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ONTARIO PASSES BILL 60: WHAT THE NEW LEGISLATION MEANS FOR LANDLORDS AND TENANTS

Is Rent Control Ending in Ontario?

No. Rent control is not being eliminated across the province. However, it has not applied to newly built rental units first occupied on or after November 15, 2018.

• Units first occupied before November 15, 2018:

Still covered under provincial rent control guidelines.

• Units first occupied after November 15, 2018:

Exempt from rent control. Landlords may increase rent by any amount, provided proper notice is given.

Bill 60: "Fighting Delays, Building Faster Act, 2025"

On November 24, 2025, the Ontario government passed Bill 60, bringing significant amendments to several acts, including the Residential Tenancies Act, 2006. The bill is designed to accelerate housing development, clear administrative backlogs, and stimulate the rental market. A major focus is improving efficiency at the Landlord and Tenant Board (LTB), particularly around eviction and tenancy termination processes.

Below is a breakdown of the key changes.

Key Changes Under Bill 60

1. Standardized Eviction & Termination Notices

All landlords and tenants must use LTB-approved forms for ending a lease or issuing an eviction notice. No alternative notices will be accepted.

2. Faster Non-Payment Eviction Process

Landlords can now issue eviction notices for non-payment after 7 days, instead of the previous 14-day waiting period.



3. Changes to "Personal Use" Evictions

Landlords who need the unit for themselves or an immediate family member may now evict with **120 days' notice**.

Compensation of one month's rent or offering a comparable unit is no longer required.

4. New Requirements for Tenants at Hearings

Tenants who want to raise issues—such as maintenance concerns or harassment—during an eviction hearing related to non-payment must first pay **at least 50% of the arrears claimed**.

They also cannot introduce new issues at the hearing without having given prior written notice.

5. Reduced Timeline for LTB Reviews

Requests to review an LTB decision must now be filed within 15 days, instead of 30. The LTB's ability to delay or overturn evictions is also narrowed under the new rules.

How Bill 60 Affects Landlords and Tenants Impact on Landlords

Bill 60 streamlines the eviction process and reduces delays that have long affected property owners. Key advantages include:

- Faster action against tenants who are not paying rent.
- Reduced financial loss due to the shorter 7-day non-payment notice period.
- Removal of mandatory compensation for "personal use" evictions.
- A more balanced hearing process, as tenants must now pay part of the arrears before raising counter-claims.

Overall, the new legislation offers landlords stronger tools to manage their units and address problem tenancies more efficiently.

Impact on Tenants

- Tenants should be aware that:
- They now face upfront costs if they want to dispute a non-payment eviction.
 - Raising issues at the LTB is no longer possible without paying 50% of the overdue rent.
 - Delaying tactics based on raising new issues at the last minute will be restricted.

While the rules still allow tenants to challenge unfair treatment, the process now focuses on ensuring rent is paid while disputes are resolved.

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Demystifying Burnout

By Harrish Thirukumaran

Burnout – a term often used interchangeably with stress, carries its own distinct meaning. Feeling under pressure is what often gets translated as stress, while burnout is when there has been a prolonged stress which creates a state of emotional, physical, and mental exhaustion. Even though this is a term often used in the context of employment burnout, it also extends to other aspects of our life as well.

Personally, having to face a lot of changes, adapting to them, and over-committing myself to various projects have been building up the stress one after the other over a period of time. In a world where the busy-ness is the norm and overworked is a 'badge of honor', burnout easily goes unnoticed. We are being conditioned to wear a 'high-functional' mask, showcasing our achievements externally, while hiding the internal exhaustion as a sign of weakness, or inadequacy.

However, it always finds a way to surface in different ways for different people. For me, it showed up in constant worries, obsession of the 'to-do', expecting the extremes in outcomes, irrational fears, and a constant feeling of running out of time. Some of us are forced to face it when it manifests itself in more explicit ways, and some of us almost start living with it, feeling trapped in it as a 'Habitual Burnout'.

Even though burnout can leave us feeling cynical, hopeless, and anxious, I believe we owe it to ourselves and our loved ones to take small, consistent steps toward healing—steps that, over time, can build momentum and help us move out of the burnout state.

Reflecting on what helps me, meditation, journaling and talking it out with people are some of the most useful habits that helps me feel a sense of balance. Meditation, even though one of the most cited techniques to help with our mental health, is still something that lot of people struggle with. Sitting still with our restless thoughts that are made even worse with our hand-held devices, could be very daunting, especially at the beginning. When I look back on what helped me stick with it, I believe it is a tradition that was built-in during my childhood. I remember as a child, me and my younger brother used to sit with our dad, trying to meditate. Even though I didn't rely on it during my teenage years, once I got to university and began feeling stressed and overwhelmed, I found myself returning to the safety tools I'd been given in childhood. We often learn our own set of coping mechanisms from our family, society, and culture as traditions, and routines, most of the times unconsciously. As adults, becoming more conscious of these patterns can be incredibly helpful. With awareness, we can recognize them for what they are and choose which ones to carry forward. This intentional awareness allows us to manage burnout and stress more effectively.

Journaling, another tool that helps with burnout, puts my mind's chatter on to paper. It often helps me creates a

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distance between me and my thoughts, lessens their impact and power and helps me to gain a lot more clarity. It enables me to read my thoughts, literally, and offers me a more nuanced outlook on my emotions, in terms of understanding the triggers and how to manage them better. For me, it is an act of building an 'emotional map' for myself.

One of the strongest antidotes to the cynicism and loneliness that so often accompany burnout is cultivating a trusted circle of people you can openly communicate with. Personally, it gives me a reality check and helps me view life from different perspectives. Most importantly, it helps you feel that you are 'not in this alone'. Even if we don't have that circle yet, it's helpful to make a conscious effort to create one. Doing so sends a powerful message to ourselves that we are actively working to care for our own well-being.

Burnout is something that most of us would experience at different stages and in different aspects of our lives. My hope is that this holiday season, we offer ourselves the gift of prioritizing ourselves, deepening our awareness of our mental well-being, and committing to caring for our mental health.

SPECIAL FEATURE

VISSHNA THIRAVIYARAJAH SHINES IN VOCAL ARANGETRAM

CHIEF GUEST AND GURU OFFER HIGH PRAISE

In a celebration of tradition, talent, and years of dedicated training, the vocal Arangetram of Vishna Thiraviyarajah captivated audiences on Sunday, November 9, 2025 at the Armenian Youth Centre in Toronto. The evening, marked by meticulous preparation and heartfelt performances, drew the presence of distinguished musicians, community leaders, and rasikas who gathered to witness this milestone in the young vocalist's artistic journey.

Adding depth to the occasion, the recital received two notable reflections — one from the event's Chief Guest, Raji Gopalakrishnan, and another from the student's Guru, Vaaraki Wijayaraj, each offering a unique perspective on the performance and the promising trajectory of the budding artist. Their reviews not only highlight the musical calibre displayed on stage but also underscore the cultural and emotional significance of this classical rite of passage.



Full scripts of their speeches at the Arangetram are given below;

Chief Guest:

Raji Gopalakrishnan Speech:

Shri Gurubhyo Ramaha Good evening to all of you. Congrats, Vishna. That was a splendid concert. Awesome. I'm really very, very, very happy, very proud of Varaaki and Vishna for having presented this. Today's program was a very traditional, elegant, classic, Carnatic concert. Of a very high standard. There was no compromise. Right from the varnam in the attathalam to the pallavi with all the trikala intact, with the ragamalika swaras done superbly in different ragas, with the climax in the korvai. She did it with absolute ease. And it was outstanding. Congrats.

You are really fortunate, Vishna, to have been accompanied by the most esteemed sought-after gurus. Guru Gowrishankar Balachandran, Guru Jayadevan, and Guru Myuran Thananjeyan accompany you and enhance and embellish this concert to such a high standard.

Thank you so much. I feel really honored and privileged to have been participating in this memorable event. Thank you to Varaaki. Thank you to Taviraja and Jayanti for having

Visshna Thiraviyarajah

Visshna Thiraviyarajah has been immersed in the divine world of Carnatic music for the past ten years. After Vidwan Dr. Umashankar first introduced her to the rich traditions of South Indian classical music, she began formal training under her guru, Vaaraki Wijayaraj, under whose guidance she continues to refine her vocal technique, deepen her understanding of rāga, layam, and manodharma, and nurture her passion for performance. Carnatic music has become a defining pillar of her identity, one she views as a lifelong journey and a sacred commitment to preserving a timeless art form. Alongside her musical journey, Vishna is in her fourth year at the University of Toronto, majoring in Political Science with minors in Public Law and History.

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SPECIAL FEATURE



Visshna with her Guru Ms. Vaaraki Wijayaraj at left and Chief Guest Ms. Raji Gopalakrishnan at right.

invited me here. I'm very, very proud of Varaaki. You are the most brilliant guru, with all the patience, the discipline, the meticulous training which she had given to this Visshna is to be appreciated.

There's no compromise. I'm really proud that she has got into this kind of teaching now, and I wish that she trains more and more students with the same kind of inspiring teaching, with the meticulous training and discipline, and I'm sure more of them will be performing in the future good-good concerts. The concert was very high standard. Why I said that was because right from the start, the Atatala Varna Viribhoni with the two speeds is very difficult. She handled with so much of grace and elegance, absolutely ease. The whole concert, you know, she was doing it with so much of her style and elegance to be appreciated that because there was no tension of any kind on her face.

A beautiful Kriti on Lord Ganesha and the Hamsadhwani, and then a vibrant Ananda Natamata with the simple, elegant Neraval and Kalpana Swaras, with some kind of technical specialities in the Swaras, which were very, very highly, I should say, very, very inspiring and very attractive to listen to. This was followed by the beautiful song Narayana, which was very divine, and the magnum opus Kambhojiraga, handled with such elegance and classicism. The Kaana Kankoti, which is a majestic Kritni of Papanasam Sivan, was handled beautifully. The Naraval, the Swara, everything, and the climax, the Korvai, was absolutely handled with a lot of classicism.

Here in comes Gauri Shankar and Jayadevan sir, mellifluously accompanying her with so much of

encouragement, so much of support, and they also enjoyed the whole journey with her, and it was so much of technical prowess coming into the forefront in the Thaniyavartanam by Gowrishanker and Myuran Thananjeyan. A lot of anticipation and coordination. It was absolutely enjoyable to the core. The crowning piece, Ragam Thanampallavi, I have to mention, was very, very interesting, very inspiring. She handled it superbly. The Ragam, the Thanam, the Ragamalika Swaras, from the Hindolam, then going to Mohanam, then the Hamsanandi, the Kannada, everything was very effortlessly done. And the climax, Korvai, as usual, was handled with complete confidence. I appreciate you for that. This was also, there were also the light songs, which were absolutely very well selected. And congrats to

Vaaraki for that. All the Sevika Vendam, the Varuvar O Varam, the Ashai Mugam Maranthu Poche, Kandana of the Life, and of course, the elegant Lalgudi Thillana was absolutely spelled upon. Very good concert presented by Krishna. I'm very, very happy. Being a Guru myself, I can relate the pride that Varahi must be feeling, listening to her Guru. I'm sure this is a moment of gratitude to the Almighty for having blessed this concert with so much of divinity. And of course, it was a very successful three-hour concert, fully Carnatic classical traditional concert. And this is the concert which usually has to be presented by a student in the Arangetram and following several concerts after that. It's very, very

difficult to get trained in such kind of methodical learning. To remember all the songs, there was a variety of thala variations, and everything was handled with so much of ease and confidence. I'm thankful to Vaaraki for having trained her in such a high standard. And congrats to both of you. Thanks to Visshna's parents for having invited me as a chief guest here. Our stay was so comfortable. They made it very homely. And we really enjoyed the stay and we enjoyed the concert here. And I'm sure this is not an Arangetram. This is just the beginning. There will be more and more of the same kind of concert by Visshna and other students of Varaaki, and I'm sure all of you will come and encourage all the students as you have come today. So this is my very, very best wishes for you and blessings for continuing this musical journey and also excel in this divine art. Blessings to Varaaki and blessings to Visshna for continuing this journey. Thank you so much. Have a good evening.

Guru Vaaraki Wijayaraj Speech:

I'm back again, before Visshna says her few words of thank you. Shri Gurubhyo Namaha. I'd like to begin by offering gratitude to those without whom neither Visshna nor myself would be here today. So as Abdul Hamid Uncle said in his speech, Mata Pita Gurudevam, words cannot describe my gratitude to my parents, my mother who's my backbone and driving force, and who was just as invested in my students like Visshna's success as I am. To my father who supported my growth as a learner, as a teacher, through his tireless efforts, and actually through whom I first came to know Visshna's parents, and then later Visshna. And of course, my Amma who always ensured that not only me, but my students were also well fed and taken care of. To my Gurus, our esteemed Chief Guest, Shri Madhitaji Gopalakrishnan. She



Visshna with her parents and sister

SPECIAL FEATURE



Visshna performing at stage supported by other gurus with their respective instruments

mentioned that I had taught with such discipline and dedication, and I think all of her students that are here today and around the world would agree that we learned this discipline and dedication towards the art of teaching from her. I'm especially privileged to have two of my other Gurus, Shri Jaidevan Nair and Gowrishankar Balachandran, sharing this stage so graciously with Visshna today. In the Divya Prabandham work, Nanmukundru Vandadi, Shri Thirumarase Puran says, Kaarana Nii, Katra Vaini, Katpa Vaini. He declares that all that is learned, all that remains to be learned, and the origin of all of this is Shri Mannarayana. So as such, I bow down to God for granting me the sacred privilege of not only guiding Visshna, but the opportunity to stand before you today. Ten years ago, a bright ten-year-old walked into my class with curiosity in her eyes and eagerness to learn and to understand the nuances of this timeless art form. Over these years, I've watched her transform from a child that was absorbing every bit of knowledge she could get into the budding artist who continues to strive for improvement, the same one that you all witnessed today.

One of the moments that stands out the most to me is when, during the classes and the practices, our interactions shifted from me pausing her to correct or provide feedback, to her asking, Aka, can I repeat that sangati, or can I repeat that line, or is it okay if I sing it one more time? Because she felt like she could do a better job. That's when I knew something deeper had begun to blossom, and she was no longer simply just receiving instruction from us, but she was internalizing and taking ownership

for her own music. And as a teacher, I think I couldn't ask for any more than that. Today, what we witnessed was not just the result of her training or skill. It is the result of her disciplined practice, her sincerity, and her devotion towards the art itself. And of course, a side that maybe not everybody here knows, but the beautiful human being that she is.

Visshna is thoughtful, she's respectful, she's caring, and she's just a positive person to have around all of us, and I think her family would agree with me. Over the years, a very special bond has developed between the two of us, and I don't think Visshna knows this, but her mother has often shared that Visshna feels a unique attachment to me, and that warms my heart in so many ways. But I think the truth is that she doesn't even realize that it's her bright, curious, and warm nature that actually drew me out of my shell and towards her.

On some of my most demanding days between my job and classes and performances, I think it's Visshna's light-hearted exchanges, her wanting to share everything that she could about her life with me, and all of those little moments of laughter that reminded me of the joys of teaching, but also the bond that you form with those students. I'd like to extend my heartfelt thanks to her parents, Raj Uncle and Jayanti Aunty, for their unwavering trust in me and in our lessons, and to her whole family for truly supporting Visshna every single step of the way. I remember her parents telling me at several moments when Visshna wanted to sit down and practice singing through the whole concert, her whole family would sit in the living room

and listen to her from the varnam all the way to the tripukar. And I think it's that kind of support and encouragement that really encourages people to pursue art forms like this.

We're also deeply fortunate to have such an extraordinary orchestra of co-musicians today, who not only brought their own artistry to the stage, but have so patiently and thoughtfully supported Visshna throughout the rehearsals and went above and beyond to ensure that she felt comfortable and encouraged. And Kumari Aparna Kulandevil on tambura. I'd also like to take a moment to thank all of the senior teachers, midwans and midushis in Toronto. I'm not listing names because I don't want to leave anybody's name out, but every single one of you that took the time out of your schedule and in this snow, our first snow for the season, to come here and support me and bless me and my student. I truly appreciate your presence. And the same goes for all of the media partners that are here today, you know, to not just document this moment, but really support Visshna's milestone in this journey of music. I'll end with just a few words to Visshna. My wish for you, Visshna, is that you continue this journey in this endless ocean of music with the same passion, dedication, tireless effort and devotion that you displayed leading up to today. Remain a lifelong learner, always reaching to exceed your previous standards and going towards your own highest potential.

Thank you all for being here and lending your ears and hearts to Visshna's music. It truly means a lot.



SRI LANKA'S NORTHERN GATEWAY: ECONOMIC PROMISE AND GEOPOLITICAL POWER IN THE INDIAN OCEAN

By: Visvalingam Muralithas

The Northern and Eastern Provinces of Sri Lanka are historically and strategically important regions that contribute significantly to the country's economy, social development, and cultural heritage. Despite decades of conflict and disruption, these provinces possess immense potential due to their land resources, human capital, and emerging economic sectors.

Provincial Overview

- Northern Province: Comprises 5 districts — Jaffna, Kilinochchi, Mullaitivu, Mannar, and Vavuniya.
- Eastern Province: Comprises 3 districts — Trincomalee, Batticaloa, and Ampara.
- Combined, these provinces cover about 27% of Sri Lanka's land area (Northern 8,884 km², Eastern 9,996 km²).
- Population: Approximately 3.5 million in the Northern Province and 1.5 million in the Eastern Province, making up around 15% of the national population.

Sri Lanka's Northern Province stands at the crossroads of economy, geography, and strategy. Once shaped by decades of conflict, the region is now redefining its place in the island's national development and in the wider Indian Ocean geopolitical landscape. Its location, resources, and emerging connectivity make it not just a regional concern but a national and international priority.

1. Geographic and Strategic Significance

The Northern Province occupies a commanding position at the southern edge of the Indian subcontinent, with proximity to Tamil Nadu across the Palk Strait—just about 30 kilometers away. This unique location positions the North as Sri Lanka's "Northern Gateway" to South Asia. Historically, the region served as a maritime bridge between South India and the island, facilitating trade, cultural exchange, and movement of people.

In modern times, this geography offers immense strategic potential. The waters around the Northern and Eastern coasts are part of the key sea lanes of communication (SLOCs) in the Indian Ocean, through which nearly two-thirds of the world's oil trade passes. This gives Sri Lanka's northern waters heightened geopolitical importance, especially as major powers such as India, China, and the United States expand their presence in the region. Ensuring maritime security, port development, and fisheries management in these areas is therefore central to Sri Lanka's long-term national interests.

2. Marine and Fisheries

Resources

The Northern and Eastern waters are among the richest marine zones in the country. They contribute significantly to Sri Lanka's marine fisheries, including valuable tuna, prawns, cuttlefish, and crab exports. The reactivation of fisheries harbours in Point Pedro, Kankesanthurai, Pesalai, and Mullaitivu has revitalized local livelihoods while enhancing national seafood exports.

The development of sustainable fisheries, combined with modern processing and cold storage facilities, could transform the North into a leading seafood hub for both domestic and international markets. Furthermore, its proximity to Indian ports allows for regional cooperation in sustainable ocean resource management.

3. Agricultural and Natural Resources

The Northern Province is blessed with fertile lands, particularly in the Jaffna Peninsula and Vanni regions. Agriculture remains a mainstay of the economy, with paddy, onions, chillies, pulses, and tobacco being key crops. The unique underground limestone aquifer system supports both agriculture and domestic water supply, while the region's dry-zone climate favours cultivation of drought-resistant crops.

The Eastern Province, complementing the North, is also a major agricultural zone producing paddy, maize, and livestock products. Together, these two provinces contribute over 8–10% of Sri Lanka's total agricultural output, providing a vital base for food security and rural employment.

4. Infrastructure and Connectivity Potential

Post-war reconstruction has improved road, rail, and port connectivity across the Northern and Eastern regions. The development of the Kankesanthurai (KKS) Port, the Palaly International Airport, and the potential reopening of ferry links to India could position the Northern Province as a transshipment and logistics node. These projects align with broader Indo-Pacific connectivity initiatives and could attract investment from regional partners.

5. Economic Contribution and Future Prospects

Although the Northern and Eastern Provinces together contribute around 9% of Sri Lanka's GDP (Northern 4.5%, Eastern 4.7% in 2023), their potential is far greater. With investments in renewable energy (especially wind and solar), fisheries, tourism, and logistics,

the Northern Province could become a leading growth frontier. Its skilled diaspora and youth population further add to the innovation potential of the region.

6. Geopolitical and Developmental Outlook

Strategically, the Northern Province's location between the Bay of Bengal and the Arabian Sea makes it central to the Indo-Pacific balance of power. Partnerships with India in connectivity, trade, and energy could bring economic benefits while maintaining maritime stability. However, such cooperation must also safeguard Sri Lanka's sovereignty and ensure that local communities directly benefit from regional projects.

Sri Lanka's Northern and Eastern Provinces are not peripheral regions—they are the country's **Northern Gateway** to economic renewal and strategic influence. Unlocking their potential requires a blend of economic foresight, diplomatic balance, and sustainable development. As the Indian Ocean gains new global prominence, these provinces will increasingly define Sri Lanka's role at the heart of the region's emerging maritime economy.

Geopolitical and Strategic Location
The Northern Province occupies a highly strategic position in the Indian Ocean and South Asian maritime geography. It lies closest to India's southern coast, particularly Tamil Nadu, with the Palk Strait and Gulf of Mannar acting as natural maritime corridors connecting Sri Lanka with the Indian subcontinent.

This location gives the Northern Province an exceptional role in:

- Maritime security and regional trade, as major Indian Ocean shipping routes pass nearby.
- Bilateral relations between Sri Lanka and India, particularly through Jaffna, Mannar, and Point Pedro.
- Regional cooperation in fisheries management, environmental protection, and coastal development.

The Northern coastline — with harbours such as Kankesanthurai (KKS), Point Pedro, and Mannar — can serve as future nodes for trade, logistics, and naval security. Its proximity to India also makes it central to regional security interests involving India, China, and other Indian Ocean powers.

Sea and Marine Resources

The Northern Province possesses rich marine and coastal resources, making it a key area for Sri Lanka's blue economy:

- The Palk Bay and Gulf of Mannar are biologically rich waters with tuna, prawns, crabs, cuttlefish, and other high-

Op-Ed

value fish species.

- Coastal lagoons such as Jaffna Lagoon, Vadamarachchi Lagoon, and Mannar Lagoon support fisheries, aquaculture, and salt production.
 - The shallow seas are ideal for seaweed cultivation, pearling, and coastal tourism.
 - There is growing potential for offshore wind energy, tidal energy, and marine biodiversity conservation.
- These marine resources are crucial not only for food security and livelihoods but also for economic diplomacy and regional maritime cooperation.

Agricultural Resources and Land Potential

The Northern Province's landscape includes fertile plains, inland water bodies, and irrigation systems such as Iranamadu, Akkarayan, and Giant's Tank, supporting a wide range of crops.

- Key agricultural strengths include:
- Paddy cultivation as a mainstay of food production.
 - High-value crops such as onions, chilies, pulses, vegetables, and fruits.
 - Palmyrah and coconut industries that contribute to traditional livelihoods and local enterprises.
 - Livestock and dairy farming, especially in Vavuniya and Mannar.

Agriculture remains not just an economic activity but a foundation for food security, rural employment, and post-conflict recovery.

Geoeconomic and Security Relevance

In a broader Indian Ocean context, the Northern Province represents Sri Lanka's northern maritime frontier, bridging South Asia and Southeast Asia. It has:

- Potential to become a regional logistics hub linking Colombo, Trincomalee, and South Indian ports.
- Strategic importance for maritime surveillance and sea lane security, particularly given rising regional competition among India, China, and Western Indo-Pacific powers.
- Opportunities for marine-based industries, ship repair, and renewable energy projects that can integrate with national development goals.

The Way Forward

Harnessing the Northern Province's strategic value requires:

- Investment in port and transport connectivity.
- Development of fisheries, aquaculture, and marine technology.
- Strengthening cross-border trade and cooperation with India.
- Promoting sustainable agriculture and agro-processing industries.
- Ensuring environmental protection and sustainable use of marine resources.

The Northern Province is not merely a peripheral region—it is Sri Lanka's northern gateway to the Indian Ocean. Its geostrategic position, abundant sea resources, and agricultural base make it a cornerstone for national security, regional cooperation, and economic diversification. Strengthening this region through sustainable development and strategic investment will enhance Sri Lanka's role in the Indian Ocean and ensure that the Northern Province becomes a bridge between Sri Lanka,

India, and the wider Indo-Pacific region.

2. Contribution to National GDP
 - The Northern Province contributes around 3–4% to the national GDP, primarily through agriculture, fisheries, and services.
 - The Eastern Province contributes approximately 5–6%, driven by agriculture, fisheries, tourism, and port activities (Trincomalee).
 - Combined, the provinces account for roughly 8–10% of Sri Lanka's GDP, despite facing infrastructure and development challenges.
 - Provincial economic growth rates have been higher post-conflict due to reconstruction, with digital infrastructure investments and trade corridor development stimulating local economies.

Year	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
GDP growth %	8.7	8.6	4.1	6.4	4.2	5.1	6.5	2.3	-0.2	-4.6	4.2	-7.3	-2.3	5

Note: Data are based on GDP estimates with 2015 as the base year, provided by the Department of Census and Statistics. Data are updated with the latest GDP estimates released on 15 September 2025 by the Department of Census and Statistics.

Provincial GDP (at Current Market Prices) Shares and Growth (a)

Province	Share (%) 2019	2020	2021	2022 (b)(c)	2023 (b)(c)	GDP (Rs. mn) 2022 (b)(c)	GDP (Rs. mn) 2023 (b)(c)	Growth (%) 2022 (b)(c)	Per Capita GDP (Rs.) 2022 (b)(c)	Per Capita GDP (Rs.) 2023 (b)(c)
Western	42.1	42.1	42.6	43.9	43.9	10,574,955	12,035,888	13.8	1,703,166	1,952,293
Central	10.4	10.6	10.3	10.0	10.3	2,414,836	2,818,367	16.7	858,761	1,013,437
Southern	9.4	9.1	9.1	9.0	9.3	2,176,530	2,554,245	17.4	805,526	957,005
Northern	4.7	4.2	4.2	4.0	4.5	974,944	1,227,018	25.9	831,154	1,065,120
Eastern	5.2	5.9	5.5	5.1	4.7	1,225,670	1,283,126	4.7	685,498	734,895
North Western	10.9	10.9	11.3	11.1	10.9	2,673,035	2,984,703	11.7	1,031,263	1,164,535
North Central	4.7	5.1	5.0	4.8	4.8	1,151,326	1,315,224	14.2	818,866	948,935
Uva	5.5	5.0	4.9	4.8	4.7	1,161,714	1,277,737	10.0	825,081	921,223
Sabaragamuwa	6.9	7.0	7.1	7.2	7.0	1,722,894	1,923,496	11.6	823,957	929,225
Sri Lanka (Total)	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	24,075,902	27,419,804	13.9	1,085,429	1,250,961

Notes: (a) Based on GDP estimates of base year 2015 compiled by the Department of Census and Statistics. (b) Revised. (c) Provisional. Source: Central Bank of Sri Lanka. The Northern and Eastern Provinces together represent the economic performance of the island's former conflict-affected regions. Their combined contribution to Sri Lanka's total GDP has fluctuated between 9% and 10% from 2019 to 2023, showing both recovery and structural limitations in regional growth.

Northern and Eastern Provincial GDP (at Current Market Prices) Shares and Growth (a)

Year	Northern (%)	Eastern (%)	Combined Contribution (%)	Change from Previous Year
2019	4.7	5.2	9.9	—
2020	4.2	5.9	10.1	+0.2
2021	4.2	5.5	9.7	-0.4
2022 (b)(c)	4.0	5.1	9.1	-0.6
2023 (b)(c)	4.5	4.7	9.2	+0.1

Key Observations

1. Declining Trend Overall (2019–2023)
 - o The combined GDP share of Northern and Eastern Provinces declined slightly from 9.9% in 2019 to 9.2% in 2023.
 - o This shows a marginal fall of 0.7 percentage points over five years, suggesting that growth in these

WORLD NEWS



- provinces has not kept pace with the Western, Central, and Southern provinces.
2. Northern Province Recovery in 2023
 - o Northern Province's share fell from 4.7% (2019) to 4.0% (2022) but rebounded to 4.5% (2023), possibly due to post-pandemic recovery in fisheries, agriculture, and service sectors.
 3. Eastern Province Gradual Decline
 - o Eastern Province's share declined steadily from 5.2% (2019) to 4.7% (2023), marking a 0.5 percentage point fall, reflecting slower industrial and infrastructure growth compared to other regions.
 4. Western Province Dominance
 - o Western Province continues to dominate, maintaining 44% of national GDP in 2022–2023, which is nearly five times the combined GDP share of the Northern and Eastern Provinces.
 5. Structural Imbalance
 - o The data highlights regional disparities in economic development.

Despite improvements in infrastructure, the Northern and Eastern economies remain relatively under-industrialized, heavily dependent on agriculture and public sector employment.

Interpretation

- The combined Northern and Eastern economic contribution is stagnant, not keeping pace with national growth.
- The Northern Province's small rebound in 2023 could signal localized improvements but remains below pre-pandemic levels.
- To ensure balanced

- national growth, targeted investment in transport, renewable energy, fisheries, and SME development in these regions is crucial.
- 3. Land Capacity and Agriculture
 - Northern and Eastern provinces together have millions of acres of arable land, including paddy fields, vegetable lands, and cash crops.

WORLD NEWS



Op-Ed

• Agriculture remains the primary economic activity, with major products including:

- o Paddy (both Maha and Yala seasons)
- o Big onions (Jaffna and Kilinochchi)
- o Chilies, vegetables, and pulses
- o Coconut and sugarcane in Eastern Province

• Fisheries: Both provinces have extensive coastlines, providing livelihoods for over 50,000 fishing families.

• Potential exists to increase yields using modern irrigation, technology, and market linkages.

4. Economic Activity and Industrial Sectors

• Northern Province: Small-scale industries, handicrafts, ICT services, and tourism (Jaffna cultural sites).

• Eastern Province: Port-related industries (Trincomalee), livestock, salt production, and eco-tourism.

• Digital economy: Investments in e-governance, digital payments, and ICT hubs are gradually increasing, linking producers and consumers.

• Provincial economic diversification is critical for reducing dependence on agriculture and fisheries.

5. Health and National Health System

• Both provinces are integrated into the national health system, providing free or subsidized healthcare.

• Smart health initiatives are emerging:

- o Telemedicine for remote districts
- o Digital patient records
- o Mobile clinics in Mannar, Mullaitivu, and Ampara

• Challenges remain in infrastructure, equipment, and specialist availability, especially in rural areas.

6. Population and Workforce

• The population is predominantly rural, with high participation in agriculture, fisheries, and small-scale trade.

• Youth employment programs in digital skills, tourism, and entrepreneurship are underway to reduce underemployment.

• Literacy rates are improving, providing a foundation for skill-based economic growth.

7. District-Level Economic Highlights

Province	District	Key Economic Activities	Notes
Northern	Jaffna	Vegetables, onions, education, tourism	Major contributor to onion exports
Northern	Kilinochchi	Paddy, fishing	Potential irrigation-based expansion
Northern	Mullaitivu	Fisheries, coconut	Post-war reconstruction ongoing
Northern	Mannar	Salt, livestock, fishing	Salt pans vital for trade
Northern	Vavuniya	Agriculture, small industries	Transit corridor for trade
Eastern	Trincomalee	Port, fisheries, tourism	Strategic deep-water port
Eastern	Batticaloa	Paddy, fisheries, vegetables	Livelihoods mainly coastal
Eastern	Ampara	Agriculture, livestock, irrigation	High irrigation potential

The Northern and Eastern Provinces of Sri Lanka, together covering nearly one-third of the island's land area, hold immense yet underutilized potential in driving the country's balanced and inclusive development. Although these provinces contribute a relatively modest 9–10% of national GDP, they possess unique natural resources, specialized economic activities, and strategic

advantages that make them vital to Sri Lanka's long-term growth and development.

Geographic and Strategic Significance

Bordered by the Indian Ocean and the Bay of Bengal, the Northern and Eastern Provinces form the island's northern and eastern coastal belt. Their location provides strategic advantages for maritime trade, fisheries, and regional connectivity with South India and Southeast Asia. Key ports, including Kankesanthurai, Point Pedro, and Trincomalee, further enhance their potential as hubs for logistics, shipping, and energy development.

Natural Resources and Specializations

The Eastern Province features fertile plains and expansive lagoons, along with mineral resources such as clay, limestone, and mineral sands, vital for construction and industrial sectors. The Northern Province, with its coastal lagoons and inland water bodies, supports rich fisheries and salt production.

Agriculture is a cornerstone of both provincial economies, with paddy cultivation dominating in districts like Ampara, Batticaloa, Kilinochchi, and Mannar. Crops such as onions, chilies, vegetables, and palm products supplement local incomes. Livestock farming, particularly dairy production, further contributes to rural livelihoods and food security.

Fisheries and Coastal Economy

The provinces collectively account for nearly two-thirds of Sri Lanka's coastline, anchoring the island's fisheries industry. Coastal waters are rich in tuna, cuttlefish, prawns, and other high-value species. Key fishing centers include Jaffna, Mullaitivu, Mannar, and Trincomalee. Post-war recovery and modernized fishing techniques have improved productivity, though challenges remain in infrastructure, cold storage, and market access.

Tourism and Cultural Heritage

Tourism is a growing opportunity, with pristine beaches such as Nilaveli, Pasikudah, and Casuarina, alongside historic and religious sites like Nallur Kovil, Koneswaram Temple, and Kantharodai ruins. Managed effectively, tourism can generate employment,

income, and regional revenue, while showcasing the provinces' cultural richness.

Budget Allocation and Development Initiatives

National and provincial budgets allocate funds for:

- Road and transport infrastructure
- Irrigation and agricultural development
- Education and skill development

• Healthcare modernization

• Fisheries and coastal protection
Investments in digital infrastructure, e-governance, and smart health systems are also enhancing service delivery efficiency.

Strengths and Opportunities

• Natural resources: Fertile lands, rivers, coastal zones, and port facilities

• Agriculture: Paddy, onion, chili, vegetables, and livestock

• Tourism and culture: Historical sites, religious landmarks, and eco-tourism

• Digital adoption: E-services, payment systems, and ICT capacity building

• Human capital: Educated youth, skilled workers, and resilient communities

Challenges

• Post-conflict infrastructure gaps

• Limited industrialization and private-sector engagement

• Seasonal water scarcity in some districts

• Market access and price volatility

• Healthcare and specialist shortages in remote areas

The Way Forward

Integrating the Northern and Eastern Provinces into the national economy requires:

• Targeted investment in transport, ports, irrigation, and rural industries

• Strengthened governance and local administration

• Youth entrepreneurship and access to finance

• Sustainable utilization of fisheries, agriculture, and renewable energy resources

Conclusion

The Northern and Eastern Provinces, though smaller contributors to GDP, are critical for Sri Lanka's inclusive growth, food security, and cultural identity. Their rich natural resources, strategic location, and human capital present opportunities for sustainable development. Targeted investments in infrastructure, agriculture, fisheries, health, and skills will not only enhance provincial growth but also promote equitable development, sustainable livelihoods, and regional integration into the national economy.

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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SHN research sheds light on language preference accuracy in hospitals

BY: JENNER PRATT, COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER, SHN

Scarborough Health Network (SHN) is celebrating a new study by Dr. Chris Yarnell, Dr. Tom Bodley, Dr. Martin Betts, Dr. Alexis Gordon, Dr. Paul Tam, and Michele James, examining the accuracy of preferred language data in hospital electronic medical records. Conducted across SHN's three hospitals, the study supports SHN Research Institute's focus on population health and equity, revealing how well hospitals capture the languages patients are most comfortable using.

In Scarborough, where nearly 40 per cent of patients prefer a language other than English, accurate language data is essential for health equity.

"Being able to communicate symptoms clearly, understand medication instructions, and follow care plans is essential," said Dr. Yarnell.

Preferred language data guides the need for interpreters, staffing, and resource allocation.

The study asked whether the language in a patient's record matches the language they actually prefer. Camron Ford, a University of Toronto medical student, surveyed 323 patients and compared their answers to data in SHN's digital health



Healthcare worker digitally translating for a patient

records. The system was accurate in 86% of cases, but accuracy dropped to 70% for patients preferring a non-English language, meaning nearly 1 in 3 had incorrect or missing data.

These findings highlight the need for flexible solutions in diverse communities.

"We counted 26 non-English languages among our patients," noted Dr. Yarnell, emphasizing the role of services like phone interpretation.

SHN also pairs patients with nurses who share their language when possible, improving comfort and communication.

The study reflects SHN's

commitment to community-driven, interdisciplinary research and created a meaningful opportunity for a medical student.

The results are already informing improvements in how language data is collected and used. SHN's Measuring Health Equity Committee is reviewing the findings, and future work may explore the impact of language-matched care on outcomes in critical care.

Dr. Yarnell encourages patients and families to ensure their preferred language is accurately recorded. This study shows how community-focused research can drive improvements rooted in equity, inclusion, and impact.



SHN Regional Nephrology Program named top performer in Ontario

BY: MELODY KESHISHIAN, COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST, SHN

Scarborough Health Network (SHN)'s Regional Nephrology Program is the largest regional kidney disease program in Ontario, providing dedicated and compassionate care to thousands of patients each year. The Ontario Renal Network (ORN) has recognized SHN for outstanding performance in kidney care and hemodialysis.

For 2024-2025, SHN achieved:

- **Top Performance on vascular access wait time**, the percentage of semi-urgent surgeries giving patients a dialysis port (an opening that connects to a dialysis machine to clean a person's blood). We attained a perfect 100% rate—the highest in Ontario;
- **Meeting the annual target on the Deferred Dialysis performance indicator** with a rate of 92.9%.

“This achievement reflects our commitment to delivering high-quality, timely, and patient-centred care for individuals living with kidney disease,” said Ethel Macatangay, Director of Nephrology at SHN and Toronto Regional Director at the ORN.

This past year, the ORN launched the Ontario Renal Plan (ORP) and



SHN Regional Nephrology Program medical staff

the first-ever Kidney Transplant System Plan: important provincial roadmaps for kidney care. SHN's Regional Nephrology Program played a key role in shaping these plans, helping to build a more integrated, equitable, and high-performing kidney care system for all Ontarians.

“Thanks to the work of doctors, nurses, technologists, social workers, dietitians, and all other nephrology staff, SHN is able to lead the way in the province for renal care,” shared Dr. Tabo Sikaneta, Staff Nephrologist at SHN and Toronto Regional Medical Lead at the ORN.

SHN thanks Ontario Health for this recognition. We remain dedicated to improving the lives of patients with kidney disease.

Protect your respiratory health this Fall

This respiratory season, it is important to stay current on how to protect your health:

- Ensure you are up-to-date with your vaccinations for the flu, COVID-19, and RSV if you are eligible.
- Clean your hands often to reduce the spread of germs.
- Stay home if you are feeling unwell.

If have symptoms like fever, cough, or congestion, visit your family doctor. You can also visit SHN's **Urgent Care Centre at Centenary Hospital**, which provides walk-in services for non-life-threatening illnesses and injuries, including many respiratory conditions.



MARKHAM STOUFFVILLE HOSPITAL FOUNDATION'S 'THE FORTUNE BALL' CELEBRATES CHINESE-CANADIAN CULTURE AND COMMUNITY GENEROSITY IN SUPPORT OF EXCEPTIONAL PATIENT CARE



L-R: Mark Fam, President and CEO, Oak Valley Health, Fortune Ball Co-Chairs — Kenny Wan, Gordon Chan, Stephen Li, David Ho, Alan Kwong, and Suzette Strong, CEO, Markham Stouffville Hospital Foundation

Markham Stouffville Hospital Foundation hosted its fourth annual The Fortune Ball on Saturday, November 22, 2025, presented by TD to benefit Oak Valley Health's Markham Stouffville Hospital (MSH). Hosted at the Hilton Toronto Markham Suites, the evening brought Chinese-Canadian culture to life through exquisite cuisine, dazzling entertainment, and a spirit of unity that filled the ballroom.

Founding members of MSH Foundation's Fortune Leadership Council (FLC) returned as the gala's Co-Chairs, carrying forward the tradition of sharing good fortune and prosperity with the community. Alan Kwong, David Ho, Gordon Chan, Stephen Li, and Kenny Wan continue to lead the FLC — an assembly of local Chinese business leaders with a shared mission to give back to the hospital. Together, they have inspired a growing circle of Chinese philanthropic supporters to bring abundant blessings to MSH and help ensure exceptional care remains close to home. With their leadership of FLC and The Fortune Ball they have raised \$5.2 million to date!

“As we celebrate tonight, we are reminded

of the Chinese proverb, ‘If you always give, you always have,’” says Co-Chair, David Ho. “It reflects the spirit of giving as we will all need the hospital at some point in our lives and what we’ve accomplished allows MSH to update its equipment, expand its campus, and enhance its services. In a year when many are feeling the weight of economic uncertainty, The Fortune Ball’s support of our local hospital truly strengthens the care our community depends on. We are not stopping here though.”

MSH Foundation Chief Executive Officer, Suzette Strong shared her gratitude for the remarkable support behind FLC and The Fortune Ball. “Health care is evolving within an increasingly complex landscape, and MSH’s community continues to grow. Our hospital remains committed to providing high-quality, integrated, patient-centred care to all the communities we serve,” says Suzette. “This would not be possible without the dedication and generosity of our FLC leaders and generous donors. It is because of our supporters that Markham Stouffville Hospital is the cornerstone of our healthy community, for the past 35 years and for

many more to come.” Access to state-of-the-art equipment is vital for MSH to continue delivering the exceptional patient-centred care that families rely on every day. This year’s appeal invited guests to help fund equipment to outfit patient exam rooms in the Emergency Department, helping MSH respond to urgent and evolving needs in emergency medicine as our community continues to grow and age. “Emergency medicine is more important than ever. It is not just our job, it is our calling,” says Dr. Elizabeth Poon, Emergency Physician, Oak Valley Health. “We need to bolster the Emergency Department because it’s the place people come to when they have no where else to go.”

Returning emcee Jennifer Hsiung, host of CP24 Breakfast, led the evening with a lively presence that set the tone for the night. Entertainment included captivating performances by Sandy Sun, Sun Ling School of Dance, and an energetic set by George St. Kitts, offering guests an unforgettable blend of cultural expression and Motown flair. Donations are still being accepted and are urgently needed. To relive



HEALTH & WELLNESS

the unforgettable moments from The Fortune Ball and to donate, visit www.mshfortuneball.ca or follow us on social media @supportMSH.

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



Host of CP24 Breakfast, Jennifer Hsiung returns to emcee The Fortune Ball benefiting Oak Valley Health's Markham Stouffville Hospital



Recognizing Presenting Sponsor, TD for their support of the 2025 The Fortune Ball in support of Markham Stouffville Hospital Foundation



Master Guo-Xuan Ruan and his Chinese Orchestra open The Fortune Ball with a captivating performance that sets the tone for an elegant evening



Mayor Frank Scarpitti, City of Markham (centre), with The Fortune Ball Co-Chairs (L-R) — Gordon Chan, Alan Kwong, Kenny Wan, David Ho, and Stephen Li



Mayor Iain Lovatt, Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville, brings greetings and support at The Fortune Ball



The George St. Kitts Band gets the crowd on their feet with their dynamic set



Sandy Sun and Sun Ling School of Dance take the stage with a vibrant cultural performance



The Hilton Toronto/Markham is transformed into an elegant evening for community members and supporters of Oak Valley Health's Markham Stouffville Hospital



Suzette Strong, CEO, Markham Stouffville Hospital Foundation (MSH) and Mark Fam, President and CEO, Oak Valley Health, celebrate the success of The Fortune Ball and Fortune Leadership Council with Anita Mah, Senior Development Officer, MSH Foundation (centre) and The Fortune Ball Co-Chairs — David Ho, Gordon Chan, Alan Kwong, Kenny Wan, and Stephen Li



THE AIRCRAFT COMPASS AND THE MORAL COMPASS OF THE AIRLINE PILOTS

By: Kane Siva

This topic has become an interesting matter to delve into, within the last 15 years. An eighth grader knows, that an aircraft flies with the help of a Magnetic Compass, which guides the pilots to chart their course, and to fly in the air to their desired destinations. This compass functions in real synchronization so as to enable the pilots to perform their (pilot's) sacred duty with the help of other navigational aids and to fly from point A to point B, with remarkable ease, and with absolute perfection. The passengers who take to the air to fly to their destinations place their trust in the hands of the pilots (mainly on the pilots) and cabin crew who man the aircraft, and aid them to achieve this objective. I strongly believe and the greater aviation industry too, that this can easily be achieved if the flying crew, especially the Pilots who hold the Throttle sets a high moral compass in all their actions, so as to enable the flying machine to reach its destination with ease. What is the Moral Compass and Ethics of the pilots? Basically Ethics is defined as a system of principles and an external factor that decide what or which is morally right or wrong in performing a certain duty that is entrusted to you. In contrast, Morality is an internal guide that differentiate right from wrong and it is conscious based. There is a code of conduct enacted by the FAA or Civil aviation organisations and the ALPA, Airline Pilot's Association international, which guides, nurture all the crew members and they are expected to follow it to the letter, so as to enable a smooth operation of the flight. The four components of the moral compass are as follows: Love, Compassion, Honesty and Integrity. The pilots are in a great way encompasses all these 4 values in performing the solemn duty of being a Pilot and flying a commercial aircraft. The foremost component in any pilot's mind is the safety of the passengers and other fellow crew members, in his fold, under any cost, circumstances and conditions. This "Human Compass" has no Calibration at all, except the sheer Morality and Compassion, and this takes unequivocal precedence over any external pressure, by the Management of the airline, desires in any pilot's psyche, unless otherwise, due to any mental disorder or depression. Pilots always maintain and practice a high level of integrity, professionalism, honesty, accountability, and set an example to their fraternity, and for aspiring pilot trainees, so as to be a trailblazer. Also they should be role models in the cockpit, as well when they

are off flying duties to keep the flag flying high. They should not produce documents that are not factual, falsify their records and refrain from flying with false Pilot's Licences, you all may wonder why I pen this way? It happened already in one of the Asian airlines, and a few other carriers elsewhere. This was an open secret since the media and online messages shed clear light on this.

Pilots should be mentally robust to chart their course through the most difficult situations including unforeseen emergencies, all the

inclement and the turbulent weather conditions which has become a norm due to, maybe, global warming. Pilots carry a heavy weight on their shoulders once in the Cockpit and till they land at their destination airport. Pilots have to have a high degree of accountability towards their employer and also must make sure that the flights are operated in a timely fashion, so the crew schedulers, and commercial flight schedulers will have a smooth going. I remember when I was doing this flight planning/operations occupation, the pilots have to report 1 hour before the flight and should be on board the aircraft after completing all the airport formalities, and with the preflight routines with the flight operations staff. One of the great moral responsibility of any pilot is to mentor the junior pilots, help them to learn, progress and to evolve as a real skillful pilot. There are certain times where a pilot is faced with a real dilemma. If a pilot feels a flight has to be delayed because of a technical issue, he would do so, and must, immaterial of the cost involved due to a delayed flight to the airline, as he would consider the safety of his passengers over any financial components. Pilots



have a great moral responsibility, to be highly honest, regarding their mental well being. If they have any depression, anxiety or any other issues, for example, a sudden death in his family, that would hamper his flying duties, then he must relieve himself from the flying duties. If he hides these issues and continues as normal, this would jeopardise the safety of the passengers. Normally they do not divulge for the fear losing their flying license, and it is a double edged sword. Normally any pilot has to undergo a medical examination every six months to prove their fitness, to perform the duty, but the mental part of it may not be revealed unless the pilot comes clean on this. This is very important and, here, the real integrity comes into play. There were few fatal crashes because the pilots did not reveal their mental issues and this was more highlighted in Andreas Lubitz, co-pilot on Germanwings Flight 9525, 24th March 2015, that killed 150 people on board, when he crashed into Alps over France due to his mental illness which escaped all the pre-medical evaluation.

I would like to mention a few of the incidents that happened in the world of



aviation so as to highlight the need for greater moral compass. July 27th 2025, a Delta pilot was arrested after landing at San Francisco airport for charges related to child pornography. September 3rd 2025, a Japan Airlines Captain, relieved from duty after drinking alcohol before an international flight in Hawaii, a Southwest Airlines pilot in January 2025 (I believe), pulled out of a cockpit, flight 3772, Savannah to Chicago Midway, when he smelled of liquor at the gates, thanks to a vigilant TSA officer on duty, and was arrested, there were more incidents in the years before too. As an aviation buff sometimes I strongly feel that we should have a breathalyzer test for the pilots just at the gates before all the flights world over, so as to prevent this occurring often, which one day, who knows, can lead to the worst calamity in the world aviation.

There was an incident this year in one of the Asian Airlines, where the Captain, locked the co-pilot out of the cockpit over some issues (No idea why this played out) but one thing for sure, it really lowered the moral compass of the captain and highly risking the safety of the passengers who were entrusted to him. I don't want to dive more and risk my life for the fear of retribution by the parties concerned, and the airline too. May be a first in the annals of aviation. Another news item cropped up in the first week of November is this: A South African Airline Pilot flew for 20 years or more with a fake license, thanks to God, no major disaster occurred. A week later another incident was online about a Swedish pilot, with Estonian roots, who flew without having a license till he was arrested at Amsterdam airport in 2010. These kind of incidents are alarming.

Another troublesome behaviour and incidents occur, on and off, has happened, and may happen again, mostly in the US (may be elsewhere too, but for sure, a rare occurrence in other parts) is between the Pilots and Air traffic controllers over communication issues or otherwise, and this too is highly unpalatable, and surely distract the pilots attention, ATC controllers, and above all risks the safety of the passengers who fly with them.

The incident I am penning down is really a study of a pilot's moral compass and I was a sole witness except the management of the airline. (AirCeylon)

This happened during my tenure, in front of me at AirCeylon in 1977. One of our DC8 flights to London, Colombo - Paris - London Heathrow, was scheduled for departure at 0100 am, early morning,

on 3rd of September 1977. When AirCeylon transport went to pick up the rostered first officer, (co-pilot) a former airforce wing commander, on secondment from Sri Lanka Airforce to AirCeylon, he informed me at the 11th hour, his unavailability to operate that night (to be precise 45 minutes before the airline transport went to pick him up) around 11 pm for the 1 am flight. The transport came to the airport with Capt. Grafton

Germanwings Flight 9525



D-AIPX, the aircraft involved, pictured in 2014

and late flight engineer Jayasooriya minus the first officer. I was in a real quandary as to how to find another first officer. The worst part, we did not have many trained DC-8 copilots. I called a couple of them who were not rostered and they were away from home. It took nearly 2 hours and finally I managed to get former Airforce wing commander, (Also on secondment from) First officer, late Noel Anandappa, out of bed, who saved the day for me, and the airline. The passengers were all already checked in, Euro 7 Tourists, fully packed flight, since I could not find a first officer for 3 hours, passengers and were agitated, and finally when the passengers were informed that the flight would depart at 0400 am, the passengers carried me up in the air, (was literally scared) out of happiness and thanked me like nothing. The same day when the General Manager, late James Lanerolle, was informed of the delay and the events subsequently unfolded, he called me from his home on a Saturday and thanked me profusely, and later followed it up with a letter of appreciation through the Flight Operations Manager. I am penning this not to showcase what I did, but to show the moral obligation of the first officer concerned. Later I came to know what actually happened, "Partying". On the same token have to narrate what I observed among some of my good friends and colleagues. Retired Capt. GAF, will not drink most of the times, anything that was refrigerated, saying it would increase the blood pressure and never touches alcohol except may be when he is on vacation, a can of beer may be. Capt. Ranjit Pedris another devoted gent. who strictly followed all the protocols before a flight and both of them were

really dedicated to the letter and treated the work place (Cockpit) as a temple, as many others in their flock. There were few others who took their duty as prayers, Capt. Elmo, Rohan Wijesingha, Duleep Vetha and Capt. Senthorsevean. There are few more, unfortunately space is the constraint. This is the real moral compass of the pilots. I have seen many of them and their devotion to their careers and the people on other side too.

I read an interesting passage about Attitudes and Aptitudes that was published in the Boston Herald many years ago.

Morality is not defined only by a set of rules and guidelines. But this is where one's inner self is guiding you to do the right thing whatever the consequences may be. So always strive to do the right thing. Quoting John F Kennedy, who considered Morality as a great principle in life. To perform a duty above personal gain and to do

what is right morally with courage, in spite of personal consequences, is considered as a great moral compass and I am sure pilots all over the world always strive to achieve this by all means and uphold the value of moral compass of the fraternity. Keep Up The Morality And The Moral Compass. "Cheers To Pilots!" Globally.

I want to say a special Thank you for all my pilot friends and colleagues whom I have worked with for 8 years in Sri Lanka, some of them were UTA French Plots, PANAM, BA, Swiss Air, South African and also the pilots who have flown me in various parts of the world, and to some the dedicated US pilots. My sincere heartfelt appreciation for your in-depth devotion and dedicated service.

My strong contention is this: All these pilots would say this: "We Stand On The Shoulders Of Giants".

God Bless You All.



P.S.: I dedicate this write up to all the pilots whom I have worked with, my colleagues and friends, and to those pilots who took the final flight into the Sunset.



EXCERPTS FROM THE BOOK 'HEAR YOURSELF' BY PREM RAWAT

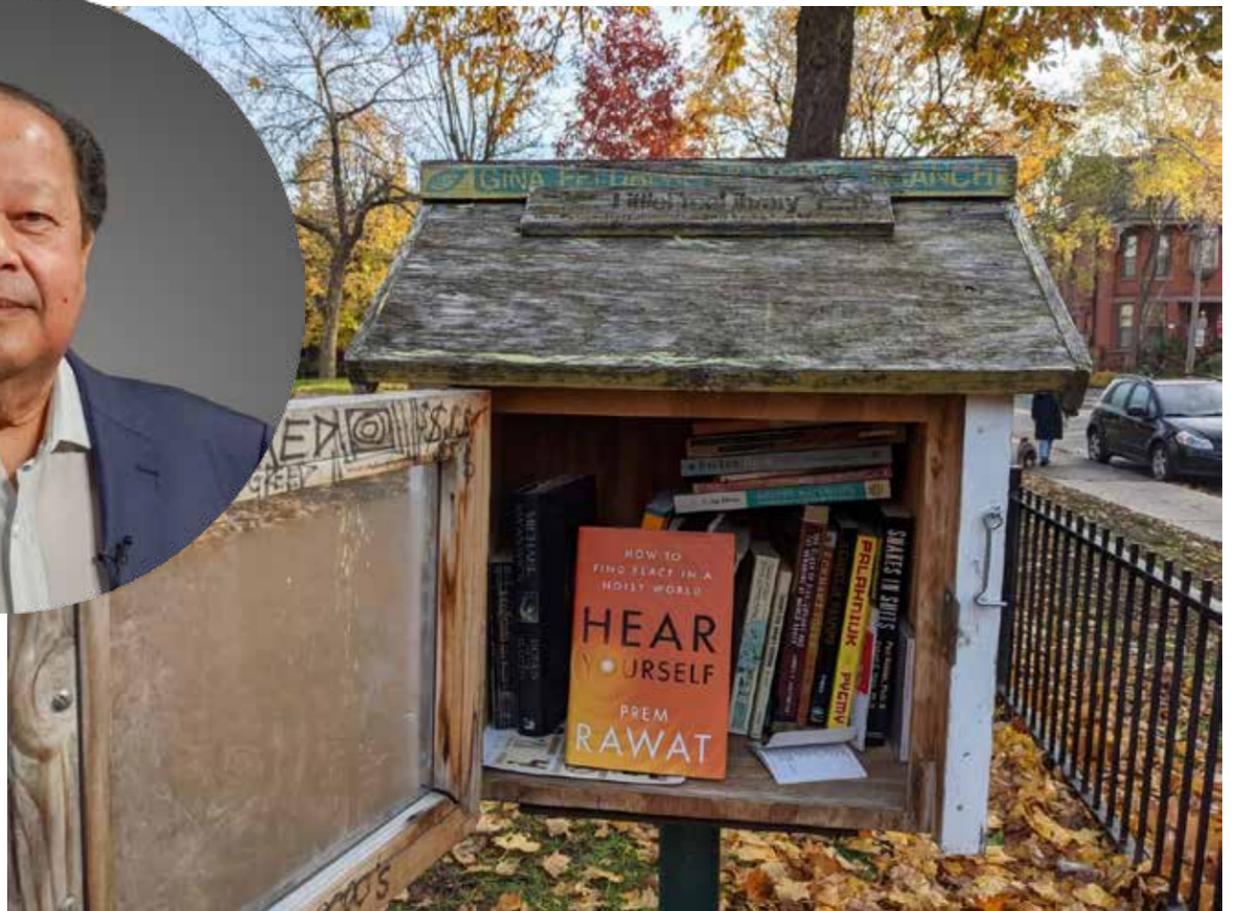
HOW TO SLEEP WITHOUT SLEEPING

Someone once asked my father, "what it is like to go deep inside and connect with peace?"

He replied "it is like going to sleep without sleeping"

The first time I heard that story, I was driving, and I had to drive over to the side of the road. I found it so profound. Imagine being in that state: like being asleep without sleeping. That merging of two states into one. Imagine how profoundly refreshing that sleepless sleep can be.

When we take away the need for our innermost self to be about other things, we can experience a tremendous sense of freedom. The weight of attachment lifts from our shoulders. Are we humans capable of experiencing something just Peace is for what is, not for what it enables us to do next? Well, it may run counter to our action-led world, but I think we are. Peace is possible for all of us, but we must choose to experience it, not try to manufacture it.



Blind to the obvious

Peace is right there in us., but many people never get to feel it. It is everywhere and yet elusive. In that way, it is rather like light. Look out the window and you might see a wall. If you look closer, you will see the bricks in that wall and even the fine details of the mortar between the bricks. We see the wall but we don't see the light, because the light is everywhere.

Natural light is not there to illuminate the world on our

behalf- that is just a wonderful and life-giving benefit of light being light. As with inner peace, we can appreciate the effect of light on the world around us, but we should also appreciate the essence of light as a thing in itself.

Sometimes the most wonderful thing we can do is just be. Too often the distractions of everyday life take our attentions away from experiencing the universe inside us. We go through this life seeing the colors reflected back to us by the world outside, without seeing the full spectrum reality within. It transforms our experience of life when we recognize we live on, and are part of this radiant ground.



Words

People live by



By: J A Rajah

1. Four things come back: the spoken word, the sped arrow, the past life, and the neglected opportunity.
- Italian Proverb
2. You never know enough until you see what is more than enough.
- William Blake
3. Nothing is more highly prized than each day's value.
- Goethe.
4. The empty vessel makes the most extraordinary sound.
- Shakespeare.
5. Study without reflection is a waste of time; reflection without study is dangerous.
- Confucius.
6. A man too busy to care for his health is like a mechanic too busy to care for his tools.
- Spanish Proverb
7. A lie has no legs but scandalous wings.
- Japanese Proverb.
8. Conscience gets a lot of credit that belongs to cold feet.
- Anonymous.
9. As long as the sun shines, one does not ask for the moon.
- Russian Proverb.
10. Experience is the father of wisdom.
- Franklin.



BY THULASI MUTTULINGAM

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From Diana Alastair on X:

I'm sure you all remember Avery Jackson, the "trans girl" who, at 9, was on the cover of National Geographic. Avery was given the gold standard in gender affirming care: he was chemically castrated and sterilized with Lupron - a medication usually prescribed to castrate sex offenders, but used on trans-identifying boys to prevent the onset of puberty.

Now, at age 17, Avery has come out as "nonbinary." He also identifies as asexual, meaning that he doesn't experience sexual attraction.

This is undoubtedly the result of the Lupron which stopped him from going through puberty. The president of WPATH, Dr. "Marci" Bowers, has said on camera that so-called "puberty blockers" chemically castrate boys who take them, leaving them incapable of arousal or orgasm as adults.

For adult sex offenders, the process is reversible. For boys like Avery, the effects are permanent. He will never feel sexual attraction, or any of the experiences that accompany it.

Avery is also sterile; he can never father a child, and his own childhood was spent in the national spotlight. The chemical castration he endured has also stunted his growth and mental development in irreversible ways. Parts of his body were prevented from developing fully, and so was his mind. His childhood and his normalcy were stolen from him, and he has said that transitioning "ruined [his] life."

It is high time that we stop pretending that children can make an informed decision to transition or take blockers, even if their doctors are honest about the risks and consequences — which most are not.

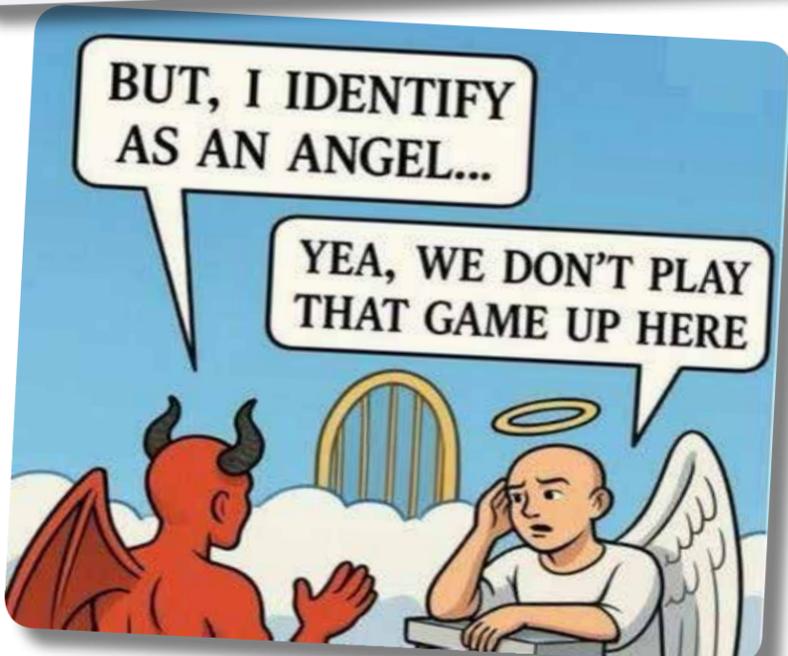
Blockers are not reversible: the intellectual deficits and physical underdevelopment that Lupron causes will never repair themselves, and neither will the damage done to the child victim's emotional intelligence and maturity. This will, of course, make it easier to push them into transitioning; that is, to sell them hormones and provide surgical alterations.

This is the medication that will be used to experiment on hundreds of children as young as 11 in a newly-announced clinical trial in the UK.

220 children will be involved in this study, even though the damage that "puberty blockers" cause to the sexual function and intellectual capacity of children has been well-documented, and the UK is just one country that has banned their use.

The trial is being carried out anyway, according to Dr. Hilary Cass, because "[as] there are clinicians, children and families who believe passionately in the beneficial effects [of puberty blockers], a trial was the only way forward to make sense of this."

In other words, the demands of children, transhausen parents, and the clinicians who profit from pushing this drug are being allowed to overrule clear and objective evidence that it is harmful to the children who take it.





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HARVEST

Original in Tamil by Akani Suresh

English version by Siva Sinniah



Oyo state is in the South Western part of Nigeria. The majority of people living here speak the language called Yoruba. Isayin is a village in Oyo State. Two police officers were traveling in their vehicle along the highway by the side of this Village. It was a Saturday morning around 6:00. Nicholas was the OIC of that area police station.

Western Africa is usually encircled by “Hamattan” from November to March. This is a mist-filled storm which originates from the Sahara Desert, in the northern part of Africa. This storm is usually carried by high winds blowing

from North to the South and Western parts of the continent. Hamattan on that day was severe, hence the vehicle in which the officers traveled was going quite slowly because the visibility was very poor. They saw a boy running from the forest area towards them raising both hands and seeking help.

Abraham the driver stopped the vehicle along the side of the road as ordered by Nicholas. The boy ran towards the vehicle raising both his hands. Both the officers went down from their vehicle and walked towards the boy and held him by his hands.

“Why are you running so fast? Were you chased by any animal in the forest?” inquired Nicholas. He couldn’t speak for some time, then he told them that his name is Victor and fell down and fainted.

Abraham sprinkled water on his face and gave him little water to drink and also gave him a banana to eat. They were able to identify that he was hungry and thirsty. Normally in Nigeria when they travel long distances people used to carry bananas and groundnuts. They had these items in the vehicle.

Since the boy was very weak, they took him to

Short Story

SPECIAL FEATURE



the hospital for a checkup. After a few days they started inquiring as to what happened to him. It came to light that he was one among the people who were abducted by some unknown people in the neighborhood. It was also revealed that an event which happened in the market some months back, where a big truck used to carry cattle, was brought to the market and the people who were assembled there, were sprayed on by a liquid and thereby they lost their senses and were taken into the vehicle and disappeared from there. The police were not able to trace their whereabouts or about the vehicle which carried them to an unknown place.

This boy was one among those groups of people who were abducted and were living in a camp in the midst of a forest. A guard who was guarding these people, saw this boy and was feeling pity on him and blindfolded him, brought him through the forest and allowed him to escape.

The boy's clothes were given to the sniffer dog several times to get the smell of them. After which, with the help of the police officers and the dog, they were able to encircle the camp and arrest the criminal gang and all those people abducted. They were shocked to see nearly 2,000 people detained by their abductors. There were some women and young children among them. They were unaware of where they were being held and for what reason.

All those people who were running the camp and the people working there were all taken into custody by the policeman and started their inquiry. Victor was

also brought there with the mask on and he was able to identify some of them and told them as to the daily routine there. Also, they were able to get more information from the guard, who allowed the boy to escape. The people who were in the camp were given food adulterated with some chemicals, so that they lost their state of mind and were made to behave according to the orders of the abductors. The person who helped Victor to escape, gave food without adulterating with the chemicals, hence he was able to manage to escape easily.

On inquiry the police officers were able to get shocking news about this camp. Some unknown people have been visiting this camp and were taking some people from there to an unknown place, telling them that they are being taken for medical examination. Some people who were taken like that were brought back and some were not. So the policeman had to wait in ambush, for the arrival of those Unknown People. One day they arrived there and were arrested by the police. At the end of the investigation they arrested some doctors and some rich people who were involved in a network of a criminal group. This group was involved in removing some internal organs from the captured people, without their knowledge and sending it overseas for big sums of money. This news was published widely in the newspapers in Ohio State. Since this group was functioning in various parts of the state, a special unit was set up by the police department under the leadership of Nicholas to investigate further.

It has been more than 20 years since this incident happened. Nicholas has been working very hard on this criminal activity and has been successful in arresting and punishing the individuals involved. Nicholas is presently holding an important position in the federal government Police Department. He had faced so many difficult situations during his tenure of office as a police officer. Even though he was working very hard to put an end to this matter, he was not able to succeed because of the demand for human organs in the Underworld. He had been working with Interpol to bring an end to this criminal trade and was unsuccessful.

In one of his interviews with the press, he suggested that International Governments must take an active role in stemming this trade. Otherwise it is really difficult to put an end to this. Furthermore he suggested that every human being must take the pledge to donate his or her body parts after death. If this is done very successfully, then the harvesting of human organs carried on by unscrupulous individuals will diminish and slowly may die away. This suggestion was well received by the media and they came forward to publicize this policy of donating organs after death throughout the world.

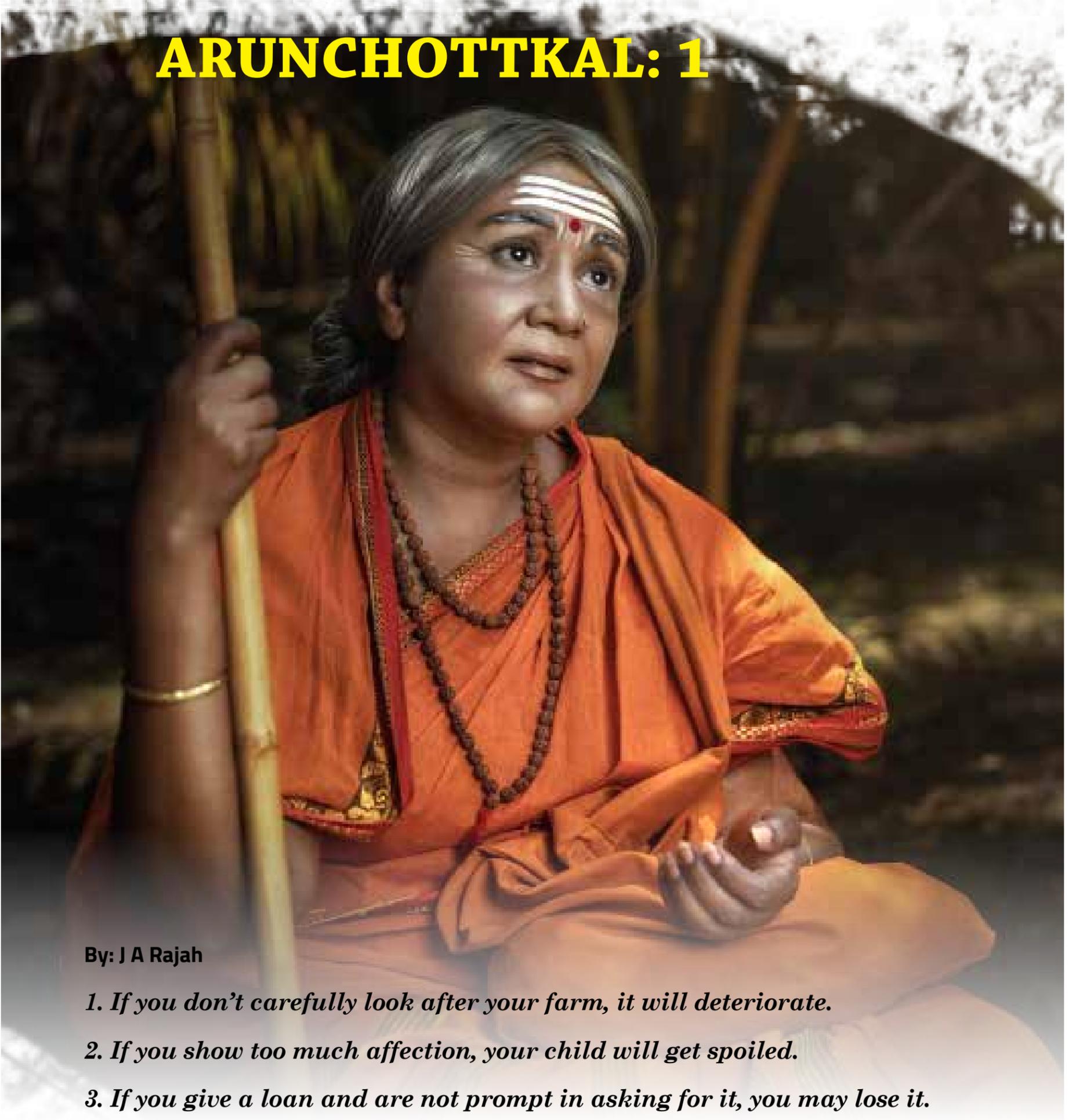
It is the duty of all human beings to make a pledge to donate their organs after they pass away. This might bring an end to the harvest of human organs, carried out by some criminals to earn quick money and prey on the poor people, who fall victims easily.



SPECIAL FEATURE

AWAAIYAR'S

ARUNCHOTTKAL: 1



By: J A Rajah

- 1. If you don't carefully look after your farm, it will deteriorate.*
- 2. If you show too much affection, your child will get spoiled.*
- 3. If you give a loan and are not prompt in asking for it, you may lose it.*
- 4. If you are not vigilant about your wealth, you may lose it.*
- 5. If you persist in asking for help from a relative, you may lose him.*
- 6. If you do not eat in time, your food will get spoiled.*
- 7. If you do not share your knowledge, you may lose it.*
- 8. Life, not lived with discipline, will be futile.*
- 9. If you do not keep in touch with your relatives, they will abandon you.*



NATRINAI 1

Kumar Punithavel

Natrinai is a classical work of Tamil literature of the later part of Sangam era which dates between 100-300CE. These poems contain both akam meaning love and family. It also has puram meaning war, valour and social life. The anthology includes 400 poems, mainly each 9 to 12 lines. As the Tamil adage says 'One grain of rice will confirm if a pot of rice is ready', I have chosen the first verse from Natrinai which was authored by Kabilar. Kabilar was one of the very prolific Tamil poets of Sangam era authoring 206 poems.

There was a couple who were dating more than two thousand years ago. The hero had to travel frequently to far off land to make money to start a family with his lover. The heroine's friend was suspicious of the intentions of her friend's lover, and she with good intention warned the heroine. The poem is composed as a reply by the heroine to her friend, describing her lover's honesty, integrity and good nature. She also convinces her friend that the lover will never desert her knowing how much she grieves. Let's go into the first poem of Natrinai which was written more two thousand years and how relevant to the modern day's life;

She starts her narration that her lover is honest and stands by his words, sweet natured and will never desert me,

நின்ற சொல்லர், நீடு தோன்று இனியர்,
Always honest, always sweet natured,

என்றும் என் தோள் பிரிபு அறியலரே,
Will never let go my shoulders,

தாமரைத் தண் தாது ஊதி மீமிசைச்
Collecting cool pollen from lotus rising high

சாந்தில் தொடுத்த தீம் தேன் போலப்
On tall sandal trees hoarding honey combs,

புரைய மன்ற, புரையோர் கேண்மை, 5
Great is the taste and great persons friendship,

நீர் இன்று அமையா உலகம் போலத்
Like world cannot survive without water'

தம் இன்று அமையா நம் நயந்து அருளி,
Living without his, love and benevolence,

நறுநுதல் பசத்தல் அஞ்சிச்
Longing pallor's effect on my brows



சிறுமை உறுபவோ? செய்ய அறியலரே.

Lover isn't petty, not to understand and desert her.

Let us now read the full poem as a verse in both Tamil and English

நற்றிணை 1, கபிலர்,

குறிஞ்சித் திணை - தலைவி தோழியிடம் சொன்னது

நின்ற சொல்லர், நீடு தோன்று இனியர்,

என்றும் என் தோள் பிரிபு அறியலரே,

தாமரைத் தண் தாது ஊதி மீமிசைச்

சாந்தில் தொடுத்த தீம் தேன் போலப்

புரைய மன்ற, புரையோர் கேண்மை, 5

நீர் இன்று அமையா உலகம் போலத்

தம் இன்று அமையா நம் நயந்து அருளி,

நறுநுதல் பசத்தல் அஞ்சிச்

சிறுமை உறுபவோ? செய்ய அறியலரே.

Natrinai 1 By: Kabilar,
What the heroine told her friend.

**Always honest, always sweet natured,
Will never let go my shoulders,
Collecting cool pollen from lotus rising high,**

On tall sandal trees hoarding honey combs,

Great is the taste and great persons friendship,

Like world cannot survive without water'

Living without his, love and benevolence,

**Longing pallor's effect on my brows
Lover isn't petty, not to understand and desert her.**

In nine lines the poet Kabilan expresses the trust and confidence the heroine had on her lover. Times pass on but fundamentals of human nature and relationship goes on. Try to enjoy reading Sangam literature that is two thousand years old.



HUMAN NEED FOR WISDOM



By: J A Rajah

Wisdom is one of the most vital human needs. King Solomon of the Bible preferred wisdom to all other needs, when asked by God, about his greatest need. He was famous for his wisdom and the building of the first temple of Jerusalem. He is also reputed for writing three books of the bible namely Proverbs, Ecclesiastical and the Song of Solomon.

A. Wisdom and Humility:

One of the essential qualities of wisdom is humility. Humility is important because it promotes personal growth, leads to strengthened relationships, and improved decision making. It leads to better learning and problem-solving., encourages empathy and respect for others and provides accountability and emotional intelligence. A humble mindset is the key to personal growth.as it involves an awareness of limitations and willingness to learn.

B. Wisdom and Fear of God and Holiness:

A wiseman will not be an egotist. He will have the fear of God. Fear of God is profound respect and awe for the divine characterised by a sense of veneration, submission to the to his authority and humility in recognition of his greatness. It is a foundational aspect of a religious relationship that is expressed through obedience, worship and a life of holiness and honour towards God's will, power and majesty.

Moreover, a wise person is also holy. He hates sin and forsake sin. To be holy means to be set apart, sacred and worthy of complete devotion. This can mean something or someone or anything pure. It could mean God or a person, object or a place. dedicated to a higher purpose. The concept is central to many religions, carrying distinct meaning across them such as a state of moral purity. or dedication to a divine purpose.

A wise person will be patient with God and man. He will not be impetuous. Patience can help you from becoming irritated, defensive or saying hurtful things. It can slow down and prevent hasty, selfish decisions. Patience helps in developing the crucial skill of empathy- the ability to understand life from the perspective of another.

C. Wisdom and the Need to Listen to Corrections and Instructions: -

To discern the real truth from whatever source it emanates is the true quality of wisdom.

*“Epporul jaar yar vai
kedipiumapporul,
meyiporul kaanpathu arivu”.*

One of the sterling qualities of a wiseman is that he always acts on what he knows so as to help and bless others. He is not pretentious. He doesn't think that he knows everything and operates recklessly. He has the good of others in his heart. Taking risks, so that others may benefit.

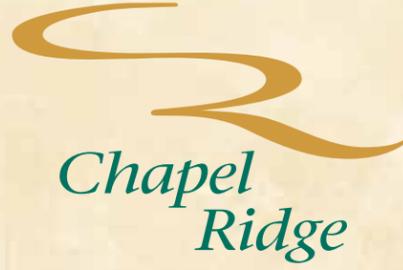
Wisdom directs a person to listen

to advice. He has the patience and humility to listen to others and accept corrections. Listening to advice and acquiring instruction is to gain wisdom, grow and avoid mistakes. by benefiting from the experience of others. To do this actively one should listen and apply whatever he is learning and apply it effectively in his life. He should also evaluate the counsel to ensure that it aligns with his values and goals. The practice is crucial to making better decisions and achieving success in both the long and short terms. It is also a valuable asset to future endeavours.

Through prayer and meditations, a wise person listens to God's Warning. The warning may come from persons near and dear to him. A wise person exercises restraint in speaking and writing. He will not assert his own point of view but act wisely so as to listen to wise counsel and be well directed and guided. Wisdom enables a man to control his anger and maintain peace and goodwill. He will not blurt out his feelings without thinking and well-meditated caution. Valluvar spelled out the idea in his Kural where he says:

*“Nanrukku vithakum nal
ozhukkam- the ozhlum,
Endrum idumpai tharum”*

Good conduct paves the way to goodness; whereas bad conduct will bring trouble all the time. Wisdom offers fortitude which enables us to live victoriously.



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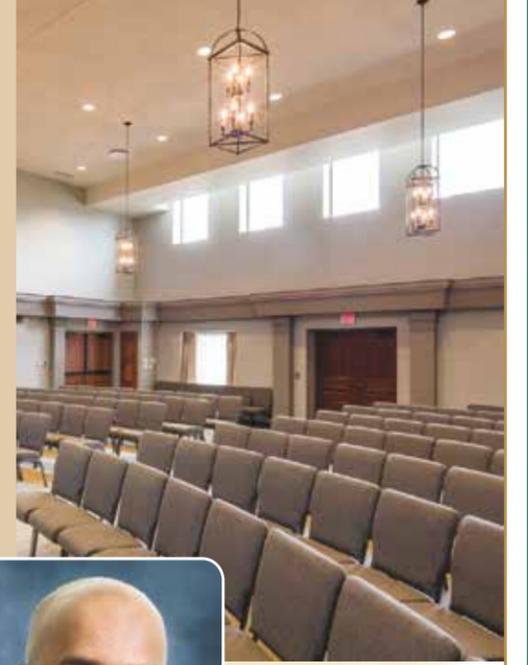
உங்கள் உறவொன்றை பிரிந்து தடுமாறும் வேளையில் இறுதி நிகழ்வுகள் பற்றிய கவலை உங்களுக்கு வேண்டாம். அனுபவத்துடன் கூடிய அன்பான சேவையை வழங்குகின்றோம்.

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EDUCATION & CAREER

SOCIAL MEDIA ADDITION: HOW SOCIAL MEDIA SHAPES ADOLESCENT SELF-PERCEPTION

By: **Thanika Kugan**
Grade 8 Student

Have you ever wondered how social media can negatively affect your self-esteem? Various social media platforms are deeply embedded in the daily lives of almost all adolescents in contemporary society. It is a helpful tool that allows everyone to connect with one another rapidly. However, while it can foster social connections with others, it often has harmful effects, especially on adolescents. Social media platforms can destroy self-esteem by reducing in-person interactions, promoting unhealthy social comparisons, and increasing exposure to cyberbullying. These effects are especially pronounced in children in their early teenage years aged 10 to 14 who are exposed to peer pressure and online harassment. According to researchers, these negative influences from social media can lead to long-term detrimental effects for teenagers' mental health and self-worth. Therefore, I strongly believe that social media negatively affects self-esteem especially resulting in lower academic performance for adolescents.

One way that social media negatively impacts one's self-esteem is through constant comparison to influencers. This can significantly damage self-esteem, possibly leading to anxiety and depression. This frequently occurs as individuals compare themselves to idealized versions of others' lives such as highlighting influencers' amazing trips, looks and fame. According to the Cybersmile Foundation, 96% of people experience emotional distress when comparing themselves to others online. This pressure to maintain a perfect life can create feelings of inadequacy. Moreover, social media platforms often amplify unrealistic lifestyle standards, causing most people to overlook the positive aspects of their lives. This is especially detrimental to teenagers and children as they are at the age of identity formation, and the lack of positive reinforcement may result in distorted views of themselves and of society. This would also result in a lack of motivation and procrastination when coming to achieving life goals. Research has shown that the more time people spend on social media, the more likely they are to experience mental disorders such as depression, which is linked to low self-esteem.

Another reason social media negatively impacts self-esteem is that it limits direct contact with others, which can lead to feelings of isolation and loneliness. According to the American Psychological Association, teenagers on average spend nearly five hours each day on social media platforms such as TikTok, YouTube and Instagram. With the addiction to social media feelings like anxiety, depression, and low self-esteem may develop, which further isolates individuals from social connections. Positive social interactions foster a sense of self-worth and peer validation. Social isolation has been linked to various health problems such as heart disease and diabetes, and it can weaken immunity, negatively impacting the self-

esteem of teenagers. Additionally, limited social interactions can hinder the development of healthy relationships and cause difficulties for individuals to engage in deep connections with peers. People may hesitate to engage in social situations due to fears of rejection or failure. Hence, it is necessary for teenagers to have social interactions with people to develop positive communication skills and maintain the well-being of their mental health.

Finally, social media exposes individuals to cyberbullying. Cyberbullying also lowers people's self-esteem and mental well-being. About 42.9% of people have been affected by low self-esteem during their lifetime, which is quite a lot. Statistics have also indicated that a huge number of students have experienced cyberbullying and its negative impacts, including low self-esteem. For instance, examples may include someone spreading lies or posting embarrassing material about another person, leading to emotional and physical harm, feelings of shame, and anxiety. Bullies may also send

hurtful, abusive, or even threatening messages, images, or videos through messaging platforms. Individuals can impersonate others to send mean messages or create fake accounts to further harass others. Young individuals are most at risk for cyberbullying. For example, teenagers may feel that they would like to have the life and fame of celebrities and influencers and the most direct way would be to share their lives on social media. However, the lack of awareness of the risks of doing so may allow for the potential distress on their mental health as cyberbullying is not always addressed. Thus, cyberbullying on social media can result in profound sadness and hopelessness.

In conclusion, I believe that social media negatively affects people's self-esteem especially for adolescents. It



encourages constant comparison with others who seem to lead a "perfect life." This can foster feelings of inadequacy and anxiety in teenagers by pressuring them to achieve an ideal lifestyle. This limited direct contact with others arises because individuals may feel insecure, fearing judgment from their peers. This negative feedback loop occurs from feeling mental distress to increased social media usage due to a lack of person-to-person interaction. Another significant concern is that social media exposes people to cyberbullying. Therefore, I firmly believe that social media affects self-esteem and would be detrimental to the individual in all aspects of life including academics and mental well-being



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SPECIAL FEATURE & MILESTONE

CELEBRATING THE LIFE & LEGACY OF LATE JOHN PHILIP LOUIS OF TRINCOMALEE ON HIS 106TH BIRTHDAY.

By: Kane Siva

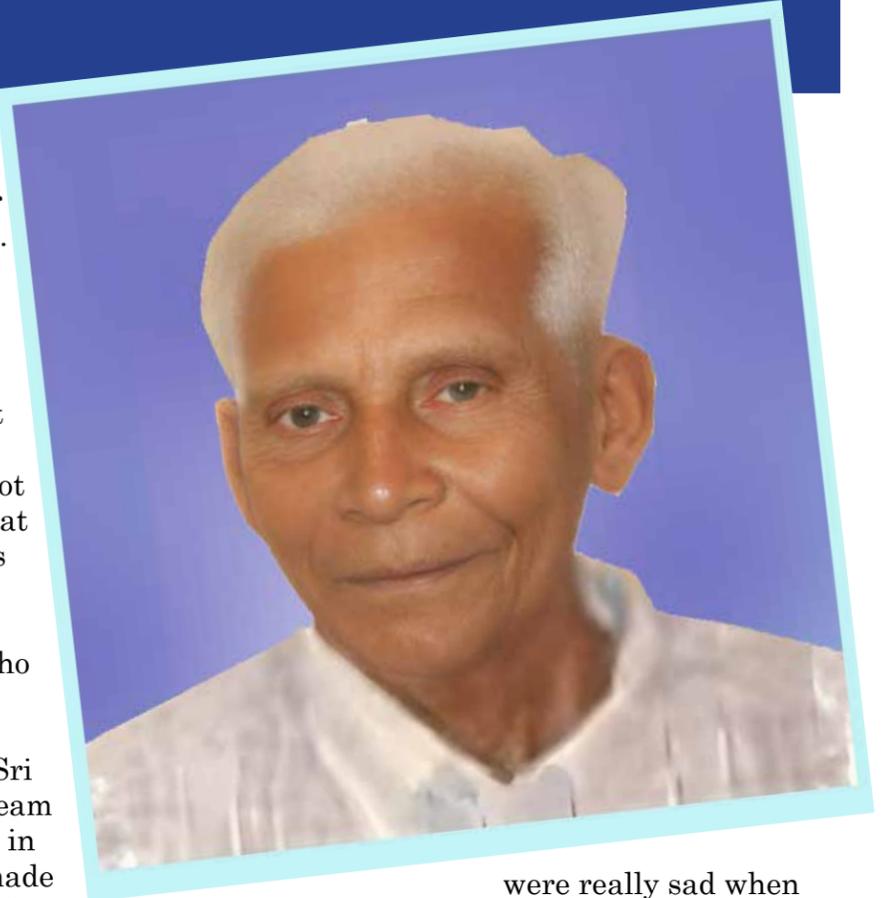
There is a saying that God connects people, whom we never dreamt or thought of meeting in our life. This narration is in this perspective about a grand old gentleman, absolutely a gentle soul to the fingertips, who had a wonderful and blessed life, and kept on batting really great, until he decided to retire after scoring 105 runs, as he decided, to go to the home of eternity, and be with his beloved wife, Lourdes Mary Annamma, who retired to eternal rest, at 91 runs, after putting up a very strong, and loving partnership for 72 years and raising 8 great children and 10 grandchildren. John made sure that his children stand much taller than him, literally, in their lives, since he was well aware that "Education Is the Key". Two of his sons are Medical Doctors, one in Canada, the other in England, two daughters are teachers, a son in finance and another electrical technician. Some of his grandchildren too have proved their mettle and are on the way to academic excellence in their chosen vocation, and I believe one of his grandsons is a Medical Doctor in England.

Late John Philip Louis was born in Uduvil, Jaffna, an adjacent village to my home in Manipay, on the 18th of November 1919, and I wonder whether this may be one of the reasons, that God wanted us (Me and my wife) to meet this undoubtedly self made and most gracious gentlemen, but who knows, he might have faced lots of challenges, but steered the course steadily and navigated his life to be the most content and successful person to his own amazement, and satisfaction. Kudos to him and his lifelong better half Mary. From what I presume after completing his education at Manipay Hindu College in Jaffna, he joined Royal Navy, during World War 2, and this brought him to Trincomalee and I believe this is where he would have met his beloved Mary, (This is my presumption) and settled down in his matrimonial life in 1948. Philip and Mary had a real cohesive life of love, built a tight close-knit home, that was fortified by real discipline, love, moral values and of great religious faith, where they raised 8 great children, 5 sons and 3 daughters. When the World War 2 ended in the late 1940s, John joined the Ceylon (Sri Lanka) Navy and worked as a Fire officer, and retired from the Government service, but he still continued to work in the private sector using all the valuable tools and lessons he learnt in the Navy as a fire officer, as he did not want to be idling and moping around at home.

Late Louis had a great passion for sports. He was the best Badminton player in his time at Trincomalee. He loved all the other sports especially Cricket, Tennis and Soccer. John mentioned, he watches almost all the Test Cricket Matches whenever it was telecast in SL. I feel it is not superfluous to mention, that John's passion for sports is in the genes of his son Dr. Lenus Louis, our Family Doctor here, in Toronto, who in his school days played soccer, excelled in it, and was selected to represent Sri Lanka's National Youth Team twice, and played matches in India. This achievement made John really "over the moon" as he narrated this to us when we met him on the 24th January 2025, at his home in Green Road Trincomalee. John mentioned that whenever his son played a game in Sri Lanka he travelled and cheered him always.

John, a regular church goer, always had a great compassion for the downtrodden people, and helped anyone who was in need. He had a heart which never said "NO" to anyone. John loved to talk, within the 3 hours we met (for the first and last time) he said he had some Paddy lands in Trinco. and loved cultivation. This helped him with rice for his home and he used the surplus to help the needy. When asked about his longevity, gave a smile and shared this, "his love of seafood and being active always". Also, he said "he takes his normal 3 meals and nothing in between". At 105, when we met John was walking with the help of a Cane, supporting his tall frame, almost a six-footer and he was highly mentally alert, as a 20-year-old. One of the stories he shared with us was this and was chuckling while portraying this: A few years back, one morning, two officers visited his home from Sri Lanka's Pension Office, Colombo, with a police constable to ascertain whether he is actually living or someone else is using his name to claim the pension money.

I like pen it this way, I am blessed to eulogize the late Louis of Trincomalee whom I met with my wife in January 2025 at his home in Trinco for the first time and it never occurred to me that we will not be meeting him again. In fact, we were thinking of visiting him on our next trip to Sri Lanka in about 6 months and spend a day with him. As the saying goes, "Man proposes but God disposes", we



were really sad when we heard the news, that this "Never Say Die Gentle Soul" breathed his last and entered the sunset in the blue skies, on the 7th of March 2025. His passing away message was really sad for us even though we met this wonderful human being for a brief 3 hours or so, but in the same vein it made us feel really so blessed and fortunate enough to have met him before he went to his heavenly abode.

He was well taken care of by his 8 children and all of them live abroad due to the situation in the country. A caretaker lady was at home, 24 hours, taking care of him and his children took turns to visit and spend time with him every 6 months. A regular Church goer and was a well-respected man in the Trincomalee town.

Late John Louis is no more but the legacy he left through his children will linger on always in the hearts and minds of the Trincomalee folks. Legacy is always a summation of your life's experiences, achievements, values and how you lived.

John, you did well in your life and must salute for the way you lived, and carried on with an indomitable spirit, as a loving human being and uplifting others.

I feel it is really fitting to mention the writing of Charles W.H. Bancroft, who wrote "Life is worth living" and other poems.

**"God Keeps the Aged,
With Hearts of Gold, and Silver-Tinted Hair,
And Earnestness, And Greater Faith in
Prayer;
He Keeps Them as A Shepherd Guards His
Sheep,
Till in His Fold They Gently Fall Asleep"**

K.N. Sivagnanasunderam (Blue)

kanesiva6@gmail.com



MEETING TODAY'S CHALLENGES FOR A BETTER TOMORROW



On October 27, Mayor David West delivered his 2025 State of the City Address at the Richmond Hill Board of Trade Mayor's Luncheon, illustrating a year of progress, innovation and community building. The address provided highlights of the past year, including progress on the new pedestrian and cyclist bridge to connect our David Dunlap Observatory Park to Observatory Lane, traffic-calming solutions which have helped reduce speeding, investments in parks such as Richmond Green and the new Dave Barrow Civic Square, and the new Cultural Centre opening in the historic Old Post Office.

Mayor West emphasized that housing remains a top priority and shared the significant progress made in expanding options for seniors. Three upcoming developments will bring over 1,300 new units to the area, ranging from long-term care beds to affordable rentals and retirement suites. The Yonge North Subway Extension is also set to unlock the development potential of Richmond Hill Centre, positioning the city for smart, transit-oriented growth.

The Mayor also highlighted Richmond Hill's global engagement. The City's partnership with the United Nations University Institute for Water, Environment and Health has led to collaborative initiatives in sustainability, micromobility and economic development. A trade mission to world's largest industrial trade fair in Germany showcased the city's strengths, resulting in promising opportunities

for research and development collaborations and European investment in Richmond Hill.

Economic development remains a cornerstone of Richmond Hill's success. With over 4,500 companies—including global leaders like Apotex, BMW, and Olympus—the City continues to attract and support innovation. The Small Business Enterprise Centre provided over 550 consultations, supported 81 new businesses, and helped create nearly 100 local jobs over the past year.

Quote

"I enjoy giving this speech as it makes plain how much Richmond Hill is achieving each year through growth and innovation. Leading a City is complex work and I feel like Richmond Hill has really hit its stride this year. We are meeting today's challenges – housing, safety, traffic, community building and economic development – for a better tomorrow. I'll continue to advocate for all of us on the provincial, national and global stage, while keeping my focus clearly on our community."

- Mayor David West



MARKHAM ADOPTS BUDGET 2026



(From left to right)
 Councillor Ward 1 Keith Irish, Councillor Ward 2 Ritch Lau, Councillor Ward 3 Reid McAlpine, Councillor Ward 4 Karen Rea, Regional Councillor Alan Ho, Deputy Mayor Michael Chan, Mayor Frank Scarpitti, Regional Councillor Jim Jones, Regional Councillor Joe Li, Councillor Ward 5 Andrew Keyes, Councillor Ward 6 Amanda Collucci, and Councillor Ward 8 Isa Lee at the Budget 2026 announcement at the Markham Civic Centre on Oct. 1, 2025.

The City of Markham has adopted Markham Racing Forward: Budget 2026, which was tabled by Mayor Frank Scarpitti on October 1, 2025. The approved 3.90% property tax rate increase amounts to \$54.99 for the average Markham household, reinforcing the City’s long-standing record of maintaining the lowest average property tax rate increase in the GTA over two decades.

“Budget 2026 is about keeping Markham strong, resilient, and inclusive,” said Mayor Frank Scarpitti. “Since 2002, we’ve invested \$680 million across more than 1,000 capital projects to build the infrastructure our growing city needs. Budget 2026 further invests in the key projects that enhances our quality of life and ensures our infrastructure is well maintained into the future. Markham is racing forward with purpose, vision, and accountability.”

Under the theme Markham Racing Forward: Budget 2026 reflects the City’s commitment to delivering exceptional services, building resilient infrastructure, and embracing innovation. Since 2022, the City has invested \$680 million across 1,036 capital projects, with nearly 70% of funds already spent, demonstrating strong project delivery and accountability. From 2009 to 2026, our Excellence through Efficiency and Effectiveness (E3) Program will have delivered \$37.2M in annual operating savings, equal to a tax rate increase avoidance of 29.0%.

Markham’s Budget 2026 demonstrates the City’s continued track record of prudent fiscal management while making important investments in infrastructure and community initiatives. By maintaining our assets in a state of good repair and proactively planning for the future, we ensure Markham



Mayor Frank Scarpitti holds a Budget 2026 sign at the Markham Civic Centre on Oct. 31, 2025.

remains resilient to economic pressures, responsive to community needs, and ready to deliver high-quality services and infrastructure for generations to come. The City’s 2026 capital budget is \$160.4 million, alongside a primary operating budget of \$309.3 million.

The 2026 capital budget includes:

- Investing in new road construction, repairs, rehabilitation and traffic improvements (\$53.8M)
- Ensuring climate resiliency with \$34.5M investment in flood control, stormwater management construction, ponds and culverts.
- Constructing and maintaining our parks and trails (\$12.1M)
- Keeping our facilities in good condition with \$15.8M for exterior and interior improvements and repairs.
- Replacement of day-to-day City assets to serve the public (\$8.5M)
- Incorporating leading-edge technology to modernize systems and services (\$3.5M for systems and technology infrastructure)

Along with being ranked amongst the top five large Canadian municipalities for fiscal transparency from the C.D. Howe Institute, the City of Markham has received several other recognitions for its budget and financial management process, including:

- Canadian Award for Financial Reporting, Government Finance Officers Association (since 2001)
- Distinguished Budget Presentation Award, Government Finance Officers Association (since 2000)
- Gold Award for A Markham Milestone: 2025 Budget Book, Hermes Creative Awards

Public consultation is a vital part of the budget process, ensuring that community voices are heard and reflected in the City’s priorities. We thank the community for their valuable input provided through Your Voice Markham and other engagement platforms during the public consultation process, which helped shape the 2026 Budget.

For more information about Budget 2026, visit: markham.ca/budget

About Markham:

Markham, an award-winning municipality with over 370,000 residents and the largest of nine communities in York Region, is home to over 650 corporate head offices and more than 1,500 high tech and life science companies. Markham is a leader in attracting foreign direct investment with more than 234 foreign companies located in the City. Founded in the 1790s, today Markham is Canada’s most diverse community and enjoys a rich heritage, outstanding community planning and services, and a vibrant local economy.



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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.



Durham Tamil Association TAMIL CLASS

<p>Durham Tamil Association offers Tamil classes for children and adults who are interested in learning the language in an innovative and effective way.</p>	<p>Tamil Class Registration for the 2025-2026 School Year is Now Open! Available in Two Locations: Ajax and Oshawa</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JK & SK • Grade 1-8 • Grade 9-12 (Credit Course) <p>REGISTER ONLINE: durhamtamils.org</p>	<p>புதுமையான மற்றும் பயனுள்ள வகையில் மொழியைக் கற்க ஆர்வமுள்ள குழந்தைகள் மற்றும் பெரியவர்களுக்கு நிறம் தமிழ் ஒன்றியம் தமிழ் வகுப்புகளை வழங்குகிறது.</p>

<p>YOUNG LEARNERS</p> <p>Kindergarten to Grade 8 students can register for Tamil classes here</p> <p>மழலையர் பள்ளி முதல் வகுப்பு 8 வரை தமிழ் வகுப்பில் பதிவு செய்யலாம்</p>	<p>HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS</p> <p>Grade 9 to Grade 12 students can enroll in our High school Credit Course</p> <p>9 ஆம் வகுப்பு முதல் 12 ஆம் வகுப்பு வரை உள்ள மாணவர்கள் எங்கள் உயர்நிலைப் பள்ளிப் திறமைச்சித்தி படிப்பில் சேரலாம்</p>	<p>For more information, call 905-428-7007 or visit our website at www.durhamtamils.org</p>
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DTA YOUTH FEST

DTA proudly hosted its 24th Annual Youth Festival, which was wonderfully led and brought to life by our talented youth, delivering outstanding performances filled with energy and excitement. We extend our heartfelt thanks to the executive committee, along with all the youth and adult volunteers, whose dedication and hard work made this vibrant celebration of talent, creativity, and leadership possible, continuing a tradition that has showcased the incredible potential of DTA's youth for over two decades.

DTA'S HOMELAND PROJECTS

DTA is proud to announce that we have completed over 120 homeland projects as of Nov 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.



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.

COMMUNITY WATCH



THANK YOU TO DTA'S ANNUAL SPONSORS

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DTA SENIOR'S DECEMBER MONTHLY MEETING

DTA Senior's monthly meeting will be held on Sunday Dec 28, 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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City of Brampton empowers young innovators to explore space technology at BramHacks 2025

City showcases leadership in Canada's space and innovation economy



Regional Councillor Rowena Santos, Vice-Chair, Economic Development with BramHacks winning team, Team JADE — Arjan Waraich, Daniel Ganjali, Emerson Ni, and Justin Riu — and Kyle Boyko, BramHacks finalist judge and CEO and Founder of InspireTech Canada. *Credit: City of Brampton*

The City of Brampton celebrated its second annual BramHacks hackathon last week, rounding out a successful weekend of events positioning Brampton at the forefront of Canada's growing space and innovation economy.

At this year's BramHacks 2025: Space Edition, over 700 registered participants representing more than 35 academic institutions across Ontario and Canada came together for a three-day in-person innovation challenge to design creative, data-driven solutions using space technologies to strengthen communities, drive sustainability and improve life on Earth.

The top five teams advanced to the finale on Sunday, November 9, at Brampton City Hall, where they presented their solutions before a distinguished panel of judges — Matilda Khoshaba, Systems Engineer at Canadensys Aerospace Corporation; Kyle Boyko, CEO & Founder of InspireTech Canada; and Michael Graham, CEO & Founder of the North American Space Institute (NASI). The finale featured a keynote by NASI CMO Mahfuz Chowdhury, inspiring participants to turn their ideas into real-world impact.

BramHacks 2025 Winners

- First Place – Team JADE for Heimdall, an AI-powered satellite diagnostic system designed to predict hardware failures and improve the reliability of space missions.
- Second Place – Team Coolie for Astro-Academy, a gamified, AI-enhanced learning platform that makes space science education accessible, interactive and engaging for students through simulation-based modules.
- Third Place – Team SpaceX for Vela, a space debris monitoring system that uses satellite data and predictive analytics to enhance orbital safety and reduce collision risks.

BramHacks 2025, administered by HackWorks, is a partnership between the City of Brampton's Economic Development Office and Brampton's Innovation District, proudly sponsored by Amazon, Greater Toronto Airports Authority, Canon Canada, Pizza2Go and Downtown Brampton BIA with support from local post-secondary institutions and industry mentors including Sheridan College, Toronto Metropolitan University, Zebra Robotics, Youth Culture, Make

Stuff Move, Downtown Brampton BIA and Algoma University. In collaboration with Ibentos, a B Hive start-up, this year's hackathon introduced a digitally immersive experience powered by an AI assistant and virtual networking community, taking participant engagement to the next level.

Space Day in Brampton

The three-day hackathon launched on Thursday, November 6, during Space Day in Brampton at Canon Canada Headquarters. The day featured milestone events highlighting Brampton's leadership in the national space sector, including:

- Moonshot3, an experiential learning event introducing high school students to careers in rocketry, robotics and space technology.
- A gathering of the Ontario Space Cluster, hosted by the Ministry of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade (MEDJCT), bringing together provincial stakeholders, industry partners and researchers to advance collaboration in Ontario's space innovation ecosystem.
- The official launch of BramHacks 2025, featuring keynote remarks by Dr. Robert Thirsk, former Canadian astronaut, and Rahul Goel, CEO of NordSpace, a company preparing for Canada's first-ever commercial rocket launch.

Brampton is home to MDA Space's Global Headquarters and Space Robotics Centre of Excellence, known worldwide for developing the Canadarm and advancing space robotics and manufacturing. Together with the Sheridan Centre for Intelligent Robotics and a growing network of research and startup partners, Brampton continues to establish itself as a launchpad for Canada's next generation of space technology and talent.

Quotes

"Brampton is quickly becoming one of Canada's most exciting centres for space innovation and advanced technology. Through BramHacks, we're showcasing the creativity and talent that continue to position our city as a launchpad for the future. We're proud to support young innovators who are driving solutions for a stronger and more sustainable world."

- Patrick Brown, Mayor, City of Brampton

"Events like BramHacks not only spark creativity among our students but also attract investment, generate new opportunities and strengthen Brampton's reputation as a city of talent and innovation. By challenging students



BramHacks 2025 Finale at Brampton City Hall with Regional Councillor Gurpartap Singh Toor, Chair, Economic Development, Regional Councillor Rowena Santos, Vice-Chair, Economic Development, the Economic Development team, winners, judges and mentors celebrating innovation. *Credit: City of Brampton*

to solve real-world problems in space technology, we are positioning our city as a place where bold ideas are developed, tested and launched into action."

- Gurpartap Singh Toor, Regional Councillor, Wards 9 & 10; Chair, Economic Development, City of Brampton

"Last week demonstrated the power of collaboration between government, academia, and industry. From Space Day to BramHacks, Brampton is becoming a hub in Canada's space sector and

continues to attract and develop the next generation of STEM leaders while growing our innovation economy.

- Rowena Santos, Regional Councillor, Wards 1 & 5; Vice-Chair, Economic Development, City of Brampton

"We built Heimdall, an AI-powered satellite-repair-as-a-service (SRaaS) platform that uses deep learning to forecast satellite failures, simulates autonomous docking in Gazebo, and performs in-orbit repairs with a custom

3D-printed robotic arm mounted on a satellite. BramHacks showed us how space innovation can support life on Earth and inspired us to create technology that sustains the satellites our communities rely on every day."

- Team JADE, BramHacks 2025 Winners: Daniel Ganjali, Emerson Ni, Justin Rui, Arjan Waraich

As one of the fastest-growing cities in Canada, Brampton is home to 800,000 people and more than 110,000 businesses.

People are at the heart of everything we do. We are energized by our diverse communities, we attract investment and we are embarking on a journey to lead technological and environmental innovation. We partner for progress to build a healthy city that is safe, sustainable and successful. Connect with us on X, Facebook, LinkedIn and Instagram. Learn more at www.brampton.ca

About the City of Brampton's Economic Development Office

The City of Brampton's Economic Development Office connects entrepreneurs, investors and global business leaders with the tools, insights and opportunities they need to grow. Learn more about our programs, events and resources at investbrampton.ca. Connect with Invest Brampton on LinkedIn, Instagram, X and Facebook.



Denise McClure, Director, Economic Development & International Relations, City of Brampton; former Canadian Space Agency astronaut Dr. Robert Thirsk; Regional Councillor Gurpartap Singh Toor and Chair, Economic Development; and a representative from Minister Maninder Sidhu's Office, following the presentation of a Certificate of Recognition to the City of Brampton's Economic Development Office for leading and organizing BramHacks 2025. *Credit: City of Brampton*



SPECIAL FEATURE

ADHYAYANA UTSAVAM



Compiled by Kidambi Raj

INTRODUCTION

Adhyayana Utsavam, also known as Vaikunta Utsavam or Prasanna Utsavam or Moksha Utsavam is observed in Vaishnava Temples across, especially at the famous Sri Ranganatha Swamy Temple in Srirangam and at Sri Venkateswara Temple in Tirupati. It is the day when Sri Nammazhwar attained Moksha in the service of Srihari Vishnu. The Naalaayira Divya Prabhandhams are chanted during this Utsavam period. The Adhyayana Utsavam is an



enlightening festival for all Vaishnavites and is an assembly of devotees reciting the Naalaayira Divya Prabhandham verses (Pasurams).

adhi bhagavo brahmeti, as mentioned in a passage in Taittiriya Upanishad. From *adhi* derives *adhiyana*, which refers to a student, who is learning the Vedas in the traditional way from an *adhyapaka* or teacher. The Adhyayana Utsavam is therefore a festival of reciting by an *adhyapaka goshti*, a group of such *Adhyapakas* or instructors who have mastered the studies of Vedas (Both the Sanskrit and Tamil Vedas).

ABOUT ADHYAYANA FESTIVAL

The Divya Prabhadham has 4,000 divine verses (Pasurams) and is the Dravida Vedam, popularly known as the *Naalaayira Divya Prabhandham* in Tamil. It is also glorified as *Dravida Tamil Veda*. The 4,000 Divya Prabhandhams are the outpourings of the *Azhwars* who appeared in various *divyadesams* few thousand years ago as per the Divine commands of Lord Sriman Narayana and composed the divine pasurams which all *sri vaishnavas* make it a rule to recite.

Once, at Srirangam, the capital for *Sri vaishnavas*, *Thirumangai Azhwar*, the last of the twelve *Azhwars* sang one of his divine

prabhandha, *Thiru-Nedun-Thaandakam*, glorifying Lord Ranganatha.

The *Azhwar* overjoyed, prayed to Lord Ranganatha for His grace in giving equal status to the 4,000 *Divya Prabhandhams* in terms of authority as Vedas. He also pleaded Lord's audience in listening to the divine pasurams of *Swami Nammazhwar* and they were granted.

Azhwar overjoyed with Lord Ranganatha's command proceeded to *Azhwar Thirunagari* from *Srirangam* with his followers on *Thirukarthigai* month (November-December), to invite *Swamy Nammazhwar* to *Srirangam*. It was almost 350 kms. Travelling from *Azhwar Thirunagari* (which is in *Tirunelveli Dt.*) to *Srirangam*.

This divine incident is celebrated as the *Thiru Adhyayana Utsavam* in all the *Sri vaishnava* temples starting on *Margazhi Amavasai* (December-January) with the chanting of the *Divya Prabhandha Pasurams* of *Thiru-Nedun-Thaandakam* (10 days before *Vaikunta Ekadasi*).

The day, *Thirumangai Azhwar* arrived at *Srirangam* with *Swami Nammazhwar* was on *Vaikunta Ekadasi*.

Swami Nammazhwar was received with due honours and was adorned with *Mutthangi Seva* and *Namperumal Lord Ranganatha* with *Rathnangi*. Thus, this divine festival was conducted with pomp and show singing Lord's *Kalyana Gunas*.

ADHYAYANA UTSAVAM



Starting on *Vaikunta Ekadasi* and the succeeding nine days, *Azhwar* along with the devotees recite *Swami Mammazhwar's Thiruviomozhi* in the royal presence of *Lord Ranganatha*.

However, after *Thirumangai Azhwar's*

disappearance, the practice was slowly overlooked. It was *Jagat Acharyar Swami Ramnujar*, who started the practice once again. As the practice of welcoming *Swami Nammazhwar's Thirumeni* from *Azhwar Thirunagari* was cumbersome, *Swamy Nammazhwar's Thirumeni* (deity) was installed with all the purificatory rites at *Srirangam*.

Swami Ramnujar further advised all to glorify Lord's *Kalyana Gunas* by reciting the entire *Naalaayira Divyaprabhandham* and hence added ten days before the *Ira Paththu* and called them *Pagal Paththu*.

As a mark of recognition to *Thirumangai Azhwar's* divine service, the day before the *Pagal Paththu Utsavam's* first day, *Namperumal*, *Lord Ranganatha* listens to *Thirumangai Azhwar's Thirunedunthaandakam* pasurams.

It is also said that *Swamy Parasara Bhattar* in the process of bringing the great *Vedanti Madhvacharyar* in *Sri vaishnava* fold won a debate and thus convinced him in joining our *sampradhaya* by the esoteric truths contained in the thirty verses of *Azhwar's Thirunedunthaandakam* pasurams.

Upon *Parasara Bhattar's* triumphant return to *Srirangam*, *Lord Ranganatha* asked *Bhattar*, how he was able to defeat the great scholar.

Bhattar explained that it was through the *Thirunedunthaandakam* pasurams.

It happened to be one day before the *aarambham* of *Pagal Paththu*, and hence in *Srirangam*, there is a special recitation of *Thirunedunthaandakam* before the regular *Adhyayana Utsavam* begins, because of *Bhattar's* great service in bringing *Namjeeyar Madhvacharyar* to *Sri vaishnava Sampradhayam*.

The great festival started as ten-days festival by *Azhwar* and was later celebrated as twenty-one-day festival (+one day for *Thirunedunthaandakam*) by *Swami Ramanuja*.

Unlike other *Divyadesams*, *Thiru Adhyayana Utsavam* is celebrated for 23 days in *Thirumalai*. This is usually held from the night of *Amavasya* preceding *Vaikunta Ekadasi* in *Dhanurmasa*.

In the absence of *Swamy Nammazhwar's* deity at *Thirumala*, the festival is conducted with the *vigraha* of *Nammazhwar's Acharya*,

SPECIAL FEATURE



Sri Senapathi Azhwar along with Swami Ramanuja.

Lord Venkateswara exclusively listens to Swamy Ramanuja's Nootrاندhadhi on the last day as a mark of respect to the Great Acharya, who offered Thiru Sanku Chakram to the Lord of the Universe and thus re-established Sri Vaishnavism in Thirumalai.

The Lord thus fulfilled Anathaazhwar's (the dearest disciple of Swamy Ramanuja) desire to have sannidhi for Swamy Ramanujar and honour our Jagat Achaaryar.

To equate the Divya Prabhandhams with the Vedas, Adhyayana and Anadhyayana kalam are period is called **Anandhyayana Kaalam**.

Travelling from Azhwar Thirunagari to Srirangam, most of the devotees were in the process of welcoming Nammazhwar and the troupe carrying the Lordships and the euphoria was focused at one place. The devotees of Azhwar Thirunagari waited for Swami Nammazhwar to return from Srirangam before they resumed the chanting of the Divya Prabhandham, which happened to take some time and when they resumed the chanting of the Divya Prabhandham, happened to take some time and when they arrived, it was almost one month, the Thai Hasta Nakshatra, the appearance day of the most advanced Srivaishnava Acharya, Sri Kooratthazhwar.

ANADHYAYANA KAALAM

ANANDHYAYANA KAALAM – THIRUKAARTHI AND ADYYANA UTSAVAM



Adhyayanam means study/recitation. **Anadhyayanam** means suspension of studies/recitation of Divya Prabhandham. But there are some exceptions as follows:

Dos and Don'ts at Home during Anandhyayana Kaalam

1. Divya Prabhandhams are not recited in homes from the evening of Karthigai month, Karthigai nakshatram, which is Thirumangai Azhwar's thirunakshatram and also **Karthigai festival**.
2. But all Azhwar's taniyans can be recited and also learnt during this period.
3. In Margazhi/Dhanur maasam, only **Thiruppalliyezhuchchi** and **Thiruppavai** can be recited in the early hours of the morning, but not taught or learnt.

4. This Thirukarthigai period can be used to learn other Stotras and Prabhandhams of Swami Ramanuja, Swami Vedanta Desikan, Swami Manavalamaamunigal and other Acharyas.

5. From Thai Hastham, all temples and homes can resume the recitation of Divya Prabhandham after starting with Thiruppallandu.

THIRU ADHYAYAN UTSAVAM – 21 DAYS

In Srirangam, on the evening of Thirukarthigai, after the sakkapanai is lit, Namperumal (Lord Ranganathar) comes to Sandana Mandapam and gives **Tirumugapattayam** (Pattolai), **Peetagava Adai** (peetambaram) and **Sandanam** to Nammazhwar and invites him to come to Srirangam to recite Divya Prabhandham. The same schedule is followed by some of other Divya Sthalams also.

IRA PATHTHU – 10 DAYS

Thirumangai Azhwar started the tradition of reciting Tiruvoimozhi Pasurams during the ten days starting from Vaikunta Ekadasi, in the evenings. This 10 days utsavam is called **Iraapaththu or Thiruvoimozhi Thirunaal**. In olden days, Nammazhwar and other Azhwar's vigrahams were brought to Srirangam. The Prabhandha Goshti also travelled to Srirangam.

PAGAL PATHTHU – 10 DAYS



Many years later, as explained earlier, there was an addition of 10 days added before Vaikunta Ekadasi for the recitation of **Mudal Aayiram, Iyarpa and Periya Thirumozhi Pasurams**, in the mornings. This 10 days Utsavam is called **Pagal Paththu or Thirumozhi Thirunaal**.

THIRUNEDUNTHAANDAKAM THIRUNAL – 1 DAY

After Thirumangai Azhwar composed Thirunedunthaandakam, extremely pleased, Namperumal (Lord Ranganathar) asked Azhwar what boon he wanted and Azhwar requested that:

1. Divya Prabhandham be given an equal status to Vedas in the temples and should be recited daily.
2. Perumal and Piratti should listen to Thiruvoimozhi recitation.



The Divine Couple agreed. To mark this special event, one day prior to Pagal Paththu, **Thirunedunthaandaka Prabhandham** is recited. Another significance of Thirunedunthaandakam Tirunaal is the celebration of victory of Sri Parasara Bhattar, who won a debate over an Advaitin scholar using Thirunedunthaandakam verses.

So, Thirunedunthaandakam, Pagal Paththu, Irapaththu together a total 21 days of **Adhyayana Utsavam** is celebrated in Srirangam Temple.

NAMMAZHVAR THIRUVADI THOZHAI

The utasavam concludes with **Sattumurai** and **Nammazhwar Thozhal**, where the scene of Nammazhwar attaining **Moksham** at Lord Ranganath's feet is enacted.

Ariyay Sevai is a significant part of Thiru Adhyayana Utsavam in Srirangam. The temple priests called **Ariyars** (king of music) belong to the decedent families of Swami Naathamuni. Every day, they enact the meaning

of Divya Prabhandhams through their serene performance that includes **devaganam** (musical form of Pasurams), **abhinayam** (dance gestures) and a traditional **vyaakyaanam** called **tambiran padi**.

This beautiful and divine utsavam is conducted in many other divya desams with slight variations.

All others at home have to wait till **Thai Hastham** (Kooratthazhwar Tirunakshatram) to resume Divya Prabhandham recitation.

It is quite interesting to note that the Prabhandhams were passed on to generations through recitations and listening until print forms came into existence a few hundred years ago!!

MAY LORD RANGANATHA'S BLESSINGS BE WITH YOU ALL!!!



VISIBLE AND INVISIBLE STRUCTURES: WHAT IS INFRASTRUCTURE AND WHY IT MATTERS

A portion of property taxes collected is used to maintain City roads, parks, traffic signals, buses, fire trucks and other critical infrastructure, but we are still facing a funding shortfall.

November 10, 2025, Mississauga's infrastructure includes visible elements like roads, sidewalks, buses, and parks, as well as less obvious elements like stormwater pipes, traffic signals, solar panels, and maintenance equipment for vehicles. Together, these pieces of infrastructure support daily life and activities in Mississauga. Currently, the City owns \$18.7 billion in infrastructure, making it one of the largest expenses for the City.

What to repair, what to replace

When you own an asset like a home or vehicle, you know that over time, repairs are required to help extend the asset's life. However, more severe issues may require tougher decisions and a bigger budget, like replacing an entire roof or all four tires. City staff face similar challenges when it comes to managing infrastructure and its life cycle.

Through regular inspection, City staff make complex decisions about which assets to prioritize based on factors like wear and tear, usage and replacement costs. The City also looks at long-term cost savings such as whether to invest in electric and hydrogen buses that pollute less.

Being prepared and having a plan

The more information we have on City assets, the more effectively we can budget for repairs and replacement. Mississauga's 2025 Corporate Asset Management Plan is a strategic document that outlines how the City will manage its municipal infrastructure, including core and non-core assets. For example, trees are assessed every seven years, roads every four years, structural bridges and culverts every two years, playgrounds monthly and sidewalks are inspected annually for deficiencies.

Taxpayers help fund important repairs

A critical tool that is available to the City is the Capital Infrastructure &



Debt Repayment Levy. It is part of the City's total budget and is reflected in the property tax bills. Money collected through this levy is used to maintain and replace infrastructure. For example, in 2025, the City invested \$325.1 million in many upgrades. This includes trail reconstruction at Birchwood, Bough Beeches and multiple parks across the city; sports amenities rehabilitation at Courtneypark Athletic Fields, Erin Meadows and more, and playground rehabilitation at Huron Park, McKechnie Woods and others.

In 2025, the City also began constructing new infrastructure such as Fire Station 123 located at Winston Churchill Blvd. and The Collegeway, designed as a net zero energy building. Other examples include the Huron Heights stormwater facility project to reduce the risk of flooding and improve water quality in the downstream Cooksville Creek watershed.

Developers and higher levels of government help fund new infrastructure

While property taxes help with repairs and replacement, this covers only a part of the overall need. When a developer is building new homes, offices or factories, they are required to pay Development Charges (DCs) to the City, which are kept in reserve funds for future use. The City uses these reserve funds to build or upgrade roads, sidewalks, bus shelters, traffic signals, community centres, libraries, parks and other such infrastructure. This helps create a complete community, where the new home occupants are provided with easy access to their neighbourhood and the wider city.

With inflation and rising costs of construction, the City does not have

sufficient funding to meet all our infrastructure needs. This is why the City advocates to the other levels of government with deeper pockets for grants and other sources of funding. In 2025, federal grant funding helped with bus stop replacements, bridge and structural renewal, and sidewalk repairs at various locations throughout the city.

Shortfall in infrastructure funding

Although municipalities own 60 per cent of Canada's public infrastructure, they receive only 10 cents of every tax dollar collected in total by all three levels of government to fund and maintain it. Unlike provincial and federal governments, municipalities lack diverse funding options such as payroll, sales taxes and additional revenue streams. The City's funding options consist only of property taxes, limited fees and charges, or issuing debt.

Mississauga maintains \$18.7 billion in infrastructure.

But we only receive 10 cents of every tax dollar collected.





Carrying the “math bundle”

Hagey Lecturer Dr. Edward Doolittle on Indigenizing mathematics

By Melodie Roschman, *Faculty of Mathematics*

Dr. Edward Doolittle, Kanyen’kehake (Mohawk) nation and associate professor of mathematics at First Nations University of Canada, is the first Indigenous mathematics PhD in Canada.

This year’s Hagey Lecturer has worked for decades to advance educational opportunities for Indigenous people and rethink what mathematics — and math education — look like for everyone.

But before any of that, he was a kid with a library card.

“I fell in love with mathematics at Terryberry Library,” says Doolittle, who grew up in Hamilton, Ontario. Every week, his parents took him to the public library where he found himself gravitating towards books about math and problem-solving, particularly by Martin Gardner.

In ninth grade, Doolittle started competing in math contests, and through them he met Dr. James Stewart, a professor at McMaster University and author of calculus textbooks. Stewart got him access to the McMaster University library, where his self-taught journey continued.

He wasn’t very interested in the algebra taught in his high school classes, but he excelled in math contests, including the University of Waterloo’s competitions and eventually the Putnam contest. At the University of Toronto, Doolittle initially set out to study artificial intelligence. “My major interest was in machine translation because I was also very interested in languages,” he shares. In the 1980s, however, artificial intelligence research was mainly philosophical, and he soon grew frustrated by the lack of practical applications.

Doolittle switched his major to mathematics, and excelled, going on to complete a master’s and PhD in mathematics at the University of Toronto. After he graduated in 1997, however, he spent four years “wandering in the wilderness.”

Wandering in the wilderness

“Like many Indigenous people, when I was in university I began to feel that I needed to serve my community, and Indigenous people in general,” he says. “I started doing that work at the age of 19, exploring Indigenous knowledge, culture, spirituality and listening to elders, but



after I graduated, I could do more.”

He got a job at Queens University in their Aboriginal Teacher Education Program (now the Indigenous Teacher Education Program), where he began to do research into pedagogy for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous students. He then took a year’s sabbatical to do Mohawk language immersion.

“Because of their traumatic time in the residential school system, my grandparents didn’t pass the language down to my father,” Doolittle says. “My father could only count to three in Mohawk, so I had to learn the language on my own.”

In 2001, Doolittle received a call from First Nations University in Saskatchewan inviting him to apply for a job. “I was very pleased to learn about the opportunity because it would allow me to do the things I cared about the most.”

Doolittle has been researching Indigenous mathematics for his entire career. “It’s a difficult topic, and I haven’t finished yet. It’s easy to give easy answers that are wrong.” For the last 12 years, that project has manifested as the “mathematics bundle.” Bundles, he explains, are containers for objects that aid in the spiritual endeavour of understanding the world and are associated with specific nations or tasks.

In 2013, a group of Indigenous mathematicians and elders formally entrusted Doolittle with the bundle and met again in a workshop in the summer of 2025 at the Banff International Research Station to go deeper on the question of Indigenous mathematics.

Indigenous and Indigenizing

When asked to explain the distinction between Indigenous and Indigenizing

mathematics, Doolittle uses the image of the 400-year-old Two-Row Wampum, which conceptualizes Indigenous people and settlers as living parallel lives in harmony.

We can imagine one of these rows as containing Indigenous mathematics — that is, the study of how Indigenous people have historically developed alternative mathematical systems.

The other row is the Western understanding of mathematics commonly taught around the world today and used

in multiple fields. This kind of math, Doolittle says, “will never be fully Indigenized,” but it can still take lessons and principles from Indigenous knowledge keepers so as to create spaces for research and education that prioritize peace, respect and collaboration.

He points to the example from Indigenous teaching of the Four Directions: mental, physical, emotional and spiritual. “Traditional math education emphasizes the mental but overlooks everything else,” he explains. “Recently, however, research has demonstrated the effectiveness of incorporating physical exploration of math using physical manipulatives such as base ten blocks or algetiles into math education from kindergarten through university.”

He also notes the importance of acknowledging the feelings of anxiety, dread and shame that so many people associate with math. He works to combat these feelings in his university classrooms by encouraging students to collaborate on problems and ask lots of questions. “Often, people will tell me that this university intro class is the first time in their lives that they enjoyed a math class,” he says.

Finally, he and the other members of the Indigenous mathematics group explored the spiritual side of mathematics through ceremony and discussion. “Spirituality is different for different people,” he says, “but community, ethics, transcendence, beauty — these are all part of the way that we think about math.”

“Having two cultures, two ways of thinking, living in parallel with each other is a great gift ... and there is so much we can learn from each other, if we create spaces of friendship and mutual respect.”



COMMUNITY WATCH

TORONTO TAMIL BOOK FAIR

A Landmark Celebration of Tamil Literature, Language, and Cultural Unity



The Toronto Tamil Book Fair marks a historic milestone as the first event of its kind in Canada. The United Sri Lanka Muslim Council of Canada (USLMCC) and the Canadian Tamil Congress (CTC) are community partners for this initiative. This landmark fair celebrates the power of language, literature, and creativity that continue to connect Tamil-speaking communities in Canada and around the world.

Tamil is more than a language; it is a living heritage. Ranked among the world's top ten classical languages, Tamil carries more than 2,500 years of literary and cultural legacy. It holds official, national, or administrative status in ten countries and is spoken by more than eighty million people across sixty-five nations. The Toronto Tamil Book Fair (TTBF) proudly honours this remarkable journey of linguistic endurance and artistic expression.

Our vision is to advance Tamil language, literature, science, and cultural heritage by creating an inclusive space that promotes participation and accessibility for everyone. The fair aims to unite all Tamil speaking peoples in Canada and around the world, while encouraging global knowledge exchange, social harmony, and reading.

The two-day event will showcase books, publications, and creative works from Tamil speaking communities across the globe including Eelam Tamils, Muslims,

Up-Country Tamils, Tamils from Tamil Nadu (India), Malaysia, Singapore, Mauritius, South Africa and other parts of the diaspora. The Book Fair will also open new avenues for dialogue and collaboration between Tamil speaking communities, highlighting shared histories and collective aspirations for peace and progress, both in Sri Lanka and across the diaspora.

The TTBF will take place on Saturday, December 6, 2025, and Sunday, December 7, 2025, at the Malvern Family Resource Centre, 90 Littles Road, Scarborough, Ontario. Visitors can look forward to book launches, author talks, and panel discussions that celebrate the vibrancy and depth of Tamil literary and artistic traditions.

Publishers and writers are invited to participate by registering for a table to showcase their work or to register for book launch opportunities through TTBF.

The Toronto Tamil Book Fair stands as a proud symbol of unity, knowledge, and cultural excellence.

To learn more about the Toronto Tamil Book Fair, please visit:

www.torontotamilbookfair.com

For more information, registration, and media inquiries, please contact: info@torontotamilbookfair.com

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Donor-Funded Technology Transforms Sinus Surgery at SHN



Dr. Michael Chang, assisted by RPN Rochelle Bihis, performs SHN's first endoscopic sinus surgery using the donor-funded Medtronic StealthStation™ FlexENT Navigation System.



(L–R) Noel Evangelista, RN; Rhodora Gutierrez, OR Manager; Dr. Michael Chang, Division Lead, Otolaryngology; donor Sandy Zheng; Dr. Jon Hummel, Interim Chief of Staff; Eugenia Dimag, RN.

A breakthrough in surgical innovation is transforming care in Scarborough. Scarborough Health Network (SHN) is using a state-of-the-art image-guided navigation system that allows Ear, Nose, and Throat (ENT) surgeons to operate with extraordinary precision. Thanks to the generosity of donors, this advanced technology is now delivering world-class care right in the community.

The Medtronic StealthStation™ FlexENT Navigation System provides real-time, image-guided navigation during delicate sinus and skull-base surgeries. For patients with chronic sinus disease, nasal polyps, or other challenging ENT conditions, this accuracy is vital. The sinuses are located close to the eyes, brain, and major nerves—where even a millimetre of error can have serious consequences. The FlexENT system functions like a surgical GPS, guiding surgeons safely through intricate anatomical structures.

“This technology allows us to operate with much greater confidence and precision,” says Dr. Michael Chang, Division Lead for Otolaryngology–Head and Neck Surgery at SHN. **“Patients will benefit from safer surgeries, faster recoveries, and better long-term outcomes.”**

Before this advancement, many Scarborough patients had to travel outside their community to access similar technology. With the FlexENT system in place, SHN can perform advanced procedures near the optic nerve and carotid artery—right here at home.

SHN used the FlexENT system for the first time in July 2025, during an endoscopic sinus surgery for patient Jaesun Joe. Dr. Chang, supported by anesthesiologist Dr. Liz Hartley, used the real-time guidance to navigate complex sinus pathways and remove nasal polyps safely and accurately.

This milestone is possible thanks to the generosity of SHN’s donor community. **Key supporters include SHN Foundation Board Member Sandy Zheng; the family of the late Dr. David Naiberg, former Chief of Otolaryngology; the Dr. David and Sharon Naiberg Health Innovation Fund in Otolaryngology; Jim Christine, Christina Ong,** and many others dedicated to strengthening healthcare in Scarborough.

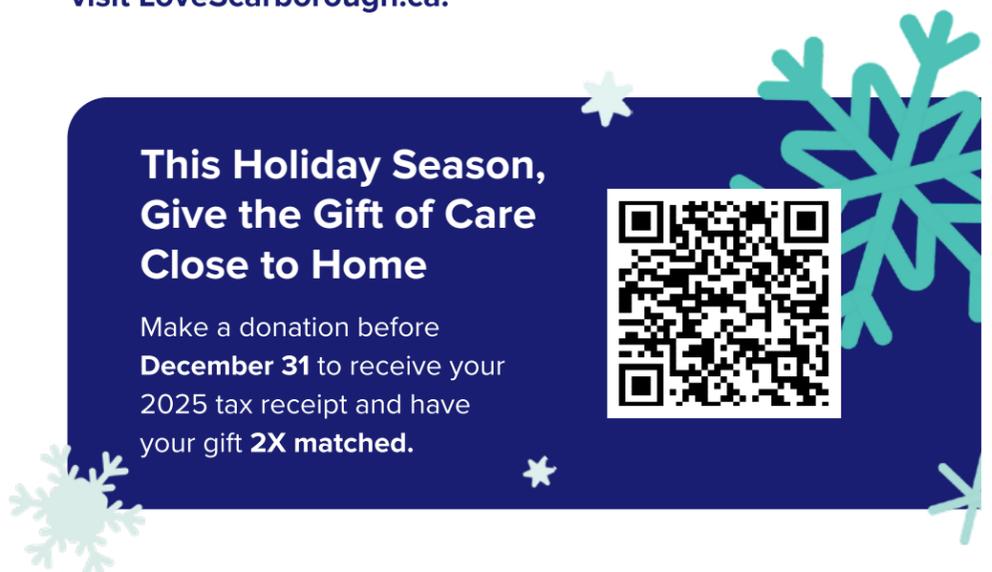
To help bring more advanced medical equipment to Scarborough and support the next breakthrough, visit [LoveScarborough.ca](https://www.lovescarborough.ca).



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DISCOVER THE ISLE OF WIGHT



The Isle of Wight is an island off the south coast of England which, together with its surrounding uninhabited islets and skerries, is also a ceremonial county. The county is bordered by Hampshire across the Solent strait to the north, and is otherwise surrounded by the English Channel. Its largest settlement is Ryde, and the administrative centre is Newport.

The Isle of Wight has a land area of 380 km² (150 sq mi) and had a population of 140,794 in 2022, making it the largest and second-most populous English island.

Located just off of the south coast of England, our island is only 2 hours door-to-door from London via ferry or hovercraft, making it the perfect year-round destination to explore with family and friends.

If you want to discover things to do, accommodation to suit all tastes and budgets, walking and cycling routes, food and drink, plus how to travel around our island, then look no further.

England in miniature, there's always plenty to do here whatever the season.

And for the best ferry deals, be sure to check with your accommodation provider.

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Our island, is your **island**. We **can't wait** to welcome **you**.

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