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VAAHEESAN LIVE IN TORONTO



On January 24, 2026, Vaaheesan (Vaaheesan Rasaiya) performed in the Greater Toronto Area, (Ajax) with several artists and performers as part of his "Voice of Eelam" live tour.

Artists who performed with Vaaheesan included members of his group, Rap Ceylon, specifically Advik Uthayakumar and Thishon Vijaymohan. Other

performers included singer Manoraj, Toronto-based Tamil artists Ashvin Bala & Eloqu3nce, and the Kalaikovil Academy of Fine Arts Dancers led by Smt. Vanitha Kugenthiran.

The performance also involved Team "Namma Podiyal". The event took place at the Durham Convention Centre and was presented by Third Eye Media Production

Vaaheesan Rasaiya is a Sri Lankan Tamil rapper, lyricist, and actor. Originating from Jaffna, Sri Lanka, Vaaheesan developed a passion for arts, including classical dance, literature, and the Mridangam.

Photo Courtesy: MAKILCHI MOMENTS

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CANADA NEWS 

Canadian Tamil Congress Celebrates 19th Annual Thai Pongal & Tamil Heritage Month Gala Dinner



The Canadian Tamil Congress (CTC) proudly hosted its 19th Annual Thai Pongal and Tamil Heritage Month Gala Dinner on January 24, 2026, at the Hilton Markham Conference Centre. The evening brought together community members, leaders, and dignitaries for a meaningful celebration of Tamil culture, heritage, and collective progress.

The event began with a lively networking reception, where guests and dignitaries connected and exchanged ideas. The formal program opened with the traditional lighting of the oil lamp, symbolizing prosperity, unity, and new beginnings.

The gala welcomed high level dignitaries from all three levels of government, who joined the community in celebrating Thai Pongal and Tamil Heritage Month. Hon. Bill Blair, MP and former Chief of Police of the City of Toronto, delivered greetings on behalf of the Government of Canada. Member of Parliament Juanita Nathan also addressed the audience and reflected on her recent visit to India and Sri Lanka. She highlighted the severe challenges faced by Upcountry Tamil communities following recent floods in Sri Lanka and

emphasized the important role the Tamil diaspora plays in supporting relief and long term recovery efforts. CTC proudly recognized outstanding leadership and service during the evening.

His Worship Frank Scarpitti, Mayor of Markham, received the Leaders for Change Award in recognition of his continued support for the Tamil

community. MP Garnett Genuis received the Service Excellence Award for his longstanding commitment and advocacy for Human Rights.

The event featured distinguished speakers who inspired reflection and action. The Special Guest, Hon. Rauff Hakeem, Member of Parliament from Sri Lanka, addressed the gathering and shared insights on the importance of global Tamil unity. The Keynote Speaker, Roy Ratnavel, author of Prisoner #1056, delivered a powerful and thought provoking message on the future of Tamil youth and the responsibility of the community to guide, empower, and uplift the next generation.

Thushyanthan R. Thurairatnam, CTC Humanitarian Coordinator for Sri Lanka, spoke about the Canadian Tamil Congress's humanitarian and development initiatives in Sri Lanka and their impact on war affected communities.

The evening also celebrated Tamil arts and culture through vibrant performances. Students of Smt. Nirothini Pararajasingam from Niro Dance Creations presented the welcome dance. Students of Guru



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Prime Minister Mark Carney Backs Up His Words with Action

By Harrish Thirukumaran

“Our view is middle powers must act together because if we're not on the table, we're on the menu.”

Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney did not mince words as he delivered his special address before the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland about the new world order on January 20th, 2026. We have yet to see what it means for Canada and the rest of the world exactly in midst of rising trade tensions in world politics. It caught the world by storm through the forcefulness of his speech on what Canada must exactly do in this moment. This article will go onto explain key points of that speech and call on readers to listen to this speech themselves and decide what it means for Canada on the world stage today.

In it, he points out that the rules-based international order is not functioning as advertised. It has now become a system of intensifying great power rivalry where the most powerful pursue their interests using economic integration as coercion.

It contrasted greatly with US President Donald Trump's speech where he talks about the USA being victimized by other countries in its trading relationships. He also talks up the USA in terms of it making massive gains since President Trump retook office. Prime Minister Carney goes onto explain the old order is not coming back and that nostalgia is not a strategy, but believe that from the fracture something bigger, better, stronger, more just can be built.

Accordingly, it is mentioned that this is the task of the middle powers, the countries that have the most to lose from a world of fortresses and the most to gain from genuine co-operation. The speech itself seemed like a strong demonstration of support in multilateralism. However, it had language around creating a coalition of partners to draw on for support to address any future challenges. As someone who has studied political science in university, this was arguably one of the greatest political speeches in Canadian history that touches on the country's identity as a middle power and stoking a clear position for the country.

Value-based realism was an idea expressed by Carney. The aim is to be both principled and pragmatic in Canada's commitment to fundamental values, sovereignty, territorial integrity, and the prohibition on the use of force except when consistent with the UN Charter and respect for human rights.

Realism is a theme that runs throughout his speech at Davos. There was an emphasis on engaging broadly and strategically with open eyes. Canada, in Carney's perspective,

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takes on the world as it is, not waiting around for what the world that we wish it to be.

The exact implications of this speech or the policy decisions to come are developments that the world should keep an eye on as they develop. They will certainly be a test of Canada's own resilience in the face of tariffs from the US. As of this writing, President Trump has threatened Canada with a 100% tariff based on its growing trade ties with China. Carney, in response, has reiterated his “buy Canadian” policy, stressing to Canadians to support domestic businesses. It was even reported that this week itself, Carney will be visiting India to sign deals on artificial intelligence, uranium, energy, and minerals. This coincides with said agreement with China to cut tariffs on electric vehicles and canola. It is noteworthy to see that his speech is backed by solid actions from his government. You can read the full transcript of Prime Minister Carney's speech here and gather your own thoughts on it: <https://www.weforum.org/stories/2026/01/davos-2026-special-address-by-mark-carney-prime-minister-of-canada/>.

CANADA NEWS

Continued from Page 3...

Sri Lanka, spoke about the Canadian Tamil Congress's humanitarian and development initiatives in Sri Lanka

and their impact on war affected communities.

The evening also celebrated Tamil arts and culture through vibrant performances. Students of Smt. Nirothini Pararajasingam from Niro Dance Creations presented the welcome dance. Students of Guru Niranjana Chandru from Kalaimanram Academy of Fine Arts and Yoga delivered a graceful Bharatanatyam performance. Students from the Centre for Leadership and Innovation also showcased their talents highlighting the importance of skills development in Sri Lanka.

A highlight of the night was the Mullai Fashion Show, which showcased exquisite handloom sarees created by war affected women through the Mullai Handloom Initiative in Puthukkudiyiruppu, Sri Lanka. The presentation powerfully reflected resilience, empowerment, and cultural pride.

In his address, CTC President Kumar Ratnam emphasized that Thai Pongal and Tamil Heritage Month goes beyond celebrating the past. He spoke about shaping a future where Tamil identity stands confident, passionate, and contributive. He reaffirmed CTC's commitment, stating that the organization

will serve with humility, lead with integrity, and grow together as a community. CTC also announced that the 2026 Tamil Canadian Walk will be dedicated to supporting the Tamil Community Centre. As part of this announcement, a ceremonial cheque was presented reflecting the Gala's title sponsor, Sutharshan Paramasamy family's generous pledge of \$500,000 toward the Tamil Community Centre.

The Canadian Tamil Congress extends its heartfelt gratitude to all dignitaries, guests, sponsors, volunteers, partners, and supporters whose dedication and hard work made this event a memorable success.

Pictures by: Iyah4u & inainuvakal.com



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SRI LANKA'S DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION



A user of digital payment technology in Sri Lanka. Photo: IFC

By: Visvalingam Muralithas

Digital transformation has become a cornerstone of modern economic growth, driving efficiency, productivity, and innovation across sectors. The integration of digital tools, automation, and AI has optimized operations in manufacturing, services, and public administration while enabling new business models, startups, fintech solutions, e-commerce platforms, and digital services.

Digital payment system has facilitated seamless financial transactions for millions of small businesses, significantly boosting economic activity. Similarly, countries like South Korea and Singapore have leveraged AI and robust digital infrastructure to enhance global competitiveness, while China's digital governance platforms demonstrate how technology can improve transparency, accountability, and public service delivery on a massive scale. digital transformation promotes social inclusion, financial access, and entrepreneurship. Mobile banking, digital payment systems, and fintech applications have extended financial services to underserved populations. It also creates employment opportunities in IT, AI, data analytics, fintech, e-commerce, and digital marketing, while upskilling the workforce. Digital tools bridge urban-rural divides, empower women and youth, and enhance access to education, healthcare, and agricultural services. By fostering innovation, supporting startups and SMEs, and transforming key sectors,

digitalization becomes a strategic driver of sustainable growth, inclusive development, and long-term economic resilience.

Over the past decade, India has undergone one of the most rapid digital transformations in the world. What began as a strategic national vision to empower 1.4 billion citizens through digital infrastructure has evolved into a socioeconomic revolution that is reshaping governance, commerce, education, healthcare, and daily life. With widespread mobile connectivity, large-scale digital identity systems, world-leading payment innovations, and a thriving entrepreneurial ecosystem, India today stands as a global model of inclusive digital development.

For Sri Lanka—an economy undergoing fiscal reforms, governance restructuring, and institutional modernisation—India's transformation offers a powerful blueprint.

India's digital revolution is built on three foundational components of Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI)—public digital goods designed to be universal, secure, low-cost, and scalable.

The integration of Aadhaar + Mobile + Bank accounts (the JAM Trinity) has

enabled universal identity verification, digital KYC, and seamless delivery of welfare benefits.

India's digital transformation is driven by breakthrough platforms like UPI, which now accounts for nearly half of the world's real-time digital payments, handling over 14 billion transactions monthly and enabling financial inclusion for millions of small merchants, drivers, farmers, and micro-enterprises. This low-cost, universal digital payment ecosystem has strengthened SMEs, e-commerce, rural markets, and government revenue systems. Alongside this, India has become the world's third-largest start-up hub, with more than 105 unicorns valued at USD 450 billion, creating millions of tech-enabled jobs across fintech, edtech, mobility, SaaS, and AI. Strong policy support under Startup India, Digital India, and Make in India has accelerated this growth. Digital governance platforms—such as CoWIN, DigiLocker, UMANG, ABDM, and eSanjeevani—have transformed public service delivery, improved transparency, cut administrative costs, and expanded citizen trust, demonstrating how large-scale digital infrastructure can reshape national development.

Digital Component	Impact / Data
Aadhaar Biometric ID	Over 1.33 billion people enrolled — world's largest digital ID system
Jan Dhan Yojana	503 million financial inclusion accounts opened since 2014; 55% owned by women
Mobile Connectivity	1.2 billion mobile connections; 840 million internet users (2024)

WORLD NEWS



Op-Ed

India's digital revolution has reshaped everyday life across education, health, and rural development. More than 250 million students accessed online learning during the pandemic, while platforms like DIKSHA recorded over 3.5 billion learning sessions, marking a new era of digital education. In health, telemedicine expanded rapidly with more than 100 million remote consultations, supported by emerging AI-based diagnostics and digital health records. Rural



communities have also been transformed through mobile-based agriculture advisories, digital crop insurance, online land records, and direct government payments to farmers, greatly improving transparency and financial stability. This widespread digital inclusion has empowered women, youth, and rural households, laying the foundation for strong economic impact. Today, India's digital economy accounts for 11% of GDP—about USD 345 billion—and is projected to reach USD 1 trillion by 2030, supported by booming e-commerce and fintech sectors. Digital systems have reduced transaction costs by up to 80%, improved tax efficiency, and saved over USD 30 billion through direct benefit transfers, while the labour market has expanded with 7.7 million gig workers and a 5-million-strong IT workforce contributing 8% to GDP. India's digital transformation is therefore not just a technological shift but a profound economic restructuring shaping the nation's future.

Sri Lanka can accelerate economic growth and inclusion by building a scalable Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI). Key initiatives include a unified National Digital ID with biometric and mobile verification, linked bank accounts for all citizens, and a national instant payment platform (LK-UPI). Such infrastructure would enhance transparency in social welfare programs like Samurdhi, pensions, and student allowances, reduce fraud and leakages, improve SME credit access, and speed up government revenue collection. Complementing this, a cashless, low-cost economy can be achieved by expanding QR-based digital payments for public transport, hospitals, government

services, local vendors, tourism, and taxes, connecting informal workers to formal markets while curbing corruption. To foster innovation, Sri Lanka should develop a start-up ecosystem through a National Start-Up Mission, university innovation labs, government-private venture capital funds, export incentives, and policies supporting fintech, agritech, healthtech, and green tech sectors. Modernising public service delivery through a Digital Land Registry, e-Health IDs, DigiLocker for certificates and licences, and unified digital education platforms can reduce delays and inefficiencies. Finally, promoting digital agriculture and rural services—including AI-based crop monitoring, digital soil health cards, e-marketplaces, and mobile advisory systems—can significantly increase productivity and income for the 25% of the workforce employed in agriculture. Together, these measures can transform Sri Lanka into a digitally empowered, inclusive, and economically resilient nation.

Sri Lanka has achieved high mobile connectivity, with 29.3 million connections in 2025, equivalent to 127% of the population, and 32.49 million in 2024. Internet adoption remains moderate, with 12.4 million users in 2025 (53.6% penetration) and 26 million subscriptions including mobile broadband. Broadband infrastructure is improving, as median mobile speeds rose from 20.22 Mbps in 2025 to 45.64 Mbps in 2026, while fixed broadband speeds increased from 22.30 Mbps to 31.67 Mbps. Data consumption is growing rapidly, reaching over 1 million terabytes in Q3 2024, with 69% via mobile broadband. Financial inclusion is strong, with 88.9% of adults holding a bank account, digital literacy at 63.5%, and a bank branch density of 17 per 100,000 people. The digital economy contributes Rs 1,342 billion (4.5% of GDP), including ICT/BPO services (Rs 606.7 billion, 2.03% of GDP) and e-commerce (Rs 735.2 billion, 2.47% of GDP), with 52% of internet users making at least one online purchase per month. However, government digital engagement remains low, with only 26% accessing information online and just 4% completing transactions digitally, indicating significant potential for public-sector digitalisation.

A Digital Roadmap for Sri Lanka (2025–2035) outlines a phased approach to building a digitally competitive nation. Phase 1 (2025–2027) focuses on laying the foundation with a National Digital ID system, launch of LK-UPI, full digitisation of government payments, 100% smartphone and 4G/5G coverage, and the introduction of DigiLocker Sri Lanka. Phase 2 (2027–2030) aims to

expand the ecosystem through a national cloud service for ministries, digital health records for all citizens, cashless public transport, university innovation hubs, and AI adoption in agriculture and manufacturing. Phase 3 (2030–2035) envisions a transformed economy with digital export trade platforms, smart city and smart village networks, AI-driven governance, expanded IT outsourcing, and a digital tourism platform. India's digital revolution demonstrates that technology becomes truly transformative when it is inclusive, affordable, and accessible to all citizens. By combining smart policy design, scalable digital infrastructure, and public trust, India has built a world-class digital economy, empowered rural communities, strengthened governance, and boosted productivity across sectors. Sri Lanka—benefiting from high financial inclusion, rising digital literacy, and a young workforce—has the opportunity to replicate and adapt this model. Digitalisation should not be seen merely as an ICT project, but as an economic strategy, a tool for governance reform, and a pathway to sustainable growth. With urgency and vision, Sri Lanka can create a more competitive economy, a transparent state, and an inclusive society for the decades ahead.

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





IRAN SAYS TALKS WITH US IN OMAN 'A GOOD START', MORE DISCUSSIONS EXPECTED



Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi, left, shakes hands with his Omani counterpart Badr bin Hamad Al Busaidi during their meeting in Muscat, Oman, on Friday [Handout: Oman Foreign Ministry via AP Photo]

Tehran, Iran – Iranian authorities described the latest talks with the United States in Oman as “positive”, while US President Donald Trump said the indirect discussions were “very good”, but the mediated negotiations in Oman have yet to offer a roadmap to alleviate growing fears of a US attack.

Speaking to Iranian television in Muscat on Friday after the talks finished, Iran’s Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said the indirect talks got off to “a good start” and that a decision on how to proceed with further rounds would be taken after “consulting with the capitals”.

Araghchi also cautioned that there was a climate of “mistrust” after the US military attacked Iran’s nuclear sites when it briefly joined Israel’s 12-day war with Iran in June, days before a sixth round of similarly mediated indirect talks had been scheduled.

President Trump, speaking to reporters later on board Air Force One, said the US had “very good” talks on Iran and said more were planned for early next week.

But Trump also kept up his threats, warning that if Iran did not make a deal over its nuclear programme, “the consequences are very steep”.

“Iran looks like they want to make a deal very badly – as they should,” Trump said, suggesting Tehran may be willing to “do more” than in previous talks, but he did not give details.

Iran’s team at the indirect talks in Muscat was led by Araghchi, while Washington sent special envoy Steve Witkoff and Trump’s son-in-law Jared Kushner. US Central Command chief

Brad Cooper, the most senior commander in the region, also joined the US delegation.

Oman’s Foreign Minister Badr bin Hamad Al Busaidi met with the US and Iranian sides separately multiple times on Friday and conveyed messages between the teams.

“It was useful to clarify both Iranian and American thinking and identify areas for possible progress,” he said, adding that the aim is to “reconvene in due course”.

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Consultations “focused on creating appropriate conditions for the resumption of diplomatic and technical negotiations”, according to a statement from Oman’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The talks come as Trump considers military options against Iran. The US has moved the USS Abraham Lincoln supercarrier and supporting warships and fighter jets near Iranian waters, strengthened air defences in bases used by the US military across the region, while US forces also shot down an Iranian drone this week.

Trump has repeatedly threatened to attack Iran if it does not reach a new agreement with the US on several issues.

Red lines

The US wants Iran to fully abandon enriching uranium, even at the 3.67 percent civilian-use rate agreed under the landmark 2015 nuclear deal with world powers that Trump unilaterally

abandoned in 2018. Iran used to enrich up to 60 percent before its main nuclear facilities were destroyed or significantly damaged by US bombs in June.

Washington also wants to limit the range of Iran’s ballistic missiles – the main tool in the country’s arsenal – and ensure that Tehran’s aligned armed groups in Iraq, Lebanon, Yemen and Syria will no longer receive any military or financial support.

Several European powers have expressed support for the US demands, as has the far-right government in Israel, which wants to undermine a substantive military rival in the region.

But the Iranian government has repeatedly emphasised that it will only negotiate on nuclear issues to lift sanctions and de-escalate, saying that discussions on missiles or any other subject were a red line. As Araghchi reiterated on Friday, it also wants the US threats of war to end.

Iranian commanders have also said they remain highly prepared for a regional-scale war, and the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) on Thursday showed a new test launch of one of the country’s top ballistic missiles. Iranian Press TV said the Khorramshahr-4 missile, capable of reaching Israel and US bases across the region, was put on a mobile launcher taken out from an underground base.

Yadollah Javani, the political deputy for the IRGC, said that “unveiling the missile means that although we have sat down at the negotiating table, we will not give up our military power”.



SHN nephrologist leads equity-focused study on immigrant kidney disease risk

BY: MELODY KESHISHIAN, COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST, SCARBOROUGH HEALTH NETWORK

Scarborough Health Network (SHN) is leading health equity-focused research through the work of Dr. Tabo Sikaneta, SHN nephrologist and lead investigator on a recently published study which examines the disparities in chronic kidney disease among Scarborough residents.

The study tests how certain immigrant and ethnic groups disproportionately represent patients with kidney failure. Dr. Sikaneta examined this using local population data. Published in *BMJ Open* in December 2025, the study signifies rethinking how kidney disease risk is identified and treated in one of Canada's most diverse communities.

SHN's Regional Nephrology Program, the largest of its kind in Ontario, provides care to thousands of kidney disease patients each year. In Scarborough, nearly 60 per cent of residents are immigrants and 75 per cent belong to visible minority groups, making SHN clinicians uniquely positioned to identify opportunities to improve kidney care.

The study's greatest impact may lie in what comes next: Dr. Sikaneta's work is helping lay the foundation for more effective screening, intervention, and care models for immigrant communities, both in Scarborough and beyond. By identifying risk in patients earlier, the study findings highlight opportunities for earlier action that might reduce the prevalence of end-stage kidney disease.



Dr. Tabo Sikaneta in the Multi-Care Kidney Clinic, SHN General Hospital

From evidence to action

The inspiration behind the study came from Dr. Sikaneta's routine patient dialysis rounds.

"I wanted to formally understand who was making up this increased kidney disease, and whether there were patterns in specific population groups that we weren't addressing early enough," he shared.

"Answering that question required examining local data."

Starting in 2018, Dr. Sikaneta studied Scarborough dialysis patients, providing insights relevant to SHN. He found that birth country was a stronger predictor of dialysis risk than ethnicity alone. Immigrants from the Caribbean, the Philippines, and Sri Lanka were six to 12 times more likely to receive dialysis than Canadian-born residents, putting them at a particularly high risk of

end-stage kidney disease. These findings also confirmed an elevated health risk seen in Ontario's Black population, and added new, Scarborough-specific clarity about other at-risk ethnic groups.

Importantly, the study found that time since immigration did not reduce kidney disease risk, whether individuals had lived in Canada for three years or three decades. Risk doesn't necessarily diminish over time, reinforcing the need for proactive screening strategies for certain groups. For example, rather than applying uniform screening models, kidney disease detection can be tailored to populations shown to be at higher risk, similar to breast cancer screening.

Dr. Sikaneta also noted that because dialysis affects relatively few patients but requires extensive resources, focusing on the highest-risk groups could improve outcomes and system efficiency.

"Dr. Sikaneta's study reflects SHN's broader commitment to using local data to inform smarter, more equitable care models that can be scaled and adapted to other regions," said Dr. Samir Grover, EVP of Academics.

Dr. Sikaneta emphasized the findings should not stigmatize immigrant communities, but support equitable, timely care, as clinician-led research at SHN continues to shape responsive, high-quality healthcare for Scarborough.

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SHN leads province in patient safety

BY: NICHOLAS SMITH, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS, SHN

What does it take to deliver the safest and highest quality hospital care?

This is a question that Scarborough Health Network (SHN) is shedding light on following our leading results in the most recent report from the Hospital Harm Project, led by the Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI) and Healthcare Excellence Canada. In the latest data from the project, SHN achieved its best-ever overall performance for rate of harm and is the top performer among the province's large community and teaching hospitals.

For 2024-2025, SHN had a harm rate of 2.0 out of every 100 hospitalizations, compared to the GTA Large Community Hospital rate of 4.5, Large Community Hospital rate of 5.3, and National rate of 5.9. Individually, all three SHN hospitals ranked in the top four among GTA and teaching hospitals, with Centenary Hospital achieving a significantly better rate of 1.3 compared to any peer group. This means that patients experience harm at SHN between two to three times less than at comparative hospitals in Toronto and around the country.

“Our success is rooted in a clear purpose: to provide exceptional care for Scarborough’s diverse and often underserved population,” said David Graham, President and CEO.



Doctor speaking with patient on exam bench

“This commitment is guided by our Strategic Plan 2024–2029, which includes a relentless focus on quality and safety, and is aligned with carefully selected targets and performance indicators in our corporate and quality scorecards and our Quality Improvement Plan.

“The very low harm rates seen across our hospitals are not by chance—they are the result of purposeful, strategic implementation across every part of the organization. This is what sets SHN apart.”

These efforts are amplified by the *Love, Scarborough* fundraising campaign, which calls on the community to help turn these priorities into reality, because building a stronger, safer healthcare system requires collective action.

Turning strategy into action

The Hospital Harm Project looks at harmful events within four categories:

1. Healthcare and medications, such as pressure injuries or getting the wrong medicine;
2. Infections;
3. Patient accidents; and
4. Procedure-related harm, such as post-surgical bleeding.

Since 2022, SHN hospitals have seen growing improvements for each of these categories. Major contributors to SHN’s overall low harm rate include a 42 per cent reduction in hospital-acquired pressure ulcers, a 57 per cent reduction in hospital-acquired delirium, and a 50 per cent reduction in falls resulting in moderate harm or above.



“SHN is on a journey to zero harm,” said Glyn Boatswain, Executive Vice-President, Clinical Programs, and Chief Nursing and Allied Health Professionals Executive.

“Our quality improvement indicators are built around the reduction of these specific adverse events. We track and report on pressure ulcers, delirium, and falls at all levels of our organization—from the front line to the board room.

“This is the unwavering commitment our teams bring to serving our community. We are focused on quality improvements that enable us to deliver the best care for Scarborough’s unique and diverse patient population.”

National leadership in quality improvement

SHN’s commitment to smarter, safer care has also been recognized nationally. Last summer, the organization achieved Quality Improvement Status as a Choosing Wisely Canada Hospital, demonstrating leadership in reducing unnecessary tests and treatments. SHN is the third organization in Canada to be recognized as an Age-Friendly Health System by the Institute for Healthcare Improvement, reflecting a system-wide focus on compassionate, inclusive care for older adults.

SHN’s results are proof that a focused, data-informed approach

can lead to measurable improvements in care and outcomes. The organization is continuing to build on this foundation, translating momentum into a sustainable model for excellence. CIHI’s latest Hospital Harm Project is clear evidence of that progress, demonstrating SHN’s real, measurable gains for patients across Scarborough and positioning SHN among the top-performing and most trusted community health leaders across the GTA.

“These results show what’s possible when a health network aligns purpose, data, and action,” said Glyn.

SHN named one of Greater Toronto’s Top Employers

Scarborough Health Network (SHN) is pleased to be recognized as one of Greater Toronto’s Top Employers for 2026. This year’s winners were announced online in *The Globe and Mail* and in a special magazine by Mediacorp Canada Inc., the country’s largest publisher of employment periodicals. This prestigious award celebrates organizations with exceptional workplaces and human resources programs, evaluating dimensions such as corporate culture, employee benefits, professional development, communication



SHN leaders with Greater Toronto’s Top Employer award

and community involvement.

SHN celebrates being a workplace where everyone involved can thrive.

Learner Spotlight: Saim Imran

Saim Imran is a third-year medical student from the University of Toronto, who is currently completing his Emergency Medicine rotation at SHN.

Saim immigrated to Scarborough in 2007, where he first experienced the impact of compassionate care when his family navigated the healthcare system as newcomers.

Watch Saim’s video:



Dr. Anojan Sivalingam Supports Paediatric and Emergency Care at SHN



Dr. Anojan Sivalingam, Chiropractor and Owner of Muscle & Movement Rehab in Scarborough gives back to paediatric and emergency care at Scarborough Health Network.

Dr. Anojan Sivalingam, chiropractor and owner of **Muscle & Movement Rehab**, is giving back to the community that raised him. He and his family live just down the road from SHN's Centenary Hospital, where his daughter was delivered about a year ago—a place that has made a lasting impact on his family.

“When my wife and I had our daughter, we received excellent care at Centenary,” says Dr. Sivalingam. “The nurses and staff were amazing and incredibly supportive. That experience made it even more important for me to give back to the hospital that gave us so much.”

Dr. Sivalingam's clinic focuses on wellness, recovery, and improving mobility. “We help the Scarborough community live healthier, stronger lives,” he says. “I know how critically important it is to have the best health facilities close to home for families, children, and our community.”

SHN serves thousands of families every year. Across all three hospitals, more than **5,800 babies are delivered annually**, and the emergency departments handle **221,000 visits in spaces built for only half** that number.

With a deep commitment to advancing children's healthcare, Dr. Sivalingam and his company have made a multi-year pledge supporting the **Paediatric Acute Care Unit** and the **Centenary Hospital Emergency Department Redevelopment** through the **Love, Scarborough** campaign. Their generous contribution will help fund essential equipment, renovations, and programs—ensuring children and families continue to receive exceptional, close-to-home care.

“We've been so blessed, and I truly want to give some of the blessings back to the community and the people that have been so important in our journey,” says Dr. Sivalingam. **“Being from Scarborough, I know how important it is to invest back into the community.”**

Join donors like Dr. Sivalingam and help us keep climbing.



LoveScarborough.ca



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A HEARTBEAT AWAY FROM home

A cardiac event abroad led Dr. Henry Solow back to the hospital he helped shape.

BY GLYNIS RATCLIFFE



DR. HENRY SOLOW walks across the helipad of his trusted community hospital.

The top of a six-storey waterslide at a resort in a foreign country is an especially terrifying place to experience cardiac arrest. That's where Dr. Henry Solow, a 35-year veteran haematologist-oncologist at Oak Valley Health's Markham Stouffville Hospital (MSH), was when his heart stopped in January 2025. Thankfully for Dr. Solow, his son was just ahead of him on the platform.

The Greater Toronto Area-based physician heard his father collapse and immediately sprang into action. He performed CPR and then used the resort's automated external defibrillator to bring his father back to life, before brain damage could occur.

THE DOCTOR BECOMES THE PATIENT

Dr. Solow was rushed to a nearby hospital in Nassau, Bahamas, where medical staff confirmed he was no longer in immediate danger. An echocardiogram revealed the likely reason his heart stopped: severe aortic stenosis due to an undiagnosed heart condition called bicuspid aortic valve disease. However, the local hospital wasn't equipped to perform further tests and recommended he return to Canada. He and his family knew exactly where he needed to be.

"Going to a downtown hospital didn't even enter my mind, because MSH is my home," Dr. Solow explains. "I spent 35 years working there, and it's really

like family — it's a community. I knew they would look after me."

Oak Valley Health established a cardiac care partnership with Unity Health Toronto in 2024 that gives patients access to advanced cardiac procedures, with streamlined care and communication between hospitals. The result is that community members can go to their local hospital and trust they'll get world-class care, no matter what they need.

"Our patient population has grown exponentially, and it's skewing older," Dr. Paul Hacker, Oak Valley Health's Lead Cardiologist, explains. "Most cardiac patients end up needing an intervention, so these partnerships are critical for us to be able to provide care to patients closer to home."

Dr. Solow arrived at MSH by air ambulance at 2 a.m. the following morning, where he was admitted to the Cardiology Unit. Later that day, Dr. Russell Fernandes, the attending cardiologist, was shocked to see a colleague become his patient.

"I saw 'Henry Solow' on the email, and I figured he was referring a patient," he explains. "Then I looked again and said, 'Wait a minute, they're talking about him.'"

BORN THAT WAY

The aortic valve usually has three leaflets that close after the heart pumps blood into the aorta. In Dr. Solow's case, he was born with only two, which can lead to a narrowing of the valve (stenosis) and cause the heart to work harder.

Valvular heart disease, which is the umbrella term for Dr. Solow's condition, affects approximately 2.5 per cent of Canadians. While symptoms may be non-existent when the disease is mild, if aortic stenosis develops and remains undiagnosed and untreated, it can lead to stroke, heart failure, blood clots or, as Dr. Solow experienced, cardiac arrest.

Dr. Fernandes performed tests on Dr. Solow to ensure he was stable and to confirm the diagnosis. "With this cardiac condition, you have to be very careful with how you administer treatment, because there can be complications if you're too aggressive," Dr. Fernandes notes.

CONTINUITY OF CARE

As part of the cardiac partnership with Unity Health Toronto, Dr. Solow was transported downtown to St. Michael's Hospital for an angiogram, and a stent was inserted in one of his arteries to improve blood flow. One of the many benefits of this partnership is the seamless integration of patient health information, no matter where they are.

Dr. Solow returned to MSH the same day to recover and a week later, he underwent a transcatheter aortic valve implantation (TAVI) to repair his bicuspid aortic valve. During the TAVI, a replacement valve was inserted through a catheter and implanted inside the existing valve.

In spring 2025, MSH opened its new Cardiac Device Clinic to service patients with implanted pacemakers. It's part of Oak Valley Health's long-term strategy to advance the hospital's

cardiac program in the coming years. The stepwise plan would enable cardiologists to implant pacemakers and more advanced devices, and perform angioplasties, cardiac catheterization, and cardiac ablations, among other procedures, says Dr. Hacker.

With a 32 per cent increase in cardiac patients since 2019 and a projected population of 500,000 by 2030, this is one of the many ways MSH is stepping up to provide better cardiac care as the community grows.

Dr. Solow continued his recovery from the TAVI at MSH, was released after three days, and returned to work one month later.

"Going from doctor to patient to doctor was nothing," Dr. Solow insists. "I was just touched, because half the hospital came to see me: doctors, nurses from my clinic and other wards, lab staff. It was nothing short of exceptional." ■



DR. FERNANDES was the attending cardiologist when Dr. Solow arrived at MSH.



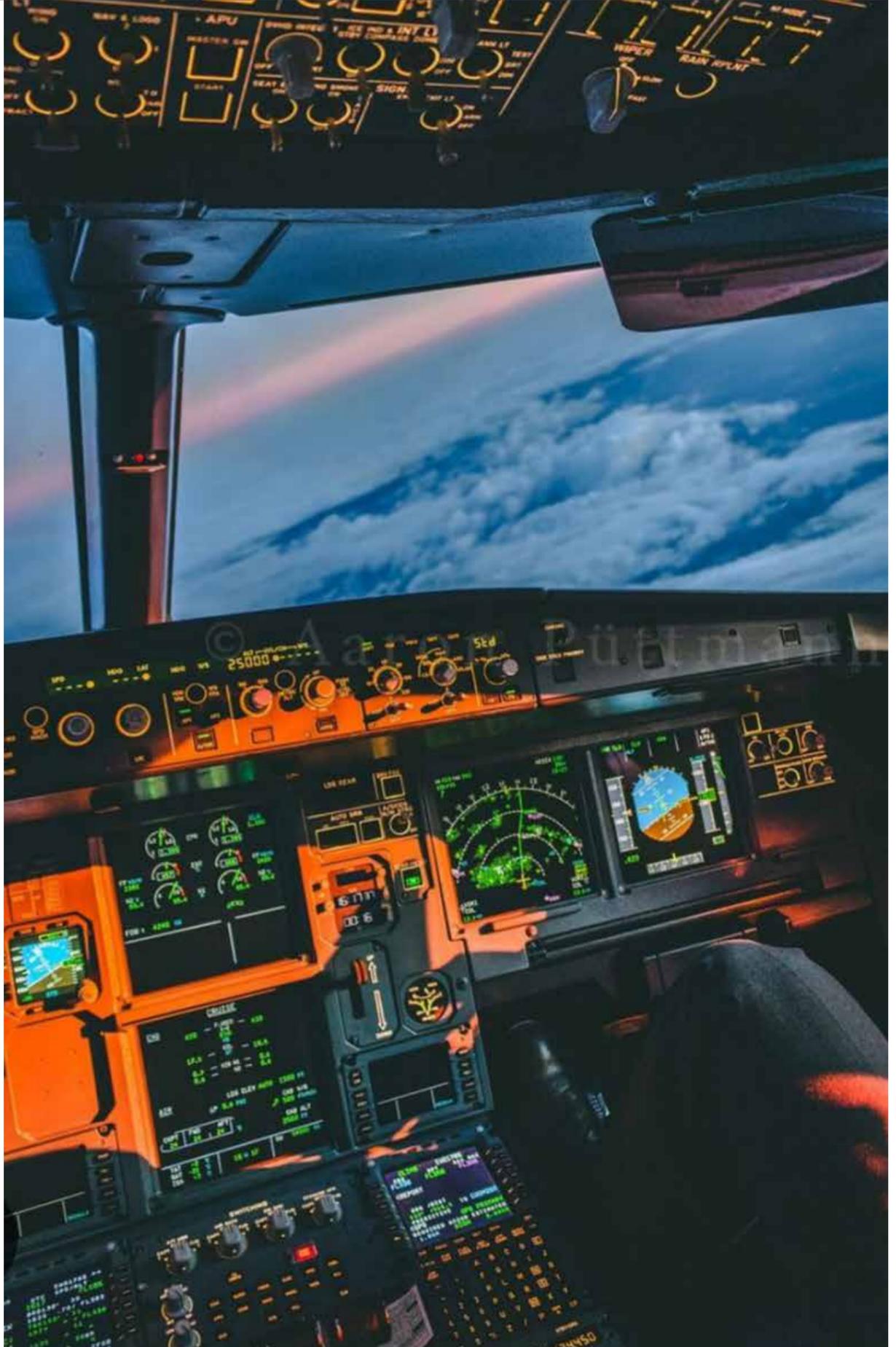
AVIATION SAFETY & ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE - AI

By: Kane Siva

AI is a real game changer in a big way and plays an important role in many frontiers of human life, in other words its cutting-edge technology helps many industries, medical research, education and many human aspects of life to function more efficiently. The scope of AI looks unlimited; its potential and application in many fields of humanity is unfathomable, and one such field is aviation. What will be the impact of AI in aviation and especially in air safety which I am really focused on and interested in. Artificial intelligence has revolutionized and continues to revolutionize the realms of Aviation. The so-called "God Father of the aviation industry, ICAO, has this to say for this new field of technological leaps. AI is Optimizing and transforming aviation safety by its Predictive Maintenance, Weather Patterns, Optimizing Air Traffic Management (ATM), Pilot assistance, by Detecting Fatigue, or Stress, Alerting Pilots in case of Pilot errors, Risk and Incident analysis, analyzing enroute Weather Patterns and Predicting Inclement weather, thus preventing unruly weather-related incidents while flying enroute. We have seen that new technologies have never been a "Smooth Sailing", always coupled with risks and great challenges, like in the case of MCAS, that was installed on B 737-MAX 8, to prevent the unexpected stall of the aircraft. The risks expert worry are the Complexity of AI and the learning process, Ethical and Legal implications and Cybersecurity of the AI systems. Obviously, no system is fool-proof, liable to disruptions may be by Hackers into the AI system if it is going to be there. Every progress in technology has its drawbacks, and it is prone to so many assaults from many disruptors.

The assistance that can be derived from AI to promote Aviation to a greater level of safety is many and more to evolve. The power of AI is its ability to gather and process a trove of data and to learn from them.

The nerve center, I would say, for any airline, is Flight Operations. AI can play a significant role in easing flight operational functions for the pilots, ops staff, and all the other aviation agencies. It would help in route planning, predicting enroute weather patterns, unpredictable turbulent weather conditions well in advance, and optimizing crew efficiency, icing conditions, and crew scheduling to enhance the safety of air travel and airline operations. Also, AI helps in securing cheaper jet fuel, easing air traffic congestion, and aiding efficient air traffic management systems.



AI is of great assistance in aircraft maintenance, scheduling periodic maintenance, especially in fatigue management, and monitoring the miles and mile of the wiring system (around 400 miles in an A380) detecting any other issues with nuts and bolts of the aircraft. AI can assist in assessing the damage to the environment due to Carbon emissions from the aircraft engines and the pollution caused by the noise of the engines and the disturbance to the atmospheric layer.

The other domain, AI, will be of great assistance in sales and customer service.

AI provides lots of inroads for viable route analysis, pricing, and seat allocation. Commercial zones already use AI, baggage handling, passenger checking, catering and preventing catering wastage on a large scale as this is already practiced by Rayan Air, KLM, Easy jet and by other carriers too. AI is already helping track baggage more efficiently. I wonder whether AI will be able to pinpoint soon, where, what day and in what sector or destination, passengers will have a cheaper price on air tickets for the benefit of customers?

AI is already assisting in airport



Aviation & Airlines

SPECIAL FEATURE



operations, facial identification, Bio-metrics, on security to prevent any undesirable incidents, detecting the serviceability of all the navigational aids, scanning the whole runway for any foreign objects, fallen metal pieces and other objects like worn out tires, one of the debris on the runway from an earlier aircraft caused the major crash of Air France Concorde's Flight Number 4590 at CDG on 25th July 2025 which caused 113 (109 souls on board the aircraft + 4 on ground) people to lose their lives and brought the death knell on Concorde operations forever, a sad day for aviation and for the ever sleekest bird of Aviation "CONCORDE".

AI has many crucial roles to play in the safety of air travel. Especially in ATC services, pilots' resources, aircraft fuel management systems, and in case of an engine fire in one of the engines, AI can assist that engine to shut down primarily through predictive maintenance and provide pilot assistance to deal with the situation through other automated systems. Engine manufacturers, Rolls-Royce and Boeing, are already using AI tools to monitor the health of the engines while in flight and to provide immediate alerts to their respective bases on the ground as well as alerting the crew within seconds of these fire incidents. AI will provide valuable critical analysis of the situation and provide quick decision-making and acceleration in the landing options. I am sure the flying folks globally will be happy to hear AI facilitated monitoring systems, such as Boeing's Airplane Health Management (AHM) or Rolls-Royce's Intelligent Engine, confirm instantly an engine fire and decipher false alarms too. AI will guide the pilot in an emergency landing to the nearest suitable airport while calculating the landing weight, weather conditions, and the altitude of the aircraft. Experts of AI say in Fly-by-Wire aircraft, like the Airbus, AI, help to maintain control, stability and compensate for the loss of engine thrust, and the drag caused by the damaged engine.

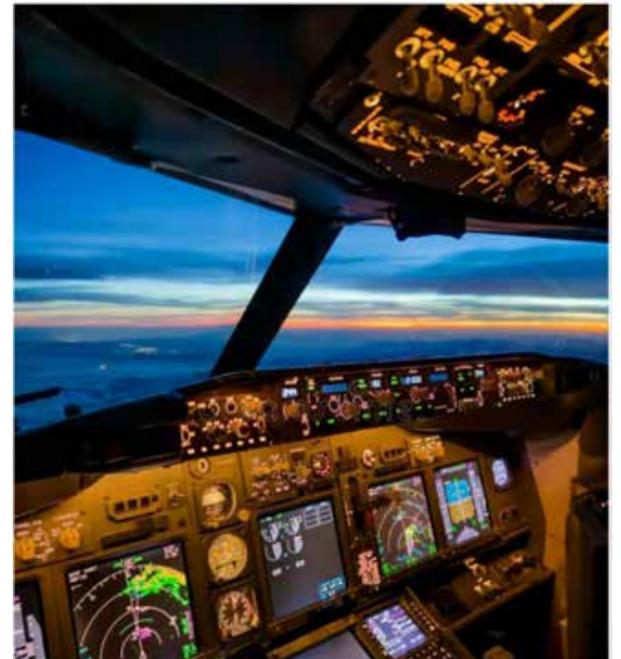
AI will emerge mostly as the best safety option net in the vast global aviation industry by enhancing the safety vacuum, mitigating human negligence and failures. A recent incident on a Qantas flight from SYD- PER sector, A Boeing 737-800 aircraft took-off with incorrect weight calculations of 4.5 Tons since the wrong aircraft configuration was entered into the system. The system was fed with Boeing 717 details instead of B-737 configuration, eventually while on flight the error was corrected as the ground load-control staff realized their error. This error resulted in fuel-under read, and situations like this can cause disaster. This incident reminds me of another incident that happened in our backyard in July 1983. A B-767 aircraft was fed with wrong fuel calculation, that led to serious situation and aircraft flew without fuel for almost 30 minutes and glided and landed safely. Thanks to the heroic efforts of Captain Bob and

his co-pilot. This came to be known as the Gimli Glider incident. Here the fuel unit was given as lbs. instead of kgs and this resulted in 10,000 kilograms of less fuel. I am sure the AI system would have predicted these calculation errors and saved the day if it was there then

With aviation expanding at a rapid pace, skies are getting enormously crowded, we have seen many near-miss incidents in the US air space and elsewhere too, pilots entering the wrong taxiway, landing on the wrong runway and air traffic controllers are unable to cope with this influx which results in system failures. AI will be a big player to save all these scenarios. AI could prevent aircraft collision on ground as well in the air too, so say some AI experts. The aviation industry understands the efficiency of AI tool and organized this safety symposium, "DATA AND AI OPERATIONAL SAFETY FORUM IN COLLABORATION WITH EUROCONTROL" to be held on 30th June and 1st of July 2026 at EUROCONTROL headquarters in Brussels. The theme will be Quote, Predictive maintenance-Applying AI to aircraft sensors and health data for early detection of mechanical anomalies and prevention of failures, Flight-phase risk prediction -Leveraging AI- driven models for real-time hazard monitoring, such as forecasting unstable approaches, runway excursions, or turbulent related risks. This forum is organized by the Flight Safety Foundation in collaboration with EUROCONTROL and the European Airline Association, and with the help of Aviation Safety Experts, regulators, and industry leaders to explore how AI tool can enhance the physical and mental health of the aviation industry thereby ensuring Air safety to its Maxima.

I believe even though AI is a big game changer for the vast and ever

expanding aviation industry, the Cog Wheel must always be human, and this human touch cannot be alienated so soon may be for 2 or 3 decades or maybe more. CEO's of almost all the airlines globally would welcome cost cutting measures in all areas to enhance profitability, and I understand this, but one area they should not lay their greedy hands on should be the Cockpit of an aircraft. The aviation industry has been thinking for quite some time about having the cockpit with only one pilot and everything else to be confined to automation. This may be good thinking, but not at the expense of Humanity. To give credit to this thought, I must mention this incident seems to give a thumbs up. On December 20th, 2025, Beechcraft Super king Air 200, auto landed at Rocky Mountain Metropolitan Airport, near Denver, Colorado. Due to loss of cabin pressure, pilots were forced to wear Oxygen masks due to this emergency. However, the Garmin Navigational System detected the emergency and engaged automatically the Garmin Autoland system and did the landing without any hassle. I would say a first in the annals of aviation. But



Automation has its downside as in the case of Air France Flight, AF447, on 1st June 2009, crashed in mid- Atlantic killing 228 passengers and the crew on board, as pilots were unable to disengage the Automated Pilot System due to an emergency.

Even though there is lot of hype about AI, experts confirm AI has no cognitive functions like humans. They don't understand and act in situations like humans. This is the reason aviation professionals believe that humans cannot be replaced in the cockpit. The title holders of Pilots and Air Traffic Controllers are here to stay in aviation for a very long time. They have an indispensable role in aviation. But AI components can make their vocation easy by feeding a lot of data in a matter of seconds to perform their duties to the best of abilities. The Pilots are not yet a history yet, and my intuition says, and they won't be, and the same characterization goes without a saying to ATC stalwarts too. I always consider ATC Professionals to be the strong Pillars and The Highway of the Blue Skies for Global Aviation.

Finally, I may use my intelligence to challenge Artificial Intelligence and ask these questions. AI, will You Make Us or Break, Flourish Us or Perish, Lie or Cheat, Cure or Harm Us and AI are You a "Great promise as Experts claim or Peril, Insecurity & Misery to Come"?

Hope, Time Will Tell Whether Human Brain or The Synthetic Brain is Better and Safer.



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



SAILING DOWN THE RIVER

EXCERPT FROM THE BOOK
'HEARYOURSELF'



Prem Rawat

There is a song by Kabir in which he says “you are just a little boat made out of paper, sailing down the river”. They are such astute words, because as you go down the river of life, guess what? The paper is getting soaked and is starting to disintegrate, meaning the boat is losing its firm and slowly merging with the water. And, so it goes.

In the meantime, you need to know you are free to enjoy this life. Everything is in place for

you to be an instrument of whatever purpose you desire and experience the richness of your existence. It all starts when you make the continuous circle of connection within yourself. From gratitude to peace, from peace to gratitude.

That’s how I try to respond to the reality of the second wall. I say, ‘Try’ because none of us has clarity 100% of the time. I want to live in a state of fully feeling, sensing every aspect of my innerself, and the joy that

springs from peace. When, I am in that state, I would be very happy if the day went forever. But I know, at some time night will come.

I’m not afraid of death. I use it as an inspiration to experience the best each moment, and that gives me a sense of urgency. For me, another way of being not good enough; it’s not enjoying the commonwealth we have all been given. Any other way of living is a compromise.

Avvaiyar Aruliya Arunchotkal: 2

By: J A Rajah

1. Love sustains life; greed leads to its failure.
2. Mercy gives in abundance, benevolence enjoys helping others.
3. Truth abides; zeal enables us to overcome stumbling blocks.
4. Simplicity evolves through character; Rise in character comes through industriousness.
5. Known is a drop; unknown is an ocean.
6. Do not reveal your secrets to others.
7. Never give up your enthusiasm.
8. There is no greater temple than one's mother.
9. Rising before the sun is up, brightens one life.
10. Self reliance is the greatest wealth one can possess.





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Thulasi Muttulingam 3h · 🌐

Germany warns exiled Iranians of possible reprisals by Tehran

IRAN INTERNATIONAL

BREAKING: Germany has warned that Iranians living abroad may be targeted - both online and physically - by operatives of the Islamic Republic. Let that sink in. This regime is no longer exporting only repression, propaganda, and intimidation. It is exporting threats, harassment, and potential violence onto European soil. This is not an "Iranian internal matter." This is state-sponsored transnational repression. Europe cannot pretend neutrality while a foreign terror state: intimidates dissidents in exile surveils activists and journalists threatens families across borders and now poses real physical danger to residents of EU countries Europe has a legal and moral duty to protect its citizens and residents. That means: dismantling Islamic Republic networks operating in Europe expelling regime-linked diplomats and operatives prosecuting intimidation and terror threats as criminal acts and openly standing with Iranian dissidents - not appeasing their persecutors If Europe allows Tehran to hunt Iranians abroad with impunity, it sends a dangerous message: that authoritarian regimes may extend their violence beyond their borders without consequence. Protect Iranians in exile. Confront the regime. Silence and appeasement are no longer options.

"Some things are believed because they are demonstrably true, but many other things are believed simply because they have been asserted repeatedly and repetition has been accepted as a substitute for evidence."

- Thomas Sowell

Thulasi Muttulingam 3h · 🌐

Jekhan Aruliah 5h · 🌐

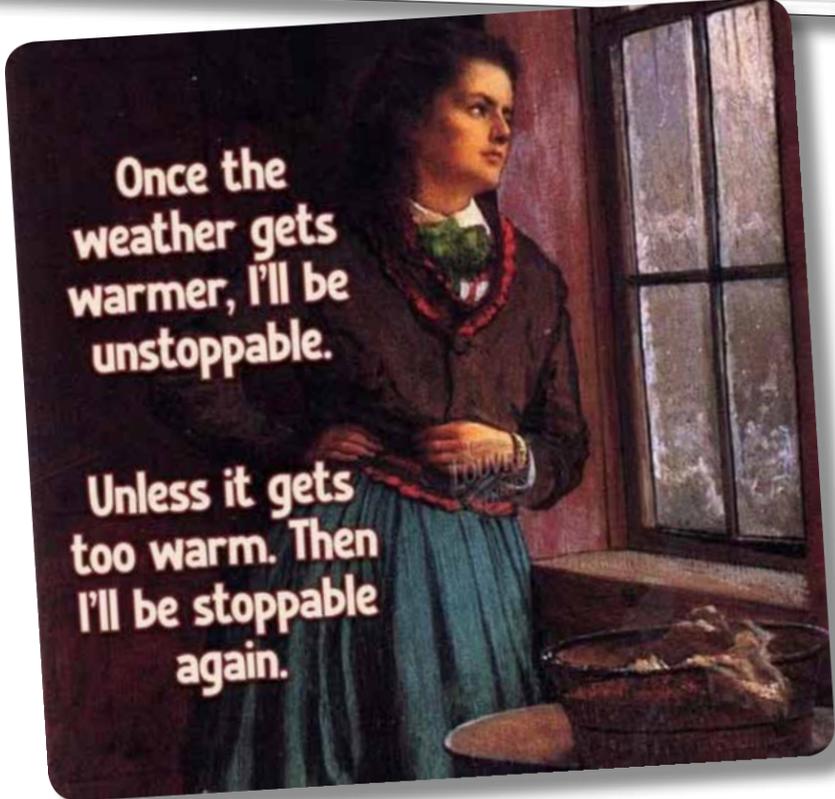
My friends James and Helen came from the UK on a tour of Sri Lanka. James had been the British High Commissioner in Colombo from 2015-2019, where he had made several friends around Sri Lanka who they are visiting. For their Northern stage in Jaffna James and Helen stayed for a couple of days with me. It is my mission to show Jaffna and the North in a new light, to alter perceptions of this province. So I took them to clubs and companies, for them to see the positive activity in Jaffna:

Young people's clubs in my building, using the shared space
 @Swag Dance Academy , modern dance club
 The [London Club](#) , English language and soft skills
 The Manipay based @Genius Drop English language tutorial opened its 2nd branch

Companies:
 @SAHO Creations , a leading documentary company in Jaffna
[MicroWe](#), software company
[Unicom Tic](#), UK founded professional IT training

We enjoyed breakfast at [Ammachi Jaffna அம்மாச்சி யாழ்ப்பாணம்](#). Got soaked in the rain at the [Jaffna International Trade Fair](#), enjoyed the sun at the Jaffna Fort. James by himself visited Nallur Kovil.

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SPECIAL FEATURE

CTCC CELEBRATES THAI PONGAL AND HOSTS 1ST QUARTERLY MEMBERS' MEETING



The Canadian Tamils' Chamber of Commerce (CTCC) successfully hosted its Thai Pongal Celebration and 1st Quarterly Members' Meeting (QM) on January 14, 2026, at the CTCC Business Centre, drawing a full-house audience of members, community leaders, and distinguished guests.

The evening began at 6:30 p.m. with the traditional Lighting of the Oil Lamp, symbolizing prosperity, gratitude, and new beginnings. The program continued with a warm Welcome Address by Vithu Ramachandran, Vice President –

Internal Affairs, followed by remarks from CTCC President Ari A. Ariaran, who reflected on the Chamber's vision, priorities, and commitment to serving the Tamil business and professional community.

The celebration was further enriched by inspiring remarks from esteemed political leaders, including Hon. Gary Anandasangaree, Minister of Public Safety, and Councillor Neethan Shan, who both acknowledged the contributions of the Tamil community and the important role CTCC plays in economic empowerment and civic

engagement.

Guests enjoyed vibrant dance and musical performances, adding cultural richness and festive spirit to the Thai Pongal celebration.

At 8:00 p.m., the event transitioned into the Members-Only 1st Quarterly Meeting.

CTCC extends its sincere gratitude to all attendees, speakers, performers, volunteers, and sponsors for making this event a memorable and meaningful success.

Photos by Iyah4U





OFFICIAL FIXTURES

WORLD CUP 2026



ICC MEN'S T20
WORLD CUP
INDIA & SRI LANKA 2026

HOST NATIONS

INDIA & SL

SAT, 07 FEB

11:00 AM	PAK vs NED	GR A
Sinhalese SC, Colombo		
03:00 PM	WI vs SCO	GR C
Eden Gardens, Kolkata		
07:00 PM	IND vs USA	GR A
Wankhede, Mumbai		

THU, 12 FEB

11:00 AM	SL vs OMA	GR B
Pallekele Intl, Pallekele		
03:00 PM	NEP vs ITA	GR C
Wankhede, Mumbai		
07:00 PM	IND vs NAM	GR A
Arun Jaitley, Delhi		

TUE, 17 FEB

11:00 AM	NZ vs CAN	GR D
MA Chidambaram, Chennai		
03:00 PM	IRE vs ZIM	GR B
Pallekele Intl, Pallekele		
07:00 PM	SCO vs NEP	GR C
Wankhede, Mumbai		

SUN, 08 FEB

11:00 AM	NZ vs AFG	GR D
MA Chidambaram, Chennai		
03:00 PM	ENG vs NEP	GR C
Wankhede, Mumbai		
07:00 PM	SL vs IRE	GR B
R.Premadasa, Colombo		

FRI, 13 FEB

11:00 AM	AUS vs ZIM	GR B
R.Premadasa, Colombo		
03:00 PM	CAN vs UAE	GR D
Arun Jaitley, Delhi		
07:00 PM	USA vs NED	GR A
MA Chidambaram, Chennai		

WED, 18 FEB

11:00 AM	SA vs UAE	GR D
Arun Jaitley, Delhi		
03:00 PM	PAK vs NAM	GR A
Sinhalese SC, Colombo		
07:00 PM	IND vs NED	GR A
Narendra Modi Std, A'bad		

MON, 09 FEB

11:00 AM	SCO vs ITA	GR C
Eden Gardens, Kolkata		
03:00 PM	ZIM vs OMA	GR B
Sinhalese SC, Colombo		
07:00 PM	SA vs CAN	GR D
Narendra Modi Std, A'bad		

SAT, 14 FEB

11:00 AM	IRE vs OMA	GR B
Sinhalese SC, Colombo		
03:00 PM	ENG vs SCO	GR C
Eden Gardens, Kolkata		
07:00 PM	NZ vs SA	GR D
Narendra Modi Std, A'bad		

THU, 19 FEB

11:00 AM	WI vs ITA	GR C
Eden Gardens, Kolkata		
03:00 PM	SL vs ZIM	GR B
R.Premadasa, Colombo		
07:00 PM	AFG vs CAN	GR D
MA Chidambaram, Chennai		

TUE, 10 FEB

11:00 AM	NED vs NAM	GR A
Arun Jaitley, Delhi		
03:00 PM	NZ vs UAE	GR D
MA Chidambaram, Chennai		
07:00 PM	PAK vs USA	GR A
Sinhalese SC, Colombo		

SUN, 15 FEB

11:00 AM	WI vs NEP	GR C
Wankhede, Mumbai		
03:00 PM	USA vs NAM	GR A
MA Chidambaram, Chennai		
07:00 PM	IND vs PAK	GR A
R.Premadasa, Colombo		

FRI, 20 FEB

07:00 PM	AUS vs OMA	GR B
Pallekele Intl, Pallekele		

WED, 11 FEB

11:00 AM	SA vs AFG	GR D
Narendra Modi Std, A'bad		
03:00 PM	AUS vs IRE	GR B
R.Premadasa, Colombo		
07:00 PM	ENG vs WI	GR C
Wankhede, Mumbai		

MON, 16 FEB

11:00 AM	AFG vs UAE	GR D
Arun Jaitley, Delhi		
03:00 PM	ENG vs ITA	GR C
Eden Gardens, Kolkata		
07:00 PM	AUS vs SL	GR B
Pallekele Intl, Pallekele		



2026





A CRICKET WORLD CUP IN TURMOIL: BANGLADESH'S EXIT AND SCOTLAND'S SURPRISE ENTRY



As the countdown begins, the cricketing world is bracing itself for another electrifying chapter in the game's shortest and most explosive format — the ICC Men's T20 World Cup. Fast-paced, fiercely competitive, and unrelentingly entertaining, the tournament promises to once again unite fans across continents in a celebration of skill, strategy, and sporting drama.

Since its inception, T20 cricket has redefined how the game is played and consumed. Matches compressed into just three hours, batters taking audacious risks from the first ball, and bowlers forced to innovate under pressure have turned cricket into a global spectacle. The World Cup, the pinnacle of this format, showcases not only individual brilliance but also the evolving tactics that make T20 cricket a constantly shifting chess match.

This year's tournament brings together the world's top cricketing nations alongside ambitious emerging teams, each carrying the hopes of millions. Traditional powerhouses such as India, Australia, England, Pakistan, and the West Indies arrive with depth, experience, and star power. At the same time, associate nations and newer entrants are no longer content to merely participate —

they arrive ready to compete, disrupt, and occasionally shock the giants of the game.

One of the defining attractions of the T20 World Cup is its unpredictability. Unlike longer formats, where dominance often unfolds over time, T20 cricket thrives on moments. A blistering 20-ball half-century, a hat-trick in the final over, or a stunning boundary catch can alter the fate of an entire campaign. This volatility levels the playing field and ensures that every match carries high stakes from the opening delivery.

Fans can also expect the spotlight to shine brightly on a new generation of cricketers. Young batters armed with fearless intent, fast bowlers clocking express pace, and spinners mastering variations will look to stamp their authority on the world stage. For many, this tournament represents a defining opportunity — a chance to transform potential into legacy under the glare of global attention.

Beyond the boundary ropes, the T20 World Cup is a cultural festival. Packed stadiums resonate with chants, national colors, and rhythmic drums, while millions more follow the action across television screens and digital platforms. The tournament transcends sport, becoming a shared

global experience that connects diasporas, ignites friendly rivalries, and sparks conversations far beyond the cricket field.

Strategically, teams will need to strike a delicate balance between aggression and discipline. Powerplays demand attacking intent, middle overs test composure and rotation, and death overs separate the good from the great. Captains and coaches will rely heavily on data, match-ups, and adaptability, knowing that hesitation can be costly in a format measured in seconds rather than sessions.

As the tournament approaches, expectations are soaring. Will defending champions hold their nerve? Can a former winner reclaim past glory? Or will a first-time champion emerge to rewrite history? These questions fuel anticipation and remind fans why the T20 World Cup occupies such a special place in modern cricket.

In a world that moves faster than ever, the ICC Men's T20 World Cup reflects the spirit of the times — bold, dynamic, and inclusive. For players, it is a test of courage and creativity. For fans, it is pure, unfiltered excitement. And for the game of cricket, it is a powerful reminder that tradition and innovation can thrive side by side.



IRON AGE FOUND IN INDIA

Kumar Punithavel



Humanity has made leaps and jumps in its development. Its development can be categorised into three early stages. The first being the stone age, which is essentially a prehistoric period during which stone tools with an edge, a point, or percussion surface were made. This period lasted for roughly from 3.4 million years and ended around 4000 BC, with the advent of metal. The Bronze age is an archaeological term defining a phase in the development of metallic culture among ancient societies in East Asia, west Europe. A civilization is considered to be part of the Bronze age if it either produced bronze by smelting its own copper and alloying it with tin, arsenic or other metals, or traded other items for bronze from producing areas elsewhere.

The iron age which is the most recent one was believed to have begun around Turkey around 1300 BC. But this has been proved wrong by a recent article I read published by BBC (1). Since independence of India, much of the archeological surveys and excavation were done in the north of Naramata River because of the wrong belief that humans migrated from north into India. Even during colonial times Indus River was considered as the gateway of the human race into India. Only in recent times archeological surveys have been done in Tamil Nadu. As an outcome from these ones would wonder whether it was the cradle of human civilization. In the past the only tangible evidence about Tamil ancestry was the Sangam era literary works. Though it was of great standard and quality the ancestry was judged as 1300 BC.

The recent discoveries in Tamil Nadu archeological surveys have unearthed evidence which is much older than what was found in Turkey. Tamil Nadu discoveries by the archaeologists have unearthed six sites dating back to 2,953 – 3,345 BCE. These put the ancestry of

the Tamil race was way much earlier. Previously The Sangam literature dated Tamilian ancestry about three centuries BC, very much in par with the Mogul empire. The recent findings from six locations had turned the face of the world towards Tamil Nadu as the beginning of the Iron age. The Tamil Nadu locations are, Adichanallur, Sivagalai, Mayiladumparai, Kilnamandi, Mangadu and Thelunganur. A professor of archaeology at the Indian Institute of Science Education and Research (ISSER) Prof Parth R Chauhan, is of the opinion that the Iron age might have developed simultaneously in



Unearthed tools and weapons different regions. However, he also mentions that if the discovery is further validated through rigorous academic study, it certainly would rank amongst earliest.

During the Sangam era which is from 500 B C, to 200 A D, we have a store of literature. Prior to this Tholkapiam, a book of Tamil grammar, is dated as 500 BC. Obviously, a vibrant society must have existed not only to have a well-developed language but also to document a grammar book for the language of the quality. Producing iron products is a very complicated process. Initially it

has to identify iron-bearing rocks, then to extract the metal it has to be smelted in a furnace at an extremely high temperature and extract the metal from the rock. At the final stage the ironsmith will have to forge the metal into tools and implements. All these could not have happened in a savage undeveloped community. The Tamils had developed a well-developed written language, unlike some ancient languages which were spoken only. It was observed in the article by the archaeologists K Rajan and R. Sivananthan that so far explored a fraction of over 3,000 identified Iron Age graves containing stone coffins (sarcophagi) and a wealth of iron artefacts. They have uncovered hoe-spades, spears, knives, arrowheads, chisels, axes and swords made of iron.

In the process, they have uncovered hoe-spades, spears, knives, arrowheads, chisels, axes and swords made of iron. At an excavated burial site, they had found over 85 iron objects inside and outside urns. Unlike copper and brass in the case of iron the temperature has to go very high temperatures and sophisticated advanced hearth was needed for melting.

In one of the excavated burials, over 85 iron objects were found inside and outside burial urns. More than 20 key samples were robustly dated in five labs worldwide, confirming their antiquity according to the article by BBC (1). What other confirmation is needed to determine the antiquity? Interestingly historian Osmund Boparachchi of the Paris-based French National Centre for Scientific Research highlights that an iron sword from a burial site, was made of ultra-high-carbon steel and dating to 13th- 15th Century BC. We could confer the honour of finding iron age to the Tamilians lived in Tamil Nadu who produced iron as early as 1500 BC.

1) <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c62e36jm4jro-iron-age>

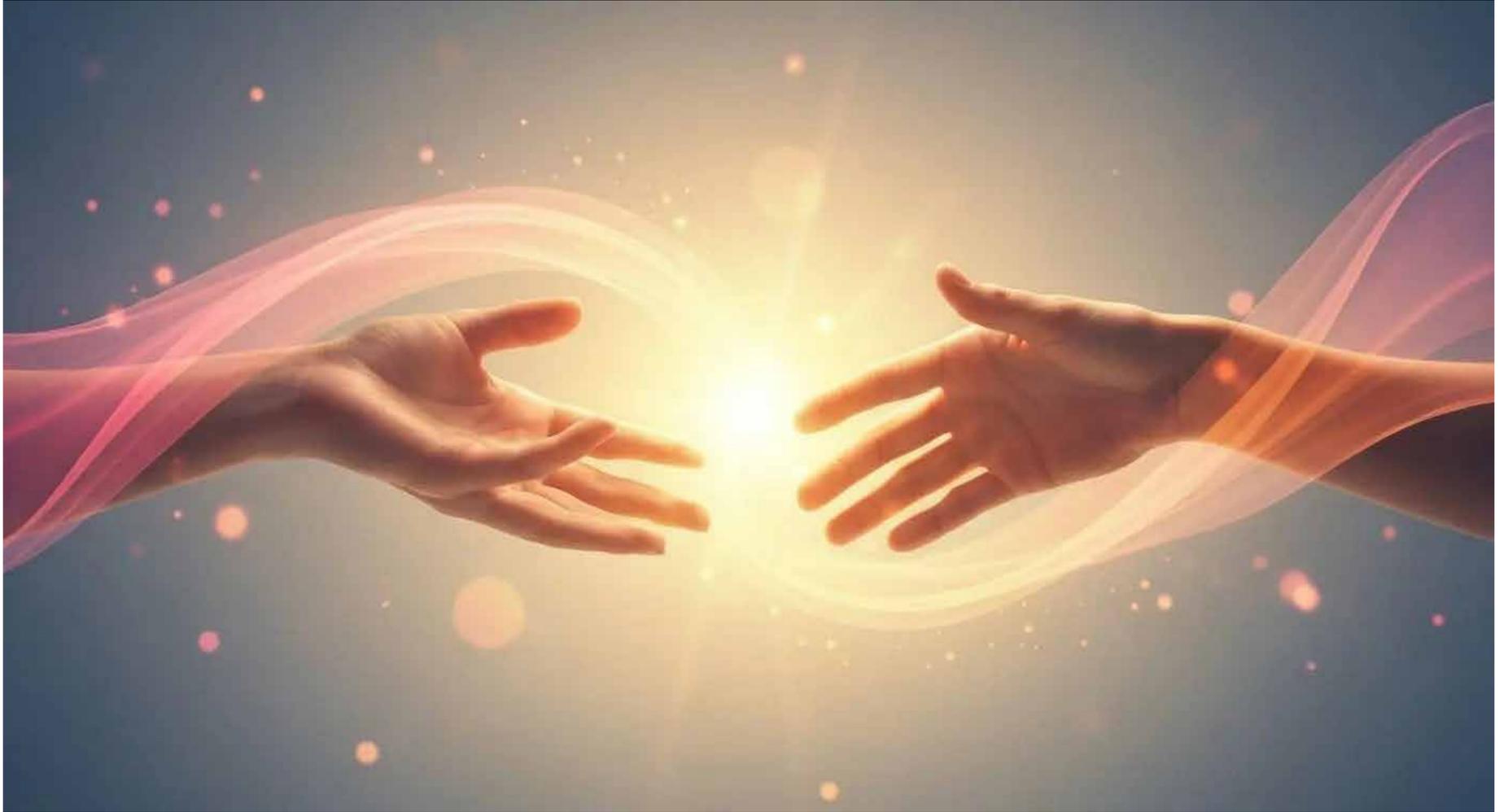


Remains of an iron melting furnace at Kodumanal site



SPECIAL FEATURE

RIGHTEOUSNESS, WEALTH, MARITAL JOY AND HEAVENLY BLISS



By: J A Rajah

Tamil culture defined righteousness, wealth, marital joy and heavenly abode as the major facets of human life. Avaiyār, the famous Tamil poetess put the idea in a single 'venba' where she states-

*"Eethal aram, theevinay videedal porul,
Kaatha iruvar karuthorumithu - aatharavu,
Paddathe Inbam, paranai ninathu,
Immoonrum vidatheperinpa veedu"*

A. Righteousness:

Righteousness is the quality of being morally right or justifiable., characterized by virtue, justice and uprightness. It can refer to actions, a state of being or a moral standard, often defined by religious or divine law. While secular definition focus on moral correctness, religious context often describes it as being in a state of rightness with a higher power, achieved through faith in adherence to a divine code or spiritual transformation. Valluvar views righteousness as a universal, practical ethic focused on leading a moral and blemish

less life. He emphasized purity of mind and conduct in everyday life. - not religious rituals or asceticism. According to Valluvar, true rightness is achieved by removing negative qualities from one's thoughts, words and deeds- envy, desire or lust, anger and bitterness. His Kural summarizes happiness as a product of righteous virtues; acting otherwise is unworthy and infamous.

*"Arathan varuvathe Inbam,
mattellam puratha, puharlum illa*

B. Wealth:

Avvaiyār saying that there is no world without wealth and no heaven without grace stands as gospel truth for those who seek wealth. She said that one should seek wealth without committing to wrong doings. This perspective aligns wealth with the broader Hindu philosophy of life, which views wealth as one of the four proper aims of life. Wealth can be accumulated both by positive and negative means. Money laundering, giving money on high interest and cheating others by printing illegal notes are all false methods of money. However, people can work hard, make money and help others if they have excess of it.

C: Love via Mutual Understanding and Heavenly Love:

The other major segments of life mentioned by Avvaiyār are 'chitinpam' and 'perinpam'. Avvaiyār referred to sexual love as the love between two souls brought together by mutual understanding- "karuthoru mithu". She gave a spiritual dimension to the sexual union. Sexual union is important in married life as it enhances emotional and physical intimacy which strengthens the bond between partners. It helps couples reduce stress improves commitment and trust and fosters mutual satisfaction. A dimension that ensures permanency to such a relationship. She referred to heaven as the ultimate refuge of the human soul. She asserts that 'Modchum' or heavenly abode is the place of liberation of the human soul after undergoing the first three stages of life. Her term for Heaven is "Perinpa Veedu" or House of Great (Everlasting) Joy. Valluvar doesn't mention anything about heaven, but Avvaiyār summarized the gist of Kural in just one quadrupled verse: 'Eethal aram.....'.



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IF I WON A MILLION DOLLAR\$

One morning I woke up thinking it would be a regular day and started to get ready for school. Suddenly a message popped up on my phone and it said that I won a big prize from the raffle I went to yesterday that was hosted by our school. So I quickly got ready and went to school thinking about what the prize could be. When I got there our school principal quickly dragged me into her room. She said that I won first place from the raffle and it was a massive amount. I won one million dollars. I was in shock and fell to my knees in surprise. She handed me the cheque and told me to use it wisely. I told her that I will use it wisely, then took the cheque, put it in my bag and called home to tell my parents. They were jumping up and down in so much excitement and could not wait until school finished. If this actually happened in my reality, I would go home and start to think about what I will do with the money. I got the perfect idea!



**Sanujan
Kethiswaran**
(Grade 7)

The first thing I would do with the money is to pay off all of our loans. This would help to get a big chunk of problems out of my parents' head. Paying off the loans will also help my parents to save a lot of money that they put towards this. It will help them save because they can keep their salary instead of spending it all on loans. If they pay off the mortgage too and have leftover money, we can also renovate the house making it look bigger and better. After renovating, everyone in my family can have their own room. This will give them more privacy and the chance to practice being more independent.

The second thing that I would do is to invest a whole chunk of money. I would probably invest around two hundred thousand dollars into my bank account. Investing will help that two hundred thousand dollars to grow into a way bigger amount in the future. It will also help me learn how to save money and not to spend it on anything useless. I would not invest all of the money into the same bank account because of technical difficulties or theft. For example, what if I went out for dinner and I want to pay with my card but it declines. Then I would be in a difficult situation because if the only bank I have is going through technical difficulty and I have no other banks, I cannot pay for dinner. But if I had a connection to three different bank accounts, even if one is going through



-Zoo.com

technical difficulties or is getting hacked then I can use one of my other cards that are connected to a different bank and are not going through technical difficulties at the moment.

The last thing that I would do with the rest of the money is to go on a major vacation with my whole family. This will not be any ordinary vacation it would be a world tour of many different countries that I want to go to, such as: Jamaica, Cuba, Hawaii, Sri Lanka, London, Sweden, Iceland, Switzerland, Italy, France, Portugal, South Korea, Spain, and Costa Rica. These are all the countries that would be a part of the world tour that we would be going to. In all these countries I will be booking the best and most luxurious five-star hotels to stay in so we can have nice sleep and be able to get enough sleep before going to the next country. Not only will the hotels be five-star but also the food we eat so I will be bringing my family to very nice five-star restaurants that serve very tasty and yummy food so we can sleep with full bellies.

In conclusion, if I won a million dollars this is what I would do with all the money which is to help my parents to pay off all their loans and

the mortgage. Then I would renovate my house to make it bigger and more beautiful allowing each of my family members to get their own room and become more independent. With the remaining money I would invest around two hundred thousand dollars and put it all into separate accounts. Finally for some entertainment I would take my family on a world tour on ten plus countries to five star hotels and dining.



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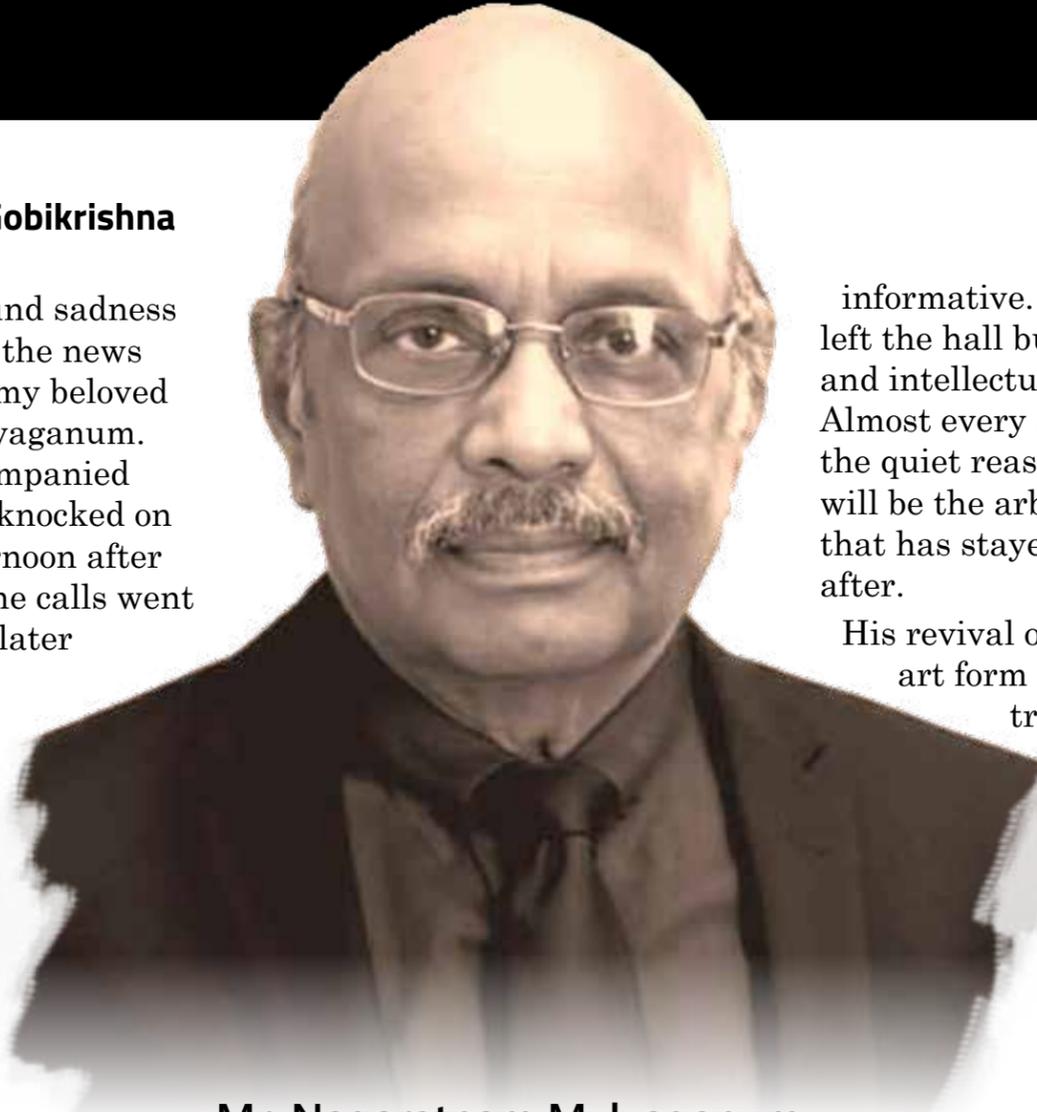
TIME WILL BE THE ARBITER: IN MEMORY OF MR. MYLVAGANUM

By: Ariaratnam Gobikrishna

It is with profound sadness that I received the news of the passing of my beloved teacher, Mr. Mylvaganum. This March, accompanied by my nephew, I knocked on his door one afternoon after repeated telephone calls went unanswered. We later learned that he had been fast asleep, and so we never met—except for a brief conversation on the phone. I regret deeply that missed meeting.

I was fortunate, however, to spend time with him in 2023, reminiscing about old days. During that visit, we stumbled upon his book *Ceylon Through the Prism of Europeans*, which led to a discussion on Robert Knox and his observations. That conversation proved catalytic. It prompted me, during my recent travels in Sri Lanka, to write about the many similarities—rather than differences—between Sinhalese and Tamils. The article drew heavily on places I had first encountered as a schoolboy on educational excursions organized by Mr. Mylvaganum.

Throughout my travels in the south, I felt his presence everywhere. When I visited



Mr. Nagaratnam Mylvaganum

Former Teacher, St. John's College, Jaffna & St. Thomas' College, Colpetty

Sept 10, 1941 to Dec 26, 2025

Kantharodai, I noticed that the nameplate he had installed as part of a high school project to preserve Tamil heritage sites had been replaced with a new narrative, now rendered in a Sinhala framework. That moment strengthened my resolve to write the article. Although I understand that he read it, the conversation we might have had about it never took place, owing to my failure to meet him this year.

As a student, I honestly disliked Monday assemblies. The single exception was Mr. Mylvaganum's speeches. He possessed a rare gift of delivery—making them engaging, thoughtful, and

informative. One invariably left the hall buoyed by optimism and intellectual excitement. Almost every speech ended with the quiet reassurance that “time will be the arbiter,” a phrase that has stayed with me long after.

His revival of the traditional art form *nattu koothu*, transforming *Potha Thambi* into a major success and making Anton Balarajah a sensation, was an extraordinary achievement. If memory serves me right, the performance had to be restaged due to overwhelming popular demand.

Mr. Mylvaganum was a man who consistently put his principles into action. He prepared meaningful speeches with care, taught us what public speaking ought to be, meticulously organized annual educational excursions, resurrected a fading art form, worked tirelessly to preserve Tamil heritage sites, and taught history in a way that stimulated curiosity and independent thought. He inspired many students, and I am proud to count myself among them.

He will be sorely missed.

Ariaratnam Gobikrishna

Former Student of St. John's College, Jaffna, Sri Lanka



ANIMAL SERVICES

2026 Pet Licences available for purchase



Richmond Hill requires all dogs and cats (as of June 1, 2025) to be licensed. Licence tags are easy to get and cost effective. They are valid from January 1 to December 31 each year.

For more information on purchasing a pet licence, please visit RichmondHill.ca/Pets.

Your pets are members of our community and we want them to be safe and enjoy living in Richmond Hill. The new Responsible Pet Ownership and Regulation By-law keeps our community and companion animals safe by making sure pet owners understand their responsibilities.

Learn about being a good pet owner in Richmond Hill:

- Responsible pet ownership
- Animal licences
- Off-leash areas

New! Responsible Pet Ownership and Animal Regulation By-law

The Responsible Pet Ownership and Animal Regulation By-law supports the health and safety of animals and the public, demonstrating our continued commitment to responsible pet ownership, public safety and animal welfare.

New changes in the by-law include:

- Cat Licensing – As of June 1, 2025, all cats (in addition to dogs) need to be licensed and wear a visible tag
- Modernized Dangerous Dog Restrictions and Owner Requirements
- Reduced Household Pet Limits –

Maximum of seven permitted animals per household, including no more than three dogs and four cats

- Permitted Pets List – Outlining approved types of animals that may be kept as household pets
- Administrative Monetary Penalty System (AMPS) enforcement for violations

Animal services

Richmond Hill has partnered with the City of Vaughan Animal Services providing animal regulation and shelter services. Officers respond to calls about wildlife and pets.

You can contact them for:

- Animal by-law violations
- Off leash or stray animals
- Lost/found pet(s)
- Injured animals
- Dog bite or attack
- Complaints about barking dogs and/or poop and scoop
- Report dead animals on public property, including roads. Note property owners are responsible for addressing dead and nuisance wildlife on private property.
- Animal cruelty concerns

Contact Vaughan Animal Services

Website: www.vaughan.ca/animalservices

Telephone: **905-832-2281** (press “0” to speak with Access Vaughan)

Toll free: **1-855-227-7297**

Email: animal.services@vaughan.ca

Note: Vaughan Animal Services responds to emergency calls 24/7.

Microchip and Rabies Clinics

Check back for upcoming clinic dates and times.

Dangerous dogs

Provincial Offences Officers can designate a dog as dangerous if it bites, attacks, or displays menacing behavior like snapping or chasing. Owners must comply with a Dangerous Dog Notice, which sets out safety requirements.

Owners can appeal the Notice within 10 days in writing. Appeals are heard by a City-appointed Hearing Officer, who can confirm, change, or cancel the Notice. The appeal fee is refunded if the Notice is cancelled.

Dangerous Dog Notice requirements take effect immediately upon service of the Notice and remain in effect for the life of the dog.

Avian Influenza (H5N1) - Bird Flu

Report sick or dead wild

birds: With geese starting to return to the community, York Region municipalities including Richmond Hill, may see wild birds that have died or are infected with avian influenza (H5N1), also known as bird flu.

Just a reminder that if you come across sick or dead geese, ducks or other wild birds in Richmond Hill:

- Do not touch them
- Report them to our animal services provider, Vaughan Animal Services at **905-832-2281** or animal.services@vaughan.ca



MARKHAM RECEIVES PLATINUM-LEVEL WCCD ISO 37120 CERTIFICATION FOR SEVENTH CONSECUTIVE YEAR



From Left to Right: Ward 3 Councillor Reid McAlpine; Ward 4 Councillor Karen Rea; Ward 1 Councillor Keith Irish, Deputy Mayor Michael Chan; Dr. Patricia McCarney, President and CEO of the WCCD; Markham CAO Andy Taylor; Mayor Frank Scarpitti; Regional Councillor Jim Jones; Regional Councillor Joe Li; Ward 5 Councillor Andrew Keyes; Ward 6 Councillor Amanda Yeung-Collucci; Ward 7 Councillor Nimisha Patel.

The City of Markham has received ISO 37120 Platinum-level certification from the World Council on City Data (WCCD) for the seventh consecutive year.

The certification underscores Markham's position as a global and Canadian leader in data-driven decision-making. Markham became a member of the WCCD in 2019 and is now part of a worldwide network comprising more than 125 cities across 40 different countries. The certification was presented during Council Session, where Dr. Patricia McCarney, the President and CEO of the WCCD, personally presented the certificate to Mayor Frank Scarpitti.

"Receiving Platinum-level certification for the seventh consecutive year solidifies Markham's leadership among more than 125 cities worldwide committed to data-driven governance," said Markham Mayor Frank Scarpitti. "Being part of this global network enables us to showcase our high standards for transparency, innovation, and sustainable city-building."

"The City of Markham has made significant strides in collecting and leveraging data to enhance the services we provide and make meaningful investments that improve quality of life," said Markham CAO Andy Taylor. "The data enables us to track progress over time, benchmark against leading global cities, and make informed decisions that

directly support the City's Strategic Plan, Building Markham's Future Together."

"This Platinum certification is a testament to the culture of robust, data-driven decision-making in Markham, championed by Mayor Scarpitti, CAO Andy Taylor, and the exceptional City staff. It has been a pleasure collaborating with you during this certification, and I look forward to our continued partnership," said Dr. Patricia McCarney, President and CEO of the WCCD.

The Platinum certification of Markham underscores the City's transparency, accountability, and dedication to sustainable development. It serves as recognition for the City's ongoing endeavours to foster a vibrant and inclusive community for its residents and an enhanced quality of life.

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,

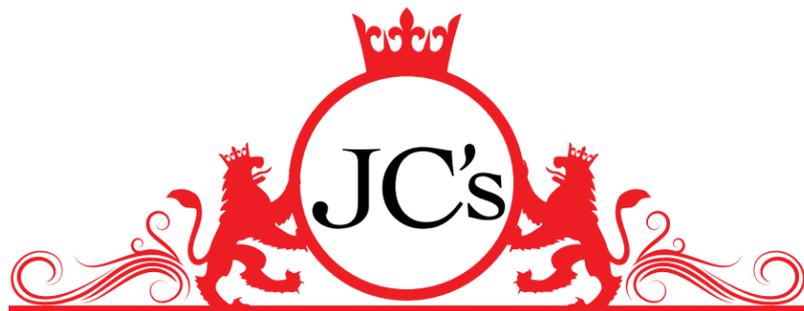
outstanding community planning and services, and a vibrant local economy.

About the World Council on City Data (WCCD):

Established in Canada in 2014, the World Council on City Data (WCCD) is committed to helping cities and communities of all sizes globally embrace ISO standardized, independently verified, and globally comparable city data. The organization facilitates data-driven decision-making processes in management, planning, and investment, enabling cities to become more sustainable, safe, resilient, prosperous, inclusive, and smart.

The WCCD team of professionals spearheaded the development and implementation of three international standards on city data, which have been published by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) in Geneva. These standards, referred to as the WCCD ISO 37120 Series on City Data, encompass ISO 37120 (Indicators for Sustainable Cities), ISO 37122 (Indicators for Smart Cities), and ISO 37123 (Indicators for Resilient Cities).

Since its inception, the WCCD has been expanding its global network of cities dedicated to high-caliber data. The WCCD collaborates with more than 125 cities across 40 different countries.



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COMMUNITY WATCH



Durham Tamils Association Celebrating 26 Years Of Serving Our Tamil Community

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

DTA PONGAL PERUVIZHA 2026 A RESOUNDING SUCCESS

On January 25, 2026, the Durham Tamil Association (DTA) hosted its annual Pongal Peruvizha at the Chestnut Hill Developments Recreation Complex. Despite a challenging winter storm, the event saw a capacity crowd gather to celebrate the Tamil harvest festival.

The program featured traditional performances and addresses from local dignitaries. Supported by Tamil One's stage production, the event highlighted the vibrant talents of DTA youth and local Tamil students. The success of the celebration was driven by the dedication of DTA volunteers

and the generous support of sponsors Dhurga Arulendran, Mahendranathan Sinnadurai, and New Spiceland (Ajax), who provided the event's delicious meals. The professional cultural showcase stood as a proud testament to the resilience and spirit of the Durham Tamil community.



Durham Tamil Association TAMIL CLASS

Durham Tamil Association offers Tamil classes for children and adults who are interested in learning the language in an innovative and effective way.

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DTA'S HOMELAND PROJECTS

DTA is proud to announce that we have completed over 130 homeland projects as of Jan 31, 2026. 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.

THANK YOU TO DTA'S ANNUAL SPONSORS

DTA thanks our annual sponsors Computek College of Business, Healthcare & Technology. **Nava Wilson LLP. Chapel Ridge Funeral Home & Cremation**, and all our sponsors for your continued support throughout the year. If you are interested in being annual sponsor please reach out to the below contacts. For more information on all DTA's Community Support Programs and Sponsor contacts *please visit: [www. DurhamTamils.Org](http://www.DurhamTamils.Org)*

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DTA SENIOR'S DECEMBER MONTHLY MEETING

DTA Senior's monthly meeting will be held on Sunday Feb 22, 2026 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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Brampton recognized as a national leader during Culture Days 2025

City ranks first among urban centres and second overall in Canada for cultural participation



Brampton musician O'Neil Fuller leading participants at the hand drumming workshop for Culture Days. *Credit: City of Brampton*

For the second year in a row, the City of Brampton has been recognized as a national leader in arts and culture, earning top honours on the Culture Days 2025 Top Participating Communities Listing. Ranking first among Urban Centres and second overall nationally, Brampton's result reflects a city-wide approach focused on neighbourhood access, community participation and meaningful opportunities for local artists to connect with residents.

During the 2025 celebration period, from September 19 to October 12, Brampton delivered more than 325 registered programs and events, contributing to a record-breaking year for Culture Days across Canada. These programs activated neighbourhoods, public spaces, libraries and cultural venues across the city, offering free and low-barrier opportunities for residents to participate in hands-on arts, heritage and creative experiences close to home.

Each year, Culture Days recognizes communities across Canada for their participation and engagement in the national celebration of arts, culture and heritage. Brampton's 2025 recognition highlights the collective efforts of local artists, cultural organizations, community partners and residents who continue to champion creativity throughout the city.

About Culture Days in Brampton

Brampton's Culture Days approach is intentionally community-driven, combining City leadership with strong local partnerships to ensure programming reflects the city's diversity and reaches residents across all wards. By supporting artists, cultural organizations and grassroots groups to lead programming, Culture Days helps strengthen the local creative sector while fostering community connection and civic pride.

Brampton's Culture Days programming was made possible through collaboration with local partners including Brampton Arts Organization (BAO), Peel Art Gallery, Museum and Archives (PAMA), Brampton Library, Downtown Brampton Business Improvement Area (DBBIA) and many independent artists and community groups. Together, these partners

helped deliver a diverse lineup that invited residents and visitors to explore Brampton's creative sector in meaningful and interactive ways.

Culture Days continues to play an important role in advancing the goals of the City's Culture Master Plan by increasing access to cultural experiences, supporting local creatives and celebrating Brampton's diversity. This work reinforces arts and culture as a core municipal service that contributes to community wellbeing, neighbourhood vitality and Brampton's long-term growth.

Culture Days will return in 2026 from September 18 to October 4. The City will invite local creatives to partner with and host events as part of Brampton's community-driven lineup. Details, including the call for artists, will be posted at brampton.ca/culturedays.

For more information about Culture Days in Brampton and the City's arts and culture initiatives, visit brampton.ca/culturedays.

Quotes

"Being recognized once again as a top Culture Days community speaks to the creativity, collaboration and passion that define Brampton. Our artists, cultural organizations and community partners

continue to make arts and culture accessible to residents across the city, and this national recognition reflects the strength of that collective effort." - Patrick Brown, Mayor, City of Brampton

"Culture Days continues to highlight what makes Brampton special — a city where creativity thrives and culture is celebrated year-round. Being recognized again as a top participating community reflects the passion of our local artists and organizations, and the strong support from residents who show up and engage. I'm proud to see Brampton recognized nationally for making arts and culture accessible, inclusive and community-driven." - Rowena Santos, Regional Councillor, Wards 1 & 5; Chair, Community Services, City of Brampton

"This recognition reflects more than strong participation numbers, it speaks to the value of sustained investment, planning and collaboration in building an accessible cultural system. Culture Days demonstrates how local creatives, community partners and the City can work together to deliver meaningful cultural experiences that reach residents



Artist Meegan Lim leading participants at the Brew and Bloom workshop for Culture Days. *Credit: City of Brampton*

city-wide and strengthen Brampton's cultural sector." - Kelly Stahl, Director, Arts and Culture, City of Brampton

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



ALL IT TAKES IS ONE MISSTEP – STAY OFF FROZEN BODIES OF WATER

Stay off frozen natural bodies of water and follow these ice safety tips to ensure you stay safe.



While winter can bring a host of outdoor fun like skating or sledding, it's important to remember that no bodies of water are safe, especially during colder months. The City of Mississauga reminds residents to be cautious and stay off frozen bodies of water, for their own safety and to avoid falling through ice. Ice conditions are unpredictable and can vary.

While ice may look solid, deep water, shifting temperatures and hidden weak spots make lakes, ponds, rivers and creeks unstable. Even when temperatures drop, natural ice does not freeze evenly and in many cases the ice can be too thin to support someone's weight.

Obey posted signs and laws



DANGER
Stay off ponds, rivers & lakes.
Ice is not safe.



Going onto frozen ponds, lakes, streams and rivers in City parks is prohibited under the City's Parks By-law.

If you see someone venturing onto the ice at Osprey Marsh, Lake Aquitaine, Rattray March or other City stormwater ponds or drainage outfalls, call 311 (or 905 615 4311 outside Mississauga). Enforcement officers will respond and may take enforcement action if required.

Children and pets

Parents and pet owners should keep children and pets well away from frozen ponds, lakes, and rivers. Children and pets may not recognize the signs of unsafe ice. It is best to keep an eye on them and

ensure pets are leashed near water to prevent falling through the ice.

Emergency response

Falling through ice can happen without warning. Depending on your location, it might take rescuers some time to get to you. The shock of entering icy water can cause hypothermia also most instantly.

It takes around 10 minutes for the cold to set into your cells and muscles.

What to do if you fall through the ice



Falling through the ice can be a scary and traumatic situation. If you ever find yourself in this type of situation, there are several important things to keep in mind.

- Try not to panic and stay clam – the more you exert yourself, the more tired you will become.

- Keep your nose and mouth above water. Avoid inhaling water.

- Gasping for air is normal, but you must try and control your breathing by slowing down it.

- Yell for help – Hang onto the ice and keep yelling if you can't get out yourself.

- Stay visible to rescuers.

- Face the direction you came from and stay close to the area you fell in.

- Keep your arms on the ice to keep you stable.

- Kick your legs behind you to help push your body onto the ice.

If you can get out of the water, don't stand up, roll yourself away from the break in the ice. This will help distribute your weight onto the ice, preventing it from breaking further.

If you can, call 911 immediately. Move to a safer area, dry off and try to keep yourself warm until help arrives.

What to do if you see

someone fall through the ice

When it comes to rescuing someone else, it is important to stay calm and safe.

- Call 911 immediately.
- Find something you can throw to reach the person (e.g. life preserver ring, a stick, branch, rope).

- Talk to the person until help arrives. Keep them calm.

- Prompt them to keep their head above water and their arms on the ice.

- Encourage them to kick their feet and push their chest on the ice.

- Avoid walking on the ice and stay dry.

If they can get out of the water, dry them off as soon as possible.

Enjoy winter activities outdoors

For winter activities, choose designated, maintained spaces such as City run outdoor rinks or community rinks that are regularly checked for safety. These locations allow you to enjoy skating and other activities without putting yourself at risk. Staying off frozen natural bodies of water reduces the risk of emergencies and keeps everyone safer during winter.

Check out City-operated outdoor ice rinks at Mississauga Celebration Square and Woodhurst Heights Park or find a community ice rink in a park in your area. Check to see if the community ice rink in your neighbourhood is open by looking for the 'Ice is Ready' sign.

Your actions can prevent emergencies and save lives. Stay alert, stay safe and stay off the ice.

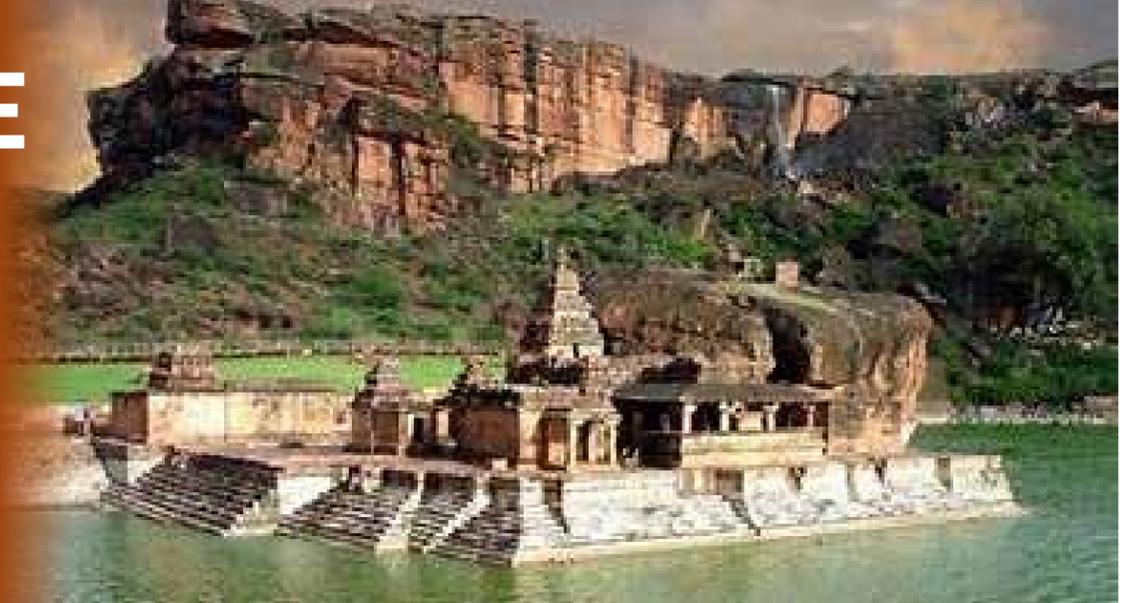




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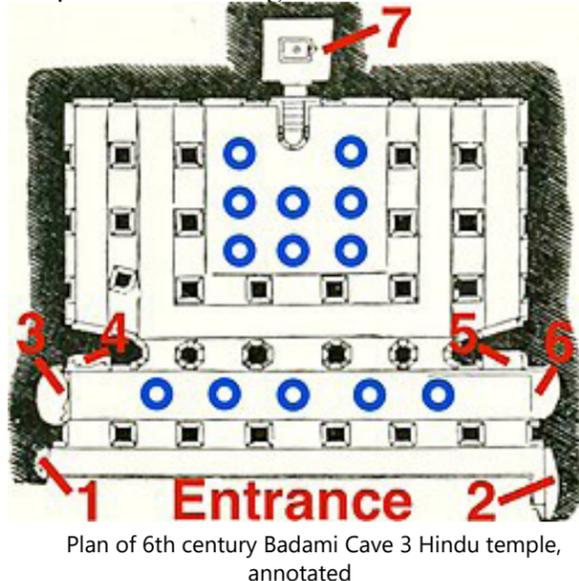
BADAMI CAVE TEMPLES, KARNATAKA, INDIA

Compiled by Kidambi Raj



INTRODUCTION

The Badami caves, carved in redstone cliffs off the rugged Bagalkot district in Karnataka, are among the most striking rock-cut monuments of India. Dating back to the 6th and 7th centuries CE., these caves were created during the reign of the Early Chalukyas, who made Badami (then known as *Vatapi*) their capital. The site beautifully blends religious devotion, architectural ingenuity, and artistic mastery, representing, Hinduism, Jainism and Buddhism in its sculptures and carvings. Badami is situated on



Plan of 6th century Badami Cave 3 Hindu temple, annotated

the west bank of a man-made lake ringed by an earthen wall with stone steps; it is surrounded on the north and south by forts built during Early Chalukya and in later times. This is one of top ten oldest Hindu temples in India.

LOCATION

The Badami cave temples are located in the town of *Badami* in the north-central part of *Karnataka*, India. The temples are about 88 miles (142 km) east of *Belagavi* and 87 miles (140 km) northwest of *Hampi*. The *Malaprabha River* is 3 miles (4.8 km) away. The cave temples are 14 miles (23 km) from the UNESCO World Heritage Site *Pattadakal* and 22 miles (35 km) from *Aihole*, another site with over a hundred ancient and early medieval era Hindu, Jain and Buddhist monuments.

Badami, also referred to as *Vatapi*, *Vatapinagari* and *Agastya Tirtha* in historical texts, the capital of *Chalukya Dynasty* in the 6th century, is at the exit point of a ravine between two steep mountain cliffs. Four cave temples were carved into the cliff's monolithic stone face. The escarpment is above a man-made lake called *Agastya Theertha*, created by an earthen dam faced with stone steps. To the west end of this cliff, at its lowest point, is the first cave temple. The largest and highest cave is Cave 3, which is further to the east on the northern face of the hill. The fourth cave, is a few steps down further east.

ABOUT THE TEMPLE

The Badami cave temples are carved out of soft Badami sandstone on a hill cliff. The plan of each of the four caves include an entrance with a verandah (*mukha mantapas*) supported by stone columns and brackets, a distinctive feature of these caves, leading to a columned mantapa, or main hall (a *maha mantapa*), and then to the small, square shrine (*sanctum sanctorum* or *garbha griha*) cut deep inside the cave. The cave temples are linked by a steeped path with intermediate terraces overlooking the town and lake. The cave temples are labelled 1 to 4 in their ascending series; this numbering does not reflect the sequence of the excavation.

The architecture includes structures built in the *Nagara* and *Dravidian styles*, which is the first and most persistent architectural idiom to be adopted by the early Chalukyas.

Cave 1 is about 59 feet (18 m) above ground level on the north-west part of the hill. Access is through a series of steps that depict carvings of dwarfish *ganas* in different postures as if they hold the cave floor. The verandah, with an inner measurement of 70 feet (21 m) by 65 feet (20 m), has five columns sculptured with reliefs of flower garlands, foliage and jewelry.

Nataraja Carving



Ceiling of Cave3 badami

The cave portrays the *Tandava* -dancing Siva as *Nataraja* on the rock face to the right of entrance and also part of Gandharveda. The image, 5 feet (1.5 m) tall, has 18 arms (9 in left and 9 on right) in a form that expresses the dance position (about 9x9=81 combinations in total) arranged in a geometric pattern, which Alice Boner, a Swiss art historian and Indologist, states is a time division symbolizing the cosmic wheel. The eighteen arms express *Natya mudras* (symbolic hand gestures), with some holding objects such as drums, a flame torch, a serpent, a trident and an axe. Shiva has His son Ganesha and the bull *Nandi* by His side. Adjoining the Nataraja, the wall depicts the goddess *Durga* of *Shaktism* tradition slaying the buffalo-demon *Mahishasura*.

Mahishasura Mardini Carving

On the right side of the Nataraja carving is a

carving of *Mahishasura Mardini* with *Chaturbhuj* (four hands). The sculpture depicts the killing of the demon Mahishasura by Durga. Mahishasura was the son of Mahishi and great grandson Brahmarishi Kashyapa.



Entrance to Badami Cave 1

Harihara Carving

Inside the veranda, the cave presents a carved sculpture of *Harihara*, a 7.75 ft. (2.36 m) high. It is fused image that is half Shiva and half Vishnu. He is flanked by the Goddesses *Parvati* and *Lakshmi* on each side.

Ardhanareshwara Carving

To the right, toward the end of the wall, is a relief sculpture of *Ardhanareshwara*, a fused image of Shiva and His consort Parvati. One half of the image has Shiva with a moon on his mukuta (head), snakes in His hands, earrings and next to the half that represents Parvati is an attendant carrying a tray of jewels. Next to the Ardhanarishvara half that represents Shiva is Nandi the bull, and skeletal *Bhringi*, a devotee of Shiva. The Bhringi sadhu carvings shows the advance knowledge of anatomy for the whole body which includes the Skulls, Ribs, bones on hands and legs.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Badami Cave Complex is part of a *UNESCO-designated WORLD HERITAGE SITE* candidate under the title "*Evolution of Temple Architecture – Aihole-Badami-Pattadakal*" in the *Malaprabha river valley*, considered a cradle of temple architecture that formed the model for the later Hindu temples in the region. The art works in Caves 1 and 2 exhibit the northern Deccan style of the 6th and 7th centuries, while those in cave 3 simultaneously represent two ancient Indian artistic traditions: the northern *Nagara* and the southern *Dravida* styles. Cave 3 also shows icons and reliefs in the so-called *Vesara* style, a fusion of ideas from the two styles, as well as some of the earliest surviving historical examples in Karnataka of *yantra-chakra* motifs (geometric symbolism) and coloured fresco paintings. The first three caves feature sculptures of Hindu icons and legends focusing on *Shiva* and *Vishnu*, while Cave 4 features *Jain* icons and themes.

Badami rose to prominence under the Chalukya

SPECIAL FEATURE



dynasty, who ruled much of the Deccan between the 6th and 8th centuries CE. These caves symbolize the dynasty's patronage of religion



Vishnu seated on Serpent Seshha in Cave 3 Right (An amorous couple)

and art, as well as their experimentation with early temple architecture that later influenced structural temples at Pattadakal and Aihole. Each cave has a distinct theme, offering insights into the cosmopolitan spiritual and cultural life of the Chalukyan court.

ARCHITECTURAL LAYOUT

The Badami cave complex consists of four major rock-cut caves and a few smaller excavations, set against a picturesque backdrop of the Agastya Lake.

- **Cave 1 (Dedicated to Lord Shiva)**
Notable for the 18-armed Nataraja dancing in 81 poses, along with depictions of Ardhanararisvara and Harihara.
- **Cave 2 (Dedicated to Lord Vishnu)**
Features incarnations of Vishnu, including Trivikrama and Varaha lifting the earth Goddess.
- **Cave 3 (Largest Cave, Vishnu-themed)**
Considered the finest, with grand reliefs of Narasimha, Anantasayana Vishnu reclining on the serpent Adishesha and celestial beings in vibrant murals.
- **Cave 4 (Dedicated to Jainism)**
Showcases images of Tirthankaras, including Mahavira, along with intricate symbolic motifs.
- **Temples on the other side Cave Temples**

On the northern banks of Agastya Theertha Lake and the other side of the Cave Temples, a series of elegant temples and carvings await those who complete an arduous climb through a stony chasm and fortified gateways. The upper Shivalaya Temple still has some friezes and sculptures depicting legends relating to Lord Krishna perched on a rock, the Malegatti Shivalaya is an example of ancient southern style of architecture.

Other than the numbered caves, Badami is home to many other cave monuments and medieval era temples. On the other side lake, near the **Bhutanatha temple**, is a 7th-8th century Chalukya period cave of small dimensions. Inside, there is a carved statue seated over a sculptured throne with reliefs showing people holding *chauris* (fans), a *Pipal tree*, *elephants*, and icons in an attacking pose. On one side of the statue is a *Chakra*, on the other a *Conch shell*. The statue wears abundant jewelry and a thread over its chest. The face of the statue is damaged and missing its face.

There are several theories as to who the statue represents. One theory holds that it is a relief of the Buddha in a sitting posture. This is supported by two chauri bearers who may be *Bhodhisatvas* flanking the Buddha. According to George Michell, the halo, the Pipal

tree and cloak-like dress suggests that this was originally a Buddha statue. According to B.V. Shetti, archaeologist and Curator of Prince of Wales Museum of Western India, the cave was not converted but from the start represented a tribute to *Mayamoha* of the *Hindu Puranas*, or *Buddhavatara of Vishnu* (ninth avatar of Vishnu). This theory is supported by the *Chakra*, *Conch* and jewelry included in its iconography. The style suggests it was likely carved in or before the 8th century.

Close to the controversial cave are the other monuments. One of them is a small shrine consisting of the 7th-century rock carving of *Ananthasayana Vishnu*, or reclining Vishnu with Lakshmi and Garuda in namaste posture. Vishnu is shown restarting the cosmic cycle by giving birth to all of existence. Above the reclining carved relief are the ten avatars of Vishnu – *Matsya*, *Kurma*, *Varaha*, *Narasimha*, *Vamana*, *Parasurama*, *Rama*, *Krishna*, *Buddha* and *Kalki*. Between Narsimha and Vamana is shown relief of Brahma cord connected Vishnu's navel. To the left of the relief is depicted the *Trinity* – *Vishnu*, *Siva* and *Brahma*, while to the right is a human couple and a mother cow with a calf feeding.

In 2013, *Manujanth Sulloli*, Assistant Director of Bagalkot district working for the state government of Karnataka, reported the discovery of another cave with 27 rock carvings, about 500 metres (1,600 ft) from the four main



Small cave rock carving of Anantasayana Vishnu caves. Water gushes from this newly discovered cave year round. It depicts Vishnu and other Hindu deities and features an inscription in the *Devanagiri script*. The dating of the carvings is unknown.

ARTISTIC SIGNIFICANCE AND CULTURAL IMPORTANCE

The sculptures of the Badami Caves demonstrate an early mastery of stone carving and iconography. The fluidity of human forms, the detailing of jewelry and attire, and the dynamic postures of Gods and Goddesses showcase the transition from simple rock-cut sanctuaries to richly ornamented shrines. Their murals, though faded, provide valuable evidence of early Chalukyan painting traditions.

Badami Caves represent more than monuments; they symbolize the syncretic ethos of ancient India. The coexistence of Hindu, Jain and possibly Buddhist shrines within the same complex reflects religious tolerance and diversity. The caves are also part of the *Chalukyan architectural circuit*, alongside Aihole and Pattadakal, offering an integrated view of early Deccan temple-building traditions.

LEGACY

Today, the Badami caves are protected monuments under the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) and attract scholars, historians, devotees and tourists alike. They continue to inspire awe for their historical depth and artistic brilliance, standing as a gateway to understanding the

grandeur of the Chalukya era and the evolution of Indian temple architecture.

PLACES OF INTEREST NEARBY

• PATTADAKAL

It is located in Bijapur district of Karnataka, also called *Raktapura* is a complex of 7th CE Hindu and Jain temples. It was not only popular for Chalukyan architectural activities, but also a holy place for Royal Coronations. *Pattadakisuvalal* Temples constructed here mark the blending of *Nagara*, *Prasada* and the *Dravida Vimana* styles of temple buildings.

There are ten major temples at *Pattadakal*, nine Hindu and one Jain along with numerous small shrines and plinths. Eight of the temples clustered together, a ninth one about half a kilometer south of this cluster, and the tenth, a Jain temple, located about a kilometer to the west of the main cluster. What is special about Pattadakal is that it represents the high point of an eclectic art which in the 7th and 8th centuries under the Chalukya dynasty achieved harmonious blend of architectural forms from northern and southern India. One master piece from the group that stands out is the *Temple Virupaksha*, built C 740 by *Queen Lokamahadevi* to commemorate her husband's victory over Kings from the South.

HOW TO REACH

• By Air

The nearest airport is Hubli Airport (about 105 km), with regular flights from Bengaluru, Mumbai and other major cities. From the airport, taxis and buses are available to Badami. Belgaum Airport (190 km) is another option.

• **By Train** Badami has its own railway station, located about 5 km from the caves, connected to major cities in Karnataka and beyond. Alternative options include nearby stations at Hubli and Hospet.

• By Road

Badami is well connected by road and is about 450 km from Bengaluru and 125 km from Hubli. State-run KSRTC buses and private buses operate from major towns such as Hospet, Bijapur and Belgaum. Taxis and rental cars are convenient for those combining a visit with Aihole and Pattadakal.

BEST TIME TO VISIT

• **October to March** The ideal season, with pleasant weather (15-30 deg.C), perfect for exploring the caves and nearby historical sites.

• July to September

The monsoon brings lush greenery around the cliffs and Agastya Lake, adding scenic charm, though occasional showers may limit outdoor exploration.



• **April to June** The summer months can be quite hot (temperatures reaching 40 deg C), making sightseeing uncomfortable during the day.



SPECIAL FEATURE

SHORE TEMPLE IN MAHABALIPURAM, TAMIL NADU, INDIA

Compiled by Kidambi Raj

INTRODUCTION

The *Mahabalipuram Shore Temple* is built with blocks of **granite** dating back to the 8th century AD. This is a complex of temples and shrines that overlook the shore of the **Bay of Bengal**. It is located in Mahabalipuram, about 60 kilometers south of Chennai in Tamil Nadu, India. At the time of its creation, the site was a busy port during the reign of **King Narasimhavarman II** of the Indian **Pallava dynasty**. As one of the **Group of Monuments at Mahabalipuram**, it has been designated as a **UNESCO World Heritage site** since 1984. It is one of the oldest stone temples in Southern India.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Marco Polo and the European merchants who came to Asia after him, called the site, **Seven Pagodas**. One of these is believed to be the Shore Temple. The temple probably acted as a landmark for seafarer. s.

This structural temple complex was the culmination of the architectural creations that were initiated by the King Narasimhavarman II in mid-7th century starting with the Cave temples and the monolithic Rathas. Even though the architectural creation of sculpturing cut-in and cut-out structures continued during subsequent periods, as seen in the *Atiranachanda cave*, the *Pidari rathas* and the *Tiger cave*, the main credit for the architectural elegance of the Shore Temple complex in the category of structural temples goes to the **King Rajasimha** (700–28 AD), also known as **Narasimhavarman II**, of the Pallava Dynasty. It is now inferred that this temple complex was the last in a series of temples that seemed to exist in the submerged coastline; this is supported by the appearance of an outline of its sister temples off the coast during the Tsunami of 2004 which struck this coastline. The architecture of the Shore Temple was continued by the Cholas (in the temples that they built) who ruled Tamil Nadu after defeating the Pallavas.

The tsunami of December 2004 that struck the coastline of Coromandel exposed an old collapsed temple built entirely of granite blocks. This has renewed speculation that Mahabalipuram shore temple was a part of the Seven Pagodas described in the diaries of Europeans, of which six temples remain submerged in the sea. The tsunami also exposed some ancient rock sculptures of lions, elephants, and peacocks that used to decorate walls and temples during the Pallava period during the 7th and 8th centuries.

Though the tsunami of 26 December 2004 that occurred in the Indian Ocean struck the temple and the surrounding garden, the Shore Temple was not badly damaged, as the water level returned to its normal level within a few minutes. The damage was to the foundation of the **bali pitham** (sacrificial altar) in front of the temple, the steps leading to the boat jetty, and the small shrine with the **Varaha** (Boar) sculpture at the basement of the Shore temple. As the temple foundation is on hard granite rock, it could sustain the waves created by the tsunami; the groynes erected around the

temple area on the coastline also aided its protection. According to the two inscriptions found in the slab of smaller Shiva temple, the names of the three temples mentioned are as **Kshatriyasimha Pallavesvara-gruham**, **Rajasimha Pallavesvara-gruham** and **Pllikondaruliya-devar**. The entire temple complex is called as **Jalashayana** (lying in water). This confirms that the Vishnu shrine was the first shrine to be excavated here. The inscription on the lintel of the Vishnu shrine also mentions this as **Narapatisimha Pallava Vishnu Griha** where **Narapatisimha** is a title of Rajasimha.

TEMPLE HISTORY

The Mahabalipuram Shore Temple history is a captivating tale that intertwines with the rich tapestry of India's past. Constructed during the reign of the Pallava dynasty, this temple is a shining example of early The Pallavas known for their patronage of art and culture, commissioned this masterpiece in the 8th century, making it one of the oldest stone temples in South India.

The significance in Dravidian temple archi-



ture is evident in its unique design, which features intricate carvings and sculptures that depict various deities and mythological scenes. The temple's layout, with its pyramidal structure and tiered towers, showcases the early stages of Dravidian architectural style that would later influence countless other temples across southern India.

SHORE TEMPLE ARCHITECTURE

The architecture of the Shore Temple at Mahabalipuram, is a testament to the artistic brilliance of the Pallava dynasty. This UNESCO World Heritage site stands proudly on the Coromandel Coast, offering a glimpse into the past with its intricate shore temple sculptures and carvings. As you wander through this ancient marvel, you will notice the exquisite details that adorn its walls, each telling a story of devotion and craftsmanship. The temple is dedicated to Lord Shiva and Lord Vishnu, housing both Shiva and Vishnu shrines within its sacred precincts. The dual shrines are rare architectural feature, showcasing the harmoni-



ous coexistence of these two deities in Hindu mythology. The temple's design is characterized by its pyramidal structure which rises majestically against the backdrop of the Bay of Bengal. This unique style not only highlights the Pallava's architectural prowess but also their deep spiritual connections to their gods. The Shore Temple sculptures and carvings are particularly noteworthy for their precision and artistry, depicting various mythological scenes and figures that have withstood the test of time. As you explore this historic site, you will find yourself captivated by the stories etched into stone, each one a testament to the rich cultural heritage of Mahabalipuram. Whether you are an architectural enthusiast or simply some one who appreciates beauty in all its forms, the Shore Temple offers an unforgettable experience that transcends time.

All the three Temples of the Shore Temple complex are built on the same platform. Viewed from the northern end, the temples appear to be a replica of the Dharmaraja Ratha. The main Shore Temple, which faces east so that the sun rays shine on the main deity of Shiva Linga in the shrine, is a five-storied structural Hindu temple rather than rock-cut as are the other monuments at the site. Built with sculpted granite stones hauled from a nearby quarry, it is the earliest important structural temple in South India. Its pyramidal structure is 60 feet (18 m) high and sits on a 50 feet (15 m) square platform. There is a small temple in front which was the original porch. It is made out of finely cut local granite.

The temple is a combination of three shrines. The main shrine is dedicated to Shiva, as is the smaller second shrine. A small third shrine, between the two, is dedicated to a reclining Vishnu and may have had water channeled into the temple, entering the Vishnu shrine. The two Shiva shrines are orthogonal in configuration. The entrance is through a transverse barrel vault gopuram. The two shikharas have a pyramidal outline, each individual tier is distinct with overhanging eaves that cast dark shadows. The outer wall of the shrine to Vishnu and the inner side of the boundary wall are extensively sculptured and topped by large sculptures of Nandi. The temple's outer walls are divided by pilasters into bays, the lower part being carved into a series of rearing lions. The temple walls are surrounded by sculptures of Nandi.

Another common question is how many temples are included within the Shore Temple

SPECIAL FEATURE



complex. The complex houses three temples, with the two dedicated to Lord Shiva and the third to Lord Vishnu. These structures stand as a harmonious blend of religious devotion and architectural finesse..

TEMPLE, ITS ARTWORK AND ICONOGRAPHY

The temple has a garbhagriha (sanctum sanctorum) in which the deity, Sivalinga, is enshrined, and a small mandapa surrounded by a heavy outer wall with little space between for circumambulation. At the rear are two shrines facing in opposite directions. The inner shrine dedicated to *Ksatriyasimhesvara* is reached through a passage while the other, dedicated to Vishnu, is facing outwards. The Durga is seated on her lion *vahana*. A small shrine may have been in the cavity in the lion's chest. The Shore Temples, like many major Hindu temples, include both Shaivism and Vaishnavism temples and iconography.

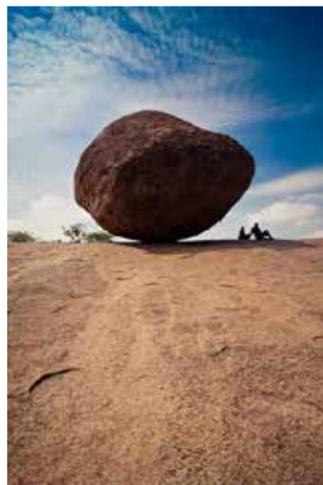
The roofs of the temples have ornamentation similar to the Pancha Rathas. The roofs have finials on the top, indicative of its religious functional nature, as it was a completed temple. The octagonal shape of the shikaras of the two temples dedicated to Shiva are in the Dravidian architectural style. Beneath the towers, the sanctuary walls are mostly blank without any decorations but the columns are carved over lion mounted bases. The decorations on the outer faces of these shrines are similar to those seen on the Pancha Rathas, though due to their closeness to the sea, are partially eroded due to salty winds.

The most distinctive feature of the temple are the *Dharalinga* and the *Somaskanda panel*, which are enshrined in the interior walls of the sanctum of the east facing Kshatriyasimhesvara temple. The Dharalinga is deified in the *garbhagriha*, which is in square shape of 12 feet (3.7 m) and the height is 11 feet (3.4 m). The Dharalinga or Shivalinga is in Rajasimha style, carved out of black basalt stone. It has sixteen faces with slight fluting to create a crown at the top. The top portion of the linga is damaged. Its total height is 6 feet (1.8 m) with one foot embedded in the foundation to provide stability. A bas-relief, which is a family image of Shiva and his consort Parvati with their child Kartikeya built over a stone slab is located in a small shrine in the temple. This is



also called the Somaskanada panel, a carved stone panel. Two more similar panels are seen at the entrance porch of the temple. This type of panel is also depicted in the nearby Dharmaraja Ratha of the Paramesvarvarman's era. The *ardhamantapa* or half chamber which is the first chamber before entering the sanctum sanctorum, also has sculptures of Brahma on the south wall and Vishnu on its north wall. Sculptures of Shiva as Tripurantaka and Durga are seen on the back side of the north wall of the main shrine. There is also a circumambulatory passage to go round the main shrine in a clockwise direction.

The smaller Shiva temple behind the main temple is a double storied structure with a stepped pyramidal tower with an octagonal *shikhara* built over a circular *griva*. A *kalasa* and finial are fitted above the *shikhara*. *kundus* (horseshoe-arch dormer like projections) and small shrines are part of the cornices at both levels of the structure. A Somaskanda panel decorates the back wall of the inner shrine. There is no *mantapa* (hall) in front of



this shrine (probably damaged). The external walls display two panels. One is called *Ekapadamurti*, a one-legged form of Shiva with Brahma and Vishnu emanating from his sides. The second panel is of Nagaraja (king of serpents) standing below a five-hooded serpent.

Anantashayi Vishnu (reclining posture of Vishnu lying on the serpent Ananta) is enshrined in a small rectangular shrine between the large Kshatriyasimhesvara temple and the Rajasimha Pallaveshvara temple. Vishnu is depicted with four arms but his attributes are missing (damaged). The temple structure's rectangular tower is missing. The typical design of *kundus* and small square shrines are part of the cornice arrangement. The external walls have carvings of Krishna slaying the demon Kesi, Krishna dancing over Kaliya (the seven hooded serpent), and Vishnu seated on his vehicle Garuda in the act of saving Gajendra (elephant) from the mouth of a crocodile. Inscription noted in Pallava Grantha script is on the lintel indicating it as the earliest shrine of the complex.

A monolith sculpture of a partly carved and partly sculpted lion with a hole in its torso is erected within the compound wall of the temple complex. A miniature image of Durga is sculpted on the back of the image, which is a depiction of Durga as Mahishasuramardini. The open mouth of the lion is inferred as representation of its role as the favourite lion.

Miniature Shrine

In 1990, the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) discovered a miniature shrine with the Bhuvanaraha image in a well type enclosure. This is dated to the Pallava King Narasimhavarman Mamalla's (AD 638–660) reign. It was enclosed with an elliptical well built during Rajasimha's (AD 700–728) period.

These are carved on the bedrock that also has the reclining Vishnu in the Shore Temple complex. The miniature shrine is also dedicated to Shiva.

It has sixteen-sided base which is carved from bedrock. The circular wall and superstructure are of structural type. There are lions depicted on the pilasters. It is reported as a unique single tiered temple and not seen in other temples of the Pallava period. Its circular shikhara, is in vesara style architecture. The shikhara is erected on a circular *griva*, which has *kundus* and *maha-nasikas* on its four sides and each *nasika* has an image of Ganesha. The kalasa above the shikhara is missing. The carving of the Bhuvanaraha depicts Varaha as the boar incarnation of Vishnu. This image is in unusual form, unlike another Varaha depictions in other regions of the country, as there is no Bhudevi shown nor an ocean. The depiction is in the form of Varaha performing a diving act into the ocean to rescue Bhudevi or mother earth. The symbolism of this act denotes the myth, only when the temple is submerged in water, as it is below the ground level. The sculpture is seen broken and the base has an inscription referring to titles of the Pa May's heat of almost 35 deg. C. Pallava king Rajasimha. The wall that surrounds the shrine to prevent intrusion of sand from the sea also has an inscription on the topmost layer, in Pallava-Grantha script, which equates the king with Arjuna.

MYTHS AND SOME INTERESTING FACTS

• Myth of the Shore Temple

According to a myth that has circulated around India and Europe for over 11 centuries, seven temples once stood along Mahabalipuram's



shore. Local legend suggests that *God Indra* became jealous of this earthly city and

sank it during a storm, leaving only the *Shore Temple* above sea level.

• What is special about the Five Rathas?

Standing apart from other ancient constructions, the *Pancha Rathas* are unique for being carved entirely from a single piece of granite. This monolithic approach required immense planning and precision, setting them apart from other rock-cut temples in Mahabalipuram.

• Story behind Krishna's Butter Ball

According to Hindu scriptures, *Krishna* often stole butter from His mother's butter handi; and this may have led to the namesake of the boulder. In 1969, a tour-guide is said to credit its present name, *Krishna's Butterball*, to Indira Gandhi who was on a tour of the city.

BEST TIME TO VISIT

Visit Mahabalipuram from November to February. This way you can enjoy the cool 20 to 28 deg. C, perfect for exploring rock temples and beaches. It is better to avoid May and its heat of almost 35 deg. C and also avoid monsoon rains between June and September.



HOW CAN CANADA CREATE AFFORDABLE PATHS TO HOME OWNERSHIP?

An ambitious research collaboration with Habitat for Humanity is reimagining home ownership across Waterloo Region and Canada

By Skylar Hammond, *Future Cities Institute*

This urgent question is at the heart of a new living lab launched by the Future Cities Institute (FCI) founded by CAIVAN in partnership with BUILD NOW, an initiative led by Habitat for Humanity Waterloo Region.

BUILD NOW sets out a bold new model of affordable homeownership that could reshape how communities across Canada approach housing. The goal is to build 10,000 “missing middle” homes by 2030, including townhouses, walk-ups, mid-rises and high-rises.

Seventy per cent of these homes will be designed for ownership, using a legal model that keeps them affordable in perpetuity. As part of this innovative initiative, FCI is embedding a living lab in the first 25-acre development site in Waterloo, where more than 1,000 homes will be built.

The University of Waterloo was built on the principle of tackling the big challenges facing its community. Today, that challenge is housing, and the FCI is drawing on this legacy of problem-solving to help create solutions that work here and can be scaled across the country. Beyond being the academic partner of BUILD NOW, FCI is committed to asking the right questions using rigorous,

interdisciplinary research to determine what works and why.

“This partnership with BUILD NOW is a great example of how we approach innovation at the Future Cities Institute,” says Leia Minaker, director of the FCI and professor in the School of Planning. “It’s a very exciting model with real potential, but our responsibility is not to celebrate it uncritically, our job is to collect evidence, evaluate outcomes and understand its impact on families and our region.”

The living lab is supported through funding from the University’s Global Futures Fund and draws on FCI’s unique structure, where interdisciplinary teams of researchers, students, municipalities and industry leaders come together to tackle urgent urban issues. The work being done with BUILD NOW touches on all five of Waterloo’s Global Futures, showcasing just how deeply issues of housing are connected to every aspect of life today.

“This is about more than housing policy,” Minaker explains. “Affordable homeownership affects family health and well-being, our economy, our environment, city infrastructure, and even the ways we design technology for the built environment. That’s why we see this critical partnership really cutting across



Dr. Leia Minaker
Professor, School of Planning
Faculty of Environment
Future Cities Institute

every one of the Global Futures.”

The teams working on this project are co-creating with FCI community partners, testing not only whether the BUILD NOW model successfully delivers on affordability, but also how it shapes long-term outcomes for residents and municipalities. FCI’s living lab approach puts real families and neighbourhoods at the centre of this research, combining local insights with applied work.

Through the living lab, the FCI is demonstrating a pragmatic path forward: test bold ideas, measure them carefully, and share insights widely to communities and municipalities across Canada.

“Canada needs housing solutions that are both ambitious and practical,” Minaker says. “By asking tough questions and working across sectors, we can help build communities that are fair, productive and future proof.”

Thanks to support from the Global Futures Fund, the Future Cities Institute is helping ensure that the path to affordable homeownership in Canada is guided not by assumptions, but by evidence.

Courtesy: University of Waterloo





MAPFLOW HELPS PHARMACISTS PROVIDE EXCEPTIONAL HEALTH CARE

New platform helps pharmacists prescribe with confidence, streamline administrative tasks and improve patient outcomes

By **Angelica Marie Sanchez**, *University Relations*

MAPflow is a Waterloo health-tech platform reshaping how Canadians access care by helping to modernize pharmacy practice and elevate patient care across the country.

Dr. Nardine Nakhla, pharmacist and co-founder of MAPflow, served on the Ontario College of Pharmacists' Minor Ailments Advisory Group that informed regulatory changes enacted in the province in 2023. The changes allow pharmacists to autonomously prescribe medications for 19 minor ailments, with 14 more under consideration for 2026.

Recognizing the need for a solution to help pharmacists work within the new regulations, Nakhla and her co-founders developed MAPflow to support pharmacists in assessing and prescribing for minor ailments. The platform streamlines workflows and automates documentation while ensuring compliance, allowing pharmacists to spend less time on paperwork and more time delivering care.

"MAPflow was built in Canada for pharmacists, with the deep understanding that technology should amplify human expertise — not replace it," Nakhla says. "Our algorithms provide evidence-based guidance that empower pharmacists to make informed clinical judgements."

The platform integrates seamlessly into the way a pharmacist works, using algorithms that consider both patient- and condition-specific factors to generate individualized care plans. The tech currently automates documentation while keeping practicing pharmacists central to both its development and clinical decision-making, ensuring it meets real-world needs.

"As AI evolves, we're committed to using it to enhance clinical decision-making while preserving the irreplaceable human elements — empathy, clinical intuition and therapeutic relationship — that define excellent pharmacy care," Nakhla adds. "At the same time, we're leveraging AI to streamline administrative tasks, giving pharmacists more time to focus on what



Dr. Nardine Nakhla
*Professor, School of Pharmacy
Faculty of Science
Co-founder and CEO, MAPflow*

matters most — patient care."

MAPflow is the only platform offering both comprehensively holistic care and true province-specific customization with algorithms and documentation tailored to each jurisdiction's unique regulations. Currently supporting more than 2,000 pharmacy locations across nine provinces, the team plans to have nationwide coverage by 2026.

MAPflow is also transforming pharmacy education. Students at Waterloo and six other pharmacy schools and technician programs across Canada utilize the platform in professional practice courses, gaining hands-on experience with regulatory-compliant tools that prepare them to deliver technology-enabled, team-based care from day one.

"We have achieved a 97.8 per cent symptom resolution or significant improvement rate at follow-up which is well above the national average of 80.8 per cent," Nakhla says. "This is not just about efficiency. It is about delivering measurably better patient outcomes through technology-enabled excellence."

MAPflow's success stems from interdisciplinary collaboration. Nakhla brings clinical and regulatory expertise while her co-founders, Dr. Andrea

Edginton, MAPflow's chief operating officer and Hallman Director of the School of Pharmacy, offers strategic leadership and operational insight, and Michael Sevestre, MAPflow's chief technology officer, contributes the technical vision that translated clinical workflows into the user-friendly platform.

Their vision extends far beyond minor ailments. The team is expanding to support pharmacists across their full scope of practice from chronic disease management and medication reviews to preventative care and emerging services. By combining clinical insight with technological innovation, they are creating a scalable model for pharmacy-based health care that's poised to transform how Canadians access care and inspire change well beyond Canada's borders.

Courtesy: University of Waterloo



From left to right: Dr. Andrea Edginton, MAPflow's CEO and Hallman Director of the School of Pharmacy, Nakhla, and Michael Sevestre, co-founder and chief technology officer at MAPflow.

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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.

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