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WHY MORE PATIENTS ARE CHOOSING THIS GAME-CHANGING HIP REPLACEMENT

Thursday, Jul 24, 2025,

By Fortis Healthcare Limited

A breakthrough in robotic direct anterior hip replacement surgery—a minimally invasive technique that spares muscles and offers faster recovery—is giving patients like a 53-year-old engineer a second chance to walk pain-free and reclaim their lives, as Dr. Hulse performed the country's first robotic direct anterior hip replacement

Bengaluru, Karnataka, India
(NewsVoir)

For over three years, a chemical engineer in his early 50s, working in Malaysia, lived with pain that gradually stole his mobility, independence, and peace of mind. Every step reminded him of what he had lost—long walks, work trips, even simple tasks like tying his shoelaces. His limp in the right leg wasn't just physical; it weighed heavily on his spirit too.

Determined to find a solution, he consulted multiple surgeons in Delhi and Mumbai, but none could offer lasting relief. Doctors told him he had Avascular Necrosis (AVN) - a condition that cuts off blood supply to the hip bone, causing it to weaken and collapse. His problems began after a COVID-19 infection, and though he underwent two surgeries in Mumbai, neither brought relief. As an engineer, he believed in science and precision. He had done his research. He wasn't afraid of surgery—but he was tired of failure.

Then, he came across a therapy he hadn't heard much about before: Robotic Direct Anterior Hip Replacement (DAA).

That decision changed everything.

A Modern Twist to a Classic Surgery

Total hip replacement isn't new. It has helped millions walk again. But what's different about the Robotic Direct Anterior Approach is how it's done—and what it avoids.

Most traditional hip replacements access the joint from the back (posterior) or side (lateral), often cutting through or detaching essential muscles. This could lead to more pain, a longer recovery, and a higher risk of dislocation.

With the DAA technique, the surgeon

enters from the front of the hip, sliding between muscles rather than cutting through them. This muscle-sparing approach, combined with robotic guidance, makes the surgery less invasive, highly precise, and allows for faster healing. It is becoming a preferred approach worldwide for these reasons.

Precision Meets Recovery: The Power of Robotic Assistance

Robotic technology does not replace the surgeon—it enhances the surgeon's accuracy. Before surgery, a 3D model of the patient's hip is created. This helps the surgeon decide the exact size, position, and angle of the implant needed.

During the operation, the robot provides real-time feedback, ensuring the implant is placed exactly where it should be. This minimizes errors such as leg length mismatch and poor alignment—common concerns in traditional surgeries.

The Engineer's Turnaround

For our 53-year-old patient, the first robotic DAA surgery on his left hip involved an incision of just about 8 cm—less than half the size of traditional cuts. Because no major muscles were cut, he was able to stand and walk with support on the very same day.

Four months later, his second hip was replaced using the same method. His recovery was smooth—no pain, no limping, no complications.

"After living with discomfort for so long, I couldn't believe how quickly I was able to move again," he said. "This therapy didn't just fix my hips—it gave me back the rhythm of my life."

What Makes Robotic DAA Therapy Stand Out?

- **Faster Recovery with Less Pain:** Since no major muscles are cut, your body heals faster and with less discomfort.
- **Smaller Incision, Less Scarring:** The 8 cm cut means minimal skin and tissue damage.
- **Better Accuracy with Robotic Help:** The robot helps the surgeon position the new joint perfectly.
- **Walk Sooner:** Most patients can walk with support within hours of surgery.



Dr. Narayan Hulse - A leading orthopaedic surgeon specializing in robotic joint replacement

- **Balanced Leg Length:** Robotic precision ensures both legs are equal in length—avoiding limping.
- **Lasting Results:** Accurate implant positioning improves durability and lowers the chance of needing revision surgery.

Expert Insight

Dr. Narayan Hulse, a leading orthopedic surgeon specializing in robotic joint replacement, explains, "Robotic DAA therapy combines the best of both worlds—a minimally invasive front-access approach and the unmatched precision of robotic technology. The result is a safer, faster, and more natural recovery for patients. However, surgeons should train themselves properly and hospitals should acquire the required technology and instrumentation to provide this service to needy patients."

The Takeaway

This isn't just about a new kind of surgery—it's about a new kind of life after surgery. For patients living with AVN, arthritis, or chronic hip pain, Robotic DAA Hip Replacement therapy offers not just hope but a real, science-backed solution.

If walking has become a struggle and pain your new normal, know that you have options. Thanks to advancements like Robotic DAA, those options are better, faster, and more reliable than ever before.

If you or a loved one suffers from chronic hip pain, consult an orthopedic specialist to learn if Robotic DAA Hip Replacement is right for you.

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Remembering the Fathers We Lost on Father's Day and Beyond

"If there ever comes a day when we can't be together, keep me in your heart. I'll stay there forever." - Winnie the Pooh

Although a profound insight into grief coming from a cartoon character, it holds a deep meaning for people like me who have experienced the loss of their father during times like Father's Day. In my case, it was losing my dad, Kanapathipillai Thirukumaran around this time two years ago on June 16, 2023.

Father's Day, a special day to commemorate the wonderful dads, uncles, grandfathers, and other male father figures around the globe, feels different for those impacted by the loss of their own father. In that sense, this story is offered as a guide into navigating the raw complexities of grief that can be magnified during occasions such as this.

Briefly, Father's Day will be held on June 15, 2025, and I still feel the freshness of his passing. As I recall last year, it felt difficult to cope with this day as there is a tinge of loneliness in our emotions in being fed the barrage of messages, words and images of fathers and their children. Even outside of occasions like Father's Day, the thoughts and memories of my dad often boil up to the surface such as going through and organizing his old belongings. However, the timing of Father's Day has me delving deeper into my relationship with my dad and my characterization of him as a person overall.

My perception of my dad during his last few years have shifted in a way where I recognize the humanness in his experiences during his own relationship with grief, in losing his wife. At the time, it felt like he was burying his feelings and continuing with his routine and regular life. Now that I reflect through the lenses of my own experiences, I could see that it was his attempt at maintaining predictability through routines.

Grief is a very isolating experience, and it is important to know that during these intense moments of grief or sadness that you do not isolate yourself; it is encouraged that you seek out the love and care of other friends, family members, and acquaintances. At the same time, it's important to give yourself permission to feel the unpleasant feelings of grief because that just demonstrates the strength and power of love you had for your dad, the bond that you shared together. Over the past two years, I witnessed how diverse grief can express itself. It could range from the emptiness to hysterical crying. And growth for me was accepting that both are equally valid.

Further, I have been trying to educate myself on grief in the recent times, as an effort to build an understanding and connect more with myself. And it was enlightening to learn that grief has the potential to express itself physically on a person, like through weakened immune function, digestive issues, fatigue, difficulty sleeping and even a heart attack on a person who left these feelings unacknowledged. This is not to say that grief directly contributed to my dad's passing but may have played a role in causing his illness. Providing a space to allow those grieving to express themselves are incredibly important. Despite the circumstances, my dad managed to find that space from within to properly express himself to a certain point, and I am all the more grateful for it. Moreover, fluidity of grief is an important concept that has characterized my personal experiences in managing the losses of my dad and mom. One of the most popular models of grief outlines the five stages of grief, involving denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance. However, it is important to

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understand and accept the fluidity of grief, which doesn't follow the set stages in no consequential order. It catches us off guard when it almost felt like it was all over.

Grief is a deeply personal experience that demands the time and space that it deserves. It will be the second year of living through Father's Day without my dad. Grief has been a complex but meaningful experience that I am navigating. I have yet to see what this Father's Day will bring, but trust that the feelings and experiences that emerge beneath the surface will contribute to my own healing.

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Op-Ed

WORLD NEWS 

Sri Lanka's Current Economic Outlook

By Visvalingam Muralithas

Sri Lanka is a lower-middle-income island nation in South Asia with a mixed economy traditionally based on agriculture, manufacturing, and services. Strategically located along major shipping routes, the country has developed key industries such as tea production, garment manufacturing, tourism, and remittances.

Following decades of civil conflict, Sri Lanka's economy experienced rapid expansion in the post-war period (2009–2012), fueled by public investment and growth in tourism. However, persistent fiscal deficits, rising external debt, and structural inefficiencies left the economy vulnerable to shocks.

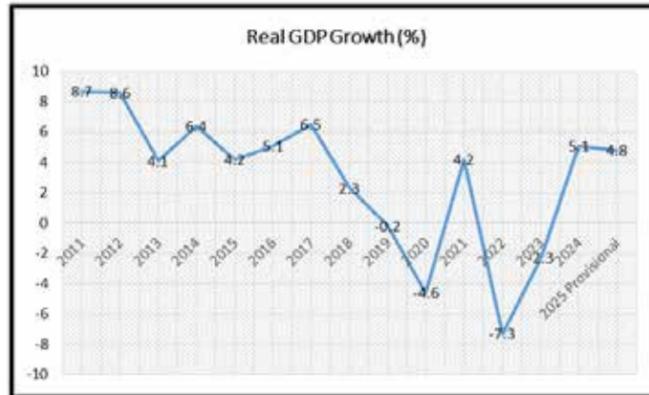
In 2022, Sri Lanka faced its most severe economic crisis in decades, characterized by a sovereign debt default, foreign exchange shortages, soaring inflation, and widespread social unrest. Since then, the country has embarked on a path of macroeconomic stabilization and reform, supported by international partners including the IMF. By 2024, signs of recovery have begun to appear, with positive GDP growth, easing inflation, and improved external balances.

Nevertheless, significant challenges remain in ensuring sustainable and inclusive development.

After years of economic turmoil, Sri Lanka's economy is showing signs of recovery, though the road ahead remains complex and uncertain. While 2024 marked a notable turnaround in key macroeconomic indicators, structural challenges, external vulnerabilities, and ongoing social pressures continue to test the nation's resilience.

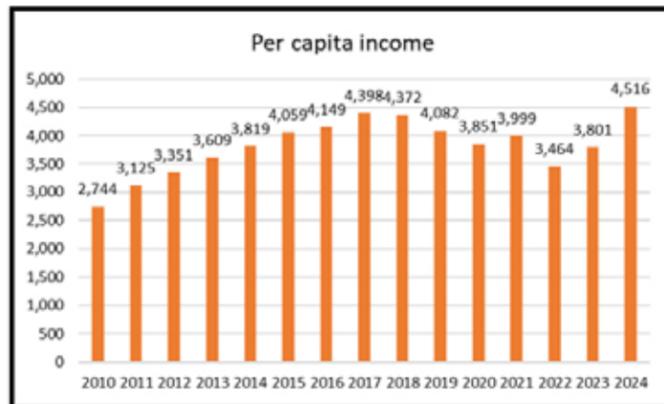
The economy grew by 5.1% in 2024, followed by a provisional growth estimate of 4.8% in early 2025—its first full year of recovery since the 2022 debt default. This rebound was driven by a strong resurgence in construction, a revival in tourism-related services, and a steady expansion of private sector credit, which grew 10.7% year-on-year by December.

However, agriculture lagged behind, hindered by longstanding productivity issues and increasing climate-related risks. The uneven growth across sectors

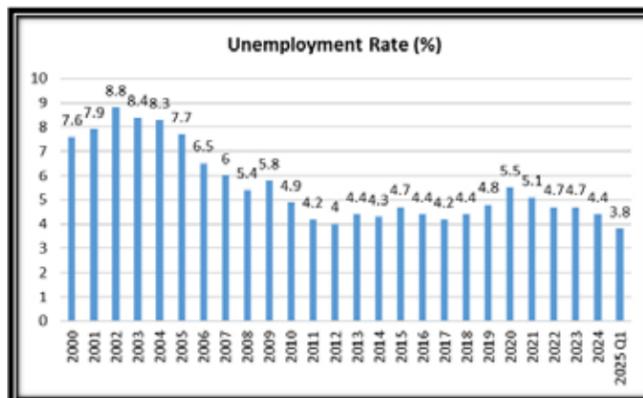


underscores the fragility of the recovery and highlights the urgent need for comprehensive structural reforms.

- Strong growth (2011-2017): Mostly high and positive growth, peaking around 6-8%.
- Slowing down (2018): Growth falls to 2.3%.
- Recession and contractions (2019-2020): Negative growth in 2019 (-0.2%) and a steep decline in 2020 (-4.6%), likely due to global and local shocks (e.g., COVID-19).
- Recovery signs (2021): Bounce back



with 4.2%.
• Sharp downturn (2022-2023): Another significant contraction in 2022 (-7.3%) and



2023 (-2.3%), reflecting economic struggles.
• Rebound (2024): Robust growth of 5.0%, indicating recovery from prior recessions.

Sri Lanka's per capita income grew steadily from 2010 to 2017, reflecting strong economic progress. However, from 2018 to 2022, it faced declines due to internal challenges and global shocks like the pandemic and the 2022 economic crisis. A notable recovery began in 2023–2024, with income surpassing previous highs, signaling renewed economic strength. Continued reforms and stability will be key to maintaining this positive trend.

- Early 2000s: Higher unemployment, peaking at 8.8% in 2002.



- Steady decline (2003-2012): Unemployment rate reduced steadily to around 4%.
- Relatively stable (2013-2019): Rate fluctuated around 4.2% to 4.8%.
- COVID-19 impact (2020): Increased to 5.5% due to pandemic disruptions.
- Post-pandemic recovery (2021 onwards): Declined steadily to 3.8% in early 2025, suggesting improving labor market conditions.

Merchandise exports showed steady growth from 2000, rising from USD 5.5 billion to a peak of USD 13.1 billion in 2022. This upward trend reflects the country's expanding trade activities and diversification of export products over the years.

There were some fluctuations, notably a dip in 2001-2002 and during the global financial crisis around 2009. Exports also slightly declined in 2015-2016 and during the pandemic year 2020, when exports dropped to USD 10 billion due to global disruptions.

From 2021 onwards, exports rebounded strongly, reaching USD 12.8 billion in 2024, signaling a resilient recovery. The export value of USD 5.4 billion up to May 2025 suggests continued positive momentum for the current year.

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WORLD NEWS



Op-Ed

Overall, Sri Lanka's export sector has demonstrated resilience despite global and domestic challenges, making it a crucial driver of economic growth.

Merchandise imports generally increased over the period, rising from USD 7.3 billion in 2000 to peak levels above USD 20 billion in the early 2010s, with a notable high of USD 22.2 billion in 2018. This growth reflects rising domestic demand and economic expansion.

There were significant fluctuations, including a sharp decline during the 2009 global financial crisis and a drop in 2020 amid the COVID-19 pandemic and economic challenges.

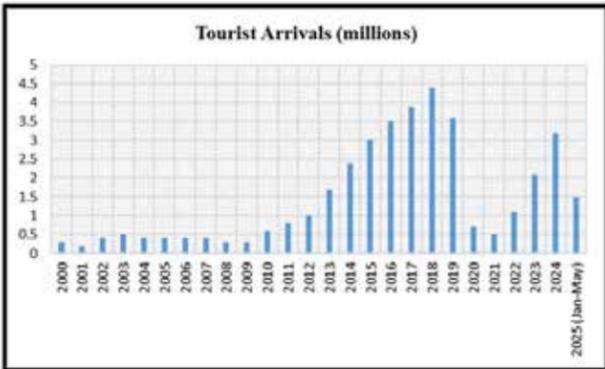
Imports declined somewhat after 2018,



with figures fluctuating between USD 16 billion and USD 20 billion in recent years. The value of USD 8.1 billion up to May 2025 suggests a continuation of this moderate import trend.

Overall, imports have shown volatility linked to external shocks and domestic economic conditions, highlighting the need for careful management of trade balance and import dependency.

Sri Lanka has consistently run a trade deficit over the entire period, with imports exceeding exports. The deficit widened gradually from around USD -1.8 billion in 2000 to a peak of nearly USD -10.3 billion in 2018, reflecting growing import demand outpacing export growth.



The deficit showed some volatility, narrowing during global downturns such as the 2009 financial crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, when imports contracted sharply.

From 2021 onwards, the trade deficit narrowed compared to previous years, dropping to around USD -4.9 billion in 2023. However, in 2024, it widened again to USD -6.1 billion, signaling ongoing challenges in balancing trade.

The provisional figure of USD -2.7 billion for the first five months of 2025 indicates the deficit trend is continuing but at a potentially manageable pace.

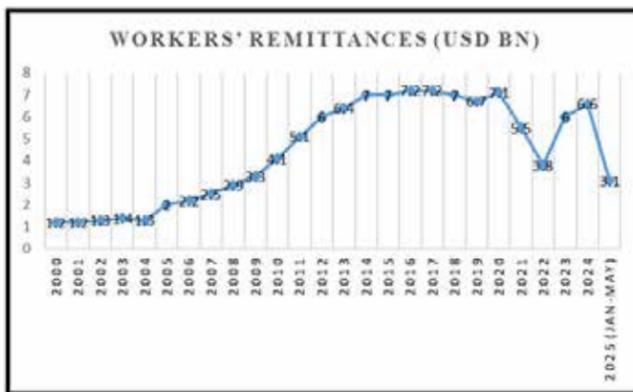
Overall, Sri Lanka's persistent trade deficits highlight the importance of boosting exports and managing imports to improve external balances and economic stability.

Tourism in Sri Lanka showed a gradual increase from 2000, starting at

0.3 million arrivals and reaching steady growth through the 2000s. From 2010 onwards, tourist arrivals grew rapidly, peaking at 4.4 million in 2018, driven by increasing global interest and improved infrastructure.

However, 2019 saw a decline to 3.6 million arrivals, likely influenced by regional security concerns and other external factors. The COVID-19 pandemic severely impacted tourism in 2020 and 2021, with arrivals plummeting to just 0.7 million and 0.5 million respectively, reflecting global travel restrictions.

Recovery began in 2022 with 1.1 million arrivals, and growth accelerated in 2023 and 2024, reaching 3.2 million tourists,



signaling a strong rebound in the sector. The provisional data for the first five months of 2025 (1.5 million arrivals) suggests continued recovery momentum.

Overall, tourism is a vital sector for Sri Lanka's economy, and the sharp recovery after the pandemic highlights its resilience, though full pre-pandemic levels are still being regained. Sustained growth will depend on stability, infrastructure development, and effective marketing.

Workers' remittances have been a crucial source of foreign exchange and economic stability for Sri Lanka, showing a consistent upward trend from 2000 to 2017, increasing from USD 1.2 billion to a peak of around USD 7.2 billion.

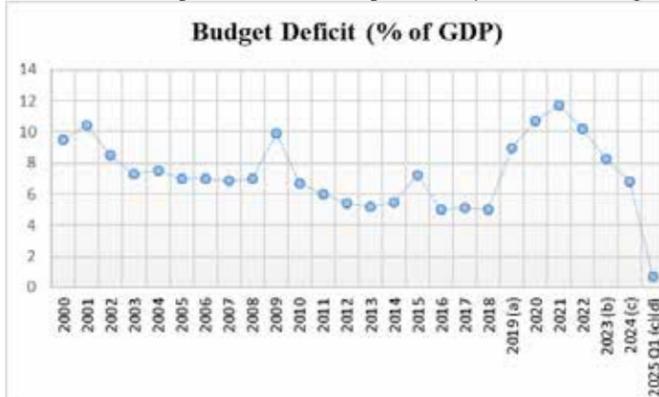
This growth reflects the expanding Sri Lankan diaspora and their increasing contributions to the economy.

From 2018 to 2020, remittances remained relatively stable, hovering around USD 7 billion, with a slight dip in 2019 but a rebound in 2020 despite the global COVID-19 pandemic, showcasing the resilience of this income source.

However, 2021 and 2022 saw a significant decline, dropping sharply to USD 3.8 billion in 2022. This decrease likely resulted from global economic uncertainties, disruptions in migrant employment, and the domestic economic crisis in Sri Lanka during that period.

The sector began recovering in 2023 and 2024, with remittances rising back to USD 6.0 billion and USD 6.6 billion respectively, indicating a revival in migrant worker earnings and improved global conditions.

Preliminary data for early 2025 (USD 3.1



billion by May) suggest continued strength in remittance inflows.

Overall, workers' remittances remain a vital pillar for Sri Lanka's economy, helping to cushion balance of payments pressures and support household incomes. Continued growth will depend on the global labor market and domestic economic stability.

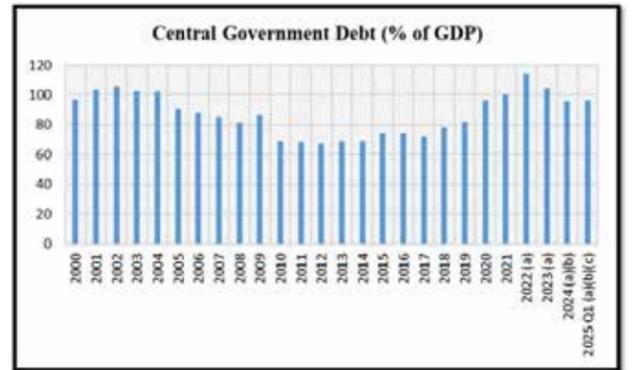
(a) According to the Ministry of Finance, fiscal sector statistics of 2019 have been adjusted as announced in the Budget Speech for 2020. (b) Revised (c) Provisional (d) Based on the GDP estimates by CBSL

Sri Lanka's budget deficit showed a generally downward trend from 2000 (9.5%) through the early 2010s, reaching a low point around 5%–6% during 2012 to 2018, reflecting relative fiscal consolidation efforts.

However, the deficit widened significantly starting in 2019, jumping to 9.0%, and then sharply increasing in 2020 and 2021 to 10.7% and 11.7% respectively. This spike was largely driven by the economic fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic and mounting fiscal pressures during a period of economic crisis.

The budget deficit started to improve from 2022 onwards, declining to 10.2% in 2022 and further down to 8.3% in 2023, signaling initial fiscal stabilization measures.

Provisional data for 2024 and the first quarter of 2025 show continued progress, with the deficit narrowing to 6.8% in 2024 and a remarkable drop to 0.7% in Q1 2025, indicating strong fiscal consolidation efforts.



Overall, while Sri Lanka faced large fiscal imbalances in recent years due to external shocks and domestic challenges, recent figures suggest that ongoing reforms and fiscal management are helping to reduce the deficit and restore fiscal stability. Sustained effort will be crucial to maintain this trajectory.

a) According to the Ministry of Finance, fiscal sector statistics of 2019 have been adjusted as announced in the Budget Speech for 2020. (b) Revised (c) Provisional (d) Based on the GDP estimates by CBSL

• Rising Debt Early 2000s: Government debt as a percentage of GDP rose above 100% in the early 2000s, peaking at 105.6% in 2002, reflecting high borrowing levels during that period.

• Decline 2005–2017: From 2005 onwards, debt-to-GDP ratio steadily declined, reaching a low of around 67.7%–72.2% between 2012 and 2017. This reflects better fiscal management, economic growth, and possibly debt repayment.

• Increasing Trend from 2018: Starting 2018, debt levels began to increase again, with a sharp jump from 81.9% in 2019 to 114.2% in 2022. This corresponds with fiscal

Op-Ed

pressures, economic shocks, and debt service challenges, especially post-2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic and Sri Lanka's debt crisis.

Recent Years (2023–2025 Q1):

Debt as a percentage of GDP has slightly decreased from its 2022 peak but remains very high, close to 96%. This may reflect restructuring efforts, debt relief negotiations, or the effects of nominal GDP growth improving the ratio.

Sri Lanka's inflation journey over the past six years has been marked by dramatic shifts—from a period of relative stability, through a severe inflation crisis, to an unexpected bout of deflation between 2019 and early 2025.

Between 2019 and 2020, Sri Lanka maintained moderate inflation levels, with both headline and core inflation generally fluctuating between 4% and 7%. This period reflected a balance between supply and demand, supported by relatively stable global commodity prices and a functioning domestic policy framework. Price pressures remained manageable, and inflation volatility was limited.

Inflation Surge (2021–2022)

A turning point occurred in mid-2021. Inflation began accelerating rapidly due to a convergence of external shocks and domestic vulnerabilities. By mid-2022, headline inflation skyrocketed to over 70%, marking the highest level in the country's post-independence history.

Key contributors to this inflation

- Sharp currency depreciation, eroding purchasing power.
- Fuel and food price shocks, driven by global supply disruptions and local shortages.
- Supply chain breakdowns, particularly in the wake of Sri Lanka's sovereign debt crisis and dwindling foreign reserves.

Core inflation—which excludes volatile categories like food and energy—also rose significantly, highlighting that price increases were not transitory but widespread across sectors.

Disinflation and Deflation (Late 2022–2024)

Following a series of aggressive fiscal and monetary tightening measures, Sri Lanka entered a disinflationary phase beginning in late 2022. Inflation fell throughout 2023, and by the end of 2024, the economy tipped into deflation.

- Headline inflation turned negative, hitting -4.2% by February 2025.
- Core inflation followed a similar trend, showing sustained softening of underlying demand.
- The Sri Lankan rupee appreciated by 19.4% against the US dollar since the end of 2022, reducing import costs and easing external price pressures.
- Global energy prices also declined, further relieving domestic inflationary pressure.

Mild Inflation (Mid-2025 Onward)

Looking ahead, inflation is projected to rise modestly from mid-2025 but will likely remain below the Central Bank of Sri Lanka's (CBSL) target range. This expected rebound is driven more by base effects and gradual demand recovery than any overheating of the economy.

External Sector

Despite a 23.9% widening of the merchandise trade deficit in 2024, strong

tourism revenues and a rebound in workers' remittances supported a current account surplus for the second consecutive year. Foreign exchange reserves improved, reaching a level sufficient to cover three months of imports, prompting the government to fully lift import restrictions, including on vehicle imports.

However, the external outlook darkened with the imposition of a 44% U.S. tariff in April 2025—a major blow to Sri Lanka's apparel exports, a key source of foreign earnings. This development underscores the vulnerability of Sri Lanka's export basket and the urgent need to diversify trade markets and products.

Poverty and Social Pressures Persist

Despite encouraging macroeconomic trends, social recovery remains uneven. The poverty rate fell by 2.7 percentage points in 2024 but remains elevated at 24.5%, nearly double its pre-crisis level in 2019. Food prices have more than doubled since 2021, contributing to worsening malnutrition and child stunting.

Employment levels have declined slightly, and real wages remain stagnant. With limited domestic opportunities, labour migration has surged, evidenced by a sharp rise in applications for overseas employment.

According to the Asian Development Bank's April 2025 Outlook, GDP growth is expected to moderate to 3.9% in 2025 and 3.4% in 2026, reflecting post-crisis fatigue and longstanding structural issues, including:

- Low productivity
- Inefficient state-owned enterprises
- Rigid labour market dynamics

Inflation is forecast to gradually increase by mid-2025, though still remain below the CBSL's target range. However, with rising imports and slowing exports, the current account is expected to return to a deficit.

Key Challenges

1. U.S. Tariff Impact

A 44% tariff threatens Sri Lanka's apparel exports and overall export recovery.

2. Persistent Poverty

Over one-third of the population is projected to remain poor or vulnerable in 2025.

3. Debt Sustainability

Despite ongoing restructuring, high interest payments continue to crowd out public investment.

4. Labour Market Constraints

Low participation, skill mismatches, and emigration of professionals weigh on productivity.

5. Climate Vulnerability

Agriculture and infrastructure remain highly exposed to climate shocks, with green investments underfunded.

Reform Priorities and Policy Directions

To solidify the recovery and ensure long-term resilience, Sri Lanka must:

1. Maintain macroeconomic discipline and policy consistency.
2. Accelerate structural reforms to enhance competitiveness and attract sustainable investment.
3. Invest in human capital, especially education, healthcare, and nutrition.
4. Strengthen social protection systems for vulnerable populations.
5. Diversify exports and trade partners

WORLD NEWS



to reduce dependency on a narrow range of markets.

6. Promote digital transformation to boost transparency and financial inclusion.

7. Advance a green economy through renewable energy, climate-resilient infrastructure, and sustainable finance.

Sri Lanka has made meaningful progress in stabilizing its economy after a historic collapse. The recovery, however, remains fragile and uneven. The next 12 to 24 months will be critical in determining whether short-term gains can translate into sustainable prosperity.

Failure to deliver on essential reforms could reignite economic instability, erode investor confidence, and deepen social distress—risks the country can no longer afford. But with the right policy mix and international support, Sri Lanka can turn this moment of fragility into one of transformation.

Conclusion

Sri Lanka stands at a pivotal crossroads in its economic journey—emerging from the depths of crisis, yet still grappling with complex and deeply rooted challenges. The recovery since the 2022 collapse has been significant, marked by a return to growth, easing inflation, rising remittances, and early signs of fiscal consolidation. Sectors like tourism and construction are rebounding, while improved foreign reserves have helped restore macroeconomic confidence.

However, the rebound is uneven. Persistent poverty, weak productivity, external trade vulnerabilities, and high debt levels continue to weigh on the country's long-term prospects. With the global landscape shifting and risks such as trade shocks and climate impacts looming, Sri Lanka must urgently deepen structural reforms, strengthen its social safety nets, and diversify its economic base. The coming years will be decisive: if the current momentum is matched by bold and inclusive policymaking, Sri Lanka can transition from recovery to resilience. If not, the gains made may prove short-lived.

Writer

Visvalingam Muralithas is a researcher in the legislative sector, specializing in policy analysis and economic research. He is currently pursuing a PhD in Economics at the University of Colombo, with a research focus on governance, development, and sustainable growth.

He holds a Bachelor of Arts in Economics (Honours) from the University of Jaffna and a Master's degree in Economics from the University of Colombo. His academic background is further strengthened by postgraduate diplomas in Education from the Open University of Sri Lanka and in Monitoring and Evaluation from the University of Sri Jayawardenepura.

In addition to his research work, Muralithas has contributed to academia by teaching economics at the University of Colombo and the Institute of Bankers of Sri Lanka (IBSL), and has also gained industry experience as an investment advisor at a stock brokerage firm affiliated with the Colombo Stock Exchange.





THE STORY OF CHINESE AMERICANS WHO CALL TEXAS HOME

The state of Texas has the third-largest Asian American population in the United States, according to the U.S. census, and Chinese people, some whose families arrived more than 150 years ago, make up the largest group.

Chinese Americans trace back for generations in the Lone Star State. Their story may not be as well known as that of their counterparts in California or New York City, but it is just as intertwined with America's history.

Keeping the stories of Chinese American Texans alive

At Rice University, the Houston Asian American Archive, or HAAA, is keeping their stories alive and sharing them with new generations. Launched in 2009, the archive now contains the oral histories of some 500 people in its database, providing a crucial window to the past.

"Oral history gives you a sense of immediacy and maybe more informality. And it's also unfiltered," said Anne Chao, HAAA co-founder and program manager.

The archive also preserves memorabilia and artifacts from Asian Americans in Houston — a city known for its oil and gas industry. It is also known for space exploration and is home to NASA's Johnson Space Center.

Albert Gee



One Chinese American who found success in 1960s and '70s Houston was Albert Gee, who at the time was considered the unofficial mayor of the Chinese community. Gee appeared with Hollywood celebrities in the society pages of local newspapers and was once invited to the White House of President Richard Nixon.



Born in the U.S. in 1920, Albert Gee went to China with his mother and brothers after his father died in 1927. He returned to the U.S. a few years later and eventually found success as a restaurateur in Houston, Texas.

Born in Detroit, Michigan, in 1920, Gee and his family moved to New Orleans, where they operated a laundry business. When his father died in 1927, Gee's mother, who did not speak English, decided to take her children back to their home in China, hoping that her three sons would return one by one to the U.S., which they did.

"Albert found himself only around 11 years old, coming back to the United States," said his daughter Linda Wu. "He was just working — working and trying to send money back to his mother."

Gee returned to the U.S. with his godfather, whom he lived with for a few years in San Francisco, California. Eventually, with the help of friends and relatives, Gee ended up in Houston.

He eventually opened grocery stores and restaurants, which became a draw for Hollywood celebrities, who would stay at a nearby hotel when in town. Wu has photos of celebrities such as singer Elvis Presley and comedian Bob Hope posing at the restaurants, some next to her father.

Helping newcomers

Wu said her parents saw themselves as Americans but never forget their roots. Her mother, Jane Eng, the child of Chinese immigrants, was born and raised in Texas.

"I always remember different people coming to live with us at the grocery store, family members who would start their roots here," she said.

By assisting newcomers, the established Chinese Americans helped fuel the growth of the Gee family surname in Houston. Not all the Gees in Houston were related, however.

Stories about some of the city's Gees can be found in the HAAA database and in the 1998 anthology "The Gees in Houston, Texas."

"For the Gee family, it's been discerned that we've come from about three to four villages in China," said Rogene Gee Calvert, who contributed stories about her father, David Gee — no relation to Albert Gee — to the anthology.

David Gee

David and Theresa Gee on their wedding day. David migrated from China to the U.S. in 1929 with false papers. He was detained on Angel Island and eventually allowed to stay in the U.S. The couple settled in Houston after their honeymoon where



ANGEL ISLAND

VOA

David worked in the grocery business.

David Gee migrated from China to the U.S. in the late 1920s, during the Chinese Exclusion Act, which allowed Chinese merchants, diplomats and students into the country but banned laborers. Gee was 17 when he arrived, but his passport indicated he was four years younger. He was a so-called paper son.



“Paper sons’ and ‘paper daughters’ are the names given to people who buy false papers,” said Casey Dexter-Lee, an educator at Angel Island State Park in San Francisco Bay. Part of the island served as a major immigration station from 1910 to 1940.

“It’s about \$100 for each year of life that the person claims,” she said. “So a 10-year-old would cost about \$1,000 to buy false papers.”

After arriving in the U.S., David Gee was detained at the Angel Island Immigration Station for almost a year.

Eventually, he received permission to stay.

Angel Island

David Gee worked in San Francisco with a relative. In 1938, he moved to Houston to join a family friend. He returned to San Francisco to get married, then brought his wife to Houston, where he worked in the grocery business.

“There was discrimination and, of course, there were natural barriers of language and just knowing how to navigate ... how to get around and what to do,” Calvert said. “So, there were some elders who were well-spoken that were respected in the mainstream community that really helped our family.”

Houston and Jim Crow

Chao said the first large group of Chinese immigrants arrived in Houston in the 1940s and ‘50s. At that time, racial segregation was legal in Texas and Southern states through a series of codes known as Jim Crow laws.

“Even though Houston also was subject to Jim Crow law, the law wasn’t applied the same way as [in] the other Southern states. And so, there’s a sense of more equitable equity in Houston.” Chao said, adding that people, including Chinese Americans, settled in Houston because there was a “sense of business opportunity.”

Being neither Black nor white, the Chinese Texans occupied a gray area under Jim Crow law.

“They were just in between and just dependent upon how well the neighborhood or people accepted them,” said Ted Gong, senior adviser

to the Chinese American Museum in Washington.

Albert Gee, as president of the Houston Restaurant Association, took part in the desegregation of the city’s restaurants in the early 1960s.

Decades later, his work in the community was immortalized in a web comic for Texas students in 2023.

The comic is part of a free website called Adventures of Asia, developed by Asia Society Texas, which also collaborated with HAAA to create lesson guides for teachers called Asia in the Classroom.

“Our Asian American students in particular said they want to see themselves represented in the curriculum,” said Jennifer Kapral, director of education and outreach at Asia Society Texas Center.

The Asian population in the U.S. nearly doubled from 2000 to 2019 and is expected to continue to grow, according to the Pew Research Center. But the history of the Asians who settled in the U.S. is missing from many textbooks, Kapral said.

“There was a study that looked at 30 U.S. history textbooks from across the U.S., and they found that Asian American history was only mentioned in half of them. And of that half, it was an average of about one to two pages in the entire textbook. So, it’s been a big gap.”

Asian American Houstonians are filling this void by sharing their stories, preserving artifacts from their past, and educating the next generation about how their forebears carved a place for themselves in Texas’ largest city.

Courtesy: VOA News

Reforming Sri Lanka's FISCAL POLICY

An economy is primarily guided by two key policy instruments: monetary policy and fiscal policy. Monetary policy regulates the money supply, interest rates, and inflation, while fiscal policy focuses on government revenue, public expenditure, and overall budgetary management.

Economic Stabilization Post-Crisis

Sri Lanka's economy began to stabilize in mid-2023 following its most severe post-independence economic crisis. The collapse was driven by years of macroeconomic mismanagement, structural weaknesses, and external shocks—culminating in a sovereign default and near depletion of foreign reserves in 2022.

Between 2021 and 2022, poverty surged by 10 percentage points due to plunging real incomes, job losses, and high inflation. However, economic reforms under the IMF Extended Fund Facility (EFF) helped mitigate further deterioration, limiting the cumulative GDP contraction to 9.5% between 2021 and 2023.

Key macroeconomic improvements followed

- Headline inflation fell dramatically from 69.8% (Sep 2022) to 4.0% (Dec 2023).
- Usable reserves rose from 0.3 months to 2.1 months of imports by end-2023.
- Public and publicly guaranteed (PPG) debt dropped from 119.2% to 111.7% of GDP over the same period.

By May 2025, disinflation was still easing. Headline deflation slowed to 0.7% (Y-o-Y), while food inflation surged to 5.2%, offsetting continued non-food deflation at 3.3%. The CCPI rose 0.82% month-on-month, driven mostly by food prices. Core inflation rose from 0.8% in April to 1.2% in May, signaling early signs of underlying price pressures. Inflation is expected to turn positive by early Q3 2025, converging toward the Central Bank's 5% target.

Revenue and Expenditure Trends: Persistent Fiscal Imbalances

Revenue and Grants (% of GDP) fell from over 17% (2000–2007) to around 12% (2010–2018), plunging to 8.0–8.8% during 2020–2022. A rebound was observed in 2023 (11.2%) and 2024 (13.5%), thanks to improved tax efforts and donor support.

Recurrent Expenditure remained structurally high—17–21% of GDP in the early 2000s, reduced to 12–14% by 2018, but surged again to 16–18% in 2023–2024 due to rising public sector wages,

subsidies, and interest payments.

- Capital Investment witnessed a steep decline, dropping from 6–7% of GDP in the early 2000s to just 2.7% by 2024, signaling a worrisome cutback

- Rationalize public wages and subsidies
- Lower debt service via liability management
- Revive Capital Investment



in infrastructure and development spending.

Despite some revenue recovery, the dominance of recurrent expenses and declining capital budgets illustrate a structurally weak fiscal composition, hampering long-term economic resilience.

Budget Deficit and Debt

- The budget deficit narrowed steadily from 10.4% of GDP in 2001 to 5% by 2018. It then surged to 11.7% in 2021, easing to 6.8% in 2024, reflecting ongoing fiscal stress.
- Government debt declined from 105.6% of GDP in 2002 to around 67–70% in 2010–2014, but rose again to 96.6% (2020), 100% (2021), and peaked at 114.2% (2022). A decline to 96.1% in 2024 followed debt restructuring efforts. Post-April 2022 debt figures exclude unpaid obligations due to the default, likely underestimating the actual debt burden.

Fiscal Policy Challenges

1. Structural Imbalance: Revenue recovery lags behind the rise in recurrent expenditure, while capital spending has been disproportionately cut—limiting growth potential.

2. Crisis-Driven Deficits: Though higher deficits were necessary for crisis response, they remain elevated post-crisis, indicating weak fiscal consolidation.

3. Debt Vulnerability: Rapid debt accumulation and default have constrained fiscal flexibility, with off-balance-sheet obligations still looming large.

Policy Recommendations

- Enhance Revenue Mobilization
- Broaden the tax base
- Improve compliance mechanisms
- Reintroduce state-owned enterprise (SOE)
- Control Recurrent Spending

- Restore public investment to at least 4–5% of GDP to support growth and infrastructure

Gradual Deficit Reduction

- Target a fiscal deficit below 4% of GDP through a phased approach
- Ensure Debt Sustainability
- Aim to reduce debt to below 80% of GDP in the medium term, supported by growth and fiscal discipline

Conclusion

Sri Lanka's fiscal policy in 2025 reflects a country striving to rebuild after crisis. The government has made progress in revenue collection and macroeconomic stabilization, but challenges remain in managing rising recurrent costs and reviving investment. Sustainable recovery will require difficult but necessary reforms—including enhancing revenue, improving fiscal discipline, and ensuring debt sustainability—while supporting the fragile economic rebound.

Writer

Visvalingam Muralithas is a researcher in the legislative sector, specializing in policy analysis and economic research. He is currently pursuing a PhD in Economics at the University of Colombo,



with a research focus on governance, development, and sustainable growth. He holds a Bachelor of Arts in Economics (Honours) from the University of Jaffna and a Master's degree in Economics from the University of Colombo. His academic background is further strengthened by postgraduate diplomas in Education from the Open University of Sri Lanka and in Monitoring and Evaluation from the University of Sri Jayewardenepura. In addition to his research work, Muralithas has contributed to academia by teaching economics at the University of Colombo and the Institute of Bankers of Sri Lanka (IBSL), and has also gained industry experience as an investment advisor at a stock brokerage firm affiliated with the Colombo Stock Exchange. He can be reached at muralithas.v@gmail.com

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Scarborough's winning paediatric surgical care gets young hockey players back in the game

BY: MELODY KESHISHIAN

Scarborough Health Network's (SHN) Kids Care and Surgery programs are always ready to make the game-winning play for young patients, with a team of paediatric surgical stars who consistently deliver the best outcomes for kids. For two young hockey players, getting referred to SHN was a real game-changer—the Network's paediatric and orthopaedic centres of excellence bring together the top doctors, teams, programs, and clinics to provide the best possible care.

Anna Mulhall, a 10-year-old from Stayner, Ontario, was born with a rare birth defect called congenital femoral deficiency. Her left femur (thigh bone) grew slower than her right.

Without surgery, she was at risk of future mobility issues including an impaired gait, hip and knee problems, and scoliosis (a sideways curvature of the spine).



Anna Mulhall in her team uniform

Despite this, Anna began playing hockey at seven years old. As the years passed, she faced challenges with balance, walking, and skating, and her chances of future



Nolan Scheirich, SHN paediatric orthopaedic patient, back on the ice

complications, such as arthritis and chronic pain, increased the longer she went without surgery.

Anna's parents got her on the surgical waitlist at The Hospital for Sick Children (SickKids), where she had been a lifelong patient. But when it was finally time for her corrective procedure last summer, their surgeon was no longer available.

Better access and outcomes resulting from hospital teamwork

To help alleviate its surgical waitlist, SickKids partnered with five community hospitals in April 2023 to transfer surgical patients who were able to receive care at a community hospital, including SHN, their largest partner within the

Surgical and Endoscopy Community Partnerships Program.

SHN has since completed over 300 surgical cases from SickKids, including Anna's. This collaboration also allows SickKids surgeons to operate at SHN when their own operating rooms are at capacity, while providing SHN staff with valuable training opportunities and supporting smoother patient care transitions and coordination.

"Partners like SHN have been essential to the success of SickKids' Surgical and Endoscopy Community Partnerships Program, helping to ensure that children receive more timely access to surgical care," said Jessica Ivan, who manages the program at SickKids.



“We have received such positive feedback from patient families about their experience being referred to our community hospital partners, and are grateful for the care, compassion, and expertise that SHN has provided through this collaboration.”

With the assist from SickKids and a longstanding reputation for excellence in paediatric care, SHN was ready to make the winning shot with Anna’s procedure. Leading the line was Dr. Ryan Katchky, a paediatric orthopaedic surgeon who was trained at SickKids.



Dr. Ryan Katchky, SHN Paediatric Orthopaedic Surgeon

“We had been with SickKids since Anna was eight months old, and at first it felt daunting to go to a hospital we’d never been with a doctor we didn’t know. But when we met Dr. Katchky, he put our minds at ease immediately,” said Kim, Anna’s mother.

“He won Anna over in five seconds flat. She was so comforted by Dr. Katchky and the kindness of the SHN team,” added Anna’s father, Mat.

Anna had her surgery at Centenary Hospital in July 2024 to positive results, and she was back gliding around the rink by October.

“By helping SickKids to free up resources for more complex cases, we are relieving children and their families of the emotional and physical distress that comes with waiting for a procedure, and helping get kids back to doing what they love faster,” said Lori-Lee James, Director of Surgery at SHN.

“We are providing a wide range of services including orthopaedics, ophthalmology, otolaryngology (ear, nose and throat, or ENT), plastic surgery, urology, and dental surgery to the patients coming to us from SickKids.”

Plus, MyChart Central East Ontario—a free, online portal for personal health information—gives parents the ability to securely view and manage their child’s health records from both SHN and SickKids.

Rare expertise, right here in Scarborough

In another case, 7-year-old Nolan Scheirich from Toronto dislocated his knee while playing with friends on Halloween day 2021. Even though it hurt, he did not tell anyone until he got home, hoping to make it to hockey practice.

“I was expecting it to be bruised, but when I saw the severity of his injury, I went pale as a ghost,” said Scott Sheirich, Nolan’s father.

At SickKids, Nolan was diagnosed with obligatory patellar dislocation, meaning every time he flexed his knee, it would dislocate. The required surgery was delicate and could potentially damage the growth plates in someone so young.

Nolan’s family spent two years searching for a surgeon who was willing to undertake the procedure and were referred to Dr. Katchky. Nolan’s mother knew they had found their clutch surgeon.

“He said he could do it. He said he would do it. And he said he was confident that all would be well,” said Loyal Scheirich, his mother. “He was calm and reassuring and the entire staff at the hospital were there for Nolan and for us. It was such a great experience.”

“Fixing dislocated kneecaps is done very commonly in teenagers and adults. But the pathology, and therefore the surgery, is very different in a child,” Dr. Katchky shared. “Nolan needed a paediatric surgeon with the confidence and experience in this procedure, and I was grateful that my team and I could offer that support.”

The surgery was in April 2024 at General Hospital, and today Nolan is recovered and playing hockey again, stronger than before.



Nolan Scheirich at a recent game

As SHN continues to provide families with the care they need when they need it, the Network’s exceptional quality surgical and paediatric care can be summed up in two words: All Star.

Roy Ratnavel, Political Prisoner and Civil War Survivor, and Sue Nathan Donate \$1 Million to Scarborough Health Network to Support Mental Health

Roy Ratnavel survived a civil war; a political prisoner at age 17 in Sri Lanka. At 18, he moved to Canada, settling in Scarborough. After building a successful career in finance, he later shared his story in the memoir *Prisoner #1056*.



Roy knows firsthand how trauma can affect mental health – and now, he and his wife Sue Nathan are giving back to the Scarborough community. **In May, Scarborough Health Network Foundation (SHN) welcomed a generous \$1 million donation from Roy Ratnavel and Sue Nathan.** Their donation will support inpatient mental health services at Birchmount Hospital.

“We are inspired by Roy’s story and incredible resilience, and grateful to Roy and Sue for their commitment to improving mental health care in Scarborough,” said Alicia Vandermeer, President & CEO of SHN Foundation. “This donation will make a substantial difference in the lives of individuals and families facing mental health challenges.”

The donation will specifically support the expansion of inpatient mental health at Birchmount Hospital, supporting vulnerable individuals with persistent mental health conditions and other complex health needs. As Ontario’s second-largest community-based mental health program, SHN supports over 65,000 outpatients, 7,500 inpatients, and more than 10,000 referrals annually.

These staggering numbers highlight the critical importance of accessible, equitable, and stigma-free mental health care for the diverse Scarborough community.

Roy and Sue have witnessed firsthand the barriers to mental health care that many individuals face, particularly within the Tamil community, where accessing mental health supports can be difficult to discuss.

“It’s crucial that we address the mental health needs of our community with compassion and understanding,” said Ratnavel. “Sue and I are proud to support Scarborough Health Network in their vital work. My own experiences have shown me the importance of accessible and culturally sensitive mental health support, and we hope this gift will help to break down barriers and reduce stigma.”

SHN is profoundly grateful to Roy Ratnavel and Sue Nathan whose gift supports the historic *Love, Scarborough* campaign.



Pictured above: Sue Nathan and Roy Ratnavel



SHNFoundation.ca



Dear Sue Nathan and Roy Ratnavel,

Thank you for giving back to Scarborough.

We are profoundly grateful for your incredible \$1 million donation to support mental health care at Scarborough Health Network.

Roy, your powerful journey from Tamil teen political prisoner in Sri Lanka to successful Canadian business executive and bestselling author is inspiring; and Sue, your commitment and dedication to supporting the neurodiverse community here in Scarborough deeply resonates with us. We are touched that your family's health experiences sparked this extraordinary act of generosity.

The **Nathan | Ratnavel Unit** will be a vital space within a new inpatient mental health centre at Birchmount Hospital. This unit will support vulnerable patients with persistent mental health conditions and other complex health needs, offering compassionate and culturally sensitive care.

Your gift directly addresses the barriers your own family has overcome, creating a legacy of hope right here in Scarborough.

Thank you for your visionary support and making a tangible difference in the lives of so many in Scarborough and beyond.

Love,
Scarborough

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SPECIAL FEATURE



Aviation & Airlines

Oh Canada! As You Celebrate 158 Years, As A Nation On 1st of July, Please Build Up Yourselves, Canada.



By: Kane Siva

Oh Canada! The True North, The Great Land across the Atlantic, as you Celebrate 158 years of your birth, as a Great Shining Beacon in Mount Logan in Yukon, in North America, We offer our Prayers, Heartiest Congratulations and Best Wishes On Your Great Birthday, and for the Celebrations that will unfold. Having said all this, I want to give my sincere take on You.

You are no longer a young kid to be pushed around because someone feels that they own everything in this world and because someone said so, but no more, nothing is granted for anyone so as to deprive others, since God believes in equality and equity. Mother Canada, You are a blessed country, people from more than 160 countries call you their beloved Home. You are "Second To None" and the second largest Country in the world, the envy, and the cynosure of the nations around the world. So, Canada please wake up for God sake and don't allow yourself to be pushed around. Bullies do things because they feel vulnerable and mentally insecure. An old adage "Empty Vessels Make Too Much Noise".

This is the time to reflect back on your long journey from the medieval times and establish yourself as a Sovereign Independent Nation, which was overshadowed by a big brother, that created an interdependency. I think the time has come to break away from the pseudo- bondage, interdependency, and to unshackle your false sense of brotherhood. You have to stand firmly on solid ground as a proud, independent, decent, and a compassionate country than being a victimised partner.

Canada, you have all the resources and must start building a strong infrastructure so as to increase your GDP and Develop A Free Trade Economic Policy with as many nations as possible including China. Also we must develop strong and viable projects across all the provinces, including more trade with the First Nation

People. To develop good inter-trade and international trade we must invest more in Aviation Industry, Airports, Airlines and all the other facilities to enhance this goal which should be our top priority and must go at it in full swing to prove it that you can do it much better than others.

I am going to concentrate on this splendid day, as how to revamp our present Aviation industry. Aviation industry, Airlines and Airports are a great catalyst and a money spinner to our economy, and for that matter to any country if it is managed properly.

As I have mentioned a year back on a Canada Day article, if a tiny island nation, Singapore, of 719 Sq Kms, can have a state of the art modern Airport, in South East Asia, why the second largest country in the world, 9,984,670 square kilometers, cannot have an airport that should be the luminary and envy of the world and a bee-hive to the airlines? Come on Mother Canada!, you deserve much better than this from your sons and daughters instead of squabbling and squandering the resources and the revenue you provide & make for them.

One of the Live Wire facilities provided to the airlines is by Air Traffic Control Services. In Canada ATC services are provided by an Entity Called "NAV Canada" which is said to be managed by a Non-Profit organisation and employs around 4500 staff all across Canada. This entity is a private, Not For Profit Company (As its website says) established in 1996, providing Air traffic control services, Weather briefings, Air advisory services, like NOTAMS, and Aeronautical information services. It controls almost 18 million square kilometers of Canadian Airspace, North Atlantic Oceanic Airspace, and provides navigational services to airlines. Nav Canada is well recognized for its safety record world wide. There are 23 airports across Canada managed by the Department of Transport. I am wondering why the government is not managing the ATC and other related facilities rather than being served by a

private entity? and I have no answer, but it bothers me. I strongly believe it should be an arm of the DOT, Canada. Nav Canada's safety record came under strong criticism from one of its own. An Air Canada pilot on a Vancouver-Montreal flight recently got really frustrated by the shortages of ATC staff at Vancouver as their flight was delayed more than 50 minutes. Finally when it was airborne, the frustrated pilot due to this unwanted delay used his intercom and uttered these words to the passengers, "please send a message or call your MPs" and tell them, that the flights are getting delayed because of shortage of ATC staff. This is not good for the travellers who want to travel and attend their matters in time, further he said "This is not good for Business". It is really a shame that we don't have enough ATC staff to provide services. The pilot accused NAV Canada, saying that "they don't want to train and hire more staff, so as to keep the overtime of the present staff at high", which NAV Canada denies. This is a serious allegation and should be investigated by the Government and the minister in charge. They should ascertain that enough staff are trained and readily available to provide services. Also NAV Canada should think of the safety of the passengers and the machines they fly. Staff working well beyond the allotted hours are stressed out and might make errors in judgement, and this will be a recipe for a great disaster to play out. Later Air Canada issued a statement "Quote" the constraints created by the ATC shortages at Vancouver, creates delays and scheduling, and all interconnected issues with the performance of the airport resources. This issue was further highlighted by ALPA president, Tim Perry, who confirmed that this shortage issue is becoming cancerous and an ongoing problem, and that has to be fixed sooner. The Federal Government must step in and sort this mess out by providing more funds and resources.

The CEO of another small carrier, Iskew Air, an Indigenous-owned



airline, Teara Fraser aired her frustrations too, “their flights from Vancouver, even though it is a 30 minute flight”, everyday the flights are delayed by more than 30 minutes. This is nonsense in my vocabulary. NAV Canada please don't kill our airlines and aviation industry. Please navigate out of the mess you have created for yourself, if it is so.

I urge the government of Canada to fund and have a college solely dedicated to educate and train Pilots, ATC staff, Mechanics, Engineers, Aviation Management and other related professionals pertaining to the aviation industry, and also invite students from abroad to train and obtain a degree at this facility. This will be able to eliminate Pilot shortages, and aviation professionals. The students in high schools should be encouraged to take up aviation as a career. We should have many training facilities focussed mainly for aviation. Canada is the second largest country with 15 million square kilometers and should have many aviation colleges, as air transport is the fastest mode of transport for inter-provincial and interconnectivity of people and trade. Also we must encourage more entrepreneurs to open up their wallets and invest in airline industry and also the Federal Government must relax its laws to encourage this kind of infrastructure to prosper and progress. I want Mark Carney, the new prime minister, delve in to this and uplift this industry.

When Perimeter Aviation recently opened its expanded Winnipeg Airport Terminal, the communique published this: Quote, 21,743 square-foot airport terminal has expanded its facilities to boost and host multiple flights departing at the same time. Wow! What a way forward to boost our aviation. Well done Perimeter Aviation and Cheers! This expansion has been praised by First Nations communities in Northern Manitoba. Grand Chief Kyra Wilson of the Assembly of Manitoba greatly welcomed this progress and echoed “this is essential for health care, food and economic security, and these opportunities will benefit the First Nation People”. This is how we can build a Stronger and One Canada, to stand against any external aggression of any form, whether it is Tariffs, Sheriffs, Bluffs, Barriers and Blockades.

I would love to mention what the CEO of Canadian Based, WestJet Group said recently (24th of May) in Calgary, when he addressed a group of business audience, “The Federal government should not treat air travel as a luxury in a country as vast as Canada. You must reduce the cost of air travel, so as to be used as a vehicle to promote, foster national harmony and unity. I would emphasize that it to be used as a great engine, to build our inter-provincial trading so as to promote a great economy to our country during this Trumpism moment. Alexis Von Hoensbroech, CEO, said that the Federal Government places heavy

burden on airline industry, by way of taxes that are passed along to the consumers, which restrict people to the fastest mode of transport of people and goods. This should not be, if we aim and



promote to build Canada as an economic powerhouse of the world. He urged the government to consider aviation as another great tool to build a viable and strong economy since aviation is a vital player. I urge the government to assist in fostering more Airlines to start operations and thrive in this country so as to enhance air travel. I understand the airline deregulation prevails Canada, but still want government participation to promote the airline industry and this will be a plus, plus.

We in Canada are aware of our Bombardier aircraft company that is based in Montreal, started by Joseph-Armand Bombardier who built the first Snowmobile.

Later, the company graduated to build Private Jet for Business travel. Celebrating more than 80 years in innovative industry, Bombardier has outgrown from family business to build the world's finest Business Jets. Bombardier took to the skies in 1986 and in 1992 launched the Canadian Regional Jet, CRJ, 50 seater aircraft. This small jet, CRJ, revolutionized travel in Canada by connecting smaller cities, and this encouraged Bombardier to dream big. Bombardier has been making great strides and proved it with their recent Bombardier Global 8000, a fastest business jet than the previous one with almost Supersonic speed, 0.94 Mach., with a range of 8000 nautical miles. I want Bombardier to invest in building long or medium haul commercial aircraft in par with Airbus or Boeing or better than, to break the monopoly or dominance in the aviation industry. I am sure that we can achieve this by all means not tomorrow but sooner. It should be only Canadian production with the RollsRoyce engines. The Canadians are really smart, resilient and second to none, and I want them to be a leader in world class aviation. I want the young entrepreneurs to invest in aviation.

A Canadian technology company that specializes in flight simulators and pilot training services recently said, Quote, By the year 2034 the world would need 1,465,000 aviation personnel:

pilots, technicians, air crew, air traffic controllers and others will be needed for the aviation industry”. We Canadians Must Rise To The Occasion.

During the US Civil War when the chips were down for the Union army, Old Abey rallied the troops and the people with these finest words, and I want to echo the same when we are threatened by a Bully. I am sharing what Lincoln said in January 1863, which I feel the most appropriate in our testing time Quote,

“The Dogmas of the quiet past,” he said, “are inadequate to the stormy present”. The occasion is piled with high difficulty, and we must rise with – the occasion. As our case is new, we must think anew, and act anew. We must disenthrall ourselves, and then we shall save our country.

“Fellow Citizens,” he continued, “we cannot escape history”.

We say, we are for the Union. The world will not forget that we say this.

We Canadians must Say:

*Our Canada Will Be First Always
And Never The 51st.*

We Are For One Canada,

We Are Here To Build Canada ,

*We Are Here To Make A Strong
Canada,*

*A True North And A North Star,
And We Will, By The Grace Of God,*

¡Vive la Cañada, Vive la

Canadienne”!

¡Feliz Cumpleaños!



K.N. Sivagnanasunderam (Blue)

Former Flight Operations
Officer, Air Ceylon Ltd.

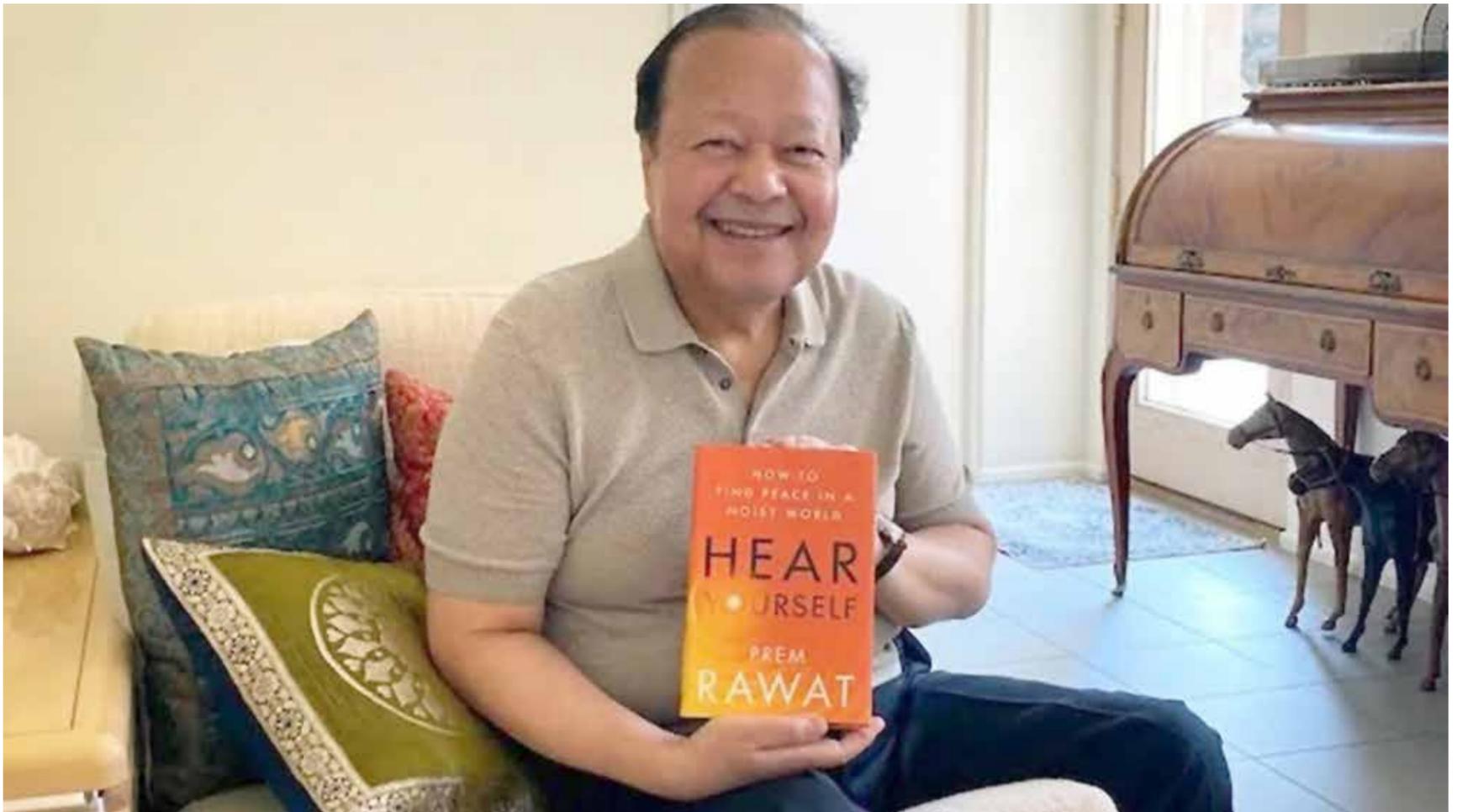
Kanesiva6@gmail.com



SPECIAL FEATURE

Words of Peace

PREM RAWAT, FROM HEAR YOURSELF



- TimelessToday

Finding the antidote to Fear, Anger,
and Worry.

“Imagine if everyone around you could gain this deep connection with who they are, imagine if everyone could hear and play the music of self-knowledge. Think of the impact on individuals, on families, on communities, on politics, on war on our world. Well, it starts with one person at a time—in this case, you. Let’s begin”

About the author, Prem Rawat

The founder of the Prem Rawat Foundation, where he works with people from all walks of life, showing them how to experience the source of peace within themselves. His work spans six decades of international effort to bring a practical message of hope, happiness, and peace to all, one person at a time. He is the internationally bestselling author, and is also a pilot, photographer, classic car restorer, and father of four children, and grandfather of four.

Key Aspects of Prem Rawat’s Work:

Inner Peace:

Rawat’s core message revolves around the idea that peace is attainable by finding it within oneself.

“Hear Yourself”:

This book guides readers on a journey to listen to their inner selves and reconnect with their core being.

“Peace Is Possible”:

This book offers insights into happiness, success, and relationships, emphasizing the interconnectedness of inner and outer peace.

Breath as a Tool:

Rawat’s recent book, “Breath: Wake Up to Life,” highlights the significance of breath as a means to connect with the present moment and find inner peace.

Accessible Wisdom:

Rawat’s teachings are presented in a simple and accessible manner, making them relatable to diverse audiences.



Bhagavad Gita

for practical life



By: J A Rajah

1. Everything happens for a reason.
2. Change is the law of nature.
3. Soul is immortal: it is neither born nor does it die.
4. The three gates of hell are: lust, anger, greed.
5. Truth can never be destroyed. One should never be afraid of doing good.
6. Don't lose your health because of temporary problems.
7. Give priority to your Dharma.

Bhagavad-Gita is a Hindu scripture dated to the second or first century B.C., which forms part of the Mahabharatha. The Gita is a substance of various strains of Indian religious thought including the concept of Dharma, Sanhya-based Yoga and Jnana and Bhakti.



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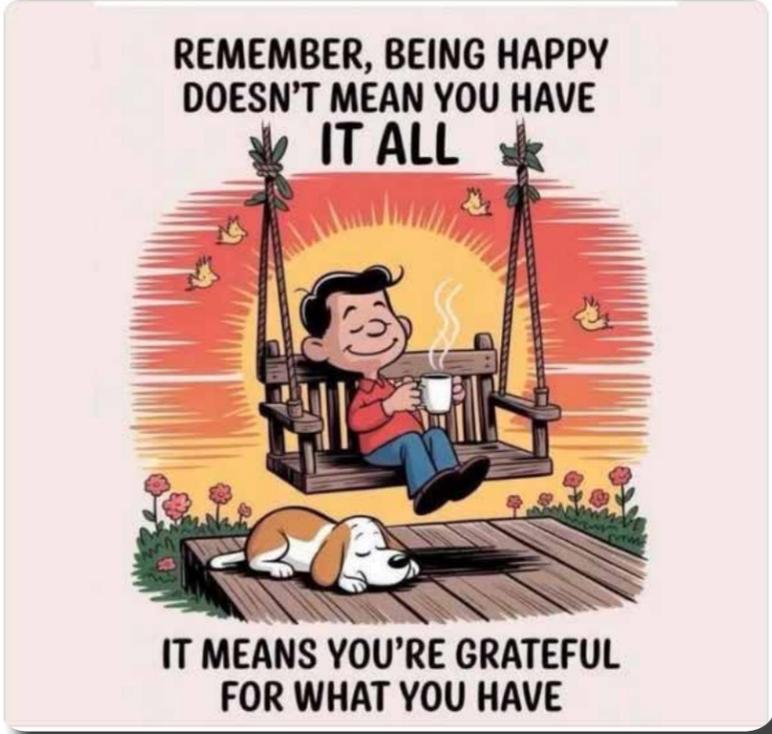
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Thulasi Muttulingam 8h



Thulasi Muttulingam 7h

Sall Grover @salltweets · 8h
 Re: Equality Australia intervening in Giggle v Tickle against @ActiveLesbians

"Equality Australia was an organization that fought for same sex marriage. So they knew what biological sex was then."

SHARRI SALL GROVER | GIGGLE CEO
COMMON SENSE NEEDED ON GENDER

Biological Reality Australia - Public Page
 9h

The Lesbian Action Group has intervened in the Giggle Vs Tickle appeal which will be heard from the 4th to 7th August and will be live streamed. Because LAG has...

Thulasi Muttulingam 19h

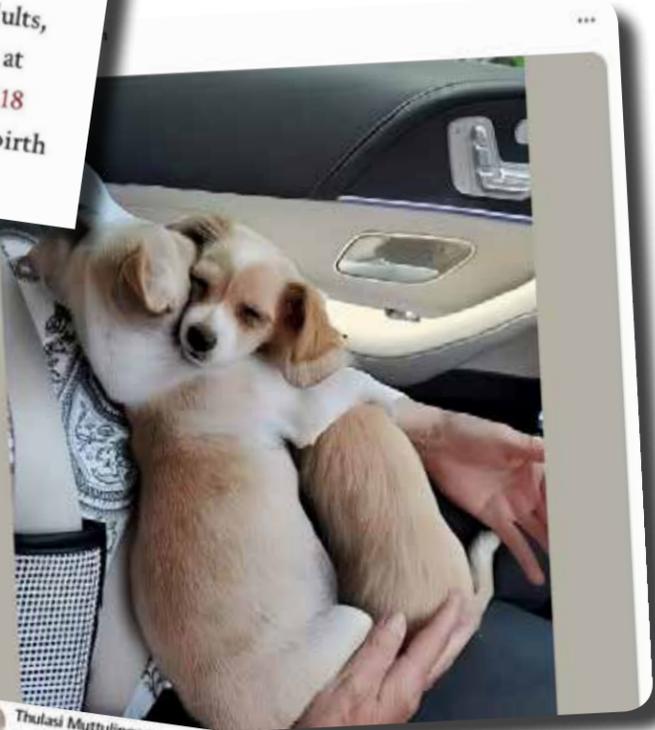
James A. Furey @James... · 12/10/24
 Look, I taught my son to read over the summer, and I absolutely believe in the importance of reading to your kids.

BUT I'm getting pretty tired of every time I mention that our schools are failing to teach kids to read, people respond that it's because teaching reading is "not the job of the school" and it has to "start in the home."

Sorry, but that doesn't cut it. Not only are schools capable of teaching kids to read, but many of them have put curricula in place that are turning this trend around while you throw your hands up and blame parents.

Iowa

Iowa has passed **three anti-trans** laws this year. **H.F. 1049** bans Medicaid from covering gender-affirming care for adults, **H.F. 856** bans DEI programs at public institutions, and **S.F. 418** prohibits gender changes on birth certificates.



Thulasi Muttulingam 19h

50 HOSTAGES. DON'T FORGET THEM.

Thulasi Muttulingam 19h

From Waste to Wow: Sri Lanka Turns Coconut Husks into Furniture!

This upcycling reduces wood harvesting, cuts deforestation, and breathes new life into waste. Sustainable, stylish and kind to forests.



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SPECIAL FEATURE

Press Release

NCL NORWEGIAN
CRUISE LINE®

NORWEGIAN CRUISE LINE UNVEILS NEARLY 500 VOYAGES WORLDWIDE DURING PEAK 2027 TRAVEL SEASON

Norwegian Cruise Line (NCL), the innovator in global cruise travel with a 58-year history of breaking boundaries, has revealed its Northern Hemisphere spring/summer 2027 deployment – allowing travellers to get ahead on planning their ideal holiday. The season features nearly 500 individual voyages across 20 ships, departing from nearly 30 of the world's top homeports, including Rome (Civitavecchia), Italy; Southampton, England; Helsinki, Finland; Istanbul, Turkey; Copenhagen, Denmark and Reykjavik, Iceland.

From April through October 2027, NCL's spectacular fleet of ships will call to over 150 unique ports across 59 countries delivering immersive itineraries with MORE time in port, including over 170 overnight stays in the most sought-after destinations such as Istanbul, Turkey; Reykjavik, Iceland; and Copenhagen, Denmark. Whether planning a quick escape or longer adventure, the newly opened deployment delivers MORE opportunities for guests to make the most out of the prime travel season.

“With our most expansive deployment yet, we're giving Indian guests even more ways to explore the world— with itineraries now open from 2025 through 2027,” said Ben Angell, Vice President and Managing Director of NCL APAC. “From more ways to enjoy an exhilarating Alaska holiday to more seven-day Mediterranean and Northern Europe sailings we're delivering more of what matters to our guests: longer port stays, more overnight calls, more value and greater flexibility to create the perfect cruise holiday.”

“We're proud to be the cruise line of choice for travelers who want MORE out of their vacation – MORE freedom, MORE destinations and MORE

unforgettable experiences,” said David J. Herrera, president of Norwegian Cruise Line. “Our spring and summer 2027 deployment clearly brings our promise to life, offering something for everyone. Whether guests are hopping between European cities nearly every day, taking in Alaska's natural beauty from ships custom-built to bring the outdoors in, or kicking back on the beach with family and friends at one of our two resort-style destinations, there's no shortage of ways to relax, explore, and create unforgettable memories.”

Itinerary highlights from NCL's Northern Hemisphere spring/summer 2027 deployment include:

EXPLORE EUROPE WITH MORE SEVEN-DAY VOYAGES, OVERNIGHTS & LATE DEPARTURES

NCL will deploy eight ships, including some of the brand's newest and recently renovated vessels, across Europe. Offering mostly seven-day itineraries that begin and end on weekends, guests have the option to sail from 10 popular embarkation ports, including Barcelona, Spain; Rome (Civitavecchia), Italy; Athens (Piraeus), Greece; and Reykjavik, Iceland. These port-intensive voyages spend over 90% of their time in port with an average stay of nearly 11 hours and feature multiple overnight stays in cities like Istanbul, Turkey; Copenhagen, Denmark; and Hamburg, Germany, as well as late-night departures from favourites like Santorini, Greece; Dubrovnik, Croatia; and Ibiza, Spain, giving guests MORE time to explore Europe's most captivating destinations.

In spring/summer 2027, Norwegian Prima® and Norwegian Viva® will

return to European waters offering a variety of nine-to-11-day voyages across the continent. Norwegian Viva will sail the Western Mediterranean and Greek Isles itineraries from June through October from four different homeports: Istanbul, Turkey; Barcelona, Spain; Rome (Civitavecchia) and Ravenna (Venice), Italy. Meanwhile, Norwegian Prima will offer Mediterranean voyages, featuring maiden calls to Dubrovnik and Split, Croatia and Kotor, Montenegro. For the majority of the summer, she will make her return to Northern Europe to operate guest-favorite open-jaw voyages to Iceland and Norway, departing from Southampton, England, and Reykjavik, Iceland. In September and October 2027, Norwegian Prima will close out her Europe season with three Baltic open-jaw sailings, which will also mark her inaugural turnaround in Helsinki, Finland and her maiden call in Riga, Latvia.

In addition to its newer and larger ships, NCL strategically deploys its mid-size ships to the region to deliver more intimate, destination-focused voyages allowing guests to explore must-see and lesser-known ports with ease. Aboard Norwegian Sun®, travellers can sail seven-day, port-intensive Mediterranean itineraries with no sea days between May and August 2027 departing for the first time from Rome (Civitavecchia) and Venice (Ravenna), Italy. These open-jaw sailings include maiden calls to historic bucket list ports including Corfu, Greece. Moreover, Norwegian Jewel® will return to Europe for a full season for the first time in over a decade, offering seven- and nine-day Baltic voyages between Copenhagen, Denmark and Helsinki featuring first-time visits to Klaipeda, Lithuania; Riga, Latvia; and Gdynia, Poland - ideal for guests

SPECIAL FEATURE



seeking to dive into cities that boast Medieval architecture and history as well as modern art, design and culture in Northern Europe.

Rounding out the season, Norwegian Epic® will offer NCL's ever-popular seven-day Western Mediterranean voyages from Barcelona, Spain and Rome (Civitavecchia), Italy from May through October 2027, providing travellers the opportunity to explore each destination pre- or post-cruise for an extended vacation. Norwegian Dawn® will also offer scenic open-jaw sailings from May through October 2027 between Barcelona, Spain and Lisbon, Portugal, providing even more ways to experience the best of Southern Europe by sea.

MORE WAYS TO ENJOY ALASKA ABOARD SHIPS CUSTOM-BUILT FOR THE GREAT OUTDOORS

With the global rise of "coolcations," holidays to cooler climates, Alaska is the prime destination to experience an exhilarating holiday. Commencing in late April, NCL's Alaska season sets sail from Seattle; Whittier, Alaska and Vancouver, British Columbia aboard Norwegian Encore®, Norwegian Bliss® and Norwegian Joy®, each of which were custom-built for the destination with expansive outdoor and indoor spaces to marvel at the natural beauty, rugged landscapes, and the area's rich wildlife as well as Norwegian Jade, Norwegian Encore, Norwegian Bliss and Norwegian Joy will sail seven-day voyages departing each Friday, Saturday and Sunday from Seattle's Pier 66. Furthermore, Norwegian Joy will offer longer and more immersive nine- and 10-day voyages from mid-May to mid-June as well as end of August to end of September.

Beginning 10 May 2027 through 20 Sept. 2027, Norwegian Jade® will cruise a series of seven-day open-jaw sailings between Vancouver, British Columbia and Whittier, Alaska and feature iconic scenic cruising along Hubbard Glacier or Glacier Bay on each voyage. Guests aiming to immerse themselves even more in the "Last Frontier" can add an NCL Cruisetour to their reservation and explore the majestic Denali National Park, take a scenic ride on the historic tracks of the Alaska Railroad or fish halibut and salmon in the cold waters of Kachemak Bay.

GUEST FAVOURITE NORWEGIAN SPIRIT TO OFFER EXTENDED SOUTH PACIFIC SEASON

Following her 2026/2027 summer season in Australia and New Zealand, Norwegian Spirit® will remain in the

Pacific through December 2027, offering a diverse range of open-jaw voyages across Australia, New Zealand, South Pacific, Hawaii and Alaska. The ship will homeport in Sydney, Australia; Lautoka, Fiji; Papeete, French Polynesia and Honolulu, and sailing a total of 11 immersive itineraries across the region.

Norwegian Spirit will offer an expansive South Pacific season with a choice of 11- to 13-day voyages, calling to exotic destinations such as New Caledonia, Fiji, the Samoan Islands, French Polynesia, and the Cook Islands.

MORE SHORT ESCAPES AND ISLAND-FILLED ADVENTURES WITH THREE- TO 11-DAY CRUISES TO THE CARIBBEAN, BAHAMAS & BERMUDA

A standout feature of NCL's Caribbean and Bahamas itineraries is a visit to the company's private island destinations Great Stirrup Cay, the cruise line's top-rated port in the Bahamas, and Harvest Caye in Belize. Both islands are featured on nearly every voyage during the spring/summer 2027 season. These destinations deliver a picture-perfect beach experience, complete with

Caribbean and Bahamas deployment for the spring/summer 2027 season. Guests will have eight ships to choose from including some of the Company's newest, Norwegian Aqua™ and Norwegian Viva®, as well as easy access with embarkation ports across Florida.

Another popular island destination best enjoyed during the spring and summer is Bermuda, with voyages departing from Philadelphia, New York City, and Boston. In 2027, three NCL ships will sail to Bermuda as part of the cruise line's seven-month season, including Norwegian Breakaway®, Norwegian Pearl® and to-soon-be the Company's newest ship – Norwegian Luna®. Running from April through October, guests will have MORE opportunities than ever to experience the island's pink sand beaches, historical sites and lush green golf courses through overnights at the Royal Naval Dockyard on each sailing.

Moreover, both Norwegian Breakaway and Norwegian Pearl will sail Canada & New England itineraries from 29 Aug 2027 to 17 Oct. 2027 calling to the most picturesque ports, including Charlottetown, Canada and Quebec City. Onboard these voyages, guests can savor the picturesque scenery of the Northeast tinted with the changing



NCL Prima aerial- [traveltrendstoday.in](https://www.traveltrendstoday.in)

pristine shores and turquoise waters, while offering guests even MORE ways to create lasting memories through unique shore excursions and curated island offerings. Beginning in late 2025, Great Stirrup Cay will debut a series of enhancements designed to elevate the guest experience, including a new multi-ship pier that ensures guaranteed access to the island; a convenient tram service for ease; an oversized heated pool perfect for relaxing under the sun; as well as the extension of popular onboard experiences ashore, such as an adult-only retreat with private cabanas, and Horizon Park, a family-friendly recreation area with lawn games and gathering spaces.

These updates to NCL's private island come as it's expanding its

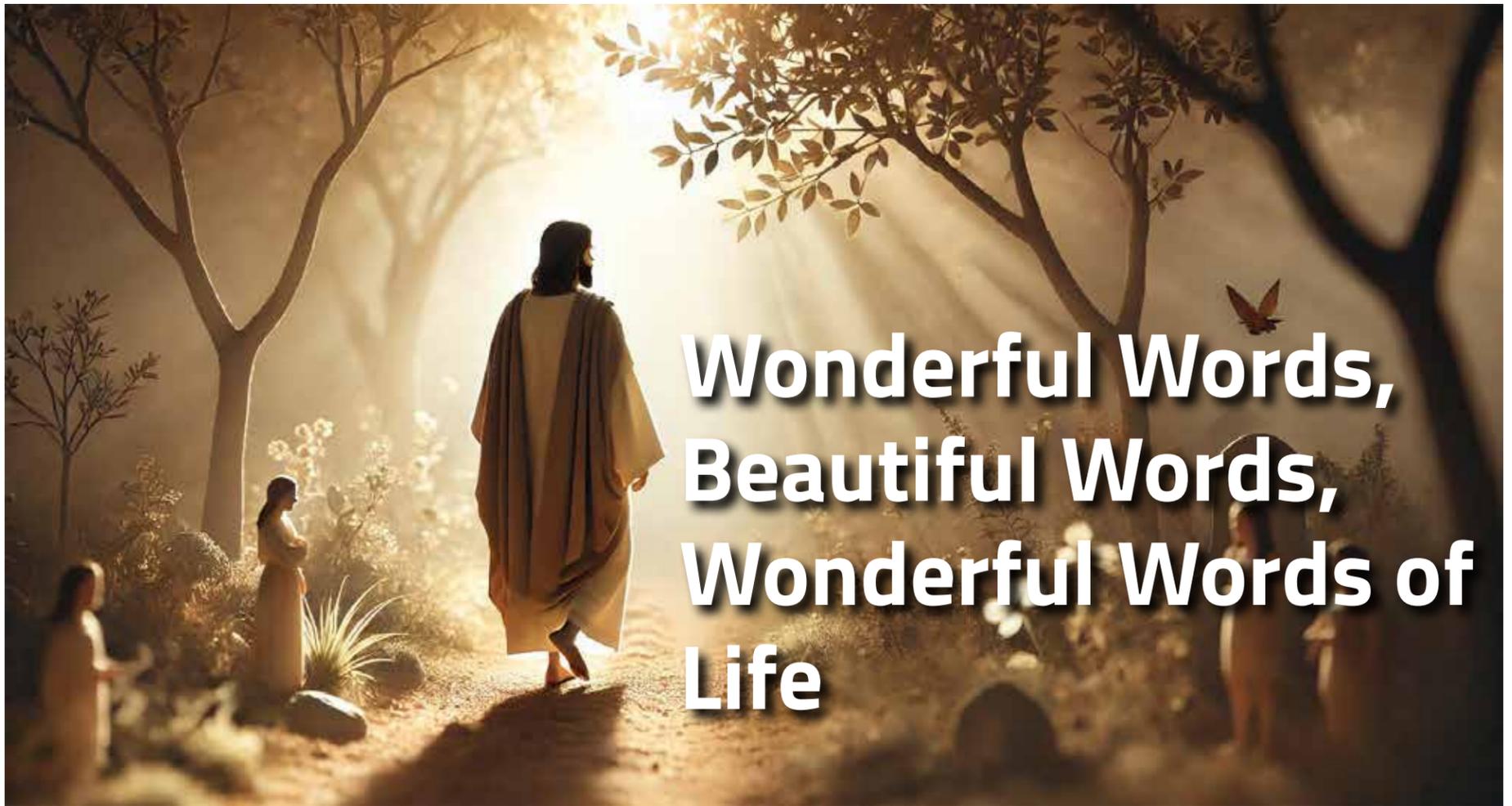
fall foliage, feast on fresh, local seafood delicacies and enjoy wine tastings at regional wineries and estates.

In addition to the newly opened 2027 deployment, NCL cruises to nearly 350 destinations worldwide giving guests the chance to plan and book their upcoming cruise vacation well in advance.

For guests looking to elevate their cruise experience, NCL's More At Sea™ is a must. Available across the whole fleet, this all-in-one offering delivers incredible value and includes unlimited premium beverages with brands such as Casamigos Tequila, Woodford Reserve, and Grey Goose Vodka; specialty dining package; high-speed Wi-Fi minutes; and US\$50 shore excursion credits at every port.



SPECIAL FEATURE



Wonderful Words, Beautiful Words, Wonderful Words of Life

By: J A Rajah

Jesus Christ gave a unique value to the word. He compared the word to God Himself. He declared that He is the way, the truth and the life. He proclaimed that the world will find redemption by just believing the power of His mighty words. P.P. Bliss wrote a wonderful song in 1874 with the words 'Wonderful words, beautiful words, wonderful words, beautiful words of life'. In more than 1,800 statements written in the gospels, Jesus revealed himself to the world.

The wonderful words of Jesus have given new life to the world. It has been the basis of education, schools, religious centers, literature, human rehabilitation, liberation of the down-trodden and the profound basis of all development in the entire world. His words are continuing to enhance the nook and corners of the whole world: 'He has the whole world in His hands through His wonderful words.

Jesus was the single most influential figure ever to walk the earth. His actions, words and miracles changed the course of history. He inspired entire societies to incorporate compassion and mercy into their cultures. He defined the standards of morality. He brought an unexpected measure of purpose, peace and joy into the lives of hundreds of millions of individuals.

Since His death and resurrection, more words have been written about than of any person or event in history.

Jesus spoke with a level of confidence and authority that we can't even imagine He proved his claims to be absolutely true. For example, He could raise people from the dead, but He

revived corpses that had been rotting in the tomb. He made several incredible claims. He said that he was the light of the world and the embodiment of eternal truth. He claimed that he was the only way that men and women could enter into a relationship with God. He claimed that he could grant eternal life to anyone who followed him. The power of his claims has allowed many of the world's most brilliant atheists to become believers in God and followers of Christ.. For example, Dr. Charles Payne, a nuclear physicist with eight doctorates and an atheist turned -Christian gave up his efforts to scientifically disprove Christianity, and instead began proclaiming the scientific evidence of the existence of God and divinity of Christ. Jesus shows his words in parables, metaphors and allegories These words reveal the depth of God's love and forgiveness and a number of eternal mysteries. Many of His words speak with revelation and power to the depths of your soul.

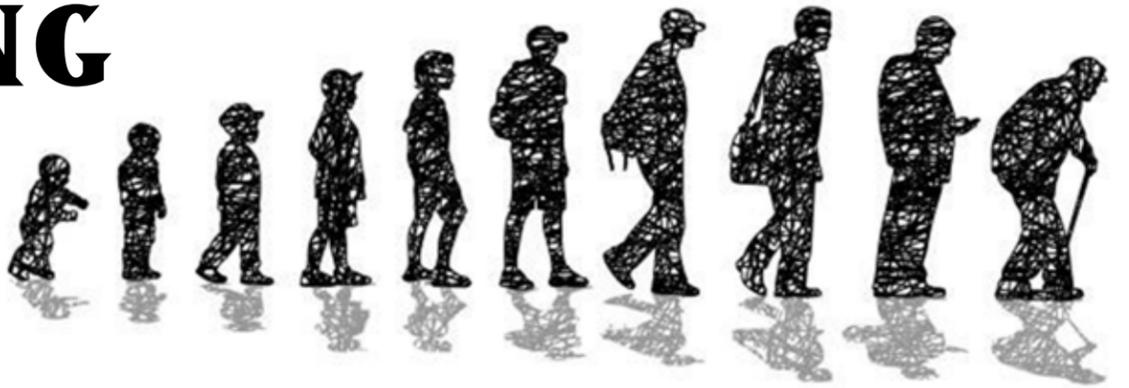
Jesus made 170 claims that no one else in history could have authoritatively made. In some cases, a single claim reveals multiple claims. Everyone of the claims fits comfortably with Jesus. He made his claims using direct statements, implied statements and metaphors. His claims were also made by His acceptance of what others said about him. Who else would claim to be both king and servant, The Son of God and Son of Man., the beginning and the end, the light of the world, the living water who gives eternal life, and the total fulfillment of law and all righteousness?. Who else to provide eternal life and

not be looked upon as a lunatic and an outright fraud?. He has shown ultimate humility and the ultimate in majesty. As you realise his words you will know how a glorious person he is and that he knows you better than anyone else. And in spite of his majesty, He intimately loves you more than you have ever been loved by anyone else. Some of the oft quoted wonderful words of Christ are:- "for God so loved the world that he gave his one and only son that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have everlasting life." (John:3:16);, Jesus said to them, Have you never read in the scriptures: 'the stone the builders rejected has become the corner stone; the Lord has done this , and it is marvelous in your eyes?'. (Matthew: 21:42; "The Son of Man will go just as it is written about him. But woe to that man who betrays him. It would be better if he had not been born". Mark: 14:21: "For now, the Son of Man did not come to destroy men's lives but to save them.". Luke: Luke 9:56;" "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me" John14:1; "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and in all Judea and Samaria, and the ends of the earth" (Acts 1: 8). Yes; Jesus wanted his message to be taken to all the countries of the world. After two thousand years, there are some parts of the world - about a one - third of the countries of the world like - Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, Laos, N. Korea, Russia, Sudan and Vietnam- where Christianity is not allowed to be practised; though every effort is made to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ to all parts of the world.

SPECIAL FEATURE



ENDURING MURALS



Kumar Punithavel

OK friends, I know very well I am an old man. Some may call me kindly as grand Pa, others simply call me an old fellow. However it may be, I have lived in this planet for eight decades, still better I lived in two centuries, and I was also fortunate to live in two millenniums too!

The great fact I realize from all of this is, that the time remaining for me in this world is very short. During the time I lived I had many experiences which have left many murals of memories in my heart. These enduring murals I want to share with you today. In the eight decades I lived in this world I have seen many changes. The great truth I realized was, that there is only one thing that is permanent in this world, which is change.

We were born in 40's, 50's and 60's. We grew up in 50's, 60's and 70's. In the 60's, 70's and 80's we finished our education. In the 70's, 80's and 90's we dated our partners and got married. Following this, we began to our wedded life in the 70's, 80's, and 90's. By 2000, when the new millennium dawned, our understanding of our life started and got completed in 2010. Now in 2025 I wish to share these experiences which are embossed in our hearts as enduring murals for you to know and enjoy and benefit.

When we started studying, we began writing with what is called a slate. It was made of polished sandstone with a wooden frame. To write in it we used either chalk or a slate pencil which is also made of sandstone. To clean what we wrote we used a wet rag, and at times I am aware kids spit on it and wipe it with a rag. The slate was used repeatedly. It tends to break if dropped, and a new slate must be bought.

As we grew older, we started using paper, pencil and of course eraser. As the evolution continued, we started using dip-pen and paper. Dip-pen was a writing tool that consists of a nib, which is a metal point attached to a wooden holder. It required to be dipped into a bottle of ink repeatedly when writing. As the next step in evolution the dawn of the fountain pen which had an internal ink reservoir came to use. These reservoirs were filled with ink with what we call as ink-filler. Man had been always innovative and evolved pens which suck the ink and make it handy and ink-filler redundant. Today we have ballpoint pens as a very common writing tool made use of either steel, brass, or tungsten carbide ball to dispense ink onto paper.

Frequently, I have heard many youngsters wonder aloud how the youngsters spent their spare time. I can assure they had enough and more fun games for their

brain and body, which got carried away disappeared by the flow of time.

For development of their brains, they had many board games using very inexpensive things that lies around like small pebbles, and seeds etc. Their game boards they drew on the cardboards lying around or even on the sand. Names of some of these games are *Adu Pulli Aatam*, *Pallankuli*, *Thayam* and so on. Unfortunately, they have all gone out of vogue.

As for the physical activity we had many indigenous games which need no expensive equipment to play. Names of some of the traditional games are, *Kilithattu*, *Sadugudu*, *Kitti pullu* and *Pillaiar Panthu* to name a few. Of course, we did play soccer and cricket too. Only that, we played soccer with bare legs and cricket we played using bat made from coconut leaf stem. I must add here, we may be the only community in the whole wide world who used the image of a religious deity as a target to throw ball at. We were so close to the God to treat him as a colleague and throw ball at an object representing Lord Ganesha, when playing *Pillaiar panthu*.

With the advancement of science during our youth, radio became a household necessity as well as a media of news provider. The great Tamil bard St. Truvalluvar in his famous book as couplet #422 mentions as follows.

*When 'tis no longer time the listening ear to feed
With trifling dole of food supply the body's need.*

As descendants of the great bard St. Thiruvalluvar, the youth too were glued to the radio listening to the cricket score. Listening the commentary of the match there were fan clubs too.

During those times the youngsters not only played cricket in the sports grounds but also in the classrooms too! Let me describe you how it was played. They used the schoolbooks and writing exercise books as their equipment. The thick books with many pages were selected for the purpose playing cricket in the classroom. The person playing as batsman will open the book, and if he gets pages 2,4 or 6 it will be taken as runs. If it is 8, then it is credited to him an extra run. However, if he gets a 0, he will out. They will take turns and count the runs to decide the winner. This game was called as, 'Book Cricket'. Now that you know about the book-cricket lets go to the next change in the evolution.

Introduction of Television was the next great change and advancement. Initially only very few wealthy persons could afford a television. Those days in the evenings the neighbors would all come to the front

yard of the person who owned the TV and sit in his front yard to watch to watch the TV program in villages. There was no cable TV in those days. There will be an antenna which will be turned this way and that way to get the proper reception. As time passed on the antenna went out of use and cable TV took over. Today TV has become a household necessity.

I will be failing in my duty if I don't expand on how dating and marriages came into being. The ancient Sangam literature which is about 2000 years old had two distinct groups, one being valor and the other being love and relationship. Among the Tamils it was accepted norm that when wedded they live together till the last.

The partners were chosen by the young boy and girl, or if they could not find a suitable mate the parents intervene and found a suitable mate. During the Sangam era we have documents describing how they send pigeon and parrot as messenger. In the modern times it is the cell phones with sending texting and WhatsApp messages it has become possible for the boys and girls to communicate. From the time of Adam, it is the onus of male to express his urge and desire. In our times the youth improvised a method to communicate discreetly with the little wealth and technology they had, which I will elaborate now. You will be surprised to know what came handy for communication was the dried thrown away mango seeds which will be hollow inside. When it dries and rots it is of no use for any one and it would be hollow inside with the hard shell on the surface. Our adventurous young man will pour all his heart on a letter expressing how much he loves her and of course flattering how beautiful she is. He will hide the letter inside the mango seed. As he rides on his bike along the lane when passing his lover's house will throw the message over the fence on the front yard of her house.

She on her part knowing that her lover would have made effort to communicate, and aware of the means of communication will pick up the seed discreetly, and during the study time would read the letter and write her own consent and love. She will hide her letter on the mango nut her lover had used and put it on the lane over the fence. Of course, our hero will come along the lane in his bike and grab the reply. I may also add that at times an empty coconut shell too may be used instead of Mango seed.

As you see life was very challenging and enjoyable in those days too. May be at some other time will share some other enduring murals that are lingering in my heart.



SPECIAL FEATURE

DEMOCRACY - WORLD'S MOST EXALTED FORM OF GOVERNMENT

By: J A Rajah

The year 2024 was hailed as a global election year when 64 countries (plus the European Union) held elections. These countries represented 49% of the world's population. It was also the greatest year of democracy. Foreign policy experts declared that the European parliament elections were vital in pushing back against dismantling and subverting democratic norms in member states

A. Liberal Democracy:

American democracy is at stake after the election campaigns. Francis Fukuyama asserted that man's search for the ultimate form of government is over. Fascism has been discredited. Communism had been a failure. Socialism was clearly inadequate. The winner in the contest of millennia-the pinnacle of human political organization- was liberal democracy, combined with market-based economics. Only liberal democracies had shown themselves worthy of human investment going forward, capable of bringing out the very best in mankind. The world is in desperate need of truly good government.

Throughout history, most human beings have lived under the governance of dictators, generals or monarchs. Democracies never lasted. Athens, perhaps the best known of ancient democracy lasted only for 200 years. And even that 'democracy,' was exercised only by Athen's free adult men -less than 30 percent of its population. Rule by monarchy has been far more common over the centuries.

B. The Importance of the Sovereignty of the People:

The Americans established their constitution in 1789 fully sharing national sovereignty with the people. In America, citizen was to be king. Philosophers like Thomas Hobes, John Locke and Jean Jacques Rousseau sought to anchor government in the concept of a social contract: a mutual agreement among the peoples of society concerning the laws they would all accept, the culture they would embrace, and the freedoms they would recognise-or, for that matter, give up for the sake of social order, grounded in radical embrace of the sovereignty of the people. Yet the architects of the new nation's government were not ignorant of the lessons of history. They new, for instance, the history of Athens, widely considered to be the birthplace of democracy around 2200 years ago. And they new the dangers of a direct or pure democracy-one in which the people decide, directly, even the smallest matter of policy and practice.

In 1987, James Madeison wrote that 'such democracies have ever been spectacles of turbulence and contention:



have ever been found compatible with personal security, or rights of property; and have been as short in their lives, as they have been violent in their deaths. One year later speaking to the constitutional Convention of the younger nation, Alexander Hamilton noted that the ancient pure democracies of history never possessed one feature of good government. Their very character was tyranny; their figure deformity. Among the faults of such direct or pure democracy was the tendency to drift into 'mob rule', where the majority exercised radical power over the minority. Any cruelty, any injustice, any despotism could become law in a pure democracy if a majority of people willed it to be so at the ballot box. Democracies also lent themselves to the creation of tyrants-one of the very dangers the nation's founders sought in their new country. To this end, they planned to divide the new government into two adversarial branches, governed by checks and balances and balances among and between them.

C. Checks and Balances:

The result was to embed American democracy with constitutional republic, in which citizens would democratically elect elders to represent them in the matters of governance, was intended to be a barrier against the chaos that accompanies pure democracies. The people will remain sovereign since the leaders served with the will of the people-and those leaders who did not satisfy the people's desire be replaced by new leaders at the end of their term.

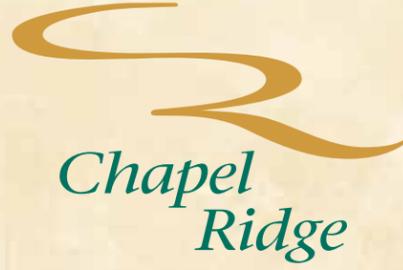
The Constitution would also define the cooperative -yet adversarial-nature of governmental authority, preventing too much power residing in the hands of a few. Executive power would rest with a single individual -a democratically elected president. Legislated power rested with a congress of democratically elected presidents. Legislative power rested in the congress of democratically elected representatives in the two chambers.

Any supreme judicial power rested with the appointed judges. Each branch was designed to be dependent on the others for the functions it could not accomplish and checked in its power by the others so that it would not turn its functions into an opportunity to take larger control. George Washington himself stated, "The basis of our political systems is the right of the people to make and to alter their constitutions of government". The Constitution was to be considered "sacredly obligatory to all", yet only "until changed by an explicit and authentic act of the whole people."

D. The Ultimate Authority of the People:

The nation truly was to borrow Abraham Lincoln's turn of phrase, a 'government of the people, by the people, for the people'. The grand experiment in self governance has generally been considered a dramatic success, and the wisdom and foresight of the founders of the US is universally acknowledged. The poet T.S. Elliot said that men constantly try to escape from the darkness outside and within by dreaming of systems so perfect that no one will need to be good. This is what the founders of the US sought to do-what the architects of every liberal democracy seek to do. So that the people are not dependent on a potentially corrupt monarch or a potentially corrupt aristocracy, democracy makes the people their own rulers. There is no system of human government that can protect us from human nature.

In the final analysis, it is correct to hold the view that democracies' fundamental concept -that sovereignty rests on the people and that rulers derive their authority only from 'the consent of the governed', in Thomas Jefferson's famous words'. It is utterly foreign to ethical ideologies but the most radical readings are twisted takes, and imaginative interpretations. Democracy is man made and subject to future innovations depending on the change of situations.



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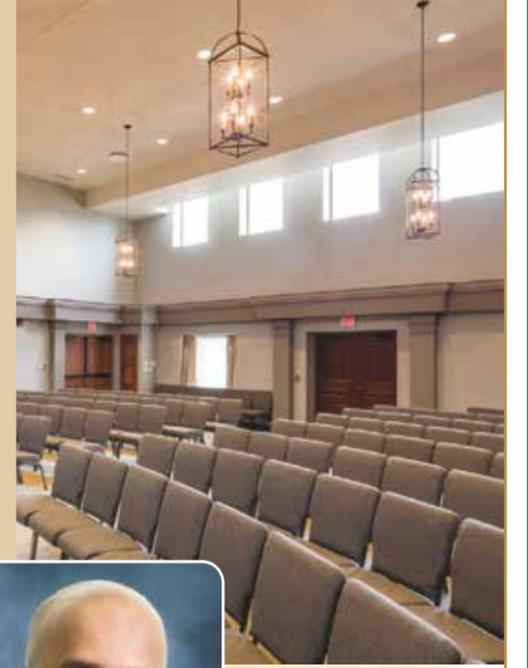
உங்கள் உறவொன்றை பிரிந்து தடுமாறும் வேளையில் இறுதி நிகழ்வுகள் பற்றிய கவலை உங்களுக்கு வேண்டாம். அனுபவத்துடன் கூடிய அன்பான சேவையை வழங்குகின்றோம்.

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EDUCATION & CAREER

Is it necessary to have more than ONE FAMILY DAY IN A YEAR?

By: **Thulasi Thiruneelakandan**
Grade 7 Student



Thulasi
Thiruneelakandan

Family Day is an important day in the year. Families gather together so they can spend more time with each other. Many families are so busy that they can only spend real quality time with their families on Family Day.

This can start to separate your family and make them more distant from you. People should always stay close to their families, and I think that to do this, it might be necessary to make multiple Family Days each year. This can give people the opportunity to spend time with their family, help people forget about problems in their lives, and allow them to have fun. This can restore family bonds and make them feel connected and together again.

I think that it is necessary to have more than one Family Day in a year because it encourages people to spend more time with their families. With only one Family Day, people are so busy with work that they can't see their family as often, which doesn't give them enough time to talk and interact with each other. They can't talk to their families about different events, and they can't know about each other's lives, causing them to become more distant. By spending more time with their families, not only will they catch up on things that they haven't talked to each other about, but they will also be able to revive old memories. By having more than one Family Day, families will be able to spend more time with each other again.

Another reason why it is necessary for there to be more than one Family Day in a year is that families can help people forget about situations and problems they have in their own lives. There are many problems in all people's lives, and your family can help you relieve the stress from these situations by taking your mind off your problems and helping you solve them. Being with family can make a person happier because you are spending your time with people whom you trust and care about. For example, when you get a bad grade on a test, your family can help teach you what you did wrong and help you fix your mistakes. You will enjoy the time you spend with your family, making every moment memorable. This will help you forget about your problems or think clearly, helping you solve your problems more easily. Your family can also help you come up with solutions to your problem. Therefore, I think that it is necessary to have more than one Family Day so people can forget about problems in their lives.

The final reason why it is necessary for



there to be more than one Family Day in the year is that people can have fun. Being with your family can bring you more fun as your family will always try to make you laugh and smile. You can play games with them which will bring excitement to the atmosphere, and being in their presence is enjoyable. You can do many things with them that can make you very happy. For example, many families go on trips for Family Day to experience new things with them. Your family is only trying to make you succeed in life. Therefore, I think that it is necessary for there to be more than one Family Day because family can make you have fun, and you can enjoy life more when you have people you love with you.

Therefore, it is necessary to have more than one Family Day in the year because Family Day can let you spend time with your family, forget about problems in your life, and help people have fun. Family Day is an important day to bond families. Without Family Day, people would probably be too busy to even interact with their families, causing them to become more distant from their families.

They might not enjoy things as much as they don't have kind and trusting people around them to help them through tough times. Therefore, I think that it is necessary for there to be more than one Family Day in the year so that families can create a strong bond with each other.



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West Nile Virus Found in Mississauga mosquitoes: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Residents are urged to follow these tips to reduce risk from virus-carrying mosquitoes

West Nile virus has been confirmed in Peel Region, with infected mosquitoes detected near Airport and Derry roads in Mississauga. With the virus now active locally, residents are advised to take immediate steps to protect themselves (and their property) from infected insects.

What is West Nile virus?

West Nile virus is a mosquito-borne illness that can cause mild flu-like symptoms in most people, but in rare cases, it can lead to serious illness affecting the brain or nervous system. There is no vaccine or specific treatment for humans, making prevention essential. People more than 50 or with weakened immune systems are at higher risk for serious complications.

Tips to protect yourself from mosquito bites

Mosquitoes that transmit West Nile virus are most active at dusk and dawn. Limit exposure during peak mosquito hours or, if possible, stay indoors during these times.

Applying effective insect repellents containing DEET or icaridin when outdoors is also recommended. Other tips to keep in mind include:

- **Wear protective clothing. Dress in long sleeves, pants, socks, and a hat when outside, especially at dawn and dusk.**
- **Light-coloured, loose-fitting clothing is best, as mosquitoes are attracted to dark colours.**
- **Special clothing and camping gear treated with permethrin**

can help when spending extended time outdoors (never apply permethrin directly to skin).

How to mosquito-proof your property

Mosquitoes lay eggs in stagnant water, turning even tiny amounts of water into breeding sites. Community mosquito control (such as the Region's larvicide program) helps reduce risk, but residents must also take proactive steps.

Mosquitoes need only a few millimetres of stagnant water to breed. To help prevent the spread of West Nile virus, do your best to eliminate standing water on your property.

Empty and scrub standing water sources at least once a week, including:

- **Birdbaths**
- **Flowerpots and saucers**
- **Kiddie pools and toys**
- **Old tires**
- **Outdoor pet bowls**

Preventive measures

Other preventive steps include ensuring all windows and door screens fit securely and are free of tears and holes. It is also important to store any water-catching items indoors or under cover and repairing leaking outdoor hoses or faucets to prevent small puddles from forming. If you notice persistent standing water in local catch basins, ditches, or other public areas, report it to Peel Public Health by dialing 905-799-7700 (or toll-free at 1-888-919-7800) or online.

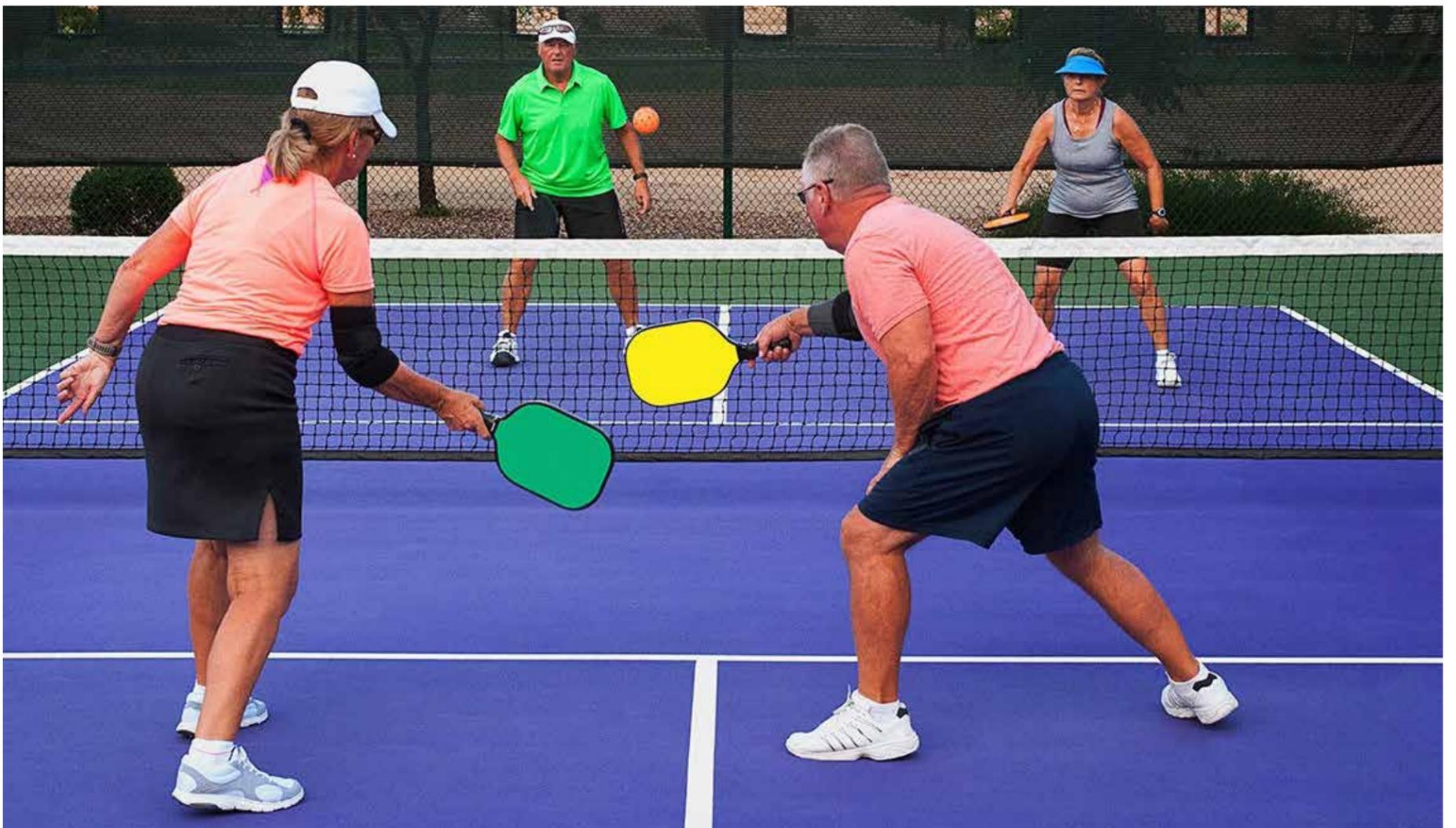
The risk of contracting West Nile virus is low but rises as mosquito counts increase in summer. By following these recommendations, you can dramatically reduce your risk and help protect your community.





NEW INDOOR PICKLEBALL COURTS OPEN JULY 10

Elgin Barrow and Bond Lake Arenas serve up more ways to play this summer!



RICHMOND HILL – As part of a pilot project, additional indoor pickleball courts will be available starting July 10 at Elgin Barrow and Bond Lake Arenas.

- **Elgin Barrow Arena**
5 courts (open until August 14)
- **Bond Lake Arena**
6 courts (open until August 20)
- **Hours: 9 a.m. – 9 p.m., daily**

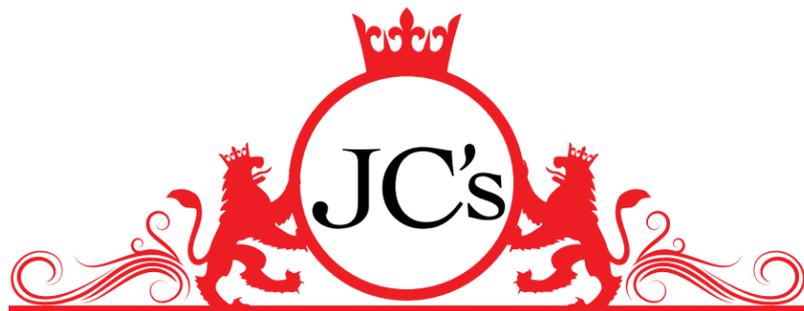
Courts are free to use and operate like outdoor park spaces. No registration or sign-in is required.

Players are asked to:

- Follow the rotation system posted at each site (generally 15-minute rotations or 4 players per court)
- Be respectful of others and follow the pickleball code of conduct
- Bring your own paddles and balls
- Wear non-marking athletic shoes indoors

These courts are not staffed, so fair play and good sportsmanship are key.

Drop in and enjoy indoor pickleball all summer long! More info and court etiquette available at RichmondHill.ca/Pickleball.



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COMMUNITY WATCH



Durham Tamils Association Celebrating 25 Years Of Serving Our Tamil Community

The Durham Tamil Association has proudly served the community for 25 years and remains dedicated to supporting our members, youth, and seniors. We continue to offer a variety of activities almost every day, providing something for everyone, from children to seniors. This milestone would not have been possible without our amazing volunteers, who selflessly give their time and energy to serve the community. DTA is truly grateful for your ongoing support. Additionally, the DTA Tamil School continues its mission by offering Tamil language classes to our students, fostering a connection to our cultural heritage for the next generation.

DTA'S CANADA DAY CELEBRATION

DTA proudly participated in Canada Day celebrations across the Durham Region, sharing and celebrating our

vibrant Tamil Canadian heritage with the wider community. Visitors to our booth engaged with our culture, while our

performers showcased the richness of our traditions through music and dance. It was a meaningful occasion that reminded



us of the pride and privilege of calling Canada home. We extend our sincere gratitude to the dedicated youth and adult volunteers, as well as the executive team, whose commitment and support made our presence possible. Oh Canada!

DTA'S HOMELAND PROJECTS

DTA's Homeland Projects DTA is proud to announce that we have completed over 100 homeland projects as of June 30, 2025. 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.

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Scarborough: Walmart Morningside – 799 Milner Ave, Scarborough, ON M1B 3C3 **Pick-up Time: 6:15 AM**

Register Online: www.durhamtamils.org/east-coast-bus-tour.html

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

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- Winter Gala 2024
- Spring Gala 2025
- September Gala 2025

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COMMUNITY WATCH



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.

DAY TRIP TO MIDLAND CHURCH JULY 19TH

Date: Saturday, July 19
Time: Departure at 7:00 AM
Cost: \$60 per person
 Includes: Coach Bus Ticket, Breakfast, and Coffee

Join us for a meaningful and fun-filled day trip to Midland Church! Relax and enjoy the scenic journey with friends and family as we travel together by coach bus.

Pick-up & Drop-off Locations:

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 Pick-up Time: 7:00 AM

Scarborough: Walmart Morningside
 799 Milner Ave, Scarborough, ON
 Pick-up Time: 7:15 AM

Limited seats available – reserve yours today!

Register online: durhamtamils.org/day-trip-to-midland-church.html

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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 SENIOR'S JULY MONTHLY MEETING

DTA Senior's June monthly meeting will be held on Sunday July 27, 2025 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 this month, please mention in the comments section to organize your cake-cutting at the meeting.



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Getting the facts straight; busting common myths about Brampton's Automated Speed Enforcement program

Speeding puts lives at risk and Brampton residents are demanding action. From schools to senior centres, unsafe driving remains one of the most frequent and urgent concerns raised by the community. In response, the City of Brampton is stepping up enforcement and pushing back against dangerous driving through various traffic-calming measures such as speed bumps, road signage and through its Automated Speed Enforcement (ASE) program.

The facts are clear, ASE works. Backed by compelling data and international research, these cameras are helping to slow drivers down in Brampton and in every community they serve. Consistent with the City and Region's support for Vision Zero, no loss of life is acceptable, and ASE cameras are proven to help prevent devastating collisions, often by simply reminding motorists to obey the posted speed limit.

At a Community Safety Telephone Town Hall hosted by the City and Peel Regional Police last night, 86 per cent of Brampton residents said they support the use of ASE in Community Safety Zones, areas such as schools and parks, where vulnerable people are most at risk. This strong show of support reflects the community's commitment to safer streets and the importance of reducing speeding in high-risk areas.

"As a father of two young children, I take the safety of our streets personally, and I know many Brampton families feel the same. During yesterday's Community Safety Telephone Town Hall, I heard from approximately 5,455 households, and the overwhelming message was clear, Brampton has zero tolerance for speeding in areas where people are most at risk," said Patrick Brown, Mayor, City of Brampton. "In fact, 86 per cent of participants said they support the use of Automated Speed Enforcement at all times in Community Safety Zones. These are places where children play, seniors cross the street and families walk to school. We will not compromise when it comes to protecting our most vulnerable. ASE is working. It is slowing drivers down, preventing collisions and saving lives."

Yesterday, the Canadian Automobile Association (CAA) South Central Ontario announced new findings in a study they conducted, which states that approximately 73 per cent of Ontario drivers slow down when nearing an ASE camera, indicating positive changes in driver behaviour due to this program. Further, 52 per cent of drivers said they are unlikely to speed up after passing through an area enforced by ASE, which has increased from 44 per cent in 2023.

As awareness of ASE grows, so do



Speeding increases the risk of serious injury or death. Slowing down, especially in Community Safety Zones, helps protect everyone on the road. *Credit: Shutterstock*

questions and misconceptions about how it works and who it impacts. Here are some of the most common myths and the facts to help set the record straight.

Myth: ASE is ineffective or unnecessary. The City of Brampton should remove all the cameras.

The data is in and it overwhelmingly supports the effectiveness and impact of ASE. In Brampton, ASE data is demonstrating meaningful change, with a reduction of up to 18 km/h in vehicle speeds across several ASE sites. These are not just numbers, slower speeds translate to fewer accidents, safer streets and saved lives.

A landmark study, conducted by the City of Toronto in partnership with Toronto Metropolitan University and Sick Kids Hospital, shows a 45 per cent reduction in the risk of vehicles exceeding speed limits where ASE is present and a decrease of 7.44 km/h in the 85th percentile vehicle speed (the speed at or below which 85 per cent of all vehicles are observed travelling under free-flowing conditions) after implementing ASE.

Proven results across North America also show that ASE leads to significant reductions in speeding and collisions. Studies from Quebec, Saskatchewan and Winnipeg consistently demonstrate declines in vehicle speeds, fewer injuries and fewer serious crashes.

Further, a 2016 study by the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS) found that the proportion of vehicles exceeding

the speed limit by more than 10 miles per hour decreased within just six to eight months of implementing ASE by:

- 70 per cent in Arizona
- 88 per cent in Maryland
- 82 per cent in Washington, D.C.

Changing driver behaviour is at the heart of the ASE program, because every reduced speeding incident is a potential life saved. Slowing down, even a few kilometres per hour, can mean the difference between a close call and a fatal collision. The City of Brampton remains committed to implementing this life-saving tool to build safer streets for everyone.

"The data clearly shows that Automated Speed Enforcement is making a difference in Brampton. It slows drivers down, prevents collisions and saves lives," said Rowena Santos, Regional Councillor for Wards 1 and 5 and Chair of Legislative Services Section, City of Brampton. "This is about more than just enforcement – it is about building safer, more livable neighbourhoods for everyone. The overwhelming support we have seen from our residents proves that Brampton is united in its vision for safer streets, and ASE is a critical tool in achieving that goal."

Myth: ASE cameras are only installed in school zones and operational during school hours, so you will not get a ticket if you are speeding in the evening or on weekends.



Speeding is not limited to school hours, which is why continuous enforcement is essential. It provides a consistent deterrent, reinforces safe driving habits and helps protect vulnerable residents at all times of day. More than 69 per cent of Brampton residents expressed support for the use of ASE cameras on evenings and weekends, reinforcing the community's belief that safety should never be limited to a specific time of day.

These cameras are installed in designated Community Safety Zones, areas with high pedestrian activity where speeding poses a greater risk to vulnerable road users, including children and seniors. While this includes areas around schools, it also extends to roadways near daycare centres, playgrounds, parks, hospitals and senior residences.

To promote transparency and fairness, and as required by the Ministry of Transportation, signs are posted at all entry points to Community Safety Zones, and notice of upcoming camera activation is provided at least 90 days in advance. This gives drivers plenty of time to become aware of the zone and adjust their speed, supporting the program's main goal: to reduce speeding and save lives. If a driver is in doubt about whether they are in a Community Safety Zone, always obey the posted speed limit.

Further, ASE camera locations are posted on the City of Brampton's website at brampton.ca/ASE, allowing residents to stay informed about where cameras are situated, further reinforcing the commitment to transparency.

Myth: Automated speed cameras unfairly impact everyday drivers, especially during times of financial stress. It is just a way for the City to make money.

The purpose of Brampton's ASE program is safety, not revenue generation. The program is designed to protect lives by encouraging drivers to slow down and



Road safety signs like these help road users identify Community Safety Zones and areas where ASE cameras may be active. Credit: City of Brampton

follow the posted speed limit. Revenues generated through this program are used to cover operating costs, ensuring the program is self-sustaining. Any surplus revenue will support other initiatives, including investments in community and road safety and associated educational programs.

The goal of the program is not to penalize drivers, but to encourage positive changes to driving habits, eliminate dangerous speeding and reduce the likelihood of serious or fatal collisions. Speed limit enforcement is key to behaviour change and individuals who drive at or near the speed limit will not receive a ticket.

Community safety is a shared responsibility. The ASE program is a long-term investment in safer roads, and every driver who slows down helps protect their neighbours, their community and themselves.

Myth: Driving above the speed limit is not a big deal. It is unfair to get a ticket for going just one km/h over the posted limit.

Even small increases in speeding above the posted limit can have serious consequences and ASE is a proven life-saving tool to protect all road users.

According to research conducted by the World Health Organization (WHO), the risk of injury or death rises significantly with each kilometre over the limit, especially in areas where children, seniors and other vulnerable road users are present. The faster a vehicle is moving on the road, the more likely it is to be involved in a crash. Every one km/h increase in speed results in a three per cent increase in crashes resulting in an injury and up to five per cent increase in fatal crashes.

Brampton's ASE program only issues tickets when drivers exceed the posted speed limit, which is carefully set to reflect the road environment and protect everyone's safety. To preserve the fairness and effectiveness of the program in reducing speeding, the City of Brampton does not publicly disclose the specific speed threshold.

The most effective way to prevent receiving an ASE ticket is by simply obeying the posted speed limit at all times.

"Automated Speed Enforcement is a key component of the City of Brampton's approach to improving road safety and is fully aligned with the principles of Vision Zero. It is one of the most effective tools in our toolbox in reducing speeding and protecting the most vulnerable people on our roads," said Michael Kralt, Director, Automated Speed Enforcement, City of Brampton. "The data is clear. When cameras are installed, speeds decrease, and that leads to fewer collisions and fewer injuries. Our focus is on changing driver behaviour through education, awareness and accountability. Even a small reduction in speed can mean the difference between a close call and a life-changing tragedy. ASE is not about

punishment or revenue, it is about prevention and building a safer Brampton for everyone."

Myth: ASE Cameras do not actually make roads safer. Speed bumps are more effective at slowing traffic down.

The City is taking a comprehensive approach to road safety and has installed a suite of traffic calming measures, including speed bumps, across the City. While speed bumps can help reduce speeds on certain local roads, they are not always suitable for every road. In contrast, ASE provides consistent, measurable results without physically altering the road. In Brampton, data shows a reduction of up to 18 km/h in vehicle speeds across several ASE sites. This is an effective tool for improving road safety city-wide.

Myth: I got an ASE ticket. Now I will get demerit points and my auto insurance rates will increase.

ASE tickets are issued to the registered owner of the vehicle, not the driver. They do not result in demerit points or impact your auto insurance.

However, ASE tickets are enforceable under the Highway Traffic Act and must be addressed. Ignoring them can lead to late fees and prevent you from renewing your vehicle registration until the fine is resolved.

The best way to avoid a ticket is to follow the posted speed limits. If you do receive one, it is a chance to reflect, adjust your driving habits and contribute to making Brampton's roads safer for everyone.

Myth: ASE cameras violate privacy by capturing video footage or storing unnecessary personal data.

Brampton's ASE camera systems only capture still images of the vehicle and licence plate when a speeding violation occurs. They do not record video, nor do they capture images of drivers or passengers. All data is encrypted and securely stored, accessed only by trained and certified City staff, adhering to comprehensive privacy protections and safeguards.

Community safety reminder: ASE ticket fraud prevention.

The City of Brampton is reminding drivers and vehicle owners to remain vigilant about potential text message scams involving ASE tickets.

ASE tickets are never sent by text message. Fines are only issued by mail to the address to which the vehicle licence plate is registered. To pay a fine online, visit the City of Brampton website. The City does not solicit third-party websites for penalty payments.

Individuals who receive text messages about ASE tickets should not click on any links and are encouraged to report it to Peel Regional Police by visiting their nearest station. Such fraud reports are not taken over the phone.



SPECIAL FEATURE

SPREAD OF HINDUISM AND HINDU TEMPLES IN THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

Compiled by Kidambi Raj

INTRODUCTION

Indians in the United Arab Emirates constitute the largest part of the population of the country. Over 3,860,000 Indian expats are estimated to be living in the UAE, which is over 42 percent of the total population of the UAE and the fourth highest number of overseas Indian people in the world, after the United States, Saudi Arabia and Nepal. Indian contact with the emirates that now constitute the UAE dates back several centuries, as a result of trade and commerce between the Emirates and India. The UAE has experienced a tremendous increase in the population of resident Indians who initially migrated to the country as a result of opportunities in petroleum. Now, the Indians are key to the UAE's construction, retail, financial services, healthcare, manufacturing and transport sectors. A sizeable minority of Indian migrants are involved in professional services and entrepreneurship. Relations between India and the UAE have traditionally been very friendly.

HISTORY

The United Arab Emirates is an elective monarchy formed from a federation of seven emirates, consisting of *Abu Dhabi, Ajman, Dubai, Fujairah, Ras Al Khaimah, Sharjah and Ummal Quwain*. A fairly homogenous society at the turn of the 20th century, the region that now comprises the UAE experienced economic boom as a result of *pearling* industry. Few Indian traders emigrating to the emirates moved to the coastal towns and remained on the fringes of Emirati society. Dubai had traditionally served as an entry point for trade between the Middle East and the Indian subcontinent and was dominated by Indian merchants in gold and textile trades. Dubai was also an important trading post for Indians prior to the discovery of oil (in commercial quantities) in the UAE in 1959, and the emirates had been at the centre of a smuggling route of gold via small boats to India, where the importation of gold was illegal.

DEMOGRAPHICS

The current population of the United Arab Emirates is 9.6 million based on United Nations data. Its population is equivalent to 0.12% of the total world population. The UAE ranks number 96 in the list of countries by population. The population density in the United Arab Emirates is 295 per square miles.

The total *land* area is 32,278 sq. miles. 94.0 % of the population is urban and the median age in the United Arab Emirates is 35.5 years. Emirati citizens are estimated to form 11.6% of the population, the remaining residents are expatriates, the majority of whom are South Asians. Islam is the official religion and Arabic is the official language. If classified by Ethnic groups; Emirati 11.6%, South Asians 59.4% (Indians 38.2%, Bangladeshi 9.5%, Pakistani 9.4% and other 2.3%), Egyptian 10.2%, Filipinos.

ECONOMIC CONTRIBUTION

Foreigners comprise 99% of the UAE's labour

force, of which Indians are a major part. Some of these foreigners have lived in the country for generations. Around 40% of Indians in the UAE are White collar professionals. In addition to employment-based migrants from India, many Indian entrepreneurs in the UAE have established successful national franchises, the notable ones such as Lulu Group International, Landmark Group, Jashanmal, Ajmal Perfumes, Amber Packaging Industries, Jumbo Electronics, Choitrans, Varkey Group, Alukkas and New Medical Centre. There are quite a few Dubai-based Indian billionaires.

The Gulf Medical University founded by Thumbay Moideen is an Indian contribution to the Higher Education scenario in the UAE. Today, students from over 68 countries study in their campuses in Ajman and the university is well known in the medical education circles.

CULTURE

The large segment of Indian migrants, along with comparatively lenient laws in the UAE, have allowed Indian communities to more or less practice their native cultures in the country. Middle class Indians in the UAE have established a network of cultural associations which cater to their needs. Cultural associations such as the India Club, Indian Association, Goan Cultural Society and numerous Keralite associations support cultural networks of the Indian sub-communities in the UAE. Additionally, schools such as the Abu Dhabi Indian School and The Indian High School, Dubai provide Indian curricular education to expatriate students. Dubai is the only emirate in the UAE with a Hindu temple and a Gurudwara. In August 2015, in the backdrop of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to the country, the UAE government decided to allot land for the construction of a temple in Abu Dhabi. In fact, BAPS Hindu temple was built in that land and Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated that temple in December 2023.

Dubai and Sharjah are the only emirates with operating cremation facilities in the Emirates. Official permission must be obtained for their use in every instance.

HINDU TEMPLES IN UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

With the recently built and inaugurated BAPS Hindu Temple in Abu Dhabi, there are a total of three Hindu Temples in UAE, with two temples in Dubai and one in Abu Dhabi.

TEMPLES IN DUBAI

1. Shri Krishna Temple (Shrinathji Haveli) in Dubai

The Thattai Bhatia's have been arriving in Dubai/Sharjah since the early 1800 AD. Most of them settled in Bur Dubai, close to the creek. The locals called them **Bhaniyas**. Some of the community members were in the *pearl* business, and others in foodstuff and Textile trading.

These merchants at that time used to worship

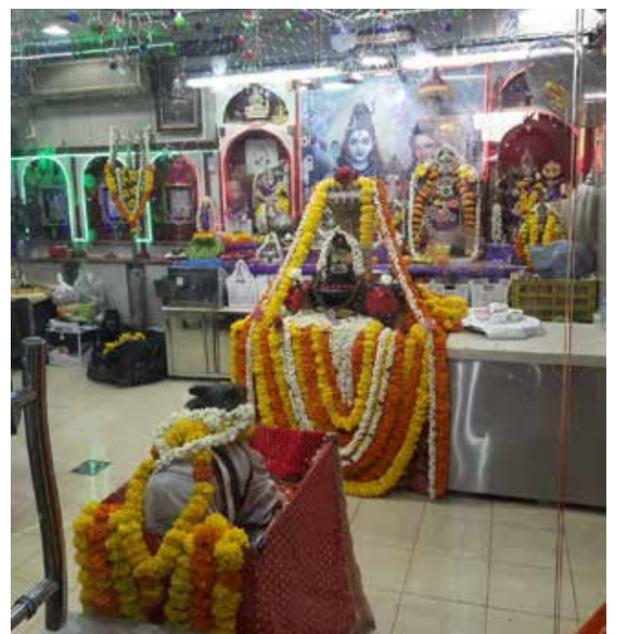


at home, as there was no Temple. They longed for a commonplace to worship and were quite eager for Shrinathji's darshan. Thus, the idea of establishing Shrinathji's Haveli (temple) took shape.

In the early 1900 AD, Late Shri Jethanand Lalchand Rainponcholia and Shri Chandumai Whabi housed the two Swaroops of Shrinathji and Lalan at the cowshed, making it a makeshift temple. People used to come for Mangala Darshan early in the morning. Later, the old mud structure was refurbished and a building was constructed, for which members of the community of 30 to 40 members contributed. In the mid-1940s, Dharmanlal Issardas & sons took the Haveli's responsibility and his representative Shri Keshavdas Tarachand was active *sevadhari*. Gradually, all Vaishnavas living in Dubai got together, under Dhamanlal Issardas leadership, being chairperson of the community. In 1958, His Highness Rashid Bin Saeed Al Maktoum, granted the land next to mosque and permission to build a Hindu temple. Later, in 1997, the temple was refurbished again to give it a proper Haveli look and it exists to date. This Shri Krishna Temple (Shrinathji Haveli) is the first temple in United Arab Emirates.

2. Shiva Temple in Bur Dubai.

In 1958, HH Sheikh Rashid bin Saeed al Maktoum permitted a Hindu temple to be built on the first floor, on top of a warren of old-fashioned shops in Bur Dubai. This shopping centre is known as *Bur Dubai Old Souk* and is located west of the Dubai Creek in the area



SPECIAL FEATURE



known as Bur Dubai. This had a prayer hall with two Altars (Sannidhis) on two sides, one for Lord Shiva and the other for Lord Krishna. The Hindu Temple, Dubai opened on October 05, 2022 in Jabel Ali, which includes the Shiva Mandir and a Gurudwara. Constructed at a cost of approx. 60 million dirhams, the New Hindu Temple exhibits a fusion of Indian and Arabic architectural styles. The temple was built using 900 tons of steel, 6,000 cubic meters of concrete and about 1,500 square metres of marble. The temple has 16 deities including Shiva, Krishna, Ganesha and Mahalakshmi along with Guru Granth Sahib. The temple's structure includes hand carved pillars and lattice screens. The structure also includes nine brass spires (**Kalasas**) ornamenting the outer domes.

On January 3rd 2024, the Shiva Mandir and Gurudwara closed at Bur Dubai complex and relocated all services at the New Hindu Temple, Dubai in Jabel Ali.

The Hindu Temple, Dubai has a first-floor main prayer hall decorated with a pink lotus sculpture and an open terrace. It also has an upper prayer hall with 108 brass bells and a banquet hall. It features a facade partially shaded with a blend of Arabic architecture and traditional Hindu designs. White and black marble statues of deities, crafted in Jaipur, Kanyakumari and Madurai, adorn the temple.

BAPS HINDU MANDIR IN ABU DHABI



In August 2015, the UAE government announced their decision to provide land for building a Hindu temple in Abu Dhabi. HH Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, the Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme Commander of the UAE Armed Forces, gifted the land for the temple. He gifted 13.5 acres for the temple and 13.5 acres for parking.

On February 10, 2018, BAPS representatives met Sheikh Mohamed and the Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the Presidential Palace. A memorandum of understanding was signed by India and the UAE in the presence of the entire Royal Family and over 250 local leaders. Prime Minister Modi expressed that the Mandir **will be a holy place where humanity and harmony will unite**. The first stone consecration (Shila Puja) for the Mandir took place on February 11, 2018.

On April 20, 2019, in the presence of **Mah-**

ant Swami Maharaj, the spiritual leader of BAPS, the foundation stone laying ceremony was performed in the presence of guests and officials from India and the UAE. Expressing his thanks to the UAE government, Ambassador Navdeep Suri said, **"This will be the eternal bridge of friendship between our nations, our culture and civilizations"**.



Construction of the Mandir began in December 2019 on the 27-acre land. This site is located at Abu Mureikah, which is near Al Rahba off the Dubai-Abu Dhabi Sheikh Zayed Highway. For construction, tonnes of pink sandstone from the northern Indian state were selected for the mandir exterior due to its ability to withstand the scorching summer temperatures of up to 50 C (122 degrees F), such as those experienced in the UAE. Marble from Italy was used to build the interior of the mandir. To minimize the carbon footprint, fly ash was used in the foundation concrete mix. This is the first traditional Hindu temple to undergo complete digital modelling and seismic simulation. This is also the first traditional Hindu stone mandir in the Middle East.

The main temple is 32.9m tall, 79.8m long and 54.8m wide. It can accommodate 10,000 people. Other buildings on the compound include prayer halls, a community centre, an Amphitheatre, a banquet hall and a library.

VOLUNTEER PARTICIPATION

Over 200 volunteers from the United Arab Emirates, Africa, the United Kingdom, the United States, India and other Gulf countries have dedicated more than 690,000 hours to the construction of this mandir. Their participation extends across various domains, encompassing logistics, civil engineering work, construction, planning and mandir maintenance, thereby playing a crucial role in shaping the project. Individuals of diverse backgrounds, including teenagers, businessmen, designers and retired expatriates from Africa, the Gulf: UK, USA and India have contributed to the mandir's construction. These volunteers describe their services as part of their devotion and spirituality. Noteworthy is the inclusion of children in this collective effort, engaging as volunteers and contributing to the creation of stone art as a symbol the harmony.

INTERFAITH AND CULTURAL HARMONY

The land to build this **Hindu Mandir** was donated by a **Muslim King**, while the lead architect for the project was a **Catholic Christian**, and the construction project was managed by a **Sikh** who worked for a **Parsi** owned company.

The foundation designer was a **Buddhist** and a director of the mandir is a **Jain**.

This shows the significance of interfaith and cultural harmony in this mandir project.

As part of the UAE's initiative to promote cultural diversity, tolerance and peace, the government organized a ceremony in September 2019 and officially awarded legal status in the UAE to the BAPS Mandir and 17 other houses of worship.

During the foundation stone laying ceremony in April 2019, Mugheer Al Khaili, Chairman of Department of Community Development said, **"Laying the foundation stone of the Mandir is reflective of the landscape of tolerance and pluralism in the UAE. The Founding Father, late Sheikh Zayed, always believed that co-existence between people of various religious beliefs and nationalities is the only way to establish international peace."** The mandir has carvings of animals native to the UAE, like Camels, oryxes and falcons. There are also 14 depictions of parables from Arabian, Egyptian, Mesopotamian and other civilizations. Observing the carvings, Sheikh Nahayan Mabarak Al Nahayan, the Minister of Tolerance and Co-existence of UAE stated, **"The craftsmanship is intricate and amazing, and the place will help spread global harmony."**

In May 2023, during a visit by ambassadors from 30 countries, Japanese Ambassador Akio Isomata said, **"I see a philosophy of tolerance in the carvings."** In January 2024, diplomats from 42 countries visited the Mandir. Deputy Ambassador of the UK, Jonathan Knight stated, **"It's wonderful to see a place that's been contributed to by so many different faiths coming together to build something that will last generations."**



MADE BY WATERLOO

PORTABLE STROKE DETECTION USING AI AND ELECTROMAGNETIC IMAGING

Waterloo startup AiimSense pioneers a portable brain scanner for brain injuries and stroke detection, enabling early diagnosis and faster treatment

By Angelica Marie Sanchez, *University Relations*

In a stroke emergency, every second counts — early detection and rapid intervention can save lives even before a patient reaches the hospital.

“Computed tomography (CT) and magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) scans are the current standard, but they are expensive, stationary and require special infrastructure,” says Dr. Atefeh Zarabadi (PhD ‘15), CEO and co-founder of AiimSense. “[These technologies] limit timely access to care, especially in medical emergencies like stroke or traumatic brain injuries.”

To address this critical gap, Zarabadi and her team have developed a scalable, portable imaging system that uses electromagnetic imaging (EMI) and artificial intelligence (AI) to detect both ischemic and hemorrhagic strokes faster and more affordably than traditional methods.

The AiimSense solutions include BrainScreen, a lightweight, a helmet-like device that fits in a backpack and can be deployed in the field — ideal for mobile stroke units or remote clinics. Its companion software, Neural Map Pro, combines AI-powered 3D analytics with Digital Imaging and Communications in Medicine (DICOM) integration to provide real-time image visualization of brain conductivity changes, such as bleeding or clots.

“Imagine having [this technology] available in many clinics where it is needed — that is very transformative,” Zarabadi says. “It can enhance brain health in general, which is not possible today.”

By enabling earlier diagnosis, AiimSense



supports faster treatment decisions — such as administering clot-busting drugs within the critical time window — and ensures patients are directed to the right care centers. AiimSense’s mission is to democratize access to advanced brain imaging and improve outcomes across both urban and underserved communities.

Powering the “brain economy” with imaging technology

Zarabadi’s vision extends beyond health care. At the G7 Canada Brain Economy Summit in Calgary, she joined global leaders in developing the “Brain Economy Declaration” — a policy initiative that recognizes brain health and cognitive

capacity as essential to national prosperity.

AiimSense’s portable brain scanner exemplifies this vision. By reducing reliance on costly, stationary imaging systems and enabling earlier intervention, it has the potential to lower health-care costs, improve patient outcomes and enhance workforce productivity — all key pillars of what global leaders are calling the “brain economy.”

“Achieving global brain health equity starts with making diagnostics accessible everywhere,” Zarabadi says. She sees AiimSense contributing in two ways: through its scientific and technological innovation, and by introducing a new imaging modality that makes brain diagnostics more accessible and impactful.

“Early diagnosis and accessible brain imaging are a game changer. The sooner we can diagnose, the more preventative measures we can take into account. By lowering the disability rates and saving

lives, this technology can contribute to the global economy.”

AiimSense BrainScreen, a lightweight, helmet-like portable imaging system that uses electromagnetic imaging (EMI) and artificial intelligence (AI) to detect both ischemic and hemorrhagic strokes faster. Photo credit: Suleyman Begenjov/Velocity and AiimSense.

A multidisciplinary team rooted in Waterloo

Founded in 2019, AiimSense has successfully built its BrainScreen and Neural Map Pro through a multidisciplinary team with deep roots



AiiM Sense BrainScreen, a lightweight, helmet-like portable imaging system that uses electromagnetic imaging (EMI) and artificial intelligence (AI) to detect both ischemic and hemorrhagic strokes faster. Photo credit: Suleyman Begenjov/Velocity and AiiM Sense.

in Ontario's research network, including McMaster University, University of Toronto and Western University.

More than 10 senior team members are Waterloo graduates with decades of industry experience, including their co-founder, Mohammad Chavoshi (MEng '16), a trained senior electrical and computer engineer. AiiM Sense has also benefited from working with co-op students, research partnerships and support from the Waterloo innovation ecosystem, including the Velocity incubator.

"Coming from academia into entrepreneurship means coming out of your comfort zone," Zarabadi says. "There are certain skills that we need to develop and focus on that are more business related than science. There are good programs like Velocity that help you learn the business side — finding the product-market fit and turning research into real-world impact."

At the 2024 International Conference on Aging, Innovation and Rehabilitation (ICAIR), hosted by The KITE Research Institute at University Health Network (UHN), AiiM Sense was awarded first place in the Innovative Startup category of the ICAIR Power Play Pitch Competition, receiving a prize of \$25,000.

AiiM Sense also received the Most Innovative Solution Award during the

Brain Health Challenge Pitch competition at the Inventures 2025 conference in Alberta, earning \$20,000 in funding and the opportunity to showcase their breakthrough brain imaging technology at the Life Science Intelligence USA 2025 Emerging Medtech Summit, where they gained further recognition among global medtech innovators and investors.

Advancing towards brain health for all

Despite the promise, Zarabadi notes that deep tech startups face unique challenges.

"While there are many resources available, meaningful early-stage support that matches the scale and timeline of transformative innovation is still lacking," Zarabadi adds. "If we want these companies to thrive and stay focused on what they do best, we need to bridge that gap with more significant and sustained investment."

She remains confident in AiiM Sense's potential to reshape brain health diagnostics.

Zarabadi envisions the platform evolving into an accessible, routine brain health monitoring tool, which is especially important for aging populations and pediatric care.

Velocity health companies are funded in part by the Government of Canada through the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario (FedDev Ontario).

**Photo credit for banner image:
Suleyman Begenjov/Velocity and
AiiM Sense.**

The "Made by Waterloo:" series showcases innovative startups founded by University of Waterloo alumni and researchers that are driving Canada's economy forward. These companies, nurtured within the region's vibrant tech ecosystem, are making significant local and global impacts. Through this series, we highlight how Waterloo and these home-grown businesses are fostering prosperity by attracting, developing and retaining the talent essential for fueling Canada's economic growth.

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