaliasman Temple. I can walk to school in 20 minutes. Finally, this house has many rooms, and I am planning to give tuition to students.

There was a big banyan tree at the intersection and surrounding it was a stone built short wall on which your grandpa was seated and settled minus skirmishes among the villagers. There was a tea shop run by one Sangara Pillai, where delicious vadai (spiced doughnut), boiled grams and plain tea were sold. Now it is no more there. All these have been replaced by the statue of Bharathiar.”

Short Story

COMMUNITY WATCH



“Sundari, I know all these details. You don’t have to tell me all these as I was living in this house. I am looking for a family which can maintain my house very well.”

“That is the very reason I came here. This was built by our great grandfather, and it is my duty to look after it very well and no other person will do so like me” said Sundari.

“Okay then you must agree to sign a legal contract with the following details:

1. You have to maintain this house in good condition always.
2. Monthly rental must be deposited in my account.
3. You had to pay me three months in advance.
4. If you like to vacate the house you must give me 3 months’ notice so said, Mathu.

“What is the purpose of a contract agreement? we are close blood relations and don’t you trust me. I will abide by all your conditions.”

“Sundari don’t talk about trust. Nowadays you can’t believe anyone. Furthermore, the economic situation in Sri Lanka is in the worst stage. I came back after 2 years to solve this problem so tell me your final decision.”

Sundari thought for a moment and said “okay Mathu, there should not be any problem among us. I agree to a legal contract, but you have to bear the cost of the lawyer’s fee.”

Mathu looked at her husband and he nodded his head in agreement.

After 2 days the house was rented for 2 years to Sundari.

After 2 years Mathu returned to Jaffna to extend the contract for two more years. But when she visited the house, she was shocked to see the house in disarray. The trees in the backyard withered without water. Two mango trees and the Goa tree were missing. The entire property was filled with garbage and broken dried branches of trees. A few walls of the house had cracks on them. She was feeling guilty for having rented to Sundari. Mathu was really upset and asked Sundari “why the house is in a very bad shape. You are a

housewife and a relative of mine. Is this the way to maintain the house?”

Sundari replied “yours is an old house and the rent I am paying is too much. I could have rented a new house for less rent. Furthermore, to look after the land and to water the trees, I have to hire a man to do it. I can’t afford it. We both are working, and my children are attending school.” She went on adding more and more reasons for not maintaining the house in good shape.

“Sundari, I am not prepared to listen to your reasons anymore. There is only one more month for the expiry of the agreement. You have to vacate the house and hand over the keys by the end of this month. I came up with an idea of extending the agreement, but the situation is worse. You have to leave, if not I may have to take legal action,” said Mathu.

After two days Mathu and her husband were called by their lawyer Nathan to his office. He asked them, “Are you aware that the occupant of your house, Sundari, tried to buy the house for a lower price than the market value?” She came to me and asked me if your rental agreement is valid and whether she can continue to stay in the house. I told her that the agreement is legal, and she has to leave the house at the termination of the contract and if she has any idea of buying it, she has to negotiate the price with the owners”.

They were shocked to hear this. Mathu said “we want Sundari to vacate our house. We have decided to repair the house and rent it to a non-governmental organization, and they have agreed to maintain it well.

Nathan said, please don’t get me wrong. you or your children are not going to come here and live in this house. There is no point in keeping this for sentimental reasons. You can sell this house and send the money to London. Furthermore, you are spending money to visit here and check on the status of the house. If you are selling the house, I am prepared to buy it. It is up to you to decide and tell me later.

Both of them thanked him for

his advice and left his office.

At the end of the month Sundari vacated the house but removed all the electrical fans and furniture and plucked all the mangoes in the tree and left.

Mathu and her husband Sivaharan came back to Jaffna after a year for the Nallur festival, where they happened to meet a teacher, teaching at Hindu Ladies College. She told them Sundari tried her level best to rent a house and found it difficult and with the help of a politician got a transfer back to her own home at Kilinochchi. I knew the problem she had with you. This is the problem with all the people living overseas. If you leave your house vacant, as time goes on, it may be taken over by the government. So better to dispose of it.

After a few days they went to lawyer Nathan to extend the rental agreement with the present tenant. Nathan told them “last time when you met me I advised you to dispose of the house and send the money to London.”

Sivaharan replied “we are also thinking about it, but transferring money is a problem.”

Nathan said “there is a person living in Germany who is prepared to buy your house and pay you the money in London. I know Mathu knows him very well because his father was the man who washed their clothes when she was young.

Mathu asked, “who is that?”

“He is none other than Annamalai’s son Selvan who is now living in Germany and doing very well.”

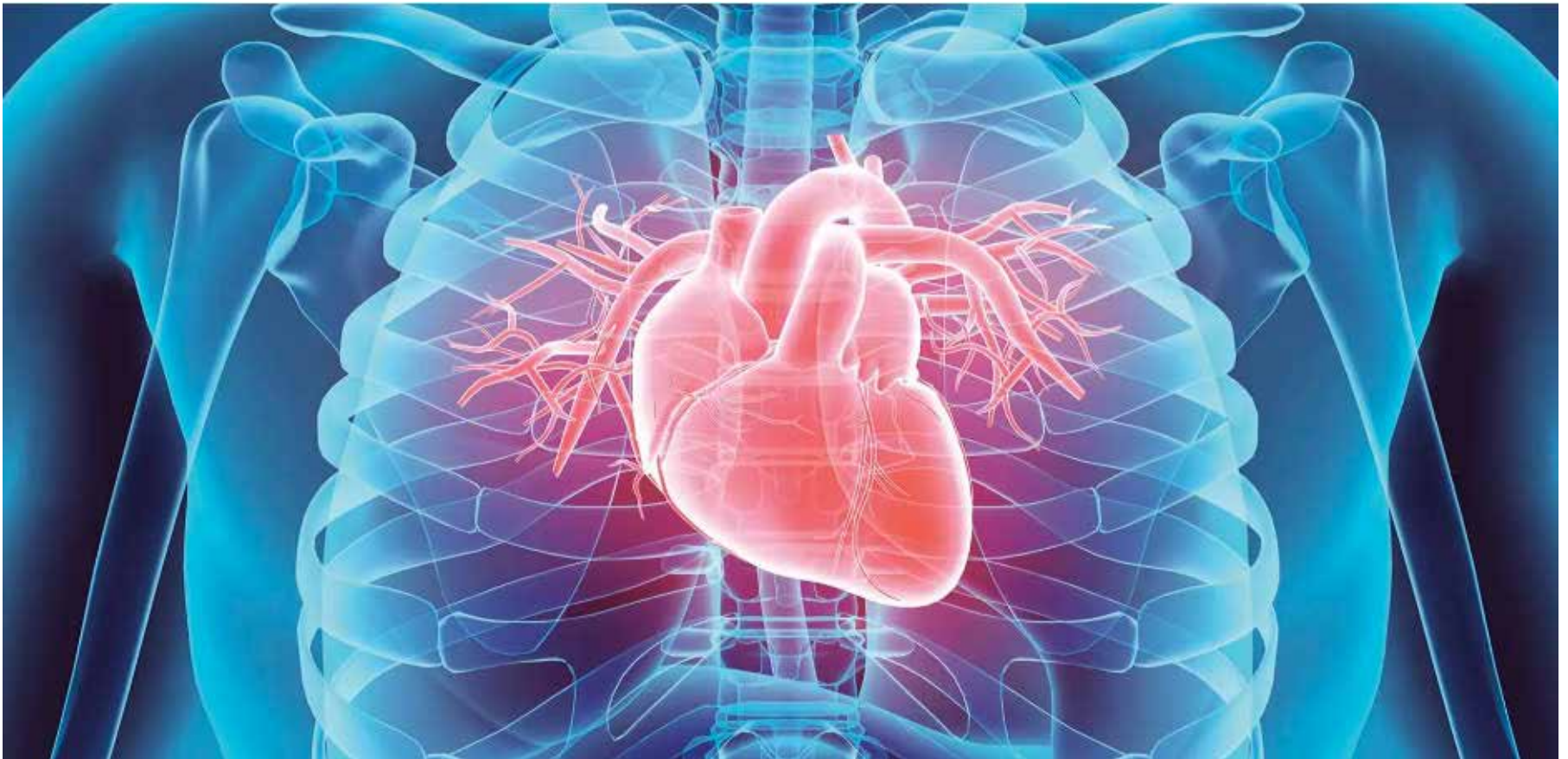
“I knew Selvan, but I have not seen him for a long time and must think about selling it to him. I have to consult with my relatives,” said Mathu.

Nathan said “I know what you are thinking. All those days are gone, now nobody is worried about Caste and Creed. He is prepared to buy your house for the price you quote. This is a good opportunity, don’t miss it. He is also looking at other properties, so if you delay, he may buy it, because he’s also in a hurry to buy one before leaving for Germany.”

Mathu and husband discussed for a few minutes and finally gave the green light to sell it to Selvan.



From the Curry House to the White House and Beyond: THE TRAJECTORY OF HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE



By Ariaratnam Gobikrishna, MD

At the tail end of World War II, with victory looming in the backdrop, the Allied Heroes convened in Yalta to chart the postwar future of Europe. Seated between Churchill and Stalin was Roosevelt, looking majestic and jubilant, so we thought, but with the benefit of hindsight, one can sketch a contrasting picture portraying a sick man in the middle, experiencing fleeting bouts of memory lapses. But in 1945 no one knew about transient small strokes or sentinel bleeding (warning leaks), portending a major catastrophe around the corner. High blood pressure was not even in the medical lexicon, let alone its effect on bargaining power against Stalin. In fact, Franklin Roosevelt was a sick man, noticeable to his comrades but not to his personal physicians.

Back home, on his daughter's insistence, Roosevelt was examined by a cardiologist at Bethesda who found the President in heart failure with significantly elevated blood pressure, but elevated blood pressure was not considered a malady then so he was prescribed digitalis — a drug to increase pumping of the heart— to ameliorate his heart failure. He was also prescribed rest, reduction in the

number of cigarettes he smoked and alcohol he consumed. All in all, it was the right move in the right direction, but it proved to be too little, too late. Shortly thereafter, Roosevelt would succumb to a cerebral bleed.

On the other side of the Atlantic, one and a half centuries before President Roosevelt's somber fate, an Indian named Sake Dean Mahomed arrived in Ireland, armed with a multitude of talents in surgery, shampoo baths, and Indian cuisine. He was a trailblazer in many regards: the first to introduce shampoo baths, the first Indian to pen an autobiography in English, and later the pioneer behind England's enduring love affair with chicken tikka masala through the establishment of a curry house. From this culinary venture emerged a second-generation descendant, a physician named Frederick Akbar Mahomed, who would go on to invent the sphygmograph (1870s) to measure blood pressure and coin the term "Essential Hypertension"—elevated blood pressure without antecedent causes (At that time, hypertension was perceived as an offshoot of kidney disease). During his brief lifespan, he would also accurately predict the long term complications associated with essential hypertension.

But Dr. Frederick Akbar Mahomed's

discovery and predictions would simply be ignored for another century by the medical establishment. Consequently, President Roosevelt would fall victim to this intellectual malaise, paying the ultimate price. However, his death served as an eye-opener for America, prompting President Truman to declare the National Heart Act, which laid the groundwork for the Framingham Heart Study (FHS) in 1948.

As the name implies, "Essential Hypertension" was interpreted as essential for normal bodily functions until as late as the 1960s, despite mounting evidence to the contrary. Expert after expert ridiculed the notion of treating hypertension, considering it a great folly. Although, early on, the FHS identified high blood pressure as a detriment to healthspan, the scientific community faced opposition from influential detractors, including renowned cardiologists like Dr. Paul Dudley White — who once said "Hypertension may be an important compensatory mechanism which should not be tampered with, even were it certain that we could control it." — and Dr. John Hay, the British cardiologist credited with describing heart block. Dr. John Hay, for that matter, vacillated in his beliefs, infusing strong ambiguity into its discourse, as he

COMMUNITY WATCH



once stated, “The greatest danger to a man with high blood pressure lies in its discovery, because then some fool is certain to try and reduce it.” It’s fair to say that both cardiologists later walked back their statements and became strong believers in the detrimental effects of hypertension. It is also fair to say that the ambiguity emanated from many luminaries certainly delayed drug development.

However, the life insurance companies held a different perspective. Early on, they classified individuals with elevated blood pressure as high risk for their business. Their meticulous record-keeping and astute observations eventually spurred scientific investigations focusing on blood pressure reduction. Towards that end, the visionary Dr. Edward Freis threw himself into the drug trial at the Veterans Administration in Washington DC. In a groundbreaking moment, in 1971, his efforts proved medication-induced reduction beneficial for the first time, validating the predictions made by Dr. Frederick Akbar Mahomed a century prior and inspiring further similar trials to follow.

A major credit should also be attributed to Dr. Nicolai Korotkov, without whom the identification and monitoring of hypertension would have been far more cumbersome. In 1905, during the Russo-Japanese War, this young man’s painstaking efforts led to the discovery of the first working sphygmomanometer. He utilized auscultatory sounds, later known as Korotkov sounds, to achieve

prevailed across all age spectrum.

Since 1976, the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute has been at the forefront of advocating for cardiovascular health, regularly releasing Joint National Committee (JNC) reports. These reports, typically issued every 5 to 7 years, represent a consensus among experts in the field. However, after the 7th JNC report in 2003, the committee faced internal discord, leading to a lack of an official consensus statement for the 8th JNC release. Instead, in 2014, a publication in the *Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA)* attempted to fill this void, albeit amidst significant dissent among the authors, particularly concerning the acceptance of a systolic blood pressure target of 150 for individuals aged 60 and above.

In 2017, the American College of Cardiology (ACC) and the American Heart Association (AHA) stepped in, assuming responsibility for providing guidance on blood pressure management. Their recommendations emphasized more stringent control measures, advocating for lower blood pressure targets (130/80) for all age groups with caveats. While the European Society of Cardiology generally aligns with many of these recommendations, disparities persist, particularly concerning the cutoff for systolic blood pressure levels pertaining to drug therapy (140/90) as well as reduction targets for the elderly (above 65) (not less than 130). Lately, ambulatory blood pressure monitoring and home recordings supersede doctor’s office recordings, taking into

these individual components have paved the way for drug discovery, ultimately culminating in the success of combination therapy contained within a single pill, which has become increasingly popular in the Western world.

The notion of taking medication is often a bitter pill to swallow. Although there are slight differences, individuals classified as stage 1 according to American guidelines and grade 1 according to European guidelines will typically undergo lifestyle changes for six months before being considered for drug therapy. These lifestyle changes encompass weight reduction, regular exercise, decreased alcohol consumption, smoking cessation, reduced salt intake, and adherence to a diet akin to the DASH (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension) diet. The DASH diet, in turn, shares similarities with the Mediterranean diet, emphasizing the consumption of ample fruits and vegetables, low saturated fat intake, and a high intake of polyunsaturated and monounsaturated fats, whole grains, fish, legumes, and seeds, all with a low sodium content.

Given the genetic predisposition for heart disease among South Asians, it’s noteworthy that individuals of African descent face a genetic disadvantage in the context of hypertension, often resulting in a higher incidence of kidney failure. Individuals of Sub-Saharan African descent occasionally harbor a mutation in the Apo L1 gene, providing resistance against trypanosomiasis (sleeping sickness) while simultaneously elevating the risk of kidney failure. This mirrors the scenario seen in carriers of the sickle cell trait, who demonstrate resistance to malaria. These instances underscore the concept of natural selection being advantageous during endemic diseases, yet potentially problematic in their absence.

There are occasions when hypertension stubbornly resists treatment, posing a looming threat of severe bodily harm—an occurrence referred to as resistant hypertension. In eras predating the availability of medications, surgical nerve disruptions were implemented with success. Building upon this legacy, contemporary approaches involve less invasive radiofrequency procedures targeting nerve endings around the kidneys. While initial results have shown limited success, ongoing endeavors aim to refine and enhance this technique at present, particularly for this category of resistant hypertension.

We have traversed a circuitous arc of trajectory vis-à-vis high blood pressure: from regarding the condition as benign, to seeing it as a necessary compensatory mechanism, to recognizing it as a symptom of underlying diseases. Now, we predominantly identify it as a standalone condition, termed essential hypertension. Cases linked to other underlying conditions are now categorized as secondary hypertension, representing a small minority and considered only in rare circumstances.



this breakthrough.

Although both systolic and diastolic blood pressure proved detrimental, treatment was initially instituted only for diastolic hypertension, based more on hunch than concrete evidence. However, numerous drug trials over the years gradually changed this perspective. Yet, this shift didn’t come easily. For decades, the diagnosis excluded the so-called elderly—individuals aged 60 and above. Reluctantly, trial investigators included those above 60 with isolated systolic hypertension and were astonished to find benefits in this age group. This paved the way for trials on individuals above 80, the very elderly, and once again, benefits

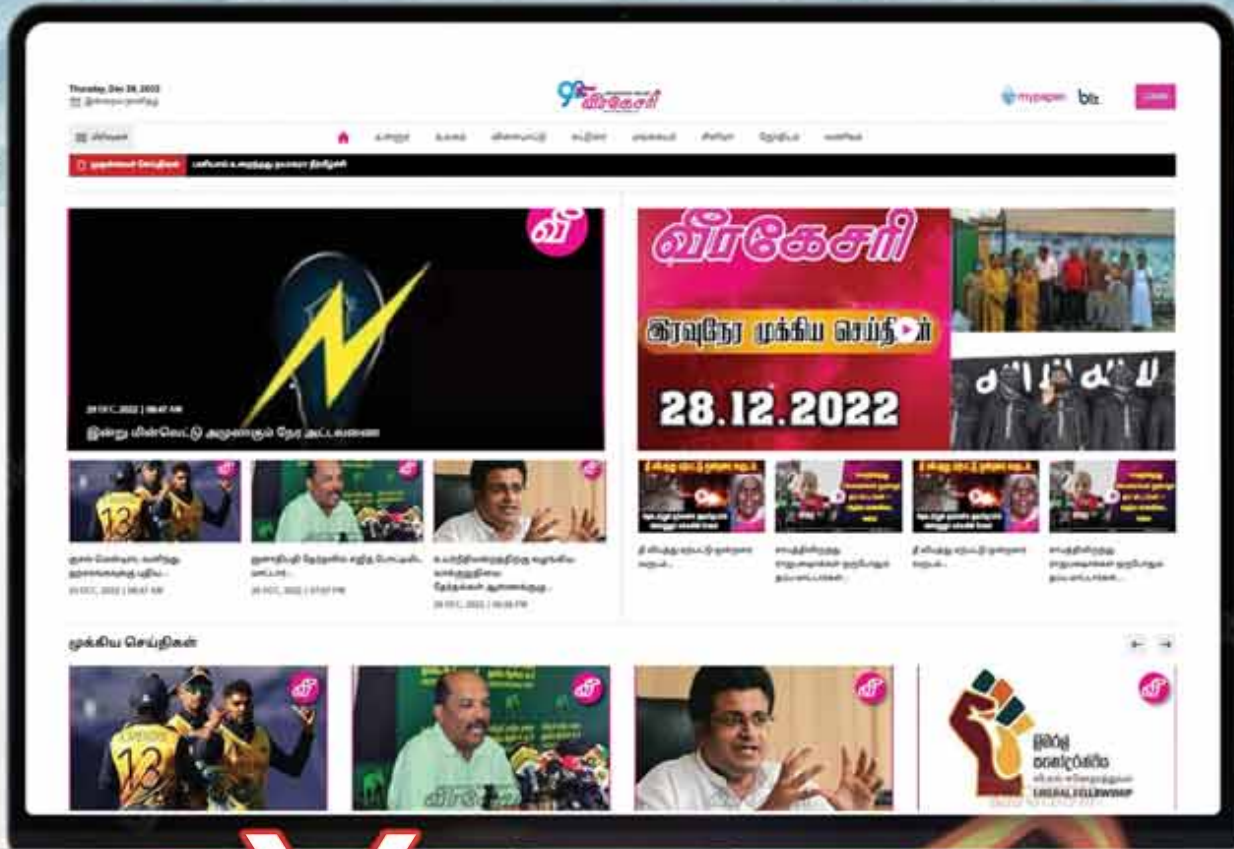
consideration the nature of fluctuations and white coat effect, necessitating multiple readings for the diagnosis.

Even though accepting hypertension as a malady faced numerous hurdles, they were insignificant compared to the challenge of identifying its causation. Over time, the cascade of discoveries related to hormones, chemical substances, neural pathways, environmental factors, genetic influences, and the evolving changes in vascular function with aging has revealed the intricate web of interactions among these elements. This complexity has rendered the pursuit of a single unifying theory impossible. However,

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