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Sri Sathya Sai Baba Devotees of Scarborough Extend Compassion Across Borders with Aid to Sri Lanka

In a heartfelt display of service and compassion, Sai devotees and well-wishers in Canada—primarily from the Scarborough community—came together during the 100th Birthday celebrations of Swami to support underprivileged families in Sri Lanka.

Through generous contributions, over 1,000 dry ration packages were distributed to needy communities in Mullaitivu and the Upcountry regions. Each package, valued at Rs. 5,000, provided essential food items aimed at easing the burden of daily living for vulnerable households. The initiative formed a key part of the centenary celebrations, reflecting Swami's enduring message of selfless service.

Organizers noted that the effort was made possible through the collective spirit and dedication of Sai devotees, who continue to extend their support beyond borders to uplift communities in need.

In addition to food assistance, the group has been actively

engaged in improving living conditions for disadvantaged families. Since launching a housing project in 2022, a total of 10 homes have been completed across Sri Lanka. This year alone, three houses were successfully built in the Northern regions, based on recommendations from local Sai Centres.

The initiative focuses on addressing the fundamental needs of life—food, clothing, and shelter—while fostering dignity and stability among beneficiaries. Volunteers and donors alike emphasized that such projects are not merely acts of charity, but expressions of a shared commitment to humanity and service.

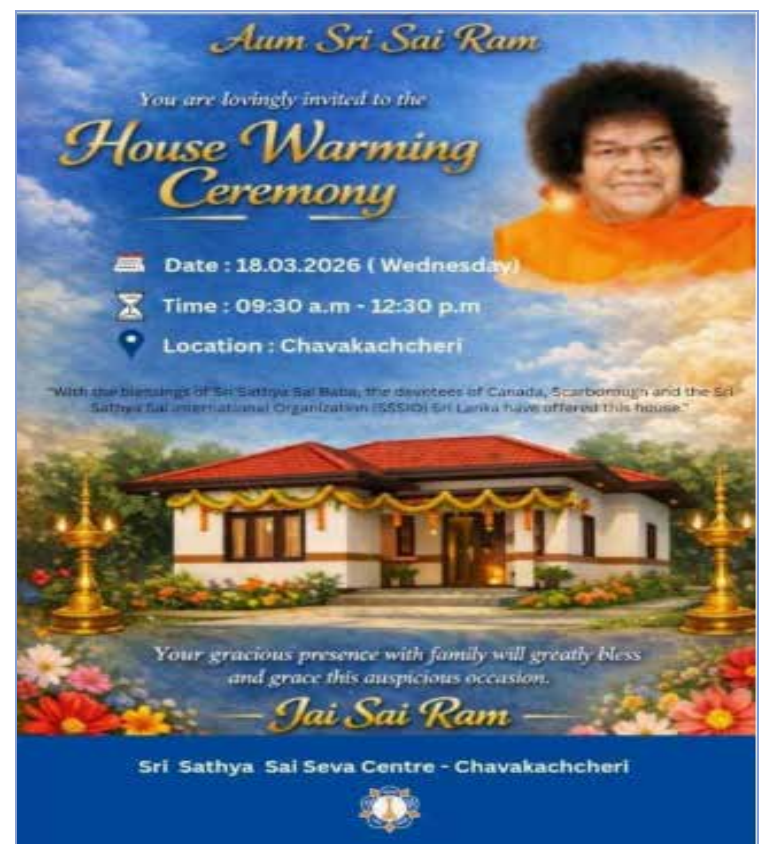
As the program continues to grow, organizers remain hopeful that ongoing support from the diaspora will further expand its reach, bringing meaningful change to more communities across Sri Lanka.

About the 3 Houses and the recipients of the houses are listed below with photos.

1. Chavakachcheri

This family is headed by Mrs. Naguleswaran Sathya, who lives with her four children in a small hut near Kachchai Road, Mahilankerni, by the seaside. During the flood season, their house was completely damaged. Her husband is a war-affected person who still has shrapnel lodged in his body, causing ongoing health and financial difficulties. Due to these hardships, relatives arranged for him to travel to the Middle East in search of employment. However, he has been unable to secure stable work and continues to struggle economically. The family lives in a flood-affected village, and their living conditions were unsafe and inadequate.

At the request of the Chavakachcheri Sai Centre, we built a house with a toilet and handed it over to the family on March 18, 2026.



Continued to Page5

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PUBLISHER'S DESK

Diaspora Hands Rebuild Lives: Tamil Community's Multi-Faceted Support Uplifts Sri Lanka

A continuous wave of support from the Tamil diaspora is making a tangible difference across Sri Lanka, with initiatives witnessed in early 2026 spanning education, economic empowerment, and humanitarian relief.

According to observations by Monsoon Journal, February saw notable contributions toward the development of laboratory facilities in Jaffna high schools. These upgrades are expected to significantly enhance science education and provide students with improved access to practical learning environments. During the same period, diaspora groups also played a role in marking the 75th anniversary of a prominent Colombo school, reflecting enduring ties between overseas communities and their alma maters.

In March, attention turned toward sustainable livelihoods in the Northern Province. A community-focused initiative in Mullaitivu District promoted the development and marketing of local products, aiming to create income streams for residents in a region still rebuilding from past hardships. Complementing this effort was the opening of a vegetarian restaurant at Murukandy, a well-known stop along the A9 highway between Colombo and Jaffna.

Murukandy, home to a revered Ganesha temple, has long been a customary stop for travelers seeking blessings during their journey. By situating a business venture at this strategic and culturally significant location, the project taps into steady traffic while supporting local employment. The initiative, backed by the Canadian Tamil Congress and its membership, is designed as a startup model that can generate sustainable income for the surrounding community.

Parallel to these development efforts, humanitarian outreach continued at scale. Sri Sathya Sai Baba devotees and well-wishers from Scarborough, Canada, marked the 100th birth anniversary of Swami with an extensive aid programme targeting vulnerable families in Sri Lanka. More than 1,000 dry ration packages—each valued at Rs. 5,000—were distributed across Mullaitivu and the Upcountry regions, helping ease the burden of daily living for those in need.

Their service, however, extends beyond immediate relief. Since launching a housing initiative in 2022, the group has completed 10 homes across the country. In 2026 alone, three houses were constructed in the Northern Province, based on recommendations from local Sai Centres, providing safe and stable shelter for disadvantaged families.

Taken together, these efforts highlight a growing trend among diaspora communities: a shift from one-off donations to structured, impact-driven engagement. By combining short-term assistance with

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long-term development strategies, these initiatives aim not only to address immediate hardships but also to foster resilience and self-sufficiency.

At a time when many communities continue to navigate economic and social challenges, such contributions underscore the enduring connection between Sri Lanka and its global diaspora. More importantly, they demonstrate how coordinated goodwill—rooted in shared heritage and responsibility—can translate into meaningful, lasting change on the ground.

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WORLD NEWS



Continued from Page 3...

2. Sithankerni Periya Vilan

The Piratheepan Gunadeepa family was living in a very small temporary hut that did not provide adequate protection from harsh weather conditions for the parents, grandmother, and their three daughters. The limited space and poor structure created many difficulties for daily living and especially affected the children's education and well-being. The father, a daily wage labourer, struggles to earn a stable income due to his medical condition. As a result, the family faces financial hardship and is unable to improve their housing conditions on their own.

This house was built with the assistance of Dr. Dhinesh Sivanandan and was handed over to the family on March 19, 2026, in the presence of Sai Centre members from the Sithankerni and Chankanai.



Sri Sathya Sai Seva Centre Siththankeny

HOUSE WARMING CEREMONY

"WITH BLESSINGS OF SRI SATHYA SAIBABA, THE DEVOTEES OF CANDA, SCARBOROUGH THINESH SIVAANANTHAN AND THE SRI SATHYA SAI INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION (SSSIO) SRILANKA HAVE OFFERED THIS HOUSE"

TIME : 10:45 A.M - 11:30 A.M
 DATE : 19 /03/2026 (THURSDAY)
 LOCATION : SITHTHANKENY
 "WE WARMLY INVITE EVERYONE."
 JAI SAIRAM

3. Urelu

This needy family is headed by Logi and consists of a mother, two school-going children, and a grandmother. The husband has separated from the family and remarried. The family depends on irregular maintenance payments from the divorced husband, along with Samurdhi relief, which is insufficient to meet their basic living expenses. To support the household, the mother works as a daily wage labourer. Their current home is severely damaged and does not provide suitable living conditions. The family actively participates in service activities at the Urelu Sai Centre.

We built this house with the help of Scarborough Sai devotees and handed it over to the family on March 21, 2026, in the presence of members from the Urelu Sai Centre.



SRI SATHYA SAI INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION - NORTHERN REGION

Sri Sathya Sai Seva Centre - Urelu

HOUSE WARMING CEREMONY

"WITH BLESSINGS OF SRI SATHYA SAIBABA, THE DEVOTEES OF CANDA, SCARBOROUGH AND THE SRI SATHYA SAI INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION (SSSIO) SRILANKA HAVE OFFERED THIS HOUSE"

TIME : 11:00 A.M - 12:30 P.M
 DATE : 21 /03/2026 (SATURDAY)
 LOCATION : URELU
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Colour of the day: Yellow

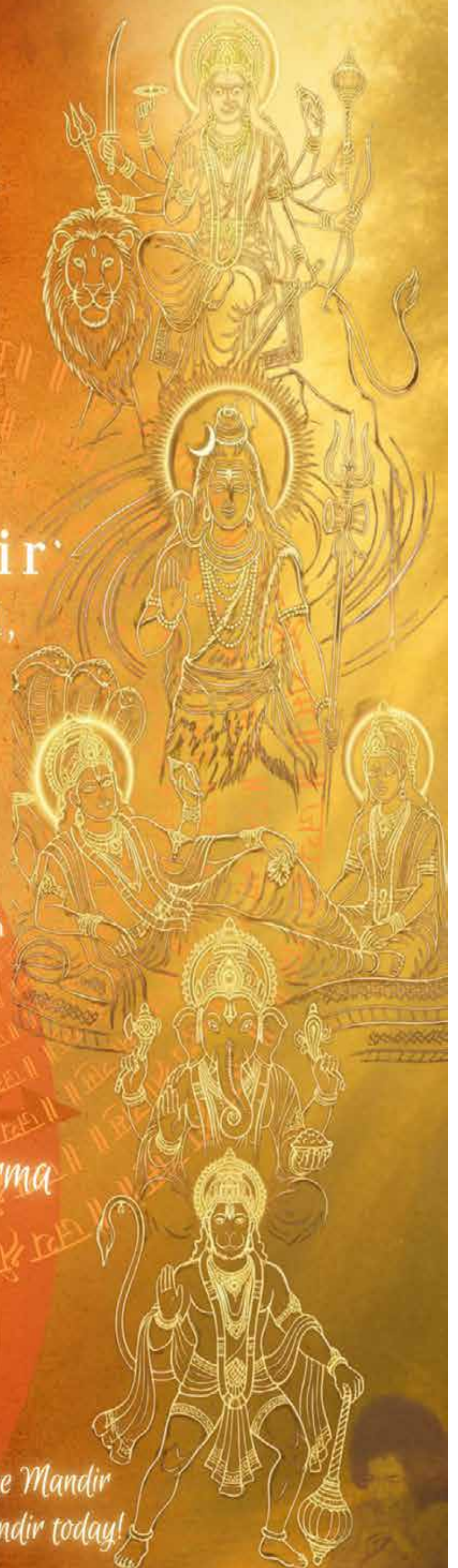
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A NEW VEGETARIAN RESTAURANT “ARIYATHTHAI” AND A LOCAL PRODUCTS STORE, “MADE IN MULLAITIVU” IN MURUKANDY



The Canadian Tamil Congress (CTC) proudly supported the opening of two new community-focused initiatives in Thirumurukandy, Mullaitivu District, on March 14, 2026.

With financial support from CTC and implementation by the North East Economic Development Centre (NEED Centre), the “Ariyaththai Traditional Vegetarian Restaurant” and the “Made in Mullaitivu” sales outlet were officially inaugurated in the Murukandy area in the Mullaitivu District.

The Governor of the Northern Province, Hon. N. Vethanayagan, ceremonially opened the two establishments in the presence of distinguished guests, community leaders, and local residents.

Located within the premises of the All Ceylon Hindu Congress Vanni Office, the Ariyaththai Traditional Vegetarian Restaurant will serve quality fresh traditional Tamil



entrepreneurs and small-scale producers.

Through these initiatives, CTC aims to strengthen local livelihoods by creating economic opportunities for female-headed households and economically vulnerable families in the region. The Made in Mullaitivu outlet is the second sales centre established under CTC’s initiative to support and promote local producers.

The event took place under the chairmanship of Mullaitivu District Secretary Mr. A. Umamaheswaran, while Governor Hon. N. Vethanayagan attended as the Chief Guest.

Several distinguished guests attended the ceremony, including Hon. Dr. Sai Murali, Deputy Consul General of India in Jaffna; Mrs. Abirami Kailasapillai, President of the All Ceylon Hindu Congress; Mr. Danton Thurairajah, Executive Director of the Canadian Tamil Congress; Mr. Thushyanthan Rajalakshmi Thurairatnam, Coordinator of Humanitarian Projects at CTC; Mr. Nishanthan, Divisional Secretary of Oddusuddan; and Mr. Vijayakumar, Divisional Secretary of Puthukudiyiruppu. Representatives of the All Ceylon Hindu Congress, including Vice President Mr. Thanabala, Deputy Vice President Dr. Aaru Thirumurugan, Secretary Mr. Kandhasamy, and Treasurer Mr. Kuselakumar, also participated in the ceremony. Members and supporters of the Canadian Tamil Congress,



vegetarian cuisine to the public and to pilgrims who travel through this important spiritual location. Alongside the restaurant, the “Made in Mullaitivu” outlet will promote and sell products made by local



COMMUNITY WATCH



district entrepreneurs, community representatives, and members of the public joined the event and marked the occasion. Delivering the welcome address, Mr. Thushyanthan Rajalakshmi Thurairatnam acknowledged that the project became possible through the generous contributions of the Canadian Tamil diaspora community. He expressed

heartfelt gratitude to the donors whose support helped bring the initiative to life.

During his remarks, Mullaitivu District Secretary Mr. A. Umamaheswaran expressed confidence that the “Made in Mullaitivu” initiative could grow into a widely recognized brand, similar to the global reputation of “Made in Japan.” Mr. Piratheepan

Sothilingam, Executive Member of the North East Economic Development Centre delivered the vote of thanks.

Through this initiative, CTC expects many female-headed households and local entrepreneurs to benefit from new economic opportunities. We invite travelers along the A9 highway to visit the Ariyaththai Traditional vegetarian Restaurant and the Made in Mullaitivu



sales outlet, and to support the products created by local producers. The Canadian Tamil Congress remains committed to supporting sustainable economic development in Tamil majority regions and looks forward to the continued support of the community in advancing similar initiatives.



THE COST OF WAR COMES TO THE KITCHEN

By: Visvalingam Muralithas

The opening week of March 2026 was marked by a sharp divergence between global instability and domestic resilience. While the Gulf conflict has sent shockwaves through energy markets, Sri Lanka's internal fiscal indicators remained stable, bolstered by high liquidity and a flourishing tourism industry. However, the crisis has now transcended geopolitics to become a "kitchen-table" issue; beyond the macroeconomic data of reserves and indices, energy-driven inflation is directly eroding the purchasing power of the average household.

Inflation

The most immediate transmission of the war is felt through Cost-Push Inflation, where rising production and logistics costs force prices upward across the board. As global crude prices breached the \$100-per-barrel threshold, Sri Lanka's market-linked pricing formula triggered a sharp domestic increase on March 9, pushing Petrol 92 to Rs. 317 and Auto Diesel to Rs. 303.

This surge creates a significant Transport Multiplier effect. Since diesel is the lifeblood of national logistics, the hike has an immediate "pass-through" impact on the economy. From transporting highland vegetables to Colombo to moving wholesale goods into the provinces, rising freight costs are forcing retailers to hike shelf prices simply to maintain their razor-thin margins—effectively bringing the cost of global conflict directly to the kitchen table.

The Kitchen Staples

The household budget is being squeezed by a simultaneous rise in energy and essential food items, creating a compounding effect on the cost of living. Following global LNG price spikes, the cost of a 12.5kg LPG cylinder increased by Rs. 300 to Rs. 3,990, adding a direct

monthly burden to urban households.

Simultaneously, a "Protein Crisis" is emerging in the poultry industry. As a sector highly sensitive to transport and imported feed costs, the rise in logistics is driving up prices for chicken and eggs, making the most accessible animal proteins less affordable for middle-income families. Furthermore, the fishing industry faces severe disruption, as high kerosene and diesel costs keep coastal fishing boats at the docks. This reduction in maritime activity has led to a shortage of fresh fish in local markets, triggering a secondary spike in prices that further strains the "kitchen economy."

Purchasing Power

The "silent" victim of this conflict is the Real Wage. Even if nominal salaries remain stable, their actual purchasing power is collapsing under the weight of imported inflation. This creates a dangerous ripple effect across the social landscape:

- **Poverty Line Rise:** In January 2026, the official poverty line reached Rs. 16,730 per person. With the March energy shock and the subsequent surge in transport costs, this threshold is expected to climb even further. This shift risks pushing thousands of borderline families into "multidimensional poverty," where they lack not just income, but also access to basic nutritional standards.

- **Malnutrition Risks:** As families can no longer afford chicken, fish, or eggs, they are forced to pivot toward cheaper, starch-heavy diets. Nutritionists warn that this widening "protein gap" could lead to a spike in acute malnutrition. This is particularly concerning for the 2.3 million children already identified as vulnerable by UNICEF, as a diet lacking in essential proteins can have long-term developmental consequences.

Summary of the "Kitchen Economy" Crisis

Economic Indicator	Impact Trend	Social Consequence
Real Wages	Declining sharply	Reduced household savings and spending
Poverty Line	Rising above Rs. 16,730	Increase in "New Poor" urban populations
Dietary Balance	Shifting to Starches	Increased risk of acute malnutrition

A Fragile Balance

Sector	Indicator	Value / Change
Real Sector	Brent Crude Price	>\$80/bbl (+\$13.87 WoW)
	Headline Inflation (NCPI - Jan)	2.4%
	Headline Inflation (CCPI - Feb)	1.6%
External	Gross Official Reserves	US\$ 7,284 Million
	Monthly Remittances (Feb)	US\$ 729.0 Million
	Monthly Tourist Arrivals (Feb)	279,328

The Gulf conflict has created a "Dual Chokepoint"—disrupting both the energy we import and the tea we export. While the recent IEA release of 400 million barrels of oil provides some global relief, the domestic "cost of war" remains high. For Sri Lanka, the challenge in the coming months will be shielding the most vulnerable from a crisis that began in the oil fields of the Middle East but is ending in the kitchen.

Economic Performance Summary: Mid-March 2026

Conclusion

Sri Lanka enters mid-March with a strong liquidity position and a recovering external sector. However, the primary challenge in the coming weeks will be navigating the "imported" volatility from the energy sector. If the Strait of Hormuz remains closed and oil prices continue their upward trajectory, policymakers may need to monitor the potential pressure on the trade balance and domestic production costs closely.

Writer

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



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SHN Excellence: Delivering results that matter to Scarborough

Scarborough Health Network (SHN) is operating at a new level of high performance, and that progress has been made possible by the people who care for patients and the community every day.

Over the past several years, SHN staff have shown an unwavering commitment to quality, safety, and innovation, finding better ways to deliver care in a health-care environment that continues to grow more complex. Their focus on doing the right thing for patients has led to meaningful improvements across SHN hospitals and, most importantly, better outcomes for the people they serve.

Because of this dedication to quality and continuous improvement, SHN has become the top-performing hospital system in Ontario for lowest hospital harm rate, a key measure of preventable harm during a hospital stay. All three SHN hospitals now rank among the top four performers in the Greater Toronto Area and teaching hospital sector. That same commitment has helped SHN achieve second-best performance among peers for Emergency Department length of stay for non-admitted patients, driven by more efficient assessment, treatment, and discharge.

Equally important is how patients experience their care. The compassion, professionalism, and patients-first mindset demonstrated by staff every day have enabled SHN to achieve the highest



Emergency Department patient experience score among its peers.

This reflects the countless moments of connection, communication, and care that happen on the front lines and shape how patients and families experience SHN hospitals. These results are supported by a strong workplace culture that values growth, recognition, wellness, and belonging. Staff engagement in this culture has contributed to SHN consistently maintaining low job vacancy rates, an important indicator of workforce stability and a reflection of SHN as a place *Where the World Comes to Work*.

Progress has also been strengthened by the support and involvement of staff, physicians, volunteers, and community members in the *Love, Scarborough* campaign.

Their collective commitment has helped raise a historic \$200 million in the campaign's first phase, bringing new facilities and

equipment to SHN hospitals, including the Community Mental Health Centre and the Northpine Diagnostic Imaging Department. While there is pride in how far SHN has come, the work continues.

The next phase of fundraising is now underway to support the Scarborough Health Centre of Excellence, advances in cardiac care, and the redevelopment of Birchmount Hospital.

These achievements are the result of strong teams, intentional leadership, and the daily efforts of people who put patients first.

Together, with continued community and donor support, SHN is building a stronger, more equitable health network—ensuring families receive world-class care, right here in Scarborough.



One patient's overnight dialysis routine and the gaps in kidney screening it reveals

BY: MELODY KESHISHIAN, COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST, SHN

Maureen Skeete spends three nights each week at Scarborough Health Network (SHN) General Hospital, receiving overnight hemodialysis from 10:30 p.m. to 5:30 a.m.—a life-sustaining treatment that filters her blood and does the work her kidneys no longer can.

Born in Barbados, Maureen moved to Canada in 2005 to begin a new chapter. She managed high blood pressure for years, not realizing it could be a sign that her kidneys were gradually declining. By the time she was diagnosed, her kidney disease had already progressed to near end-stage, and she required dialysis almost immediately. The shift was sudden as overnight treatments, strict schedules, and the emotional weight of living with chronic illness became part of her daily reality.

“Dialysis becomes part of your life,” Maureen shared. “You plan around it and sometimes feel like it interrupts your life, but you also learn that you’re stronger than you think.”

Maureen came to SHN to begin dialysis, a journey that unexpectedly placed her at the heart of an important discovery. Her experience reflected a troubling pattern that nephrologist Dr. Tabo Sikaneta had been observing—certain immigrant and ethnic groups in Scarborough were appearing more frequently among patients with kidney failure. When Maureen agreed to take part in his study, she did not just



Maureen receiving dialysis at SHN General Hospital

contribute to vital research; she gained life-changing insight. Through the process, she learned how people like her are often diagnosed too late, and how earlier, more regular screening could make all the difference.

SHN’s Regional Nephrology Program, the largest of its kind in Ontario, supports thousands of patients across every stage of kidney disease, from early diagnosis to dialysis and transplant coordination. For patients like Maureen, that means coordinated, specialized care close to her Scarborough home.

Over time, dialysis has become part of her rhythm. She brings what she needs—books, music, her phone charger—for the long overnight sessions and greets familiar staff and fellow patients. The unit, once intimidating, now feels like a community.

Maureen is currently on the transplant waiting list and remains hopeful about the future.

“I’m feeling better now than when I first started thanks to the support from my family and my care team at SHN,” she said. “It takes adjustment, but you learn how to live well with it.”

Initiated in 2018 and led by SHN nephrologist Dr. Tabo Sikaneta, a study published in *BMJ Open* in December 2025 found that immigrants from regions including the Caribbean face a significantly higher risk of end-stage kidney disease. Country of birth was a stronger predictor of dialysis risk than ethnicity, with individuals from the Caribbean, the Philippines, and Sri Lanka six to 12 times more likely to receive dialysis than Canadian-born residents. For Maureen, the findings were eye-opening, as she was unaware of her elevated risk before diagnosis. Dr. Sikaneta noted that her journey reflects both the challenges of advanced kidney disease and the importance of supporting patients through treatment, education, and care.

These insights are informing more proactive kidney screening at SHN to identify patients earlier, when simple tests and lifestyle changes can slow progression.

Today, Maureen expresses gratitude for her care and encourages others—especially those with high blood pressure or diabetes—to speak with their doctor about screening.

Where I Was Born. Where I Fell in Love. Where I Beat Testicular Cancer. Andre Thurairatnam's Journey Through Scarborough Care



From premature birth to cancer remission, Andre's life has been shaped by Scarborough Health Network. Today, he stands as both a survivor and a face of Love, Scarborough.

Pneumonia as a newborn? **Treated at a Scarborough hospital.** First surgery at five years old? **Tonsils removed at a Scarborough hospital.** Broke his first bone playing football in high school? **X-rays done at a Scarborough hospital.**

Andre Thurairatnam was born five weeks premature at Centenary Hospital, which meant from the very start he was already receiving special care from the doctors and nurses in the Scarborough Health Network.

In his 20s, he was diagnosed with a serious autoimmune disorder called **ulcerative colitis**. He spent a week as an inpatient under the care of Centenary's digestive diseases unit in 2015, then another week just a year later when the disease came out of remission.

Ten years ago, he was studying as a Master's student at Western University when his ulcerative colitis came out of remission. It happened so quickly: one day he was in a lecture hall in London, and the next he was hooked up to an IV at Centenary Hospital in Scarborough.

He had just started dating someone new in London, and even though it had only been a few months, he knew there was something special about her. When she found out he was hospitalized, she insisted she come and visit him in the hospital. That woman, Jacqueline, is now his wife and they've just celebrated 10 incredible years together.

Years later, he faced the toughest battle of his life—**testicular cancer**. In March 2024, Centenary Hospital

was where he got the news that would change everything: he had cancer.

Dr. Zachary Klinghoffer, Urologic Surgeon at SHN, performed the surgery to remove the primary tumour. He was referred to a Toronto cancer centre and began three long rounds of chemotherapy.

Chemo was the single worst experience he's ever had in his life. Finally, after three rounds, he rang the bell. The very next morning, he was back in the hospital with chemo-induced kidney failure. Weeks of recovery followed, and chemo unfortunately hadn't worked.

In July 2025, he got his first post-surgical scan results: he is officially in remission. He made it to the summit. Despite the overwhelming odds against them after his cancer treatments, he and Jacqueline has **welcomed their first child together in March 2026.**

To Andre, Scarborough Health Network means more than medical treatments—they've been his lifeline through the toughest climbs of his life.

Support grateful patients like Andre, and help us keep climbing.



LoveScarborough.ca



SPECIAL FEATURE

A DAY OF INFAMY - APRIL 21ST, 2019, EASTER SUNDAY AND MY PERSONAL PERSPECTIVE

By: Kane Siva

Statement of Purpose

It does not address the tragic loss of life in places of worship on that day. This is purely an exercise to portray and profess the faith I have placed at this holy place of worship, a great sanctuary for people of all faiths, a place of interfaith in Sri Lanka and around the world. For some, in times of distress, agony, ailments, and at other times, but for the most faithful, it is a regular ritual of prayers whether it is sunshine, rain, thunderstorm, tsunami, sandstorm, snowstorm, or minus 25 degrees Celsius — they will go to this place of worship. People may ask what prompted me to pen this after almost seven years; I never thought of it. Maybe it was an urge from my inner self, for an unknown reason, to proclaim what this place meant to many globally and in Sri Lanka.

First and foremost, I would like to emphasize that this statement does not serve as an analysis of the causes of the event, any parties involved, or potential motivations.

Personal Background

Please let me start this write-up with a little side of myself. I was born a Hindu. My late father was a 3-bar captain, had three stripes of holy ash, Vee-poothy on his forehead, and performed a ritual called "Theedshai." He was an on-and-off vegetarian, mostly for all the temple festivals, and Fridays were always a mandatory vegetarian day for all of us. He was a hereditary trustee of our Hindu Temple in Suthumalai, Manipay, and I am still one of the trustees. I was educated in a British Methodist College, Jaffna Central, from KG onwards. At our school, before the start of our classes, all students had to be at the Chapel for morning prayers and hymns, regardless of religion, up to grade 5. I continued my studies in this college until I sat for my first University Entrance College examinations. I left



Central in 1968 and joined Aquinas University College, Borella, Colombo, in 1969 to prepare for the second try for medical college entrance examinations. A batchmate of mine one day took me to this place of worship at Kochi Kaddae, called St. Anthony's Church. I marveled at the sight of the people at this place of worship. I saw people of all faiths at this place, pouring out their worries, seeking St. Anthony's intercession for ailments, difficulties, and many other issues. I have heard stories from many people of their faith at this shrine, St. Anthony's.

Devotion to St. Anthony's Church

After some time, I started to visit this church on any day, especially on a Tuesday, as Tuesday is St. Anthony's day. This practice continues to this day; whatever the weather conditions, I never miss praying at a St. Anthony's church, in whatever part of the world I am, on a Tuesday.

History shows that this church was founded by a Franciscan priest, Anthony Kochchiar, a Goan priest. Goa was under Dutch rule until 1961, and during Dutch persecution, Catholic church practices in Goa were banned. The church was built as a mud chapel at this location, rebuilt in 1828, consecrated in 1834, and

enlarged in 1938. The church houses a revered statue of St. Anthony of Padua. It is said to hold a small piece of St. Anthony's incorrupt tongue in a special reliquary. This shrine is a well-known landmark in Sri Lanka and known as the "Church of Miracles," and of the poor. The shrine serves greatly as a shrine of interfaith mellifluousness for all: Catholics, Hindus, Buddhists, Christians, and Muslims. This is the great significance of this Holy Shrine.

Easter 2019: Personal Experience

Let me share my experience, journey, involvement, and significance regarding the above date and day in 2019. I arrived in the country in January 2019 from Toronto to stay for five months, since I had some property matters to attend to. I was alone, as my wife could not join me because our daughter's university final examinations were due soon. On the evening of the April 20th, I walked into a bakery at Wattala, where I had a rental apartment, and requested the owner to keep 100 bread buns for Sunday, April 21st morning, paid a deposit of 500 rupees, since I wanted to take them to the poor people outside this church compound on Easter Sunday. In the morning, I went to the bakery to collect the buns and proceed to the church to be there at 8:15 am. The baker said, "Sir, I entirely forgot to keep the bread buns for you," and I was upset, angry, and disappointed that I could not be at the church to give these buns and pray on that day. I resolved to be there on Tuesday, the April 23rd, and would give the buns to the poor on that day, heading straight to my property at Jaela.

While cleaning up my land around 9:45 am, one of my good friends, T.T. Tennakoon, called and wanted to know where I was. When I told him, he was relieved and said, "Brother, I thought you

SPECIAL FEATURE



would be at St. Anthony's church," and urged me to go back to my apartment at Wattala immediately and call him. I booked an Uber vehicle and, while going home, the driver described what happened at the two churches and other places. I was shocked and stunned to hear what he was saying. I called my wife in Toronto and informed her of the terrible news; she was upset and thanked God that I was prevented from harm but mourned for those less fortunate. The world leaders, church society, and all religious leaders expressed grief and sadness at this carnage on the holiest day in a church. I cried several times, thanking God that my life was spared, but was devastated by what happened to the poor faithful.

My wife called me the next day, Monday the April 22nd, and requested that I not visit St. Anthony's Church on Tuesday, April 23rd. I assured her I would not. But on the April 23rd morning, I woke up at 5 am, had a shower, and proceeded to Kochi Kade, wearing my usual attire, shorts and hat, carrying my Canadian passport and leaving all Sri Lankan documents behind. Security officials questioned me before allowing me to reach a security barrier about 100 yards from the main entrance to the church. I stood there for more than an hour, prayed, and cried for the lives lost and the damage done to the beloved holy shrine I had been visiting for over 50 years. I was distraught and devastated after seeing the damage. But every Tuesday, I went to this church and prayed from the roadside perimeter until I returned to Toronto in June 2019.

Faith and Miracles

My attachment to this church dates to 1969 and has reinforced my belief in this miraculous church ever since, even though I was not born in the Christian religion. I would like to share three incidents that strengthened my faith in this Holy Sanctum. In 2003, while coming home from work around midnight in Houston, someone appeared from nowhere, pointed a gun at my head, and demanded all my money. I said, "St. Anthony," and fortunately, he did not harm

me, took my money, and let me go. Again, in 2010, I faced a similar situation in Houston, said "Anthonyiar," and my life was saved. In 2016, I tripped and fell on the carpet of my outdoor house in Houston at 11pm. I was alone; my family was in Toronto. The owners of the property were on vacation in Europe, the gates operated electronically with a remote, and



the keys with the remote were hanging on the wall. I was on the floor with a broken leg, unable to get up or call emergency services, my family, or friends. I passed out twice and peed twice on the carpet, crying and calling St. Anthony's name and praying. After four hours, some force built up in me to drag myself to the sofa, reach the keys, and call 911, my family, and a friend. I still cannot believe how I managed it or what force helped me. I would say this was made possible through St. Anthony's help. The same day, I was operated on at Memorial Herman Hospital and had a metal rod inserted from hip to knee. On the third day, my wife and son flew to Houston and brought me home to Toronto. I had to stop working as my family wished. Looking back, I still cannot understand how I survived without the great blessing of St. Anthony.

These incidents have always strengthened my devotion, belief, sanctity, and the miraculous ways of this Deity. As we welcome another Holy Easter Sunday this month, I thought it was the

most appropriate moment and time to say a few words about this miraculous church. I am not writing for any reason or to convince anyone to visit this place of worship, just to describe my unshakable belief, and the attachment many others have to this miraculous place, irrespective of the religion they were born into. Every year when I visit Sri Lanka, my first stop from the airport is at this Church for two minutes, and when I depart, I stop for two minutes before heading to the airport.

Reflections and Final Thoughts

I still cannot comprehend why this place of worship, along with two other churches, was chosen for this heinous act in our lifetime. These are sad and unpardonable acts against churchgoers. The two photos were taken on April 23rd, 2019, with my cell phone from the closest proximity I was allowed; people can see the clock struck at 8:45 am, the actual time the explosion rocked the church.

My only prayer: St. Anthony, please have mercy on these people who carried out these attacks since they were misguided, but not on those behind this most treacherous, monstrous, heinous, and atrocious crime.

One last thought, want to quote what late US President, Richard Nixon's famous, poignant advice was, when he was forced to resign, "Always remember, others may hate you, but those who hate you don't win unless you hate them, and then you destroy yourself".

Before my pen dries love to say this, a quote I read by, Dear Abby, (Pauline Phillips) "Prayer is not necessarily in fluency of speech, not in painted imagery, not in deep thoughts, not in burning words, not in the length and breadth and fullness of petition, Prayer is something more: It is the wish of the heart and expression of the dear Soul".

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AVIATION AND FEATHERED FRIENDS INSPIRATION FROM SONG AND HISTORY

By: Kane Siva

Reflecting on my school days in Jaffna, I vividly remember the profound influence of a well-known Tamil song. The lyrics resonated deeply with me, and I found myself singing it frequently. This song left such a strong impression that it ultimately inspired the title of this piece. Its impact on my thinking and the direction of my writing cannot be overstated; it served as a guiding force throughout the creative process.

The song's lyrics, "Parawyai Kandan, Vee-manam Padaithan," translate to, "Man saw the bird and inspired by it, made airplanes." This message holds true and is a testament to the inspiration behind many advancements in aviation. The Wright Brothers, Wilbur and Orville of Ohio, are prime examples; their fascination with birds contributed significantly to their successful achievement of the first powered flight, even though it lasted only a few moments.

This idea is further reinforced by the legacy of Leonardo da Vinci (1452–1519), a visionary in the field of aviation. Historical records show that Leonardo da Vinci was one of the earliest pioneers in designing flying machines. Between the 1480s and 1490s, he produced more than a hundred drawings and diagrams, carefully studying the anatomy of birds and bats. By observing how these creatures achieved flight, da Vinci applied their principles to his inventions, which included both fixed-wing concepts and early designs resembling rotor-type machines, such as helicopters. His work provided a logical foundation for future advancements in aviation, demonstrating how nature's designs inspired human innovation. It is fitting to refer to Leonardo da Vinci as the "father of aviation," as he envisioned the possibility of human flight nearly five centuries before it became a reality—all from observing the graceful movements of birds in the sky.

It occurred to me that it is worth mentioning classic Greek mythology, of Daedalus and his son when imprisoned by King Minos of Crete, began to think, what if they could escape by flying away like birds. The story says, Daedalus crafted bird-like wings made of feathers and wax and managed to fly out of the prison. Icarus had an unfortunate ending since he did not listen to his father's advice, and his father survived. This story shows the inspiration of human flight because of feathered friends.

Flying advanced quickly thanks to the Wright Brothers' determination. Birds are natural pilots. I remember reading, cannot recollect the title, that Wright Brothers got interested in watching little Buzzard's flying and inspired by its flight mode and modulations.

Man inspired by birds, designed and built aircraft with different wing design, and with an extension called winglet, curved upward or vertically, for greater fuel efficiency, to maximize the operational



range, and thereby reducing the aerodynamic drag. Birds have taught us the aerodynamics of flight and are the great masters of flight. The credit goes to birds' anatomy and their God given feathers for the new advancement in aircraft design and aerospace programs. Birds' anatomy enabled scientists, aerodynamic engineers and industry experts to produce commercial and military aircraft with more speed, fuel efficiency and less noise. All kinds of feathered friends influenced the design of aircraft including Honeybees which inspired man to build Helicopters. The close connection of bird's anatomy and aircraft design is greatly explained in a study called "Bio-mimicry or biologically inspired engineering which is providing aircraft engineers with invaluable insight on how to design lighter and more fuel-efficient aircraft. It is worth mentioning that this technology was used in Japan to design Bullet trains. Shinkansen trains have been designed, with a nose, shaped like a Kingfisher's beak, to reduce noise and increase speed.

Modern Innovations Inspired by Birds

October 28, 2024 news item on media proclaimed this, quote "Bird's wings inspire new approach to flight safety". Princeton University Engineering students' innovative approach to flight safety, inspired by bird feathers, these students found that adding rows of flaps to a remote-controlled aircraft's wings improves flight performance and helps prevent stalling of the aircraft. Quoting the research paper "Aimy Wissa, assistant professor of mechanical and aerospace engineering published their findings, quote "The flaps mimic a group of feathers, called covert feathers, that deploy when birds perform certain aerial maneuvers, such as landing or flying in a gust. Further, engineering studies have investigated covert-inspired flaps for improving engineered wing performance but have mostly neglected that birds have multiple rows of covert feathers. Girguis Sedky, the lead author of this research said, this "Covert-inspired flaps technique for improving engineered wing performance, is an easy and cost-effective way to improve flight performance without additional power requirements. The researchers are highly convinced and

proved that this technique will prevent the stall and the safety of the flight. The paper, "Distributed feather-inspired flow control mitigates stall and expands flight envelope" was an inspiration from birds' feathers, was published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences October 2024.

Birds, Aviation, and the Modern Challenge

The close connection and association of birds with aviation, however, got fractured because of ecological, environmental challenges and global climatic changes. It is sad to read that birds have been classified as "a menace" and danger to aviation, and cannot dispute this characterization, but what caused this is unexplainable and sad. As global air traffic increases, atmospheric pollution and noise continue to rise and make feathered friends to move out of their favorite habitat in search of food, cozy and quiet places to build their nests, breed. Also, global warming and weather elements still make birds to move in flocks or in small numbers around the globe. Ornithologists will have a clear explanation for birds' migration. Migration of birds in large numbers or in small formation poses a real threat and hazard for aviation. Experts estimate it costs the airlines a huge amount of economic downturn financially besides causing severe damage to the aircraft. Analysts say it costs almost over 1.3 billion dollars annually and over 20,000 incidents. The exact figure is hard





to say but would easily tip the scale towards this. Birds pose a significant and realistic air safety concern for airlines. We have read birds get sucked into the engines causing severe damage, costing millions, leaving big holes in the nose, fuselage or the wings, in some cases damage to the windshield of the aircraft. Birds of any size and weight create major headaches for airlines and at times fatal accidents. Canadian Geese, Starlings, and Vultures are considered the most dangerous birds mainly because of their size, weight and their flocking behavior. It has been proved that a bird weighing 15-lbs at 250 knots has a high-impact force of 57,000 lbs. or more. We can imagine or understand the damage to the aircraft caused by this impactful force. This kind of external force can and will cause structural and engine damage. The following areas are exposed to this impactful damage: Engines, windshields, fuselage and wings.

The deadliest bird strike air crash was on October 4, 1960, an Eastern Airlines Flight 375 that crashed on take-off from Logan International Airport, Boston soon after it took-off, killing 62 people and ten survived with injuries. After this deadly



crash, various measures were taken by airlines and airports globally to prevent and minimize birds' strike incidents and accidents. But whatever the measures adopted by the people concerned, birds' strikes continue unabatedly. The most memorable and dramatic bird strike incident was in 2009 January 15th, on the rivers of Hudson, a US Airways Flight 1549, from New York LaGuardia to Charlotte & Seattle in the US, shortly after takeoff, reported both engine failure, flock of Canadian Geese got sucked into the Airbus, A320, both engines. Given the circumstances and the proximity of the alternate airports, Capt. "Sully" Sullenberger decided in conformity with copilot Jeffrey Skiles, informed the ATC, "We are going down to Hudson" and proceeded with his vast flying experience to glide the aircraft gently, ingeniously, and safely on the Hudson. Capt. "Sully's", presence of mind and the swift action he performed, saved the lives of 150 passengers, 5 crew and the best part, the aircraft was in intact without major structural damage. Reflecting on this incident my personal perspective, I was getting ready to go for work in the afternoon, in Houston, while watching Houston ABC channel 13 as a habit, and was blessed to see this landing by Capt. Sully, and was awestruck, and thanked God. Then Governor of New York State, David Patterson, described this unbelievable event "A Miracle on the

Hudson" and this landing etched a name in the History of Aviation, as the most successful ditching ever in water.

Measures to Mitigate Bird Hazards

Various airports globally have developed and adopted various measures to combat bird hazards for aviation. Most bird collisions happen at low altitude during takeoff and landing, 75% under 500 feet and 90% mostly on takeoff. Airlines and airports have developed so many different methods to scare birds away but without complete success. Airport operators practiced many different methods to control or prevent bird menace. The key factors/components include so many techniques.

Habitat management: This is a vast arena, making the water resources less attractive, draining the ponds around airport vicinity, cutting the long grass to prevent birds nesting, prevent marshiness, predatory worms, rodents and other bird feed insects along the runway. Some airports use chemicals to prevent growth of green vegetation around the runway and the land mass. Also, they use different chemicals to prevent the breeding of worms and other insects that attract migrating birds to prey on.

Pyrotechnics is used to scare birds away from airports with cartridge launchers or flaring guns. Bio-acoustic mimicry and distress call broadcasts are used to deter birds. Using laser lights, kites, balloons, firearms, sirens and explosives to scare birds away. **Biological control:** use of trained owls, Eagle raptors or dogs to chase birds away. It is sad some airports and operators use poison gas or bullets to kill birds. In the US, USDA, Wildlife Services, which coordinates majority of lethal bird control measures, estimates more than 160,000 birds killed in 2008 to prevent hazards to aircraft.

Hudson River incident, Canadian wild geese flocks, intensified the efforts to control birds in airports vicinity. A new radar technology is used to cull birds, to alert air traffic control, when high volume of birds is seen at airport area. One source says there are few takers to use avian radar technology. It is said that FAA approved use of avian radar as a supplementary tool in addition to the established bird-control methods. King Shaka airport in South Africa became the first airport to use the avian radar, to control birds menace. Avian radar technology has been proved highly effective; it increases the safety of aircraft and thus minimizes the collision of birds with aircraft. Experts say it can detect 50 times more birds than by human observers. Experts confirm the radars detect the size, altitude, speed and the flight path. The radar range is almost 3 to 6 nautical miles. Only concern is the small birds, or single birds may go unnoticed. JFK, O'Hare & Schiphol are some of the airports that use this radar and have been pleased with the outcome. Canada, Vancouver uses and Toronto Pearson in 2020, got 2 of these radars installed and their efficacy proven beyond reasonable doubt. This technology continues to develop, and it could eventually become the best tool for keeping birds safe from danger while also protecting aviation from potential hazards.



A saying goes like this "good things are no cheap and cheap things are not good", these avian radar's price ranges from 500,000 to 1.5 million dollars and it is still worth installing them at all the airports irrespective of the cost factor.

Many aviation consultants and airport management experts offer five reasons to employ the services of avian radar to combat bird hazards. Liability issues are minimal, radar technology provides the right and most accurate data to mitigate bird strikes, time is an essence to act, and avian radar provides the fastest time.

Avian radar functions 24/7 and can learn from the past to avoid the same mistake.

The Future: Finding Harmony

Bird hazards are a real grave concern and headache for airport builders, architects and planners. February 25th, 2026, London Daily Telegraph had a news item: "Heathrow third runway will increase the threat of bird strikes" a warning from Ministry of Defense. I am sure, CAA and Heathrow authorities will go ahead with the 3rd runway expansion project but will take major initiative steps to prevent bird hazards. Birds are Birds and fly in their own world without being any harm to humanity. But we have significantly antagonized their way of life by depriving their livelihood, habitats, creating biggest and boomeranging noises, their comfort zones, causing untold misery and harm, and as a result, birds started moving from one country to another, continent to continent, migration in large numbers. This migration is a big hazard to aviation. There are some birds flying in the jet stream, at 33,000 feet, to save energy and time and we should understand even the high altitude is not safe for aviation. 9th of March 2026, surprised by a news item, Times Entertainment, Nature's greatest Flight: Migratory bird flies 13,560 kms non-stop from Alaska to Australia without landing for 11 continuous days, Wow! The Bar-tailed godwit, a shore bird, an incredible feat of nature so far by a feathered friend.

I believe a compromise between Aves (birds), Aviation and Aviators is possible, if we explore more ways to adapt a policy of "Live and let live" may look funny, but I have no other way of summing it up.

Good Luck to Birds and Aviation.



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SPECIAL FEATURE

WORDS OF PEACE

"There is a lamp that shines in the heart of every human being. This is the lamp that needs to shine. In this time of great darkness where people are fighting with their own kind, that lamp needs to shine as brightly as it possibly can."

~ Prem Rawat

If you stay positive in a negative situation, you win.

Prem Rawat

The most magnificent achievement of humankind will be peace on earth.

Prem Rawat

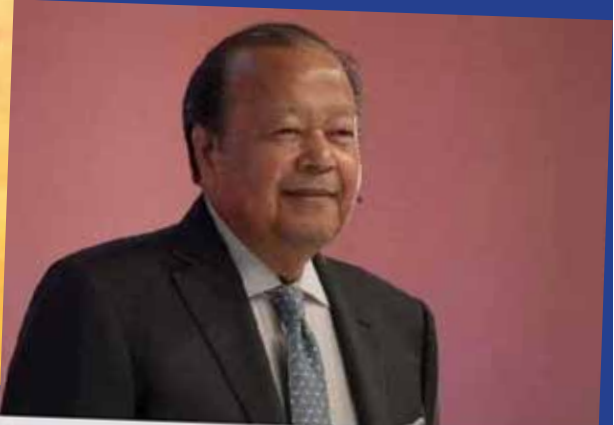
"You find Freedom inside - nowhere else. In the heart of every human being is that one space which is free, which is filled with Peace, and which is full of love."

-Prem Rawat

Happy New Year All My Premies....

"We give attention to our thinking and forget our breathing, embracing the complexity of mind and neglecting the simplicity of breath."

Prem Rawat
from his book, *Hear Yourself*



"A good teacher doesn't perform your instrument or lay down the rhythms of life. You set your own rhythm."

Prem Rawat
from his book, *Hear Yourself*

Quotes from Prem Rawat

"Don't lose hope because of the darkness that you see on the outside. It doesn't represent any power over the light that resides in you."

Prem Rawat

Global Peace Education Day

Sept. 20
Connect with many of the leading voices for peace at this free zoom webinar - at 11am NY time

Global Peace Education Network

<https://globalpeaceeducation.com>



Prem Rawat
World-renowned peace educator and bestselling author. His Peace Education Program helps people in 80 countries discover inner resources for fulfilling lives.

@globalpeaceeducationday

A human heart is a creature who carries in their heart an ocean of love, of kindness, of Light. We all have these qualities somewhere within us.

Love is simple when viewed through the eyes of Love.

Understanding does not change a fact, it changes you.

When the heart is full, it is a wonderful life for the heart, a day got saved, a life time mended.



Awayaar Aruliya

Arunchotkal - 04

By: J A Rajah

1. It is vital to control one's anger/temper.
2. It is not good to reveal your assets or secrets to others.
3. Never covet the things that belong to others.
4. Consider the norms of the world and live in conformity to them
5. Always read valuable books.
6. It is proper to speak considering the wishes of those who hearken to you.
7. It is not good to forget the good things one has done for you.
8. Do anything it is due time.
9. Do not say anything that is not true even if they are attractive.
10. Do not speak highly of your own merits or achievements.

(Based on Aathisoodi)

Avvaiyar statue - Marina Beach, Chennai, India.



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No government of the left has done as much for the poor as **capitalism** has.

Even when it comes to the redistribution of income, the left talks the talk but the **free market** walks the walk.

What do the poor most need? They need to **stop being poor**. And how can that be done, on a mass scale, except by an economy that **creates** vastly more wealth?

Yet the political left has long had a remarkable lack of interest in how wealth is created. As far as they are concerned, wealth exists somehow and the only interesting question is how to **redistribute it**.



Today at the clinic, something happened that I won't forget in my lifetime. An owner brought one of his pet dog for treatments, traveling from a fair distance. But as they arrived, we saw that the dog's mother had followed them, running all the way from home, just to check if her son was okay. My eyes filled with tears. What a beautiful bond. In so many ways, they are far better than us.

Like

Comment

Share

Thulasi Muttulingam 8h · 🌐



M.A. Rothman 23h · 🌐

UN OFFICIAL ADMITS HER CASUALTY NUMBERS CAME FROM TIKTOK AND "TRUST ME BRO"

A journalist asked UN Special Rapporteur Francesca Albanese: *Who were your sources for the casualty numbers?*

Her response: basically nothing. She cited vague reports, activist groups, and **social media**.

This woman's reports are used to **condemn Israel** in international forums. Countries cite her numbers. Activists use them for propaganda.

And her methodology? Nonexistent.

This is why the UN is worthless on Israel. The process is rigged from the start.

No credibility. No accountability. No standards. Just activism masquerading as international law.

Like

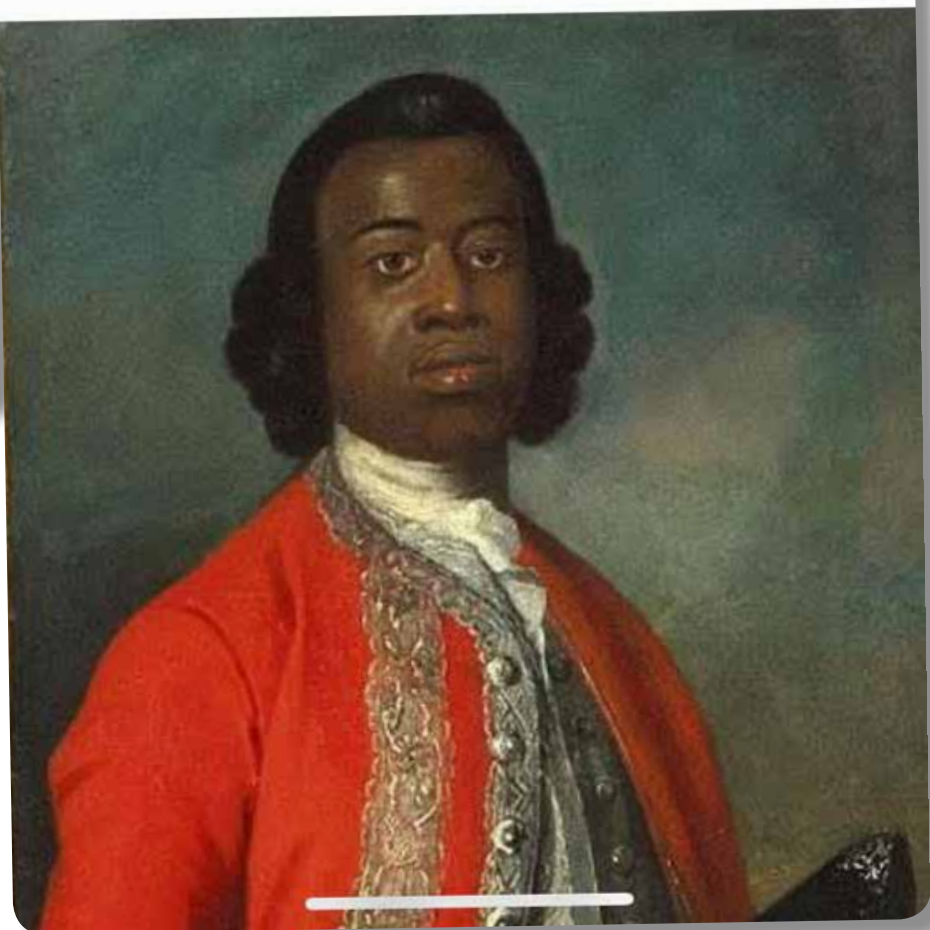
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Eazo Mitchel · Follow

12h · 🌐

When Africans say "we didn't know how bad the slaves were treated in America until it was too late," remind em of William Ansah. A Fante royal from the part of Africa that's now Ghana. His father was a slave trader. His father sent him to Britain for education and diplomatic relations, but he was betrayed and sold into slavery. He was in Barbados for a few years as a slave until he was freed with the help of the British Royal African company. Now with all the atrocities going on in the Americas with slavery, you'd think he'll have a heart since he seen it first hand. Nope. His a** went right back to selling slaves lol f***n scammers. You Africans don't or can't speak for us.



Around 845,000 Jews were expelled from Arab nations since 1948. They didn't like when Jews were living in their countries. Now they can't stand when Jews are living in their own country.

The problem has never been about how or where Jews live, but THAT Jews live.

Short Story

SPECIAL FEATURE



A ROOM WITH FIVE WALLS

(A long story)

Original in Tamil by Daniel Jeeva

English Version by Siva Sinniah



Arasan and Poorveega had only one daughter—Karthika. She was their entire world, their joy, their everything. The little girl who had grown up surrounded by boundless love attempting suicide shattered them like a rock split open. Shock and confusion swallowed them whole. “How could something like this ever happen?” they cried in pain, unable to comprehend why Karthika had wanted to end her life. They had never imagined—not even in their worst dreams—that a child so deeply loved would come to such a decision.

In their married life, Arasan and Poorveega often clashed because each disliked the other’s personal habits. Arguments and quarrels became frequent in their home. In the early days of marriage, Poorveega had been affectionate. But over time, the constant fights pushed them toward the conclusion that divorce was the only solution. By court order, their marriage came to an end. Two people who had once lived as though they were each

other’s very breath now walked away from one another, defeated by fate.

Nearly two years had passed since the divorce. But when they realized that the emotional wounds of that separation had deeply scarred Karthika—and that this pain had driven her to attempt suicide—their hearts broke all over again. The agonizing thought haunted them: “Has our divorce caused a wound so deep in our child’s mind?”

Poorveega’s heart was always filled with concern for her parents. She dreamed of taking her younger brother abroad, of arranging her sister’s marriage, of fulfilling her family’s needs. She believed that if she and Arasan lived together as a family, these dreams could come true.

But Arasan, by nature, was someone who never worried about anything. He had no habit of thinking about the family’s future. He lived without any clear goal or direction. Even during times of financial hardship, he behaved as though nothing was

wrong. He believed life was simply about earning each day and spending each day. Even when going out, he wouldn’t dress properly. No matter how much Poorveega advised him, he never changed. Drinking at night had become a routine for him. Though he never fought with her in anger, he found peace only in drinking alone and falling asleep. Poorveega tolerated these habits for as long as she could.

From the very beginning of their marriage, she had endured silent battles, lonely nights, and unspoken pain. Eventually, she reached a point where she felt that putting an end to all of it was the only way forward.

Her slender figure, slightly long nose and thick lips lined with a soft pink tint together made her face look like a beautifully painted portrait. She was a little tall, and her outward appearance carried a natural charm. Whenever she wore tight pants, the curves of her legs became clearly visible—but she never considered that a flaw. On the contrary, Arasan had heard her proudly and



SPECIAL FEATURE

Short Story

confidently say many times, “I’m more beautiful than the average woman from Jaffna.”

Poorveega was someone who always wore a gentle smile. But her eyes often held a fierce, intense look—like a dog waiting to bite. She herself had noticed that this sharpness in her gaze appeared more frequently during the years she lived with Arasan. Though the initial cause of that harshness was the conflicts that arose between them after moving to Canada, the financial struggles that followed became another major reason. Added to that was the anger she carried from the day she terminated her pregnancy—something she did only because Arasan’s mother insisted on it. That incident planted a deep bitterness within her. From that day on, her eyes lost their softness.

Most of the time, she directed that harshness only toward Arasan, even though she knew very well that she didn’t behave that way with anyone else.

When their marriage finally broke apart, Poorveega chose divorce with the mindset, “Only time can decide whether this decision is right or wrong.” At the same time, she also believed that “The pain caused by divorce will fade away on its own someday.”

Once they both realized that there was no possibility of living together again, they accepted that truth. But that acceptance shattered Karthika’s heart.

When they separated, their main asset—the house—was evaluated at the current market price and divided equally between them. Poorveega paid Arasan for his half and bought the house entirely for herself. After receiving the cheque through the lawyer, he left and went to his mother’s home.

According to the court order, Arasan was allowed to meet his daughter only once a week—on Saturdays. At that time, Karthika was 13 years old. Ever since the divorce, from the age of eleven, her affection for her father had gradually faded.

It was after a severe argument when she was eleven that Arasan left the house. “Left” isn’t the right word—“was sent out” would be more accurate. After that, he was not allowed to enter Poorveega’s house for any reason. This condition was clearly stated in the divorce agreement. But on his visitation days, he would come to Poorveega’s house to pick up Karthika. He would park his car outside, and Karthika would come out and get in. That was the routine.

Whenever he came, Poorveega would stand inside the house, watching through the narrow gap of the door

until Karthika got into her father’s car. She never spoke to Arasan for any reason. Only if something was absolutely necessary would she say a few words—nothing more.

Sometimes, if he arrived late to pick up Karthika, she would stand near the front door, muttering under her breath. She made sure her muttering was loud enough for him to hear. He knew it too. Yet he never reacted. Not once did Poorveega ever think that he might be choosing silence instead of responding.

Poorveega carried heavy family responsibilities. She had to take care of her mother, bring her younger brother to Canada, and find a suitable groom for her sister. These were dreams she could never suppress. She had entered marriage believing that she could fulfill all these dreams by building a life together with her husband. But everything ended in disappointment.

Arasan never interfered in her personal decisions. He would simply say, “That’s her freedom,” and leave it at that. Poorveega, on the other hand, had a very positive outlook. She believed that “life must have a purpose.” From dressing neatly to maintaining her appearance, she paid great attention to everything. She cared about her body just as much as she cared about money.

The income they both earned would be spent entirely on mortgage payments and other necessities. Even when they tried to save a little, her family members would call and within ten minutes the conversation would turn into, “Where is the money?” or “Can you bring us abroad?” Whenever they spoke like that, the thought would rise in Poorveega’s mind: “How can I possibly save anything?”

The main accusation Karthika made about her mother was that she disliked seeing her mother going around and talking with a male friend. She had noticed that whenever her mother was speaking with that man and suddenly saw Karthika nearby, she would immediately switch to talking as though he were just another female friend. Karthika also knew that her mother would hide her phone under the blanket at night and continue talking. She had caught her doing this many times. When she told Arasan about it, he brushed it aside as though it didn’t matter. That man was none other than Sundaram—Arasan’s long-time friend.

Sundaram had become close to Arasan back when they were studying together in Jaffna. They were in the same school, the same class, and Sundaram knew many things about Arasan that he disliked others knowing. Later, Sundaram too migrated to Canada. From the

time he arrived, he remained close to Arasan. But once he began visiting their home frequently, Arasan noticed certain inappropriate behaviours in him. Because of that, he stopped maintaining the friendship and firmly told him not to come to his house anymore. Yet Sundaram continued going around with Poorveega and kept visiting the house. Arasan found himself unable to control the situation.

In a short span of time, Sundaram became very wealthy. He married and brought his wife to Canada. They had three children. Both husband and wife worked and saved a great deal. They bought two houses and two vehicles. His wife also worked, and because both were extremely frugal, they accumulated a large amount of money. They began lending money at interest to people they knew, and through that too, their wealth grew rapidly.

After the separation, Arasan began living at his mother’s house. For the past two months, his mother had been constantly pressuring him to remarry. Whenever she said that marriage must be done at the right time, he would give various excuses and avoid the topic. But this time, he sensed that she was determined to make a decision and would not let it go.

When he mentioned this to Karthika, she said, “Appa, for any reason, I will never let you get married again. I know you don’t want it either. I’ll talk to your mother.” As she promised, Karthika spoke to his mother and temporarily stopped the matter. Arasan was amazed at where Karthika found such courage.

Poorveega often believed that she was not someone who sought physical or emotional pleasure for herself. She always longed for love and affection. She had told Arasan this many times. But he never paid attention, nor did he openly share affection with her. Her life had placed a heavy burden on her shoulders. She never truly wished to marry or come to Canada. She had told her parents this. But because she didn’t want to reject her family—and because of their poverty—she agreed. She believed that coming to Canada would help lift her family into a better life. From the moment she arrived, she worked toward that goal.

She spent every moment wondering how to lighten the burden that weighed on her shoulders. In that constant struggle, where was the time or space for her to show love to him? To show love to someone else, her own mind first needed to be in a place of peace.

Her family, under the illusion of “love,” kept pulling her in only to ask for money. She understood this very well, yet she couldn’t escape

Short Story

SPECIAL FEATURE



that situation. Even while hurting inside, she kept thinking she had to do something for her family.

For someone working two jobs, happiness was always out of reach. Only suffering clung to her. Though she drowned in dreams—"I must somehow bring my brother to Canada, find a good groom for my sister, bring my parents here too"—her daughter was the only comforting presence in her life.

Poorveega spent her days working, then came home exhausted to cook and take care of the house. When night arrived, she would sit near a dim lamp, like a lone figure lit by a tall candle. Only then would she take her phone and scroll through something. This had long been her nightly habit before sleep. Sitting in that soft glow felt as though it revived some forgotten feeling within her. Her eyes would shine like a floating star in the sky. In those moments, she looked breathtakingly beautiful. That was her one peaceful moment of the day. She would enjoy it briefly, and then sleep would take over.

When she entered the bedroom, she would lie down next to Arasan, who would already be asleep. Every night, a desire would rise within her to hold him close. But some inexplicable feeling always stopped her. She had realized during their life together: "He and I can never be in the same emotional place."

For a moment, those thoughts would pass through her mind. She would push aside her longing and quietly fall asleep. Many of her nights slipped away like this.

Later, when the family separated, their main asset—the house—was evaluated at market price and divided equally. She paid him for his half and bought the house for herself. After receiving the cheque through the lawyer, he returned to his mother's home.

Only after he left her house did her mental peace and financial stability begin to change. Just when she started living the way she wanted, a situation arose where she had to take her brother to France. Apart from her savings, she needed a large sum of money. Though she had occasionally borrowed small amounts—100 or 200 dollars—from Sundaram during earlier financial struggles, this time she suddenly asked him for 40,000 dollars. He gave it to her with interest. While giving it, he said, "This isn't my money; it belongs to a friend." But Poorveega didn't believe him. She was certain: "This is his own money."

She had observed him many times during their outings. She had seen firsthand his stinginess and obsession with money during the years she knew

him. She began paying 800 dollars a month as interest on the loan. Only after receiving that money did the close relationship between Sundaram and Poorveega begin.

In the beginning, everything between them went on happily. But after Arasan left the house, Sundaram's frequent visits became something Karthika disliked intensely. Because of that, Karthika slowly began behaving like someone who preferred isolation. Gradually, she changed the course of her life. After returning from school, she would stay inside her room all the time. That isolation eventually pushed her into emotional distress. In the early stages, Poorveega couldn't understand this at all—her workload had increased, and she failed to notice the changes in Karthika's behaviour until much later.

These days, Poorveega often wakes up suddenly in the middle of the night. On many nights, she cries without any reason. Even during the day, she sometimes breaks down. A strange fear and disturbing dreams surround her and terrify her. Unable to escape that fear, her mind begins to falter. "What has really caused all this?" she wonders repeatedly. At times, she feels as though she has done something terribly wrong. Given her current situation, she thinks this might simply be the helplessness of her mind.

Back in her hometown, she had seen and heard of many people being killed. The faces of those murdered would appear in her mind and torment her. Loneliness had become the root of many fears and thoughts. Now she often goes to the bathroom several times at night. Sometimes, when she cries uncontrollably, she kneels beside the bed where Arasan used to sleep and prays. Her prayer feels like she is speaking directly to God, pleading with a trembling heart.

She had always believed that she overcame countless problems in her life through her intelligence. But now—where had that intelligence gone? What had turned her into someone so fearful and fragile? How had she come to a state where she saw herself as a sinner, confessing her sins to God and begging for forgiveness? Without any real reason, she would get angry at Karthika; moments later, that anger would melt into overwhelming love. Why was this happening? Was this her true nature?

She had been adamant about throwing Arasan out of the house. But after he left, why was she now filled with regret, thinking she had made a mistake? She wondered whether Karthika's emotional breakdown

was caused by their divorce. Another thought also occurred to her—that the growing distance between Karthika and her father might be a reason. Whenever she felt that might be the true cause, she wished she could fix it.

But then another question arose: Was her closeness with Sundaram—the man who had become her rescuer, her moneylender, and eventually her lover—the real reason behind all these changes?

Even in difficult situations, she had always been someone who could handle problems with ease. She believed she was naturally intelligent, observant, and capable of understanding the social world around her.

But in recent days, she felt as though she had entered a period of intense crisis. Financial strain, emotional stress—everything seemed to be increasing. She felt drained. Many nights passed without sleep. She had to pay interest on the borrowed money, pay the monthly mortgage, and manage all other expenses. All of this pushed her into deeper distress. In that state, she missed two months of interest payments to Sundaram. Because of that, whenever he spoke to her or visited her house, he began reminding her about the money. Even then, he justified himself, saying the money he had lent her was not his own but borrowed from a friend. No matter how many times he said it, she never believed him.

A deep dislike for him had already begun to grow inside her. The reason was his intrusive behaviour. Whenever someone called her while he was with her, he would immediately ask, "Who's calling you?" He would take her phone, check who had called, and if he saw any male names, he would question her suspiciously: "Who is that?"

When they went out, his behaviour regarding money affected her in many ways. She had seen many people who lent money on interest—though they were greedy, they still had some conscience. But Sundaram was not like that. For him, money was everything.

Even when she was struggling so much, he treated her inability to pay the interest as a major offence. Whenever he came to her house, he never brought anything for her child—not even food or a small chocolate. She would think bitterly, "Such a miser... such a stone-hearted man."

For many days, she deliberately avoided his calls. This angered him. One morning, he came and stood at her doorstep. When Poorveega returned home after dropping her daughter at school, Sundaram was waiting for her inside his car. As soon as he saw her,



SPECIAL FEATURE

Short Story

he got out and followed her into the house.

She sat on the sofa without saying a word. He sat down too. For a few moments, silence hung between them—no words, no movement, only the stillness of light and air.

Breaking that silence, Sundaram asked:

“I called you so many times. Why didn’t you pick up?”

His tone was confrontational. The moment he asked, a poisonous anger rose inside her.

“My husband—who tied the knot on me—never once doubted me. Only you! You’re the one who grabs my phone and snoops through it... If a man’s name

appears, you interrogate me like I’m hiding something. You act as if I know nothing, as if I’m a fool. I tolerated all this for so long—that itself was a big thing for me. Your behaviour is wrong. You treat women terribly. You try to control me far too much. You care more about money than about people. You and I will never match in any way.”

Then, as if some buried truth in her life suddenly rose to the surface, she broke down crying again.

“He... he listened to his mother and made me destroy the child growing in my womb—our first child. He would never say no to her. But I know he is a good man. He is trapped under his mother’s control. She is the one who manipulates him. Out of her anger toward me, she uses him to hurt me. No matter how many times I explain, he never understands. He struggles to see that his mother is the cause of all our problems. I could never pull him away from her control. I know how much he loves our daughter. If anything happens to her, he will come running. He buys everything she needs...”

Then she turned sharply toward Sundaram.

“Have you ever bought even a single piece of chocolate for my child? All you ever think about is your interest money. You’re always calculating, always counting...”

Her anger flared. She unleashed everything she had held back.

“Compared to you—who only cares about money—he is far more capable, far more decent. By the end of this month, I will return your forty thousand dollars and the interest. Come to the Sri Lankan grocery store near the gas station on Sunday at the end of the month. I’ll give you every cent there. Now you can leave my house.” When he remained silent, she repeated: “Get out. From today, there is



no relationship between you and me.”

He quietly stood up and walked toward his car.

She picked up her phone and called Arasan. He answered after just one ring. For a moment, she couldn’t speak.

“What happened? Did something go wrong at your workplace? Or is it about Karthika? Did the school call?” he asked.

Something stirred inside her, and she broke down crying.

“No... the school didn’t call. It’s me. For the past few days, my body and mind haven’t been right. I feel like ending my life... and I’m scared that one day I might actually do it. Only now, slowly, God’s light has begun to fall on Karthika. She’s improving a lot. I believe she will return completely to her old physical and mental state. If we live together again, I believe there’s a strong chance that will happen. Instead of blaming each other for past mistakes... forgetting everything... I’m begging you... can we live together again?”

She said everything in one breath.

Arasan remained silent on the phone, listening.

“Why... why aren’t you saying anything?” she asked.

After thinking for a moment, he said, “If you want it, I’m willing to live with you again. I have no objection. But I have one condition. If you agree to it, I’ll come back to you right now.”

On the other end, Poorveega began thinking intensely.

What condition would he ask?

Would it be about her relationship with Sundaram?

Or would he ask her to stop helping her family?

Whatever it was, she told herself she must agree—for the sake of their child’s future.

“What is it? Tell me,” she asked again.

He came back to himself.

“Tell me... what’s the condition?”

“Nothing big. For any reason, you must never raise your hand against Karthika. If you agree to that, I have no problem.”

She let out a relieved breath.

“Oh... is that all? Of course. I won’t hit her anymore,” she said softly.

After a moment of thought, as if making a sudden decision, she added, “You can come here today itself. I have no problem.”

“Alright, I’ll come today,” he said.

Before he could end the call, she asked in a pleading voice:

“Can you do me a favour?”

“Whatever you need, don’t hesitate to ask,” he replied.

“I urgently need forty thousand dollars. Can you give it to me?”

Before she even finished, he said, “No problem at all. I’ll give it to you. I have a line-of-credit card with a limit of a hundred thousand dollars. I haven’t used a single cent from it. I’ll take it from there and give it to you. You can repay it little by little. Don’t worry about anything.”

She had never expected her request to be fulfilled so easily.

In a broken voice, she said, “That’s a huge help... thank you.”

A thought crossed her mind. She asked:

“After all the cruelty I’ve shown you... how are you able to forget everything and accept me again?”

He laughed gently.

“I can’t explain it fully. But I’ve made many mistakes too. I’ll say just one thing... the love I have for you is the first reason.”

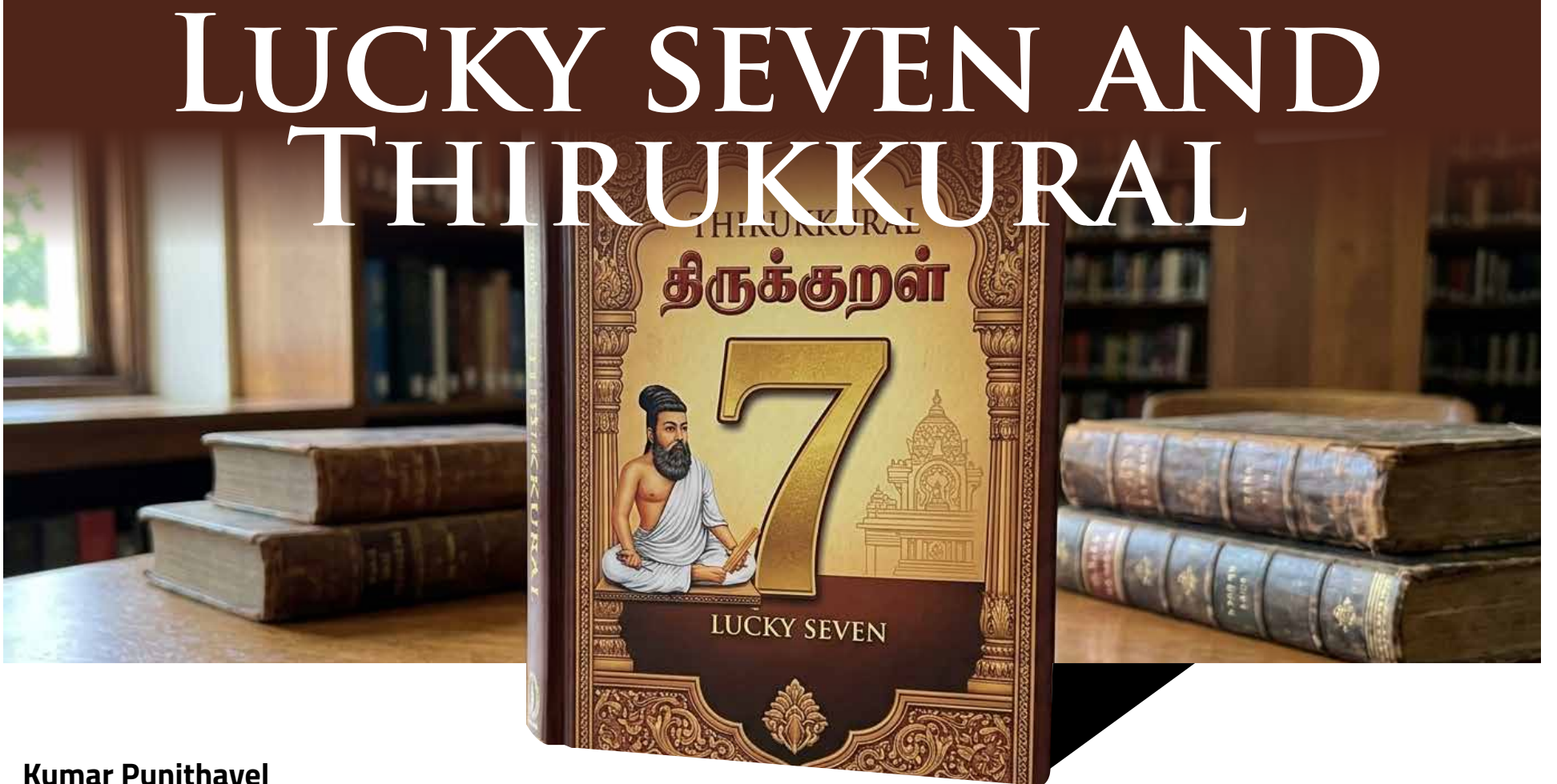
She wondered silently, “Is my husband really such a generous man?”

While she was still lost in thought, he said, “I’ll come to your house this evening after work,” and ended the call.

(The End)



LUCKY SEVEN AND THIRUKKURAL



Kumar Punithavel

We all say 'lucky seven', but never wonder why we do so. I gave little thought why so, and decided to share with you what I found. It has been in different cultures, like as per Bible, God after creation rested on the seventh day, while as per Judaism and Islam mentions about seven heavens. In Hinduism we mention about seven worlds. Among Japanese we mention the Seven Lucky Gods. We also frequently in Tamilian culture mention the Seven ancestors and seven births.

In nature we see seven colours and of course we have seven wonders around the world. We do have seven continents in the world. In music there are seven major notes in the western music, and, in Tamil music too we have seven notes called suram.

Interestingly mathematically seven is a unique number. It is the only prime number among those we can count on our hands (1-10) that cannot be divided or multiplied within the group. One, two, three, and five can each be doubled to reach two, four, six, eight and ten. Nine is divisible by three. Seven, then, is the only number between two and ten that is neither a multiple nor a factor of the others.

Thirukkural stands out alone as a universal book of ethics, which aligns with no race, religion, language, cast or creed. Though I was exposed to it many decades ago, at the dusk of my life now I am astonished by its teaching. It had no professional marketing in the name of religion or any organization. Only benefit by learning it is that this life will be peaceful and calm. To my surprise and astonishment, I found out how much the bard who wrote it, not knowing his name, is given a name by those who benefited. They say Thirukkural was written by

Thiruvalluvar. Browsing through the book to my surprise and astonishment, I found the magical seven is spewed all over the book.

1) To begin with, the great book of virtue is referred to as Thirukkural, meaning in Tamil, in the language it was written, as Holy-couplet for it was composed in couplets. These couplets stored large amounts of knowledge which when time comes, I will explain a very few as an example. These couplets were very condensed, and each couplet had only seven words.

2) The total number of couplets in the whole book were 1330, which again adds up to seven; $1+3+3+0=7$. Here too we see the poet used the number 7.

3) In the whole book he had dealt with 133 subjects in 133 chapters. Interestingly they too add up to seven. $1+3+3=7$.

4) The chapters have been subdivided to three groups excluding the first four chapters as Preface. The preface couplets are 1, Praise of God, 2 The blessing of rain, 3. The merit of ascetics and finally 4. Power of Virtue.

5) The chapters that come under Virtue which are 34. Interestingly they add up to seven. $3+4=7$ thus adding to 7.

6) The second section of the book Thirukkural is wealth. The chapters on wealth comprises seventy, which will add as $7+0=7$.

7) The third section titled as pleasure of love. In it he has had 25 chapters, which again adds up as $2+5=7$.

In two couplets on the first section of virtue bard Thiruvalluvar has quoted 7. Let's take couplet 62 in the chapter on wealth of children;

*Who children gain, that none reproach,
of virtuous worth,
No evils touch them, through the*

seven-fold maze of birth.

It is interesting to note Thiruvalluvar too in a way believed that the effect of the child will last for seven births. He says, the evils of the seven births shall not touch those who obtain children of a good disposition shall be free from vice. It is not my intention to justify or deny Thiruvalluvar's belief,

Now let us consider a couplet from the section of wealth. In the chapter on self restraint Thiruvalluvar says if one can restrain the five senses will gain seven for births in his couplet 126. Here it is;

*Who senses five like tortoises hold
Their joy prolongs to births sevenfold.*

Thiruvalluvar says should one throughout a single birth, like a tortoise controls his five senses he is bound to benefit and safe-guard him for seven births. Here too in his couplet on wealth he points to the need of controlling and being humble.

The third section is pleasure of love which has seven chapters with seventy couplets. In it on the chapter on pleasure of love in couplet 1269 he says;

*One day will seem like seven to those
who watch and yearn*

*For that glad day when wanderers
from afar return.*

The poet says to those who suffer waiting for the day of return of their lover, one day will feel as if it is seven days. Such is the distress of missing the loved one. For sure the poet Thiruvalluvar must have felt too missing to express the feelings of missing in seven words.

Indeed, I am not only blessed and fortunate, but lucky like seven able to enjoy and learn Thirukkural in its language of composition. With so many sevens in this book, I am sure humanity is blessed to be able to read this book in so many languages.



SPECIAL FEATURE

THE NATURE OF MAN'S MORTALITY



By: J A Rajah

Many societies have always pondered what happens to people after death. Is death the absolute end of physical and human consciousness? Does a conscious but non-corporeal entity survive, in some way after the death of the body? Most human beings have for millennia acted on their beliefs that a non-physical or spiritual portion of it would survive death.

Ancient Egypt provides a well-known case in point, taking the preservation and protection of the body to unparalleled levels. A great portion of the wealth of the

A. The Egyptian Concept:

Egyptian Empire was focussed on this end. Each person, they believed, consisted, consisted of a physical body and not one, but two souls that lived on after death-the Ka-soul and the Ba-soul. The Ka was said to be a spirit replica of a person, containing the vital force received at birth-it would dwell in the statue or picture of the dead person that was placed in the grave. The Ba was the part of the person that had the potential to enjoy eternal life and peace if accepted by the gods, and it was thought to return to the burial site to enjoy food and drink offerings left by family members. or admirers. The body, however, had to continue to be recognizable to allow the Ba to return to it. Hence the Egyptians mastered the art of embalming. Anything that might cause the body to decay like internal organs -was removed and placed in jars. But the heart which was believed to be the seat of life, was preserved and placed in the body. They felt that damaging the heart could result in the second death of the Ka.

The body was dehydrated and stuffed, then preserved with chemicals. An Egyptian priest adorned with a jackal mask, would perform the last rites, which included causing the moth to be opened-to allow speaking and eating in the after life. The whole process took 70 days. Much of the wealth and skill of the Egyptian empire was consumed

by a religion that was essentially a cult of death. Historically, the Egyptians kept the dead bodies which they called 'mummies', put inside pyramids, in which they put in large amount of resources for livie inside them.

B. Religious Concepts:

Today, many in society claim to have no interest or belief in religion and readily dismiss the idea of an after life. Of course, opinion may shift a bit with age or illness, as one 's apparent mortality becomes more obvious. Most religions have some sort of idea.

Hinduism perceives death as a natural transition than a final end. It is mainly the soul shedding its physical body and preparing for another life. According to Hindu philosophy life after death is moksha or liberation from the soul and uniting with the divine. and attaining eternal peace.; whether a person reincarnates or achieves moksha depends on karma, the universal law of cause and effect. Buddhism espouses the doctrine of reincarnation. After death there is a brief transition where you are in a special body. Then your karma prepares a new world based on your activities from previous lives. The Muslims believe that life is a test where deeds determine one's fate. After death soul enters an intermediate spiritual state, awaiting the day of resurrection and judgement, leading to eternal reward in paradise or punishment in hell. Christians believe that there is life after death. Christ's resurrection set in motion a revolt against the old order of things-an overthrow of a broken world ruled by death and all its ills. They look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Christian militant denominations like the Pentecostalists and the Holy Shakers look forward to the second coming of Jesus with eagerness as they sing, "Jerusalem Fair, I Long to be there! The Lord is now waiting to welcome me there, there's rest from my toil, And Life without care; I want to be their sweet home".

Similarly, in Tamil they sing, "Nava

Jerusalem manavarlan, nadu vaanil tonriduvaar, ituvarai emairuntha thunpamillay, emakkenrume, aanantham". This indeed is the blessed assurance that defeated death and makes Jesus as the number one man who ever lived on this planet. He is indeed Man and God in one form!!!!Christian philosophy erased the pangs of death and became the most sought-after religion (31.2%) in the world.

In truth, there have been-and currently are-many varying ideas about death and its consequences. Some eastern ideologies hold that while the body may die, the spiritual essence of the body gets reincarnated into another living thing. Some believe this cycle of birth and death continues until they achieve perfection and escape the wheel of life into blissful non-existence.

C. The Eternity of the Soul:

Other Middle Eastern or Western traditions hold the human body is home to a non-physical entity called a soul. The soul they believe, leaves the body upon death and is assigned by God to an eternal reward in a heavenly realm or sentenced to an eternity of pain, sorrow, and suffering in hell. These ideas later spread later to Egypt and the East, and to Greece and Rome.

Dr. Philip Almond, professor of humanities at the University of Queensland states that 'from the beginning of the third century, the Christian tradition adopted the Greek tradition that individuals were composed of a mortal body and an immortal soul.'

When people die, they cease to have any awareness or ability. Christians believe they have no consciousness until God raises them from the dead to an indescribably great opportunity. Other religions or cultures adopt similar views. They believe that death is not the end of the human soul and take all the necessary precautions to adopt the stance of the fear of God and plead for his mercy to grant remorse to their souls in the life hereafter. "Hope springs eternally in the human breast."



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LAZINESS IS A BAD TRAIT



By: Annabeth Francis
(Grade 5)

It is not good to be lazy! Laziness is bad because it means that you don't want to budge or do anything. For example, being lazy means that if you drop your pencil, you won't even budge to

get it. I think that sometimes I am lazy because I feel tired or unwell, and I don't feel like moving. People might also feel lazy if they have been sitting at a desk or playing a sport for a long time. When they finally sit down, they might feel too tired to get back up to finish a task. Most people feel lazy about doing their homework or chores if they are just not in the mood.

The advantages of being lazy are that if you don't want to do something, then you can just relax, but if you constantly ask someone to do frequent tasks for you, then you are very lazy.

If you are frequently being lazy, you may fall behind on your tasks compared to others who are hardworking and on top of things. Laziness causes a lack of completion in important work. One way to change a lazy habit is to focus on tasks that are important to complete first. Then complete the second important task and so on. Sometimes it can help to write down a list of everything you have to do. This way, people would never fall behind.

If a person is too lazy to work for money, they may choose to play the lottery. People who play the lottery dream of having a life of winning the lottery and living well, but they don't put any effort into earning the money on their own. This is a bad idea because instead of actually winning money, they are losing all the money they have, and with that, they are wasting all of their time. They won't have a good life because they never work hard to earn money, and they will be unsuccessful in life. Even if they win the lottery, they would not be able to save any of the money because they would spend it all because they never learned how to save up their money.



Being lazy can also severely impact a person's health. When people are too lazy to exercise, they will be unfit. They might also choose to eat unhealthy snacks because it's easier than making a healthy meal. Lazy habits can also mess up your sleep. Someone might stay up very late at night and then sleep in way too late into the next morning, which means they waste the whole day. To change this, they can set an alarm early in the morning or ask someone to wake them up and have a set schedule that they need to strictly follow. They can also go to sleep on time and not stay up too late at night. Over time, they will develop a schedule that will make them less lazy.

In conclusion, being lazy all the time is bad. It is good to take breaks once in a while, but after taking a break, it is important to work hard again. Doing so will make you successful. It is also important to remember

that gambling is bad and people should work hard to earn money instead of gambling. People should also work hard to be physically and mentally healthy, so that their bodies and mind will also be less tired when doing tasks. They will feel less stressed and in the end be more successful.



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Everyone is invited to help protect our natural environment by volunteering to clean up around their neighbourhoods during Clean Up, Green Up Weeks!

Residents, businesses, community groups and schools are encouraged to come together between April 20 and May 4 to help pick up litter that has accumulated over the winter in parks, trails, on boulevards and other public spaces.

The City will provide registered participants with gloves and garbage bags, and arrange for collection of the filled bags.

Last year, 10,800 volunteers helped to clean up 195 parks, trails and neighbourhoods in our community!

Together, we can continue to help keep Richmond Hill safe and clean for everyone.

**Last year 10,800
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to clean up 195
parks, trails and
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in our community!**

Participants can register online at RichmondHill.ca/CleanUpWeeks until Monday, April 6.

For more information, visit RichmondHill.ca/CleanUpWeeks, email us at wastemgmt@richmondhill.ca or call 905-771-8800.



5 TOWERS - RANGING IN SIZE FROM 15 TO 41 STOREYS- APPROVED FOR MARKHAM CENTRE DEVELOPMENT

Markham approves 2,139-unit project despite residents' concerns over height and density.



Concept map of the proposed development at Verdale Crossing and Birchmount Road.

Markham has approved another major high-density development, bringing thousands of new residential units to Markham Centre, as the city continues to push intensification near transit.

At a recent meeting, council approved a zoning bylaw amendment application from The Remington Group that will allow a three-phased, mixed-use development at the northwest corner of Verdale Crossing and Birchmount Road.

The proposal includes five towers ranging from 15 to 41 storeys, with a total of 2,139 residential units, along with ground-level retail space and indoor and outdoor amenity areas. Phase 1 would feature a 28-storey tower, with later phases adding additional buildings, including the tallest at 41 storeys.

In total, the project includes more than 150,000 square metres of residential gross floor area, about 2,800 square metres of retail space and 1,815 parking spaces.

The currently vacant 2.59-hectare site is located within Markham

Centre, an area designated for higher-density, mixed-use development.

According to a staff report, the proposal is consistent with provincial, regional, and municipal planning policies, as it supports increased density near higher-order transit.

“The proposed development is appropriate and represents good planning,” the report states.

During the consultation process, the city received at least four written submissions raising concerns about the scale of the project and its potential impacts.

In a written submission, nearby resident Sherry Tcheng said “the number of buildings and the excessive height of the towers are completely inappropriate to the scale of the existing neighbouring buildings” and would negatively affect quality of life.

Tcheng also raised concerns about reduced sunlight, increased traffic and parking pressures, overcrowding of public spaces and a lack of school capacity in the area.

“As a teacher, I am aware that there are no schools in Downtown Markham, and all the children are already bused into Unionville,” she wrote.

City staff said those concerns were reviewed as part of the application process.

According to the report, school boards did not raise objections, though busing may be required until new school sites are secured. A new elementary school currently under construction nearby is expected to open in 2028.

Transportation staff also concluded that the surrounding road network, including planned road extensions and a future pedestrian crossing, can accommodate the additional traffic.

Environmental, servicing and noise considerations will be further reviewed through future site plan and servicing applications, with additional technical details to be addressed at later stages of the planning process.

Courtesy: Scarlett Liu, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter, Markham Economist & Sun



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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 EASTER EGG HUNT & FAMILY FUN DAY 2026

DTA will host its Annual Easter Egg Hunt and Family Fun Day on Sunday, April 5, 2026, at J. Clarke Richardson Collegiate (1355 Harwood Ave N).

Running from 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM, this inclusive community event features:

Pancake Breakfast:

Served with hot chocolate and coffee.

Youth Activities: A signature Easter Egg Hunt for children aged 12 and under (**please bring your own baskets**).

Family Entertainment: Games, structured activities, and face painting for all ages.

Registration & Details

Admission: \$5.00 per person.

RSVP: Register online at durhamtamils.org.

Contact: DTA/DTF Communications at (647) 968-9549.

The DTA invites all local families to join this morning of festive celebration and community connection.

DURHAM TAMIL ASSOCIATION INVITES YOU TO JOIN!

EASTER EGG HUNT

FAMILY EVENT - KIDS, ADULTS AND SENIORS

Happy Easter

SUNDAY, APRIL 5TH
10:00AM - 12:00 PM (NOON)

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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:

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FAMILY KARAOKE NIGHTS ON FRIDAY

Join us for every Friday night for family fun and music at our Family Karaoke Night! Bring your vocal talents as we gather for a memorable evening filled with laughter, singing, and bonding. Whether you're a seasoned performer or a first-time singer, there's a song for everyone to enjoy. We will provide your favorite tunes so get ready to create lasting memories. Don't miss out on this amazing opportunity to come celebrate your talents.

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Open to Moms, Dads, Kids, Youth and friends Join us for a fun night of singing and smiles

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Location: DTA Center 66
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DTA SENIOR'S DECEMBER MONTHLY MEETING

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

COMMUNITY WATCH



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EXPLORE BRAMPTON YOUTH PASS RETURNS FOR 2026 SEASON

Applications open today for free summer transit and recreation access for youth aged 12 to 16

The City of Brampton is continuing the Explore Brampton Youth Pass program in 2026, offering young residents free access to Brampton Transit and select recreation opportunities throughout the summer.

Up to 2,500 Explore Brampton Youth Passes will be available for Brampton youth aged 12 to 16. Passholders will enjoy free rides on Brampton Transit and complimentary access to Brampton recreation drop-in programs, including swimming, skating and select sports, from July 1 to September 6, 2026.

Apply now | Explore Brampton Youth Pass

Applications for the Explore Brampton Youth Pass are now open until May 17, 2026. Eligible youth can apply online and will be required to pick up their pass in person at select recreation locations.

The Explore Brampton Youth Pass supports the City's commitment to building a Healthy and Safe City and a City of Opportunities, giving young residents the freedom to stay active, connect with their community and explore everything Brampton has to offer.

The City greatly appreciates the generosity of this year's sponsor, Amazon.

About Brampton's Youth Engagement Strategy

As one of Canada's youngest and fastest-growing big cities, Brampton is home to more than 153,000 youth. Developed in collaboration with more than 1,200 youth, City staff, community partners and consultants, the City of Brampton's 2026-2030 Youth Engagement Strategy outlines a comprehensive plan to engage residents aged 14 to 29.

The strategy focuses on strengthening youth participation, leadership opportunities and well-being, helping create a city where youth feel a strong sense of belonging and are empowered to contribute and shape Brampton's future.

To learn about the Youth Engagement Strategy, get involved or explore upcoming opportunities, visit brampton.ca/youth.

Quotes

"Brampton is the youngest and fastest-growing big city in Canada, and programs like the Explore Brampton Youth Pass help ensure our young residents have access to opportunities that keep them active, engaged and connected to their community. We

**EXPLORE
BRAMPTON
YOUTH PASS**

For youth ages between 12 - 16

From **July 1 to September 6**

- Ride Brampton Transit for free
- Access select Brampton Recreation drop-ins for free

Generously sponsored by

Learn more at brampton.ca/ebyp

encourage eligible youth and families to apply and make the most of everything Brampton has to offer this summer."

- **Patrick Brown,**
Mayor, City of Brampton

"The Explore Brampton Youth Pass continues to make public transit more accessible for young people in our community. By providing free transit access throughout the summer, youth can travel independently, take part in recreation programs and explore their city with greater freedom."

- **Paul Vicente,**
Regional Councillor, Wards 1 & 5, Chair,
Public Works Section, City of Brampton

"Access to recreation programs plays an important role in supporting the health and well-being of our youth. The Explore Brampton Youth Pass helps remove barriers and gives young residents the opportunity to participate in a wide range of activities at our recreation centres all summer long."

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

About Brampton Transit

Brampton Transit is one of Canada's fastest-growing transit systems, providing safe, reliable and accessible service across Brampton and the Greater Toronto Area. With a strong focus on sustainability, innovation and customer service, Brampton Transit connects people to where they live, work, learn and play. In 2024, Brampton Transit proudly served over 43 million riders, marking a significant milestone in our journey of growth and service excellence. Learn more at bramptontransit.com. Follow Brampton Transit on X, Facebook and Instagram.

As one of the fastest-growing cities in Canada, Brampton is home to 800,000 people and more than 124,000 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



MORE FARE OPTIONS COMING TO THE AFFORDABLE TRANSIT PROGRAM STARTING APRIL 1, 2026

The program will provide a 50 per cent discount on PRESTO single fares for low-income adult and youth riders, making transit a more affordable option for travel in Mississauga.



Riding MiWay to school, work or for fun to explore the city just got easier with more affordable fares for youth and families with lower income levels.

The Affordable Transit Program (ATP), which launched as a pilot in 2014, is a partnership between the City of Mississauga and Peel Region. The program provides a 50 per cent discount on MiWay adult monthly passes for eligible Mississauga residents.

Starting April 1, the program will also offer a 50 per cent discount on PRESTO single fares for eligible youth and for adult riders. This will provide them with more ways to pay their fare on MiWay. This also helps make transit more equitable for those who may not need a monthly pass for their travels in Mississauga. More riders will be able to benefit from discounted transit fares and move around the city and beyond with greater support and confidence.

Getting a PRESTO card

Riders will need a PRESTO card to apply to the program. Add a digital

PRESTO card to an Apple Wallet or Google Wallet for free, or purchase a physical card for \$4 from a customer service outlet.

New to PRESTO? Learn more about why PRESTO is the easiest way to pay your fare on MiWay and other transit agencies in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area.

Applying to the program

Visit Peel Region's website to view eligibility requirements and apply.

People who live in the same household can apply together or individually. Peel Region processes applications within 10 to 20 business days.

Adding the ATP discount on a PRESTO card

Once enrolled in the program, visit a service location with a PRESTO card and personal identification. Service locations include the MiWay Fares Booth at the City Centre Transit Terminal and the Open Window Hub at the Hazel McCallion Central Library.

Open Window Hub support

Residents who need help with their application can visit the Open Window Hub, located on the second floor of the Hazel McCallion Central Library. Staff can assist with submitting applications and setting up the ATP discount on a PRESTO card for approved program participants.

The Open Window Hub at Hazel McCallion Central Library operates Monday to Friday from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

One Fare Program

PRESTO also provides transit riders with free transfers via Ontario's One Fare Program. This program delivers significant benefits for MiWay customers who want to transfer between MiWay and Brampton Transit, GO Transit and the TTC.

Travelling on MiWay

Planning a trip on MiWay? Visit miway.ca for bus schedules, service announcements and information.



SPECIAL FEATURE

KAILASA TEMPLE IN ELLORA, INDIA

Compiled by Kidambi Raj

INTRODUCTION

The *Kailasha (Kailasa)* or *Kailahsnatha* temple is the largest of the rock-cut Hindu Temples in the Ellora Caves in *Sambhaji Nagar* District in Maharashtra, India. The Kailasa temple (*Cave 16*) is the largest of the 34 Hindu, Buddhist and Jain cave temples and monasteries known collectively as Ellora Caves, ranging for over two kilometers (1.2 mi) along the sloping basalt cliff at the site. Most of the excavation of the temple is generally attributed to the eighth century *Rashtrakuta King Krishna I* (r.c. 76-773), with some elements completed later. The temple architecture shows traces of Pallava and Chalukya styles. The temple contains a number of relief and free-standing sculptures on a grand scale equal to the architecture, though only traces remain of the paintings which originally decorated it.

A megalith carved into a cliff face, it is considered one of the most remarkable cave temples in the world because of its size, architecture and sculptural treatment. It has been called *the climax of the rock-cut phase of Indian architecture*. The top of the structure over the sanctuary is 32.6m (107 ft) above the level of the court below. Although the rock face slopes downwards from the rear of the temple to the front, archeologists believe it was sculptured from a single rock. The Kailasa Temple is among the 34 monasteries that comprise the Ellora Caves, which is considered to be among the most popular tourist sites in all of Maharashtra. It is recognized as one of the world's largest single monolithic discoveries and one of India's most incredible ancient temples. It is a megalith carved out of a single rock. Aside from its immensity, the temple is notable for its sculptures and the excellent craftsmanship of its other architectural aspects.

HISTORY

The Kailasa temple lacks a dedicatory inscription, but there is no doubt that it was commissioned by a *Rashtrakuta ruler*. Its construction is generally attributed to the Rashtrakuta King Krishna I based on two epigraphs that link the temple to *Krishnaraja*. The Kailasa temple features the use of several distinct architectural and sculptural styles. This, combined with its relatively large size, has led some scholars to believe that its construction spanned reigns of several kings. Some of the temple reliefs

feature the same style as the one used in the Dasavatara Cave (Cave 15), which is located next to this temple. The Dasavatara cave contains an inscription of Krishna's predecessor and nephew Dantidurga (c. 735-756 CE). Based on this, art historian Hermann Goetz (1952) theorized that the construction of the Kailasa temple began during the reign of Dantidurga. Krishna consecrated its first complete version, which was much smaller than the present-day temple. According to Goetz, Dantidurga's role in the temple construction must have been deliberately suppressed, as Krishna sidelined Dantidurga's sons to claim the throne after his death. Based on analysis of the different styles, Goetz further hypothesized that the later Rashtrakuta rulers also extended the temple. These rulers include Dhruva Dharavarsha, Govinda III, Amoghavarsha and Krishna III. According to Goetz, the 11th century Paramara ruler Bhoja commissioned the elephant-lion frieze on the lower plinth during his invasion of Deccan and added a new layer of paintings. Finally Ahalyabai Holkar commissioned the last layer of paintings in the temple.

Chalukya-Pallava influence

Dhavalikar pointed out that no major part of the monolithic temple appears to have been an afterthought, but architectural evidence suggests that the entire temple was planned at the beginning. The main shrine is very similar to (although much larger than) the Virupaksha Temple at Pattadakal, which itself is a replica of the Kailasa temple at Kanchi. The Pattadakal Virupaksha Temple was commissioned by the Chalukyas of



Sikhara



Ramayana Panel



Mahabharata panel

Badami to commemorate their victory over the Pallavas, who had constructed the Kailasa temple at Kanchi. According to the Virupaksha temple inscriptions,

SPECIAL FEATURE



Large Shiva Linga at Kailas Temple

the Chalukyas brought the Pallava artists to Pattadakal after defeating the Pallavas. Dhavalikar theorizes that after defeating the Chalukyas, Krishna must have been impressed by the Virupaksha Temple located in their territory. As a result, he brought the sculptors and architects of the Virupaksha Temple (including some Pallava artists) to his own territory, and engaged them in the construction of the Kailasa temple at Ellora. The Kailasa Temple is notable for its vertical excavation, as carvers started at the top of the original rock and excavated downward. The traditional methods were rigidly followed by the master architect which could not have been achieved by excavating from the front.



Sultanate and Mughal encounters

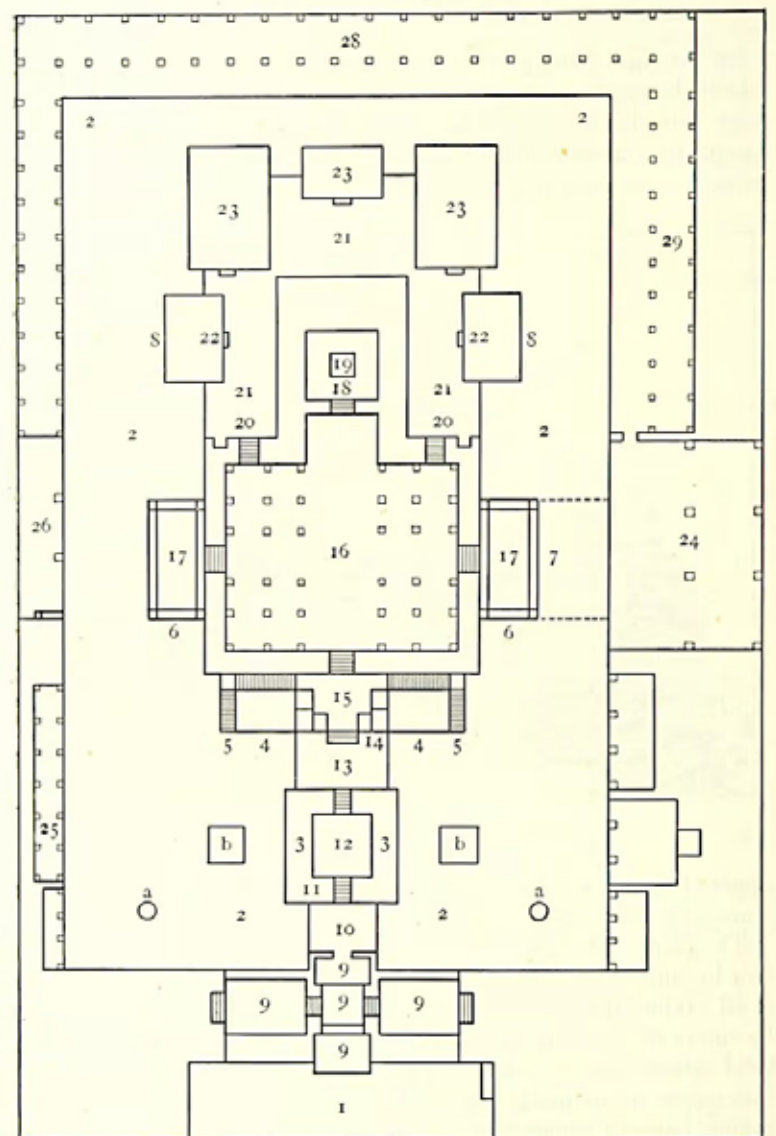
Khilji's troops had destroyed nearby Yadava Temple at Devagiri and repurposed it into a mosque, but they never harmed the Ellora temple. Instead, it became a sightseeing spot for the troops. Afterwards the Sufi orders set up their camps in Ellora caves which came to be known as *Rauza*. A Bijapur historian Rafi-al-Din Shirazi writes in his *Tadhkirat al Muluk* that the Kailasanatha Temples were an ancient *wonder and a rarity* comparable to

Persepolis and Naqsh-i-Rustom. He asks God to forgive his patrons for destroying similar temples in Vijayanagar after the battle of Talikota and admits with regret that this kind of temple and art had been forgotten. During the Mughal era, Aurangzeb Alamgir liked visiting these temples. He was infamous for destroying many temples in India, but he called Kailashanatha temple as a *marvelous place for strolling*, despite having been a place of worship for *unbelievers*. He further writes in his memoirs that the temples are *one of the wonders of the work of the transcendent Artisan, charming to the eye, and unless one sees it, no written description can correctly picture it*".

ARCHITECTURE

The Kailasanatha temple architecture is different from the earlier style prevalent in the Deccan region. As stated above, it appears to be based on Virupaksha Temple at Pattadakal and the Kailasa temple at Kanchi, but it is not an exact imitations

of these two temples. The southern influence on this temple architecture can be attributed to the involvement of Chalukya and Pallava artists in its construction. The indigenous Deccan artisans appear to have played a subordinate role in the temple's construction. The entrance to the temple courtyard features a low *gopuram*. Most of the deities at the left of the entrance Shaivites, while on the right-hand side the deities are Vaishnavites. A two-storeyed gateway opens to reveal a U-shaped courtyard. The dimensions of the courtyard are 82 m x 46 m at the base. The courtyard is edged by a columned arcade three storeys high. The arcades are punctuated by huge sculptured panels, and alcoves containing enormous sculptures of a variety of deities. Originally, flying bridges of stone connected these galleries to central temple structures, but these have fallen. Some of the most famous sculptures are Shiva the ascetic, Shiva the dancer, Shiva being warned by Parvati about the demon Ravana and the river goddess. Within the courtyard, there is a central shrine dedicated to Shiva, and an image of His mount *Nandi* (the sacred bull). The central shrine housing the *Lingam* features a



flat-roofed *Mandapa* supported by 16 pillars, and a *Dravidian Shikhara*. The shrine, complete with pillars, windows, inner and outer rooms, gathering halls, and an enormous stone lingam at its heart, is carved with niches, plasters, windows as well as images of deities, *maithuna*



SPECIAL FEATURE



(erotic male and female figures) and other figures. As it is traditional in Shiva temples, Nandi sits on a porch in front of the central temple. The Nandi *mandapa* and main Shiva temple are each about 7 m high, and built on two storeys. The lower storeys of the Nandi mandapa are both solid structures, decorated with elaborate illustrative carvings. The base of the temple has been carved to suggest that elephants are holding the structure aloft. A rock bridge connects the Nandi mandapa to the porch of the temple. The base of the temple

hall features scenes from *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana*.

There are five detached shrines in the temple premises, three of these are dedicated to the river goddesses, *Ganga*, *Yamuna* and *Saraswati*. There are two *Dwajasthambams* (pillars with flagstaff) in the courtyard., A notable sculpture is that of *Ravana* attempting to lift *Mount Kailasa*.

INTERESTING FACTS ABOUT THE KAILASHANATHA TEMPLE

- **It is the Largest Monolithic**

- **Structure in the World:**

Ellora Caves is well-known for the world's biggest single monolithic excavation, the colossal Kailasa Temple. Dedicated to Lord Shiva, The Great Kailasa is a multi-level freestanding temple. The marvel of this 1300-year-old architectural masterpiece is that it is fashioned out of one basaltic rock and is recognized as the largest monolithic work of art, not only in India, but as well as



around the globe. Even the statues at this intriguing temple are sculptured from the same chunk of granite as the remainder of the building.

- **It is a Representation of Mount Kailash:** The temple's architecture, dedicated to Lord Shiva, reminds one of the sacred Mount Kailash., the mysterious dwelling of the god. Two inner courtyards surround the entrance, each with a massive stone elephant and 15-metre-tall triumph pillars. Nandi, the holy bull, is shown facing the Shivalinga. The main Shiva temple is 7 m tall and built on two levels. The base level provides the impression that the elephants are keeping the entire edifice together. Originally this edifice was covered in a thick coating of white plaster to resemble the sacred mountain Kailash, and some remnants of its plaster exist today.
- **It Is Larger Than the Parthenon:** Kailash temple is recognized as one of India's most magnificent cave temples because of its enormous dimensions, architecture, and sculptural execution. Kailash Temple is 44 m wide and 59 m long and 27 m high, covering an area double that of the famous Parthenon in Athens. The famous temple is one of the largest buildings in India and the entire world, rivaling even the Taj Mahal in Agra, with its enormously carved monolithic main shrine in the centre, gopura and enclosing walls on all sides.

- **It Is Said to be Indestructible:**

There is an intriguing story concerning Ellora's Kailasha Temple. Aurangzeb, the Mughal emperor who demolished thousands of Hindu Temples, also attempted to destroy the Kailash Temple. It is said that around 1,000 soldiers were sent to destroy the temple in the year 1682. They worked for three years but could only shatter and dismantle a few sculptures. Aurangzeb eventually gave up on this attempt, realizing that he was unable to entirely destroy the temple because the rock was just too hard to dismantle, despite the fact that artisans built it with only chisels, hammer and picks.

- **UNESCO World Heritage Site:**

The Caves located in Maharashtra's western area, is a UNESCO World Heritage Site with structures ranging from 600 to 1000 CE. While there are several spectacular constructions on-site. Probably the most well-known is the massive stone Kailasa Temple.

LEGACY, CULTURAL RESONANCE AND AN ENGINEERING WONDER

The Kailashanatha Temple remains one of the greatest achievements of *rock-cut architecture*, celebrated internationally for its scale and artistry. Art historians

SPECIAL FEATURE



frequently liken its importance to masterpieces like the *Parthenon*, even noting that the temple's area exceeds twice that of the Parthenon in Greece. The influenced the *Deccan architecture* and remains a central site of *Shaivite tradition*, pilgrimage and heritage preservation.

AN ENGINEERING WONDER AND AN ARCHITECTURAL MARVEL: CARVED FROM ONE ROCK

The precision in execution remains equally astonishing. The temple includes *drainage system, ventilation and careful orientation* towards the rising sun. The scale, symmetry and sheer scale accomplished with basic tools, continue to astonish architects and scholars alike. Attempts at destruction notably ordered by *Emperor Aurangzeb*, were unsuccessful, even after three years of effort by over 1,000 labourers, who could only partially deface some sculptures. The temple's resilience underscores its solid monolithic strength. What makes Kailasha Temple truly extraordinary is that it was excavated *top-down* from the basalt cliff, an architectural feat rarely seen elsewhere. Approximately *200,000 to 400,000 tonnes* of rock were painstakingly removed using only hand tools over about *18 years*. The level of precision and planning remains a mystery even to modern engineers. The temple covers roughly *195 ft in length and 145 ft in width*, and rises to a height of nearly *100 ft* encompassing a courtyard, corridors, a

MYTH, LEGEND, RELIGIOUS SYMBOLISM AND SPIRITUAL IMPORTANCE

Kailash Temple is a symbolic re-creation

of *Mount Kailash*, Shiva's heavenly abode, reinforcing its *Shaivite significance*. Myth recounts that the temple was initially named *Manikeshwar* and built at lightning speed to fulfill a queen's vow and crafted so perfectly that she saw its shikhara within days of the start of work. A famous relief called *Ravanaanugraha* show *Ravana attempting to lift Mount Kailash*, a dramatic narrative captured in astonishing



detail. Nearby sculptures include *Ardhanarishvara, Mahishasuramardini*, and representations of river Goddesses. *Ganga, Yamuna, and Saraswati*, whose shrines flank the main corridors, a *Nandi pavilion, mandapas* and the inner sanctum, all carved from a single stone mass. As a sacred shrine to Lord Shiva, the Kailashanatha Temple remains a revered site of Shiva worship. The central sanctum houses a prominent *Shiva Linga*, which continues to be worshipped in a

setting ripe with divine symbolism. The surrounding carvings reinforce stories of divine victories, cosmic order, and mythic ecology, blending *religious experience with architectural storytelling*.

PLACES NEARBY WORTH VISITING

- **Bhadra Maruti Temple:**

At a distance of 3.5 m from Ellora Caves and 26 km from Aurangabad Railway Station, Bhadra Maruti temple located near Aurangzeb Tomb in Khuldabad. It is dedicated to Lord Hanuman. The idol of the presiding deity, Hanuman is portrayed in a reclining or sleeping posture and this is only one of three temples where one can see Lord Hanuman in a reclining posture. Of the other two, one is in Allahabad, UP and the other in Jam Sawali, MP.

HOW TO REACH

The site is located about 30 km from Aurangabad, and is well connected by road, rail and flights. Visitors can also take local buses or taxis to reach the Ellora Cave site in approximately 45 minutes.

BEST TIME TO VISIT

Best visiting time is during the *cool season from October to March*, with early morning entries advised to avoid crowds and summer heat. Week days tend to be less crowded and early hours offer the best light for taking photographs and contemplation. The temple is open daily from 6:00 AM to 6:00 PM and entry is restricted on Tuesdays.



EYE CLINIC DELIVERS SERVICES FOR REFUGEES

The Waterloo Eye Institute provides eye care for newcomers and refugees to support their transition to the local community

By Sarah Fullerton, *Faculty of Science, University of Waterloo*



The Waterloo Eye Institute clinic in downtown Kitchener helps ensure that poor vision is one less barrier for those seeking refuge in the community. The School of Optometry & Vision Science has provided eye care to the refugee population for many years, and Dr. Lisa Woo, who became head of the Health Sciences Optometry Clinic eight years ago, continues this commitment, providing care to more than 300 newcomer and refugee patients each year.

The clinic has partnered with local organizations such as Reception House Waterloo Region and Community Health caring, Kitchener-Waterloo for more than a decade, playing a critical role in helping families integrate into their new lives.

The clinic sees newcomer patients daily, but for the past two years, in partnership with Reception House, it has run a dedicated clinic day each month specifically for refugee patients in the Waterloo Region.

Patients of all ages receive eye exams, ongoing eye care, and eyeglasses supported through federal and provincial benefit programs that are now being reduced. “For many of my patients, this is their first eye exam,” Woo says.

For Woo, giving back to the community through this service is deeply personal. She arrived in the U.S. as a young refugee from Vietnam and recalls that the journey to her new home was only the start of an onset of challenges that come with moving your life to a new country.

“Once you’re in a new country, there’s the challenge of learning a new language, and adapting to a new culture and community,” she says. “Health concerns make that adjustment even more difficult.”

Woo has treated infants and toddlers with congenital eye conditions and eye turns, as well as adults with more complex vision problems due to limited access to care in their home countries. For patients that require tertiary care or surgeries, they are referred to surgeons or speciality care ophthalmologists.

“Eye care shouldn’t be an additional issue that newcomers have to worry about,” Woo says. “Through providing this service to them, it is assisting them with being successful here in Canada.”

Receiving proper eye care can be critical to helping newcomers integrate into their new community. Healthy vision is essential for learning English,

finding employment, driving, and contributing to the community. Routine exams also help detect eye diseases and prevent further complications.

Over the next few weeks, the clinic is adding additional days to its schedule to accommodate even more patients prior to government funding changes that will require Interim Federal



Health Program beneficiaries to pay 30 per cent of their vision care costs.

From now until the changes take effect on May 1, they hope to help as many patients as possible with eye exams and eyewear, knowing the upcoming changes will create new barriers to care.

The clinic will offer additional days for refugees and newcomers on March 30, April 6 and April 13. To learn more about the clinic, visit their website.



HOW YOU WALK COULD HELP DOCTORS TELL TWO SIMILAR BRAIN DISEASES APART



By: Media Relations, *University of Waterloo*

Doctors often struggle to distinguish early dementia with Lewy bodies from early Parkinson's disease. The two neurological conditions share many symptoms, including changes in movement, and are frequently misdiagnosed in their early stages. New research from the University of Waterloo suggests that quantifying walking behaviour might be a useful way to tell these diseases apart.

The study found that people with early dementia with Lewy bodies walk more slowly, take shorter steps and have a lower walking rhythm than people with early Parkinson's disease. These differences were most pronounced when participants walked while performing a second task, such as counting backward.

"We compared stepping patterns between individuals with early dementia with Lewy bodies and people with early Parkinson's disease to see whether walking behaviour could help distinguish the two conditions and found that they can," said Dr. Kaylena Ehgoetz Martens, a professor in Waterloo's Department of Kinesiology and Health Sciences and lead author of the study. "The findings highlight

the promise of measuring movement in a more detailed manner which could address a significant clinical problem. Because the two diseases look similar in their early stages, patients may receive an incorrect diagnosis, which affects treatment decisions, care planning and expectations for patients and their families."

Simple yet quantitative walking assessments, which can be performed in clinical settings, could help clinicians diagnose patients more accurately and at an earlier stage. Earlier diagnosis may allow for earlier intervention, more targeted symptom management and clearer guidance for caregivers.

While the researchers expected to see differences between the groups, one result stood out.

"Walking without interference from a secondary task was less effective at identifying differences than walking while multitasking," Ehgoetz Martens said. "Asking participants to walk while counting backward revealed changes that weren't as obvious during regular walking. "Ultimately, the goal is to identify individuals sooner, intervene earlier and improve quality

of life before symptoms become more severe."

The results point to the importance of cognitive load — how attention and movement interact — in distinguishing neurological diseases that can otherwise appear similar.

The work reflects the University of Waterloo's Health Futures focus, which brings together researchers across health, engineering and data science to develop practical, technology-enabled approaches to improving care. By translating everyday movement into meaningful clinical insight, the research highlights how accessible tools can support more equitable and accurate diagnosis.

The researchers plan to expand their approach to other conditions and to people in the earliest, pre-clinical stages of disease, including those known to be at higher risk.

The study, titled "Differentiating gait behaviours between early-stage dementia with Lewy bodies and Parkinson's disease," was published in the journal *Gait & Posture*.

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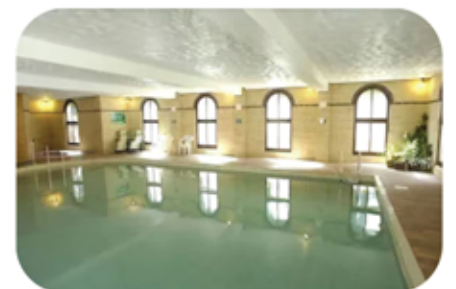
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