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City of Toronto to almost double the amount of basement flooding subsidies starting May 1

The City of Toronto is launching its most comprehensive Basement Flooding Protection Subsidy Program, effective Friday, May 1. The expanded program now almost doubles the financial support available to help homeowners prevent basement flooding.

The expanded program is part of the City's broader efforts to make life more affordable for Torontonians by helping residents avoid costly damage from increasingly severe weather, while supporting practical home upgrades that provide short and long-term savings.

Eligible residential property owners can now access an increase to the maximum subsidy per property from up to \$3,400 to a maximum of \$6,650 which includes:

- a 28 per cent increase to backwater valve and sump pump subsidy amounts to reflect inflation and market costs
- a new Home Plumbing Assessment subsidy to help identify internal plumbing issues that contribute to basement flooding
- eligibility for a second backwater valve subsidy for homes with multiple sewer connections
- a \$300 subsidy for sump pump battery backup systems including retrofits
- an extension of the application period from one to two years after eligible work is completed
- eligible homeowners who completed work on or after November 12, 2025, can apply for the enhanced program subsidies

The revised program follows severe rainfall events in 2024 that led to basement flooding in more than 1,000 homes. The City reviewed the Basement Flooding Protection Subsidy Program and asked residents what additional measures they would like to see to help reduce stormwater runoff and flooding risks.



Established in 2007, the program provides eligible residential property owners with subsidies to install flood protection measures that help prevent sewer backups and reduce basement flooding during severe storms. To date, the program has received approximately 59,000 applications and the City has issued approximately \$86 million in subsidies, with about 14 per cent of Toronto's eligible property owners participating.

Information about eligibility and how to apply is available at: toronto.ca/BFPsubsidy

For practical basement flooding prevention tips, visit: toronto.ca/how-to-prevent-basement-flooding.

Quote:

“This is the largest basement flooding subsidy program the City has ever offered. By doubling the financial support available, we’re

helping more homeowners protect their homes, prevent flooding and avoid costly damage.”

– Mayor Olivia Chow

Toronto is home to more than three million people whose diversity and experiences make this great city Canada's leading economic engine and one of the world's most diverse and livable cities. As an Official Host City for the FIFA World Cup 2026™ and the fourth largest city in North America, Toronto is a global leader in technology, finance, film, music, culture, innovation and climate action, and consistently places at the top of international rankings due to investments championed by its government, residents and businesses. For more information visit www.toronto.ca or follow us on X at [x.com/cityoftoronto](https://twitter.com/cityoftoronto), on Instagram at www.instagram.com/cityofto or on Facebook at www.facebook.com/cityofto.

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PUBLISHER'S DESK

A Gentle Reminder This Mother's Day : Gratitude Beyond Words

As Mother's Day Approaches on May 10, 2026, it arrives not merely as a date on the calendar, but as a meaningful pause in our busy lives—a moment to reflect, reconnect, and remember the profound role mothers play in shaping who we are.

In today's fast-moving world, many of us find ourselves caught in the rhythm of demanding careers, raising our own families, and navigating countless responsibilities. For those who have moved away—whether across cities or continents—the distance can quietly widen, not just geographically but emotionally as well. Amid these realities, it becomes all too easy to assume that our mothers understand our silence, our absence, and our preoccupation.

But Mother's Day gently reminds us that appreciation should never be left unspoken.

A mother's journey begins long before we take our first breath. She carries us for months, enduring physical and emotional changes, and then continues a lifetime of care, sacrifice, and unconditional love. From sleepless nights to quiet prayers, from putting our needs before her own to celebrating our smallest victories, her presence is woven into every chapter of our lives.

These sacrifices are not transactional; they are given freely, often without expectation of recognition. Yet that is precisely why acknowledgment matters.

For many in our community, particularly those who have built lives far from their roots, the story is familiar. Parents remain back home or live separately, while children pursue opportunities abroad. Over time, phone calls become shorter, visits less frequent, and expressions of gratitude rarer. It is not neglect, but life's pace that creates this distance. Still, the emotional gap can grow unnoticed.

This Mother's Day offers an opportunity to bridge that gap.

A simple phone call, a heartfelt message, or a visit—if possible—can carry immense meaning. More importantly, it is the sincerity behind the gesture that resonates. Taking a few moments to say "thank you," to recall a cherished memory, or to simply listen can reaffirm a bond that no distance can diminish.

It is also a time to recognize that motherhood takes many forms. For some, it may be a grandmother, an aunt, or a guardian who stepped into that nurturing role. For others, it may be a memory of a mother who is no longer physically present but remains deeply alive in spirit. Honouring them is equally important.

At its heart, Mother's Day is not about grand celebrations or material gifts. It is about gratitude—genuine, heartfelt,



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and expressed without hesitation. As publishers, we are reminded of the stories we share and the values we uphold. This is one such moment to encourage reflection within our community. Let us not allow the demands of modern life to overshadow the simple, enduring truth: a mother's love is irreplaceable.

This May 10, take the time. Reach out. Reconnect. Remember.

Because no matter how far we travel or how much we achieve, the place we first called home was always in her care—and that is something we should never forget.

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CANADA NEWS 

Toronto Arts Foundation Announces 2026 Toronto Arts Awards Recipients at Mayor's Arts Lunch

The Awards provide more than \$100,000 annually directly to artists, with more than \$600,000 awarded to recipients and finalists to date

Toronto Arts Foundation is proud to announce the recipients of the 2026 Toronto Arts Awards at the annual Mayor's Arts Lunch, hosted by special guest Mayor Olivia Chow. The Awards distribute more than \$100,000 annually to artists, with over \$600,000 awarded to recipients and finalists to date.

This high-profile event brings together a room of artists, cultural leaders, arts philanthropists, key business and civic leaders, and politicians from all levels of government to celebrate and spotlight the artists and arts organizations whose work shapes and strengthens this creative city.

"The arts give so much to our city: they inspire and connect us, drive our economy, and create a sense of belonging. Today is an opportunity to give back to the people who make all of this happen," says Kelly Langgard, Director & CEO of Toronto Arts Council and Toronto Arts Foundation. "To our recipients: congratulations and thank you for sharing your artistry and your stories with us. Our lives are enriched by you, and we're deeply grateful," says Langgard.

Now in its 21st year, the 2026 Mayor's Arts Lunch will award \$95,000 to artists and organizations across the following categories:

- **Celebration of Cultural Life Award**, supported by Victor and Maureen Dodig, is a \$10,000 cash prize, with finalists receiving \$2,000 each.

- The 2026 Recipient is Dr. d'bi.young anitafrika, an internationally celebrated dub poet, biomythicist, theatre-maker, and decolonial pedagogue whose work spans performance, scholarship, and arts leadership across four continents. Laureate of the 2025 Johanna Metcalf Performing Arts Prize, they have shaped contemporary theatre and performance training globally through their pioneering methodology, the Anitafrika Dub Praxis.

- Arts for Youth Award, sponsored by the Kingfisher Foundation and National Bank Financial, is a \$20,000 cash prize, with finalists receiving \$2,000 each.

- The 2026 Recipient is Multicultural Pride in Scarborough, a grassroots organization offering accessible, low-barrier resources, supports, programs, and services to 2SQTBIPOC youth 15-29 with disabilities and/or mental health conditions who live low-income since 2010. Their mission is to amplify these voices and build stronger community connections through the arts.

- Che Kothari Artist & Instigator Award,



Photo by Kat Rizza Photography

supported by Che Kothari, is a \$10,000 cash prize, with finalists receiving \$1,000 each.

- The 2026 Recipient is Pixel Heller, is a multidisciplinary artist and international performer. Her work explores Afro-Caribbean identity through performance and visual art. As the founder of Northern Jumbies, she brings the spirit of Moko Jumbie to life through stilt-dancing workshops, performances, and community engagement rooted in Caribbean tradition.

- Breakthrough Artist Award, supported by Toronto Arts Foundation's general donations, is a \$10,000 cash prize, with finalists receiving \$2,000 each.

- The 2026 Recipient is Vladimir Kanic, a transmedia artist creating living algae sculptures that transform spectators' breath and carbon emissions into oxygen, confronting climate crisis impacts. Informed by maritime heritage and ocean freediving experience, he treats breath as method and material, envisioning symbiotic futures through interspecies collaboration, ecological care, and embodied environmental awareness.

- Community Arts Award, sponsored by MOD Developments, is a \$15,000 cash prize, with finalists receiving \$2,000 each.

- The 2026 Recipient is Beny Esguerra, a two-time JUNO-nominated artist, composer, and educator known for blending Afro-Indigenous Colombian traditions with contemporary urban music. As leader of New Tradition Music and director of Wheel it Studios, he champions community-engaged arts in Toronto's Jane and Finch neighbourhood, mentoring emerging artists while creating nationally recognized, socially conscious work.

- Muriel Sherrin Award, funded through an endowment created with surplus funds from the 1984 Toronto International Festival of Music and Dance, is a \$10,000 cash prize with finalists receiving \$1,000 each.

- The 2026 Recipient is Alexis Baró, a Cuban-born trumpet virtuoso, composer,

and arranger whose work bridges tradition and innovation with deep emotional resonance. Based in Toronto he has built a prolific catalogue that includes 8 solo albums and over 200 Recordings and collaborations with jazz and Afro-Cuban music legends such as Paquito D'Rivera, Michael Bublé, and Andrea Bocelli. As a cultural ambassador Baró gives masterclasses, workshops, and performances that celebrate Cuban musical heritage while building new bridges across jazz communities in North America, the Caribbean, and beyond.

This year's recipients join a distinguished alumni of award winners, including the 2015 Breakthrough Jazz Artist Award recipient Justin Gray, who recently became the first Canadian to receive a Grammy for Best Immersive Audio Album this year.

"Every small spotlight creates 10 other opportunities and opens more doors, and especially for an emerging artist and immigrant artist, any possible visibility is like a miracle," says 2026 Breakthrough Artist Award Finalist Elham Fatapour. "That's what we all need," says Fatapour.

This year's event is emceed by the 2022 Celebration of Cultural Life Award recipient



Mayor Olivia Chow by Kat Rizza Photography

Dwayne Morgan. It features performances by the Elizabeth Rodriguez Quartet and the Lua Shayenne Dance Company with musician Cécé Haba, one of the six 2026 Newcomer Artist Award recipients.

For more information about this year's awards finalists and recipients, please visit: <https://torontoartsfoundation.org/programs/art-awards/>

TORONTO ARTS FOUNDATION

Toronto Arts Foundation is Toronto's city-wide charity for the arts. Established in 1995, the Foundation mobilizes private partners and resources to champion and strengthen the arts sector, nurture creative potential, celebrate artistic achievement, and connect communities to the transformative benefits of the arts.

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THEATRE PASSE MURAILLE HOSTS THE CANADIAN PREMIERE OF MARK OF A WOMAN, WHERE TATTOOS BECOME AN ACT OF POWER AND RESISTANCE

A Theatre Passe Muraille presentation of a Chisato Minamimura production

*“The marks you carry.
The ones you choose.”*

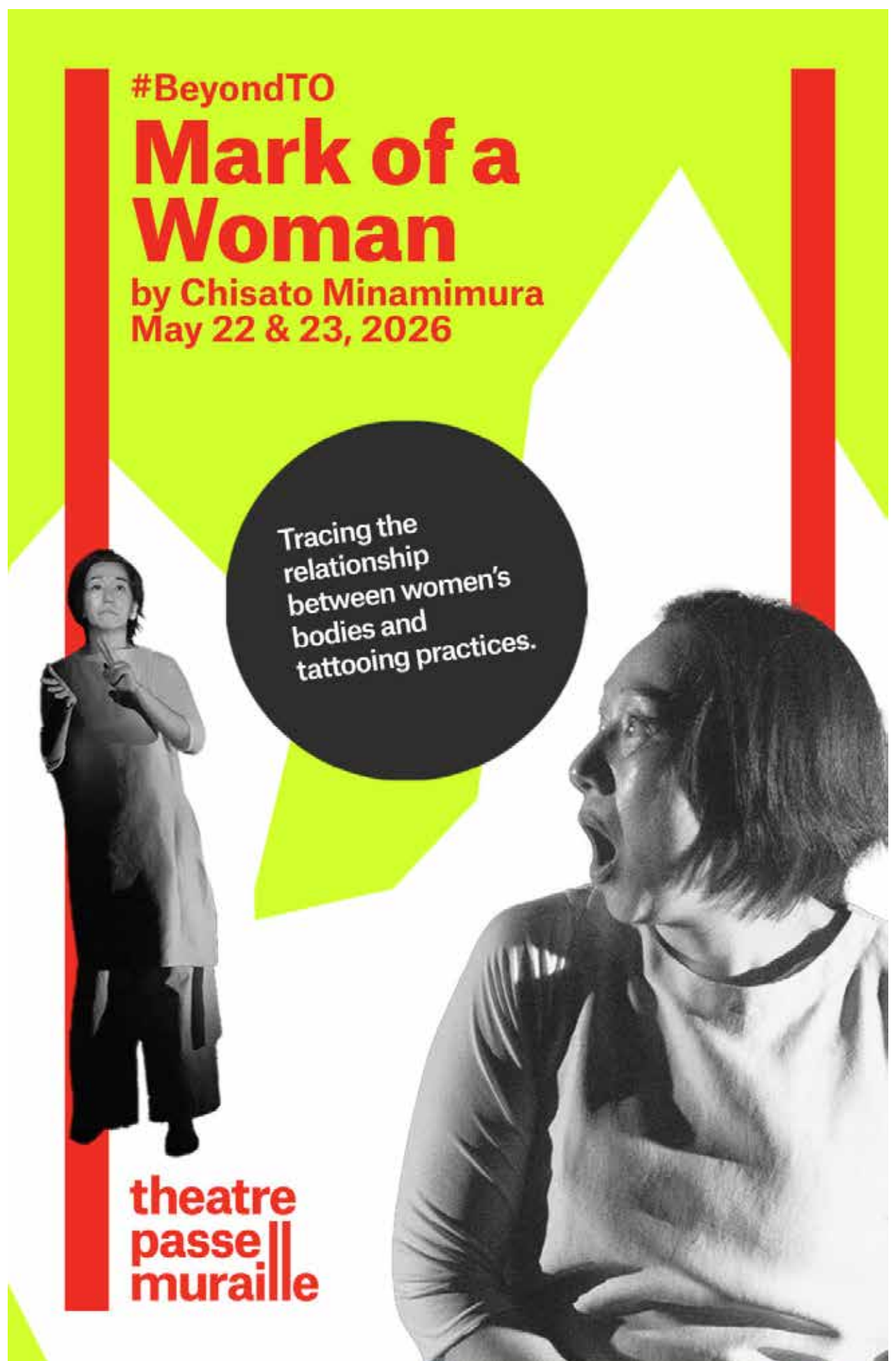
As part of their 2026 #BeyondTO Series, Theatre Passe Muraille is thrilled to present *Mark of A Woman*, a powerful performance by acclaimed international artist Chisato Minamimura, onstage **May 22 & 23, 2026**. This production makes its Canadian premiere at TPM after having toured at several prestigious theatre companies and festivals in the United Kingdom, the Netherlands and Japan.

Mark of A Woman explores tattooing culture to confront the expectations and constraints society places on women’s bodies, defining womanhood across cultures and generations. Drawing on her own lived experiences, Minamimura asks urgent and resonant questions: Can we ever escape the marks others place upon us? And what happens when we reclaim the power to mark ourselves?

“Tattoos may be regarded as an impulsive or trivial acquisition, but *Mark of a Woman* serves to show their cultural significance and role in promoting positive body image whilst also allowing the non-tattooed Chisato Minamimura to make a lasting impression” - *British Theatre Guide*

Through a fusion of Visual Vernacular, ASL, digital animation, kinetic projection, and Woojer™ technology, *Mark of A Woman* reframes tattooing as both a deeply personal and profoundly political act. The performance invites audiences to reexamine how gender is written onto our bodies from birth and what it means to reclaim that power for ourselves.

“In our final show of the 25-26 season, we’re thrilled to be able to bring the astonishing and powerful work of Chisato back to the theatre. TPM audiences may remember her from her play *SCORED IN SILENCE*, which we previously presented as a part of #BeyondTO. The beauty of Chisato’s work is the artistry, elegance, and precision of her unique perspectives. Her new show, *Mark of a Woman*, invites us to reconsider our relationship to the body, illuminating the visible and invisible ways we choose to mark—or leave unmarked—ourselves. As ever, TPM holds a spotlight for many unexplored narratives, and by including extraordinary international artists in our programming, the spotlights shine that much wider and brighter,” says Marjorie Chan, Artistic Director and Indrit Kasapi, Artistic Producer.



SHOW INFORMATION:

Dates: May 22 & 23, 2026

Venue: Theatre Passe Muraille Backspace, 16 Ryerson Ave, Toronto

Running Time: 60 min

Tickets: In Person Performance Pay-What-You-Can-Afford – \$15 | \$40 | \$65
Woojer™ Strap: Woojer straps are

vibrating belts designed to provide an additional sensory experience for audiences by allowing users to feel sound vibrations. The straps convert low-frequency sound—like bass, gunshots, or engine roars—into vibrations that you can feel on your body.

Accessibility & Mask Mandatory Performances: The show contains ASL

CANADA NEWS



and Visual Vernacular, and is Accessible for Deaf audiences. There are captions during the showing of the films, but not for any other part of the work. There will also be voice-over narration during select scenes. The script is available in advance if requested for accessibility purposes. All shows are in a relaxed environment.

Environmental warnings: Woojer Straps vibrate (these are optional with availability limited to 45 per performance).

Content warnings: This performance contains references to colonialism, abduction, sexual assault and mild torture. It also references cancer treatment and mastectomy surgery. Age Guidance 14+.

Red Circle Community Event: Join us on Saturday May 16 at 1 pm for “Connect Beyond Language,” a movement workshop with Black Deaf sessional professor and coronation medal recipient, Dr. Jenelle Rouse. Registration is available on the website.

CREATIVE TEAM:

Artistic Director and Performance by:
Chisato Minamimura
Produced by: Michael Kitchin
Production Management and Lighting
Design by: Jon Armstrong
Projection Design by: Mark Morreau
Sound Design by: Dominic Kennedy
Animation by: Dan Chambers
Animation by: Ronnie Cheng
Dramaturgical Support by: Sarah
Pickthall and Orrow Bell
Costume Design by: Sophie Donaldson
Videography by: Caroline Smith
Interviewees: Sonia Zambakides and
Shuko Fujita
BSL Translation by: Fifi Garfield
Visual Vernacular Experts: Giuseppe
Giuranna and Tetsuya Izaki
BSL/Visual Language Consultant:
Ramesh Meyyappan and
ASL Consultant/Translator: Natasha
“Courage” Bacchus
Tattoo Consultants: Stewart
O’Callaghan and Nikole Lowe



ABOUT CHISATO MINAMIMURA

Chisato Minamimura is a Deaf performance artist, choreographer and BSL art guide. Born in Japan, now based in London, Chisato has created, performed and taught internationally and is currently a Work Place artist at The Place. Chisato has been involved in aerial performances with Graeae Theatre Company, London’s Paralympic Opening Ceremony 2012 and Rio’s 2016 Paralympic Cultural Olympiad. Chisato trained at Trinity Laban in London and holds a BA in Japanese Painting and MA from Yokohama National University.

Chisato approaches choreography and performance making from her unique perspective as a Deaf artist, experimenting with and exploring the visualization of sound and music. By using dance and digital technology, Chisato aims to share her experiences of sensory perception and human encounters.

Chisato’s work is highly regarded and supported by a number of organizations, including Arts Council England, British Council, Unlimited, Wellcome Trust and Disability Arts Online. Chisato is fortunate to have received major commissions and funding to support the development and international touring of her work. Chisato’s work has attracted attention from national and international press through reviews, features, and interviews with TV, radio, print and online publications.

ABOUT THEATRE PASSE

MURAILLE:

Established in 1968, TPM is Canada’s original alternative theatre company, developing and producing new Canadian plays. TPM strives to articulate a distinctly Canadian voice reflecting our intercultural society’s complexity. TPM believes our theatre should have a more diverse representation of artists, audience members, and stories. TPM aspires to be a local, national, and international leader in establishing, promoting, and embracing collaborative and inclusive theatre practices. We do this to support and ignite the voices of unique artists, communities, and audiences.

Theatre Passe Muraille gratefully acknowledges the original caretakers of this land, the Anishinabek, Wendat, Haudenosaunee, and the Mississaugas of the Credit.

We embrace collaborative and collective values exemplified by Indigenous cultures, and we aspire to live up to those values. We are also particularly inspired by the Dish With One Spoon Treaty. This agreement binds people on this land to share peacefully with their neighbours so that we may all have enough.

There is one dish, one spoon, and no knife. In that spirit, we honour all who came before us, our own ancestors, as well as all the Indigenous caretakers, named and unnamed, recorded and unrecorded. We are grateful to have the opportunity to work, play, and create here in this community and on this territory.

Photos by Mark Pickthall



by Mark Pickthall

Special Olympics Ontario Announces the 2026 Provincial Pickleball Championships Presented by the Wayne Gretzky Foundation hosted at the Gretzky Pickleball Club



Hamilton, ON – April 23, 2026 — Special Olympics Ontario is proud to celebrate the ribbon cutting of the Gretzky Pickleball Club, the new Official Training Facility for Special Olympics Ontario Pickleball and Golf.

This exciting milestone marks a significant step forward in the continued growth of inclusive sport opportunities across the province. In addition to the Provincial Championships, the Gretzky Pickleball Club will serve as a premier training hub for Special Olympics athletes, providing access to top-tier facilities and a dedicated space to develop skills, build community, and compete at the highest levels.

“We are thrilled to welcome Gretzky Pickleball Club as our official training facility for both pickleball and golf,” said Cody Jansma, President & CEO at Special Olympics Ontario. “This partnership creates new opportunities for our athletes to train, compete, and thrive in an environment that reflects the excellence and inclusivity of our movement.”

In addition to its role as a training centre, the Gretzky Pickleball Club is set to make history by hosting the first-ever Special Olympics Ontario Provincial Pickleball Championships from July 24-25, 2026 in partnership with the Hamilton Police Service. The event will bring together athletes from across Ontario to compete in one of the fastest-growing sports in the province. “We are doubly excited for the grand opening of this incredible facility in our community and also support our official charity of choice, Special Olympics Ontario” said Chief Frank Bergen of the Hamilton Police Service.

Co-Founder of Gretzky Pickleball Club, Glen Gretzky stated: “we are incredibly excited to open our state-of-the-art pickleball and golf facility while having the opportunity to give back to local Special Olympics athletes, not only in Hamilton and surrounding communities but later in July with the Provincial Pickleball Championships”

About Special Olympics Ontario

Special Olympics Ontario provides year-round sports training and competition opportunities for athletes with intellectual disabilities, empowering them to develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage, and experience joy while building inclusive communities across the province.

About Gretzky Pickleball Club

It started with a simple idea: build a place where the energy of the game matches the community of the people playing it. No stuffy rules, no exclusive walls—just great courts, great rallies, and a community that shows up for each other. Gretzky Pickleball Club is being built from scratch with the goal of growing the sport, elevating the community, and creating a space where every serve starts something bigger. Together we can do great things.

Book Launch & Review:

History of The Development of JAFFNA CITY 1621-1948

*This Distinguished Scholarly Publication authored by **Mr. Mayoornathan** - a Master's graduate of the University of Moratuwa and a professional architect - is a significant academic work that deeply explores the historical journey and evolutionary development of the city of Jaffna. It provides a clear and comprehensive account of urban development, social transformations, and the impact of administrative changes during the period from 1621 to 1948.*

Through rigorous research, credible sources, and a strong academic approach, this publication stands out as a highly valuable scholarly contribution.

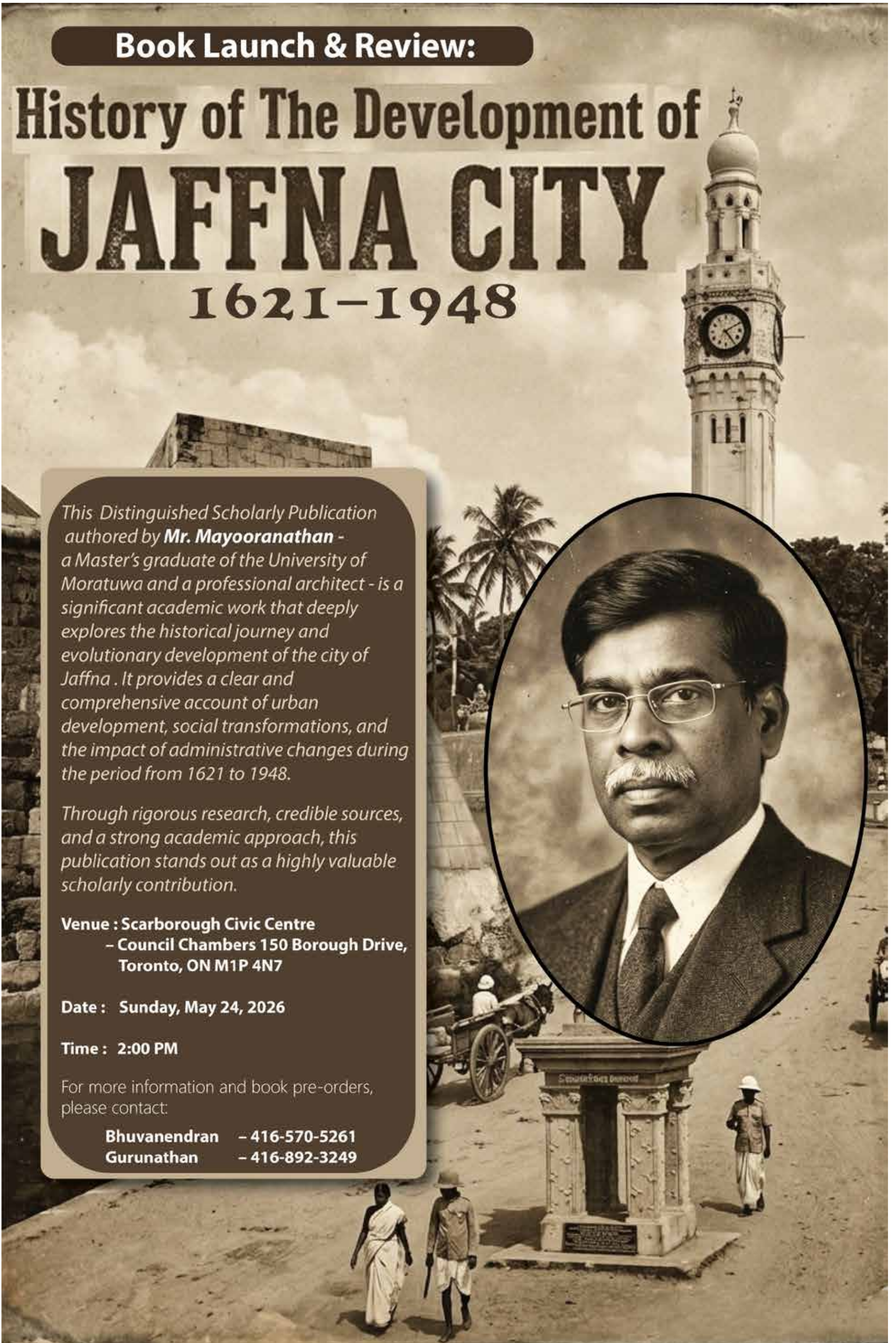
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SHN provincially recognized for equitable sickle cell disease care

BY: MELODY KESHISHIAN, COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR, SHN

A newly released spotlight report from Ontario Health, *Using Quality Standards to Improve Care: Spotlight Report on Scarborough Health Network*, recognizes Scarborough Health Network (SHN) as a provincial leader in implementing the “Sickle Cell Disease: Care for People of All Ages” quality standard. This work reflects SHN’s commitment to addressing long-standing gaps in care, building trust with patients and families, and improving outcomes for a population that often faces barriers within the health system.

One of the most significant areas of progress has been in its Emergency Departments (ED). For patients identifying with sickle cell disease, SHN has reduced the average time to physician initial assessment by 80%, from 66.7 minutes to less than 15 minutes, making it the top-performing hospital in Ontario in this measure. It has also achieved the lowest average ED wait time and the lowest 30-day repeat visit rate for patients with sickle cell disease across the province. These improvements are critical for individuals experiencing pain crises, where timely care can make a profound difference.

These results are grounded in thoughtful, system-wide changes. SHN has introduced standardized ED protocols, enhanced its electronic medical record system with patient flags and communication tools, and provided staff with training in trauma-



informed care. Importantly, it has worked closely with patients, families, and community partners, hosting town halls and co-designing services to ensure care is respectful, inclusive, and centred on lived experience.

SHN continues to expand and strengthen its Sickle Cell Disease Care program, including launching a dedicated Adult Sickle Cell Disease Clinic to provide specialized, coordinated support. In addition, Dr. Kevin Kuo, VP of Research and Innovation, and Physician Lead for the clinic, is leading ongoing work in a landmark global clinical trial, which is investigating a new treatment for sickle cell disease symptoms.

Readers are encouraged to read the Ontario Health spotlight report to learn more about this important work and the impact it is having on the community, as SHN continues to enhance access, improve experiences, and advance equity for all patients living with sickle cell disease.

SHN’s Adult Sickle Cell Disease Clinic expanded its hours to meet the growing needs of our community!

The Adult Sickle Cell Disease Clinic continues to accept referrals. If you’re an adult living with SCD, ask your family doctor about being referred to our clinic.

Visit www.shn.ca/adult-sickle-cell-disease-clinic/ for more information.

Read Ontario Health spotlight report:





SHN Patient Care Coordinator receives Provincial Donation Champion Award

BY: MELODY KESHISHIAN, COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR, SHN

It is important to recognize the life-saving impact of organ and tissue donation and the healthcare professionals who make this work possible every day.

At Scarborough Health Network (SHN), that commitment is reflected in team members like Sandra Ricketts-Fusca, a Patient Care Coordinator in the Surgery Department at General Hospital, who has been honoured with the 2025 Provincial Donation Champion Award from Ontario Health's Trillium Gift of Life Network (TGLN).

The Provincial Donation Champion Award recognizes healthcare professionals across Ontario who demonstrate exceptional dedication to advancing organ and tissue donation, giving more people across the country a second chance at life. In 2025 alone, Ontario saw 1,088 life-saving organ transplants made possible through the support of 362 organ donors, and 2,051 tissue donors. Milestones like these rely on the expertise and compassion of professionals like Sandra.

Sandra's role as a Patient Care Coordinator is both complex and essential to the smooth and safe operation of the OR. She serves as a central link between surgeons, anesthesiologists, and nursing staff, ensuring each surgical day runs efficiently while maintaining the highest standards of patient care. While her work often focuses on coordination, Sandra regularly steps in to provide hands-on clinical and organ recovery support.



Sandra Ricketts-Fusca, PCC of Surgery at General Hospital

Her journey at SHN spans an extraordinary 36 years. Sandra began her career on a respiratory and medical unit before moving into the operating room (OR), where she has spent the majority of her career. For her, working in surgery was always the goal.

"I always knew the OR would be my final stop," she shared. "It's where I feel most connected to the work. And when it comes to donations, I feel fulfilled assisting those procedures with honour and respect to the donors."

Throughout her time in the OR, Sandra has played a vital role in organ and tissue donation, supporting cases from the earliest days of donation procedures at SHN. As a coordinator, she works closely with donation specialists to organize teams, prepare operating rooms, and ensure each case proceeds with precision and respect. Even in this role, she continues to assist clinically, scrubbing in whenever another nurse is needed in the OR.

"Being present in the OR during a donation recovery is a profound responsibility that not everyone would choose to take on," shared Lori-Lee James, Director of Surgery. "Sandra rises to this responsibility with compassion and support to the donor's family during the transition from loss to the life-saving impact their gift will have to another person."

Sandra describes organ donation as a deeply collaborative effort grounded in teamwork, respect, and shared responsibility.

Sandra focuses on the lives saved and improved through donation, which continues to motivate her decades into her career. When she learned she had been selected for the Provincial Donation Champion Award, she was both surprised and deeply honoured.

"I didn't expect it," she said. "But it reminds me why I do this work. It's about the impact we make, and the lasting results of more lives being saved."

Inspired early on by caring for her grandmother, she has remained devoted to nursing as both a profession and a calling.

Sandra's contributions serve as a powerful reminder of the impact healthcare professionals can have in giving the gift of life. Through her work, and the work of teams across the network, patients and families are given hope in the most difficult moments, and lives are transformed through the generosity of organ and tissue donation.



DR. BEAR CLOCKS IN TO LAUNCH TIM HORTONS SMILE COOKIE CAMPAIGN IN SUPPORT OF MARKHAM STOUFFVILLE HOSPITAL

Smiles are back across Markham, Ballantrae, and Stouffville as the annual Tim Hortons Smile Cookie campaign returns from April 27 to May 3 in support of Oak Valley Health's Markham Stouffville Hospital (MSH). To kick off the campaign, Dr. Bear stepped behind the counter at a local Tim Hortons today, greeting customers, taking orders, working the drive-thru, and decorating Smile Cookies.

Customers can support the hospital by purchasing a Smile Cookie (\$2 plus tax) or a cute and cuddly Smile Cookie reversible plushie from April 27 to May 3.

"The annual Smile Cookie campaign is a powerful reminder of what community truly means. For the past 30 years, Tim Hortons restaurant owners, team members, and guests have come together to create real change for people right in their own neighbourhoods," says Axel Schwan, President of Tim Hortons. "With nearly 700 local charities and community groups supported this year, the reach of this campaign has never been greater. We encourage everyone to visit their local Tims and join us in making a difference."



Allan Bell, Vice President, Community Relations and Corporate Partnerships, MSH Foundation, decorates a Smile Cookie with the help of MSH's Dr. Bear.

Since its launch in 1996, the Smile Cookie campaign has donated 100 per cent of proceeds to charities across Canada, supporting the communities in which the restaurants operate in. Proceeds from participating restaurants in Markham, Ballantrae, and Stouffville will benefit families and children and youth cared for at MSH.

MSH is committed to delivering high-quality, integrated patient care to one of the country's fastest growing and most culturally diverse regions. Government funding alone can't keep pace with all the hospital's priority needs, or health care's evolving landscape. MSH relies on dynamic partnerships like this one with Tim Hortons to implement new technology, improve access, and enhance



Markham and Stouffville Tim Hortons restaurant owners, representatives, and supporters are excited to launch this year's Smile Cookie campaign – L-R: Allan Bell, Vice President, Community Relations and Corporate Partnerships, MSH Foundation, Ali Awan, Ivan Chiu, Tracy Schembri, Gillian Fintelman, Julia Suppa, Influencer and longtime MSH Foundation supporter, Dr. Bear, MSH mascot, Heather King, Jessica Smith, Sebastian Schembri, Michael Forbes and Jeff Thompson.

programs and services. Generous donor support helps MSH purchase leading-edge equipment and enhance its campus, enabling safe and timely care for the communities Oak Valley Health is honoured to serve.

"We are honoured to be the long-standing beneficiary of the annual Smile Cookie campaign in Markham and Stouffville," says Allan Bell, Vice President, Community Relations & Corporate Partnerships, MSH Foundation. "With every cookie purchased, Tim Hortons' support helps fund essential programs and services for children and families at our hospital."

To learn more about the campaign and which local charities are being supported, visit www.timhortons.ca/smile-cookie. Community members can also support by participating in MSH Foundation's Smile Cookie Instagram and Facebook contests for the chance to win a \$50 Tim Hortons gift card and a Smile Cookie plushie. For contest details, visit: Tim Hortons Smile Cookie Week 2026.

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

About Tim Hortons In 1964, the first Tim Hortons® restaurant in Hamilton, Ontario opened its doors and Canadians have been ordering Tim Hortons iconic Original Blend coffee, Double-Double™ coffees, Donuts and Timbits® in the years since. Over the last 55 years, Tim Hortons has captured the hearts and taste buds of Canadians and has become synonymous with serving Canada's favourite coffee. Tim Hortons is Canada's largest restaurant chain operating in the quick service industry with nearly 4,000 restaurants across the country. More than a coffee and bake shop, Tim Hortons is part of the Canadian fabric



MSH's Dr. Bear steps behind the counter as a Tim Hortons team member for the day.

and guests can enjoy hot and cold specialty beverages – including lattes, cappuccinos and espressos, teas and our famous Iced Capp® – alongside delicious breakfast, sandwiches, wraps, soups and more. Tim Hortons has more than 5,100 restaurants in Canada, the United States and around the world.

HEALTH & WELLNESS



OAK VALLEY HEALTH AND MARKHAM STOUFFVILLE HOSPITAL FOUNDATION UNVEIL RECOGNITION CELEBRATING \$1 MILLION CONTRIBUTION LED BY MAYOR IAIN LOVATT AND THE TOWN OF WHITCHURCH-STOUFFVILLE

Today, municipal leaders and community partners gathered at Oak Valley Health's Markham Stouffville Hospital (MSH) to recognize the leadership and generosity of The Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville and Mayor Iain Lovatt.

In recognition of a remarkable \$1 million contribution raised through community events spearheaded by Mayor Lovatt, the hospital proudly named and unveiled the Mayor Iain Lovatt & The Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville Seating Area, located at the main staircase where the Foundation's Spiral of Sharing and Heritage Wall are on display. This contribution supports the purchase of new equipment and priority needs for the hospital.

"This recognition is a tremendous honour for our entire community. I am incredibly proud of the residents, donors, volunteers, and partners who came together to support Markham Stouffville Hospital," says His Worship Iain Lovatt, Mayor of Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville. "This \$1 million contribution reflects the generosity and compassion of Stouffville, and it will help ensure patients and



L-R: Allan Bell, Vice President, Community Relations and Corporate Partnerships, MSH Foundation, His Worship Frank Scarpitti, Mayor of City of Markham, Mark Fam, President and CEO, Oak Valley Health, His Worship Iain Lovatt, Mayor of Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville, Maurice Smith, Ward 2 Councillor, Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville, Honourable Dr. Helena Jaczek, Member of Parliament for Markham-Stouffville, His Worship Dave Barton, Mayor of the Township of Uxbridge and Sunny Bains, Chief Administrative Officer, Town of Stouffville.

Town of Stouffville, we are very honoured to receive this recognition," says Sunny Bains, Chief Administrative Officer, Town of Stouffville. "This is a testament to the compassion and collective spirit of our staff. Their continued commitment to supporting causes such as this truly embodies the values of our organization."

This special naming stands as a lasting tribute to the Stouffville leaders and community members highlighting the important role of community investment in strengthening local health care. "As our region continues to go through exponential growth, so does the demand for programs and services at Oak Valley Health," says Mark Fam, President & CEO, Oak Valley Health. "Gifts like this ensure we can continue

to expand the services our patients need, enhance the patient experience, and continue to invest in the hospital's most urgent priorities."

Government funding alone cannot support all the hospital's priority needs. Through MSH Foundation, donor support helps ensure the hospital can continue to expand and respond to increasing demand for care.

"We are incredibly grateful to Mayor Lovatt and the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville for their commitment to our hospital," says Suzette Strong, CEO, MSH Foundation. "The Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville exemplifies what's possible when a community comes together to ensure patients can continue to receive exceptional patient care close



L-R: Mark Fam, President and CEO, Oak Valley Health, Suzette Strong, CEO, MSH Foundation, His Worship Iain Lovatt, Mayor of Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville, Maurice Smith, Ward 2 Councillor, Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville and Sunny Bains, Chief Administrative Officer, Town of Stouffville.

families have access to the life saving equipment and exceptional care they deserve, today and for generations to come."

Mayor Lovatt is the Co-Chair of the Campaign for MSH alongside City of Markham Mayor Frank Scarpitti. Together, they are calling on our communities to invest \$150 million to transform the hospital into an integrated health care hub and meet the needs of a rapidly growing population. Mayor Lovatt united the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville to support MSH through numerous events including — All Night Lawn, Mayor Lovatt's Charity Golf Classic, Stouffville Gala, and Stouffville Main Street 5K.

"On behalf of the Administration at the



The Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville receives key from Oak Valley Health and MSH Foundation in recognition of their support of the hospital – L-R: Suzette Strong, CEO, MSH Foundation, Mark Fam, President and CEO, Oak Valley Health and His Worship Iain Lovatt, Mayor of Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville.

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

The Town of Stouffville is one of the jewels of the GTA, located just north of Toronto on Highway 404. We are a community rich in heritage and character and we are committed to offering our residents and businesses 'Country Close to the City'.



WAS THIS CULPABLE HOMICIDE NOT AMOUNTING TO MURDER, AIR CANADA JAZZ, AT THE HANDS OF THE AVIATION SYSTEM?

By: Kane Siva

Honestly, I choose this title since I cannot comprehend why this should have happened in a busy airport in the Big Apple, USA, which is always considered as a “Cradle of Aviation” and aviation safety. Who expected this accident, in a normal, routine and short haul flight in perfect weather conditions? The weather was chilly as it is still winter in Canada and in New York.

Air Canada flight 8646, 22nd March 2026, from Montreal to LaGuardia airport took off from Montreal at 22 12 hrs (10.12pm), flight time of 1 hour and 30 minutes. The flight was cleared to land by LaGuardia ATC, landed safely at 2340hrs (11.40PM) on runway 4.

Canadian Bombardier aircraft CRJ- 900, considered to be a safe aircraft and the landing was uneventful. Captain Antoine Forest and copilot Mackenzie Gunther would have been relieved that the flight was on ground, and the pilots were looking forward to their return flight to Montreal within 1 hour (normal turnaround time) but this became a dream. This flight carried 72 passengers and 4 crew members on board. Poor pilots never thought for a moment that they would be “Flying West”, (A term that is used in the pilot’s fraternity) soon or taking their final flight instead of going home to be with their loved ones.

This is really a heart-breaking incident for many in aviation industry. There were lots of alarm bells that were sounding across the aviation industry and in the blue skies across USA for the last 2/3 years. This has been a lingering problem, and the regulators are aware of these issues but don’t know whether they were shelving the issues plaguing the system, unable to address the issues in a timely manner, maybe due to financial constraint by the Federal Government, and the lack of willpower to act sooner. When the Air Canada landed, an airport fire truck, Truck One Company, requested permission from the ground controller to cross runway 4 to answer an emergency call. The call was answered by the ATC controller who gave permission for the fire truck to cross the active runway 4, without realizing that AC 8646 flight landed on the same runway and rolling. The ATC controller was so busy, forgot his earlier clearance. ATC controller tried to stop the truck, but it was too late. The pilots never saw this truck except when it was inches away and could not react to veer off from the runway.



‘Stop stop stop’: Report details lead-up to Air Canada LaGuardia crash

The impact killed both the pilots instantly, aircraft got perched on top of the fire truck, (Horrible sight to see) and one of the cabin staff sitting near the aircraft door, got ejected from the aircraft on the tarmac, still strapped in her seat, and fortunately alive with multiple fractures, in her legs. It is a miracle that she survived the and both fire truck staff too. The passengers, most of them, suffered injuries and some seriously and the cockpit got mangled.

Always an incident like this brings the normal question as to why and who was at fault for this horrific incident, a first in LaGuardia in 30 years. Many have been voicing their concern, for a long time at the highest level, in the “Mother of Aviation”. Aviation fraternity wants to uphold the aviation industry to its highest standards and moral values. Did this happen? Yes, to an admirable extent, but a lot more to be done by the system to provide a greater envelope of protection, in the skies and on ground always.

As soon as the accident occurred all the aviation bigwigs and heads of regulatory bodies were on the scene in LaGuardia, addressing the media as to why this happened. This is simple logic that any aviation buff would figure out. After an unpardonable tragedy it is futile to give all kinds of explanations, statements, arguments, finger pointing and starting a game of blame. What the aviation industry needs is concrete action now, how to prevent incidents like this in the future and sooner.

Aviation is an evolving, progressive and money-spinning industry. The system should be always one step ahead to provide enough safety tools, to protect the lives

of the people involved in their own yard. This is not an option, but mandatory. In an environment where at least every 2 or 3 minutes an action takes place; the regulators should be on the ball. This is almost like a situation where a surgeon operating on a patient should compromise the procedures due to lack of certain tools at the expense of the patient. The airport runway is a place where life and death can happen or develop any moment if the system has loopholes.

The situation in LaGuardia, the deficiencies, was well known to the system, but the fixes were slow in evolving. Failure of safety technology, ASDE-X —Airport Surface Detection Equipment, a radar-based system used by ATC controllers to track aircraft and vehicles on airport runways and taxiways, failed to work that day because the fire truck was not equipped with a Transponder. ATC and the staff functioning at an airport should be considered

essential services always. We should not attach monetary constraints and reduce the workforce, instead of enhancing it.

On that fateful night, LaGuardia ATC had only 2 controllers manning the fort instead of 4 which is mandatory, quoting the news media, after the crash. I stand to be corrected. Online sources mentioned that the ATC controller was handling the ground controller’s duties as well, which is against the norm. Ground control is a niche position within Air Traffic Control that manages aircraft on taxiways. Ground control function within the tower and is part of ATC, but both are separate positions, and on different VHF frequencies to ensure safety and mainly prevent taxiway collisions. Ground control manages all aircraft movement on taxiways, and ramp areas. The air traffic controller completely forgot his earlier clearance and the human frailty was in full display. The human error was in full display in a split second with a horrible fatal crash and it was like a horror movie.

Another question that comes into play is this: Authorities were aware that the fire truck was not equipped with a transponder to avoid collision and should have been more vigilant. Why did you permit this practice to go on? Further they should have modified the procedures for the emergency fire truck operations. Always, fire truck should have one or two personas sitting in the truck with the driver and they should function as a “Big Eye” watching out for any vehicle or aircraft on the runway when they must cross. This could have prevented this tragedy. I listened to one of the analysts after the crash who said that



Aviation & Airlines

SPECIAL FEATURE



air traffic volume decreases after 1130 pm at LaGuardia, hence the 2 staff would have served the purpose. I found this highly reprehensible and irresponsible. ATC is the backbone of the aviation industry, and you should not play second fiddle with this pillar of aviation. You must provide the system with all the tools to function smoothly without throttling it. These are essential services and whoever heads administration must upgrade the system. The situation at LaGuardia is an open secret, the evidence, as we say, "the proof is in the pudding". This is nothing but failures and repeated failures in the system. I am sure none of the hierarchy will accept this, but it was clearly visible that night. A saddest day for aviation.

Further on the 17th of April, an American Airlines flight 1197, pilot was forced to slam the brakes to avoid a collision on the runway at Charlotte airport, North Carolina, while taxiing out. Three weeks after LaGuardia accident. I don't want to be critical or cynical at all, trying my best to improve the safety of people who fly in and out 24 hours and 365 days. I want to be constructive and productive to enhance the safety of the system.

Now let me tap the "Home" button. This accident did hit us, Canadians, hard since the airline and the pilots are Canadian and the tragic demise of the pilots. Capt. Antoine Forrest 30 years, Quebecker and copilot Mackenzie Gunther 24 years, Ottawa, in the prime of their life, and career became the Sacrificial Lamb at the end. Some passengers called them "as heroes", since the pilots applied the brakes hard, to break a fiery impact which saved others' lives. It was heart clenching and wrenching to read the message of Antoine's brother, Cedric: "Have a safe flight, brother! Oh, we have heard that phrase so many times, but this time it will be the last, he said" in his Facebook post. The other pilot Mackenzie is missed by his parents and deeply by his wife Hanah, a high school sweetheart of him. Air Canada pilots did not want these two pilots lives to be squandered away, but their memories cherished always and gave them one of the warmest send offs in our aviation history.

I hope and pray that these pilots' death should not be in vain and the "System" should be upgraded and enhanced at every level by the administration. Hope, this is not a cry in the wilderness.

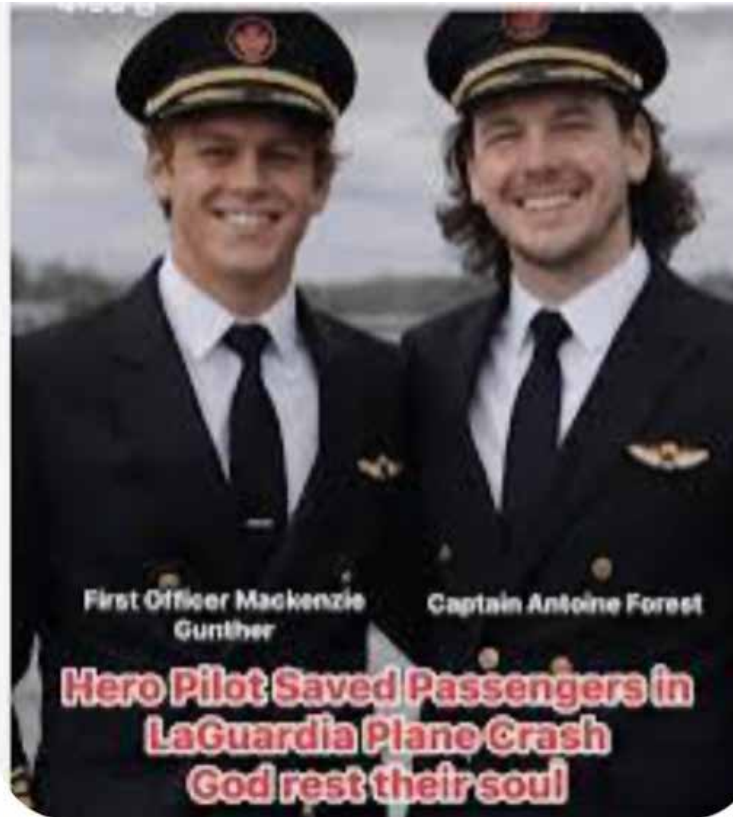
Systemic Failures and the Need for Change

The tragic accident at LaGuardia has highlighted significant deficiencies within the aviation system, particularly regarding staff shortages and outdated safety technology. The lack of essential personnel and equipment contributed directly to the events of that night, underscoring the urgent need for reform. Despite longstanding awareness of these issues, progress in addressing them has been slow, leaving critical vulnerabilities unaddressed.

On March 2026, only two air traffic controllers were on duty at LaGuardia

instead of the mandated four, forcing one controller to handle both tower and ground responsibilities. This deviation from protocol compromised safety and led to a fatal mistake when a fire truck was cleared to cross a runway without realizing an incoming aircraft was landing. The resulting collision tragically claimed the lives of two experienced pilots.

Compounding these failures, the fire truck involved lacked a Collision Avoidance Transponder, a device that could have prevented the incident. The practice of operating emergency vehicles without this



Our thoughts and prayers...

critical technology raises questions about procedural oversight and the prioritization of safety. Additionally, suggestions to reduce staff during late hours, based on lower air traffic volume, reflect a misunderstanding of the constant risks present in airport operations.

Staffing Decisions and Operational Risks

The approach of reducing staff during late hours, often justified by decreased air traffic, overlooks the persistent risks inherent in airport operations. Even when traffic is lighter, the potential for emergencies and critical incidents remains, making it essential to always maintain adequate staffing levels. This misconception can lead to dangerous gaps in oversight, as safety in aviation is not solely dependent on traffic volume but on the readiness and vigilance of personnel. Therefore, decisions based on traffic statistics rather than comprehensive safety requirements undermine the fundamental priorities of airport management and threaten the lives of both staff and passengers.

Essential services such as air traffic control must be fully supported, regardless of perceived workload.

The accident is a clear result of repeated system failures. Rather than engaging in blame or excuses, the aviation industry must commit to concrete measures that ensure safety for all personnel and

passengers. The lives lost in this tragedy must drive meaningful changes, with a renewed focus on upgrading technology, increasing staffing, and enhancing procedures to prevent future incidents.

To the families of both these heroic pilots, we (Canadian aviation) say this: "They will be cherished in our memories always and remembered for the highly professional way they conducted themselves, keeping our flag of compassion flying, even though when their lives were in mortal danger, tried and saved other passengers lives, by applying the brakes hard". As I am

summing up my agony over the system, US, ABC World News, 20th April, mentioned two Southwest Airlines flights had a narrow miss, of a mid-air collision at Nashville International Airport. ATC is the cause it looks like from the media, but they are always stretched to the thin, and we should stop blaming the ATC staff, instead of the system.

This looks like never ending episode, cannot believe as I am closing. Another close call at JFK, Quoting ABC world news today 21-04-2026, involving an Air Canada flight and an American Airlines flight.

Wonder how many more to come, before they revamp the System. Scary.

This is a clear-cut example of "what you invest / sow you reap" my personal musing.

I kindly request Prime Minister Mark Carney to urge the airport authorities or people responsible for the airport management in Montreal and Ottawa to name a hall or lounge after these 2 pilots respectively, as they originate from both these areas, to perpetuate their passion and memories.

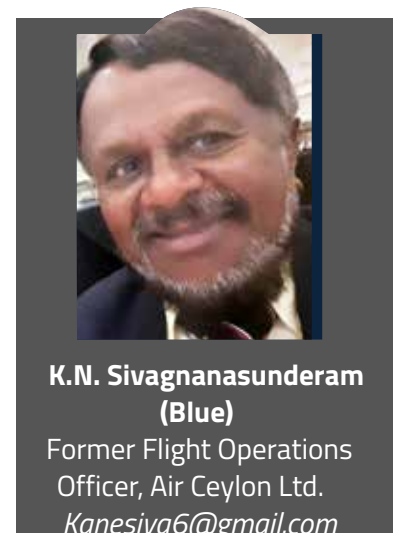
Quoting: Philip James Bailey,

Both these brave pilots might say this,

"We live in deeds, not years; in thoughts, not breaths; in feelings, not in figures on a dial. We should count time by heartthrobs. He most lives who thinks most, feels the noblest,

God Bless Their Souls to Be at Eternal Rest.

P.S. Latest news on this crash as reported in the media: NTSB, investigators confirmed that fire truck heard the "stop, stop" but did not know for whom this was. Again, human frailty.



K.N. Sivagnanasunderam (Blue)

Former Flight Operations Officer, Air Ceylon Ltd.
Kanesiva6@gmail.com



PEAK by Prem Rawat

Core Topics of PEAK

1) Self-Awareness

- Understanding yourself beyond roles and labels
- Becoming aware of thoughts, feelings, and reactions
- Recognizing personal responsibility for inner experience

2) Inner Strength

- Discovering resilience within
- Responding rather than reacting to situations
- Building confidence rooted in self-knowledge

3) Clarity

- Seeing situations as they are
- Reducing confusion caused by assumptions and emotions
- Making thoughtful, grounded decisions

4) Choice

- Recognizing the power of personal choice
- Understanding consequences of decisions
- Moving from impulsive to conscious living

5) Appreciation

- Cultivating gratitude for life and everyday experiences
- Shifting focus from problems to possibilities
- Enhancing wellbeing through positive awareness

6) Hope

- Developing a constructive outlook toward the future
- Strengthening motivation and purpose
- Overcoming discouragement

7) Dignity

- Respect for oneself and others
- Understanding inherent human worth
- Encouraging compassionate interactions

8) Peace (Inner Peace)

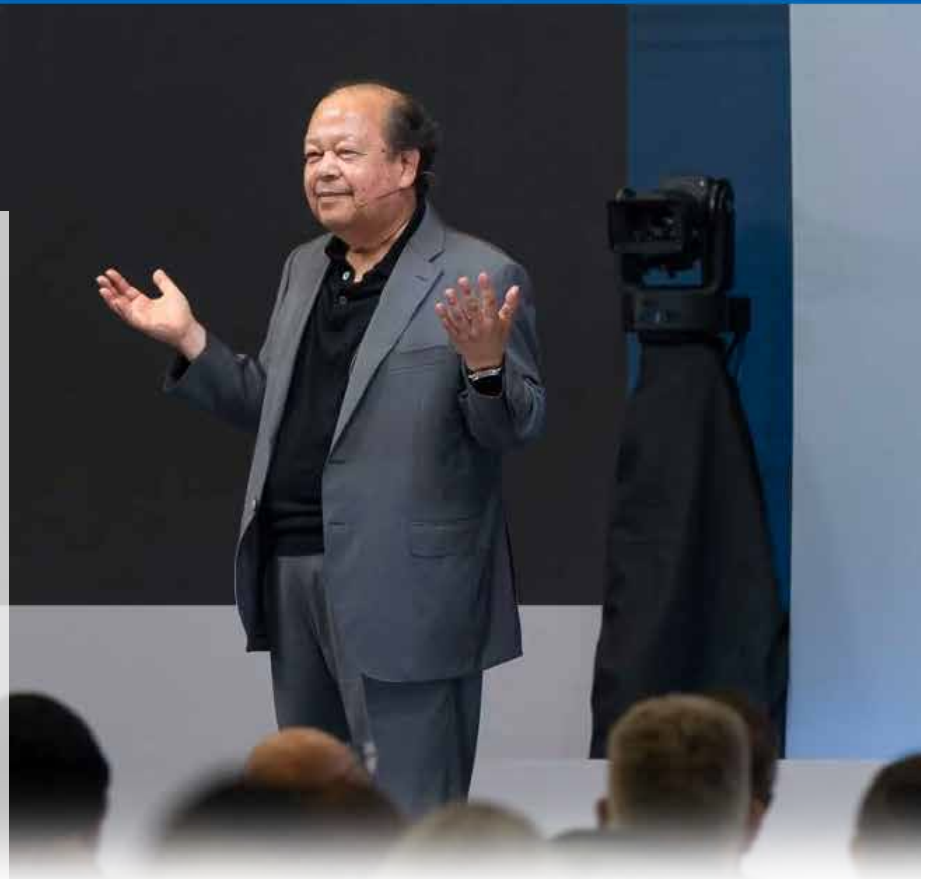
- Exploring peace as an inner experience, not external condition
- Practical ways to access calm and balance
- Living peacefully amid challenges

9) Understanding

- Deepening insight into human nature
- Building empathy and better relationships
- Reducing conflict through awareness

10) Fulfillment

- What it means to live a meaningful life
- Aligning actions with inner values
- Moving beyond material definitions of success



PEAK — Peace Education and Knowledge — is described as a practical educational program designed to help people discover their inner resources and live with greater peace, clarity, and fulfillment.

Peace Education and Knowledge – called PEAK is a free, self-paced online course designed to help participants discover their inner peace, gratitude and personal strengths. Acts as a foundation for those wishing to pursue deeper practice through live Knowledge sessions.

Available in multiple languages including English, French, Hindi, Spanish, Tamil and more .

Course Structure & Content

Consists of 9 chapters, a blend of video teachings, journaling, and self-reflection over 9 hours

The chapters include:

1. Introduction
2. Who Are You?
3. Clarity & Beliefs
4. Choice
5. Understanding
6. Gratitude
7. Peace
8. Hope
9. Self-Knowledge .

Participants Say

- "It has been life-changing to listen to it."
- "Helps stay anchored in stormy times."
- "With practice and focus, Knowledge takes me from thinking to feeling."



Naaladiyaar Koorum Nayavuraikal - 4

By: J A Rajah

1. People who have the mind to help others, would always strive to continue their charity in times of adversity as well as prosperity.

2. Do not hoard wealth. Share whatever you have with others since your life in this world cannot last forever.

3. Always remember to help others. Wealth will come and also leave you in its time. Therefore, remember to shed the sufferings of the needy.

4. Give at least a handful to those who are poorer than you. It is those who never helped others in their previous birth, find themselves eking out an existence as beggars.

5. Realizing the pride of helping others in your previous birth as well as our present birth, help the poor as much as possible.

6. People who live happily by giving charity to the needy are like a palmyra tree that grows tall in the midst of a village, granting its fruits to others.

7. The punnai tree spreads fragrance in coastal areas even when there is no rain to dispel the foul smell of the fish. Therefore, one must never forget to grant charity to those in need.

8. It is the sterling character of a good man to grant charity to those to come for help. Helping others thinking whether there will be some benefit selfishly is not charity. It will be just like business.

9. When people come begging for food, give them at least something in their begging bowls. Even if you give them a little rice, it will increase and give you blessings to lead a happy life.

10. The beating of the drum may be heard for a mile; but thunder and lightning can be heard for miles. On the other hand, the glory of a charitable man will be heard in all the three worlds. One cannot measure the great character of a charitable man, it is beyond limits.





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Zoroastrian priests of the Sassanid Empire maintained a sacred flame that never went out for over 700 years, using long bronze tongs because human breath was considered impure. By 651 AD, conquest extinguished these eternal fires, but the meticulous ritual survives in Parsi temples today.

From the 3rd to the 7th century AD, the Sassanid Empire maintained sacred fires that burned without interruption.

These flames represented the living presence of Ahura Mazda, the supreme deity of Zoroastrianism, and formed the spiritual core of an empire that rivaled Rome. The three greatest fires were linked to social classes: priests, warriors, and farmers. Kings would pilgrimage to the Warrior's Fire before major campaigns.

Maintaining an eternal flame was a monumental task. Specific woods were used, and ashes were removed with ritual implements. The fire could never be blown on by human breath, which was considered impure. Priests worked in rotating shifts to ensure constant vigilance. The system survived until the Arab Muslim conquests in the mid-7th century.

The temples were converted or abandoned, and flames that had burned for generations were extinguished. Yet the tradition migrated with Zoroastrian refugees to India, where the Parsi community continues the ancient practice of tending sacred fires.

leekern
@leekern13

When Europeans went to America they didn't find ancient manuscripts of Shakespeare: because they were colonisers

Jews in Israel find ancient manuscripts written in Hebrew, the same language they speak today, describing the same rituals they observe: because they're indigenous



Thulasi Muttulingam
April 30 at 12:37 PM

Yahoo News
April 29 at 12:10 AM

A saffron-robed Buddhist monk ended a gruelling barefoot walk across Sri Lanka on Tuesday with an impassioned appeal for world peace and kindness towards animals... See more

IS THIS REALLY GENOCIDE?

9 QUESTIONS THE ACCUSERS CAN'T ANSWER



Hamas carried out mass killings with **genocidal intent** on Oct 7.



The accusation was flipped onto Israel.



Same slogans. Same narratives. Same story.



Facts > slogans. Think critically. Demand answers.

1 IF EXTERMINATION IS THE GOAL... WHY HASN'T IT HAPPENED?

Israel has the power to kill tens of thousands in a day. **So why hasn't it?**

2 WHY ARE PALESTINIANS IN THE WEST BANK UNTOUCHED?

Millions of Palestinians. Same people. **Why no genocide there?**

3 WHY DOES THIS LOOK LIKE A WAR - NOT A GENOCIDE?

✓ Goal: Hamas + hostages
✓ Thousands of Israeli casualties
✓ Genocides don't look like this.

4 "INTENTIONAL STARVATION"? THEN WHY ALLOW FOOD IN?

Over 1.4 million tons of food entered Gaza. **If starvation is the goal, why allow any?**

5 WHERE IS THE FAMINE?

Real famine = massive visible deaths. **That's not what we see.**

6 WHY RISK SOLDIERS' LIVES IN GROUND COMBAT?

Urban warfare is high risk. **Why not just bomb everything if that's the goal?**

7 WHY ARE CASUALTY RATIOS LOWER THAN OTHER WARS?

Lower ratios don't match genocide patterns.

8 WHY WARN CIVILIANS BEFORE STRIKES?

Evacuation alerts Humanitarian corridors Delayed offensives
That's NOT how genocides work.

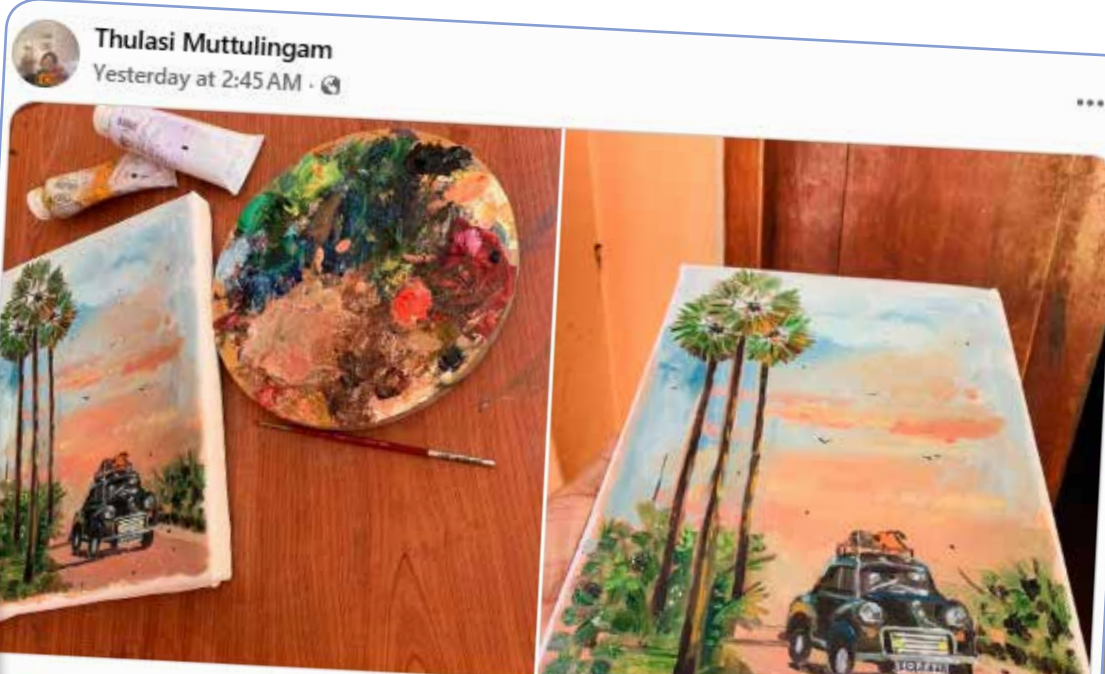
9 WHY VACCINATE HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF CHILDREN?

Mass vaccination campaigns with Israel's cooperation. **Does that fit an extermination plan?**

AT SOME POINT, YOU HAVE TO CHOOSE:

A THIS IS GENOCIDE **OR** **B** THESE FACTS DON'T FIT THAT CLAIM

THEY CAN'T BOTH BE TRUE. | THINK CRITICALLY. NOT EMOTIONALLY.



Pirunthajini Pirabakaran
April 30 at 11:16 AM

A journey in an Ambassador car through clusters of palmyra trees offers a truly unique experience. Vintage car models are still in use on the roads of Jaffna even today. Experience this journey through this painting.

SPECIAL FEATURE



CITY OF TORONTO SHARES FIRST LOOK AT FIFA FAN FESTIVAL™ TORONTO



FIFA Fan Festival™ Main Stage

On April 27, 2026, the City of Toronto shared details for FIFA Fan Festival™ Toronto at the Fort York National Historic Site and The Bentway that includes renderings, early programming highlights and event details. General admission is free, with advance registration required.

Mayor Olivia Chow was joined by Deputy Mayor Ausma Malik (Spadina–Fort York), the Honourable Neil Lumsden, Minister of Sport, Toronto hip-hop legend Kardinal Offishall and festival partners.

FIFA Fan Festival™ Toronto

FIFA Fan Festival™ Toronto will take place over 22 event days from Thursday, June 11 to Sunday, July 19, aligning with tournament match days, offering public viewing of matches. The schedule and days of operation are available at www.torontofwc26.ca/FIFAFanFestival.

FIFA Fan Festival™ Toronto is the central fan destination, featuring 46 live match broadcasts alongside performances, cultural programming, art and food that reflect Toronto as “The World in a City.” Residents and visitors alike can look forward to an all-ages celebration that captures the passion of the tournament from the first whistle to the final match.

Programming highlights

The festival will feature live music, cultural showcases and community programming that celebrate both the tournament’s global teams and Toronto’s diverse communities.

To anchor the energy and

Allied Nations, Anna Sofia, Bedouin Soundclash, Big Wreck, The Brokes, Choir! Choir! Choir!, Classic Roots, Deborah Cox, Dwayne Gretzky, Ikky, k-os, MICO, Murda Beatz, Nimkii and the Niniis, Shawn Desman, SHOUT! the band, Skratch Bastid, Snotty Nose Rez Kids, The



FIFA Fan Festival™ Site Map Rendering

electricity across all 22 days of the festival, Toronto-based hip-hop legend Kardinal Offishall presents: Soundclash Society, a curated supergroup of Toronto’s top DJs and special guests. This cultural collective will bring the heartbeat of Toronto to the festival’s stage.

The initial line-up of performers and DJs includes AHI, Alessia Cara,

Strumbellas, TOBi, Tyler Shaw and Walk off the Earth, with other announcements to come.

The festival’s cultural and community programming will also spotlight global entertainment and traditions through Toronto-based performers, including Andrés Valiente Proyecciones Folklóricas (Panama), Ballet Folklórico Puro



SPECIAL FEATURE



The World Pitch – featuring artwork by Alanah Astehtsi' Otsistóhkwa' Jewel

México and Mariachi Vientos del Norte (Mexico), Esie Mensah & The Black Stars Collective (Ghana), HanBeat Nanta (Korea), Nagata Shachu (Japan), Sky Dancers (First Nations), Spring Creek Dancers (First Nations) and SuperDogs, with more to come.

With support from FACTOR (the Foundation Assisting Canadian Talent on Recordings), FIFA Fan Festival™ Toronto will spotlight diverse and emerging Canadian artists throughout the festival's programming.

On-site features

Fans can enjoy a range of on-site experiences across the festival. Highlights include a dynamic mix of street food and flavours that reflect the richness of Toronto's global culinary scene, along with playful public artworks celebrating fandom curated by programming partner The Bentway.

Additional features include a custom soccer mini-pitch featuring the artwork of Indigenous artist Alanah Astehtsi' Otsistóhkwa' Jewel, a family-friendly play area and Tkaronto Market, which will feature five spaces of Indigenous vendors. Visitors can also take guided tours of Fort York and explore "Ontario Campus" fan activations hosted by the Government of Ontario and Host City Supporters.

Ticketing

General admission to FIFA Fan Festival™ Toronto is free with tickets required in advance to support capacity management, safety planning and the overall event experience.

Tickets will provide full-day access to match broadcasts, performances and activities.

Five hundred tickets per day will be reserved for community distribution through local youth and community organizations to support access.

Fans can enhance their experience through three distinct premium packages, each offering an elevated and immersive way to experience FIFA Fan Festival™ Toronto.

Tickets go on sale May 6. Learn more at www.torontofwc26.ca/FIFAFanFestival

Event overview

FIFA Fan Festival™ Toronto is expected to attract residents and visitors while supporting local businesses.

The City engaged a joint operation of vendors via competitive procurement to operate FIFA Fan Festival™ Toronto, comprising of The Fifth, CANDICE&ALISON, One Twenty Eight and LOFT

Entertainment, with Paquin Artists Agency. This collective group brings deep expertise that spans hospitality, culinary programming, large-scale event production, cultural and live entertainment programming, artist relations, and interactive and elevated experiences.

Host City Supporter

The City has signed Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corporation (OLG) as the fourth Official Toronto World Cup™ 2026 Host City Supporter, joining Ontario Power Generation (OPG), Humber Polytechnic and Toronto FC. Through this partnership, OLG will support grassroots investment and drive fan experiences, including through activations at FIFA Fan Festival™.

Media accreditation

Media accreditation will be managed by the City, with the application portal expected to open in May. Accreditation is limited to recognized media and working journalists, with freelance reporters required to provide an assignment letter from a recognized media outlet.

FIFA World Cup 2026™

FIFA World Cup 2026 begins in Mexico City on Thursday, June 11 and concludes with the final in New York/New Jersey on Sunday, July 19. Toronto will host six matches, including the first-ever men's FIFA World Cup™ match on Canadian soil on Friday, June 12 and a round of 32 match on Thursday, July 2. Funding approved by Toronto City



Casamigos Clubhouse – Premium Area

SPECIAL FEATURE



Garden Pavilion – Premium Area

Council forms part of the City's host city budget, with support from the Government of Canada and the Government of Ontario.

In December 2024, FIFA released an economic impact assessment prepared by Deloitte Canada, estimating the tournament could generate up to \$940 million in economic output across the Greater Toronto Area and support more than 6,600 jobs.

“As Canada prepares to welcome the world for the FIFA World Cup 2026™ this summer, initiatives like FIFA Fan Festival™ Toronto will help bring the excitement of the tournament from the stadium to the city's neighbourhoods and beyond. 2026 is Canada's Year of Sport, and moments like this show how sport can bring people together, strengthen our



Garden Pavilion – Premium Area

Quotes:

“FIFA Fan Festival™ Toronto will bring residents and visitors together to celebrate the game and our city. Keeping this free was important, so everyone has the opportunity to take part and feel part of this historic moment. This is an opportunity to showcase Toronto as a safe, affordable and caring city, while creating space for communities to connect and celebrate together.”

– **Mayor Olivia Chow**

communities and showcase the very best of who we are. The Government of Canada is proud to support opportunities for Canadians to come together, celebrate our diversity and be part of this historic moment.”

– **The Honourable Adam van Koevorden, Secretary of State (Sport) and Canada's FIFA Sherpa**

“Ontario is proud to support the delivery of FIFA Fan Festival™ Toronto as a cornerstone celebration on the world's biggest

sporting stage this summer. Our government is excited to take part in an unforgettable tournament experience that will create a safe, inclusive and high-energy space, bringing communities together, driving economic activity and showcasing the best of Ontario and Toronto to the world.”

– **Neil Lumsden, Minister of Sport**

“Fort York and the Bentway are two iconic sites in our city, where fans from near and far will be able to get a real feel for the best of our city at FIFA Fan Festival™ Toronto. From this historic site to communities across the city, the festival will bring people together to connect, celebrate and be part of the FIFA World Cup™ experience.”

– **Deputy Mayor Ausma Malik**

“The Bentway is a year-round vibrant destination where culture and recreation intersect, and we're excited to bring that same spirit to the FIFA Fan Festival™. With interactive, family-friendly art installations, creative gathering areas that spark social connection, and signature works that celebrate Toronto's creativity and diversity, we're looking forward to creating an unforgettable fan experience.”

– **Ilana Altman, CEO, The Bentway**

Toronto is home to more than three million people whose diversity and experiences make this great city Canada's leading economic engine and one of the world's most diverse and livable cities.

As an Official Host City for the FIFA World Cup 2026™ and the fourth largest city in North America, Toronto is a global leader in technology, finance, film, music, culture and innovation and climate action, and consistently places at the top of international rankings due to investments championed by its government, residents and businesses. For more information visit the City's website or follow us on X, Instagram or Facebook.



SPECIAL FEATURE

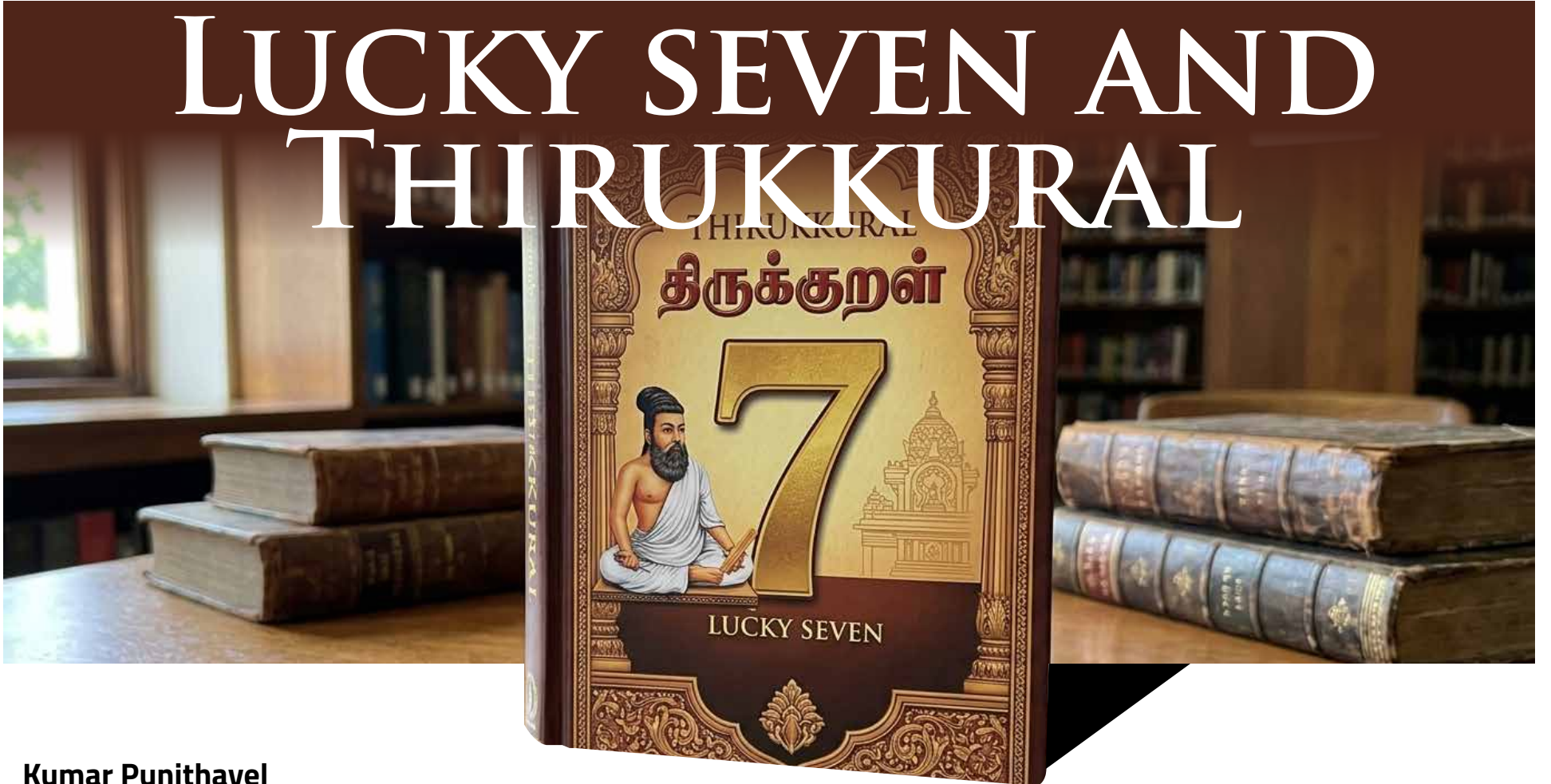


Pitchside Terrace – Premium Area





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 ROLE OF PARENTAL RIGHTS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIETY

By: J A Rajah

Canada has always been considered as a land of peace, opportunity, and freedom. The freedom included the opportunity to raise a family, and pass on our values and beliefs to our children. This assumption may not be fully correct and be overly optimistic.

A. The Background

In 1948, the world was just beginning to recover from the two most horrific conflicts in modern history. The effects of the rules of dictators like Hitler and Stalin have polluted the seats of government. Schools became places where ruling parties imposed its values and philosophies on students, often turning into their parent's betrayers. In December 1948, the UN passed a resolution known as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Its authors had experienced how the totalitarian regimes have used schools to brainwash children into accepting philosophies and beliefs that were diametrically opposed to the cultural and religious beliefs of their parents and grand parents. The resolution wanted to make sure that schools could never again be used to brainwash children against those who raised them. The resolution stated that family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and state. It further made it clear that parents have the right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.

Though the nations agreed to these statements, many school systems are violating these stipulations. Schools have become tools of social activism. Students are brainwashed to think contrary to what has been taught to them at home.

B. The Contrary Values that have crept into the minds of Children:

The National Post referred to an article that states about the new ideas that have been put into the minds of the young at schools. The kids were being taught to lie to the parents. A grade six class student in Calgary, was told by the teacher that the gender identity of a classmate must not be told to its parents. In another instance, a Toronto mother complained that her child's



school changed her kid's name and pronouns without even consulting her.

Even the Public Health Agency of Canada advises schools to implement a 'simple one stop procedure' for students to change their names and gender on official documents and not talk to anyone about a student's identity, including parents/caregivers, to whom they have not already disclosed their gender identity. Instead, the staff are told to 'discuss with them the possibility of rejection, physical abuse and sexual abuse'.

Health authorities or school systems that make such policies to conceal from parents some of the most sensitive and vital information about their own children are betraying a trust placed on them by parents-and violating the UN declaration to which the nation is signatory. The same article relates the story of a father who was shocked to find his daughter, who was identified as a boy at school, was assigned to a room with three boys in a hotel while on a field trip. In that case, the father found out and the problem was resolved. There is also the disturbing fact that both parents exercise their right to have a child, excused from sex education classes, schools may however, include the student in events like 'Gender Splendour' weeks, where guest speakers challenge religious ideas of human identity and conduct - parental knowledge.

C. Correct and Courageous Choices:

Neo-Marxism and other social activism should not be allowed to destroy parental rights that have

been ensconced by law for centuries. The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights signed in 1976 by the Canadian government and the US in 1992 guarantees the protection of the family as well as the rights of parents to teach religious and moral convictions. They are legal guardians to ensure the religious and moral education in conformity with their own convictions. In Sri Lanka, religion is taught to all students as a school subject and permission is given to all students to worship in fellowship with the students of their own religious denomination. An attempt to deprive the parents of such a democratic right should not be tolerated. Any forms of societal madness should not be allowed to have their way.

D. Parental Indoctrination and the Child's Educational Success:

Parental indoctrination is the most critical factor in a child's educational success, transforming from a school achievement to a lifelong pursuit. They provide educational security, and curiosity and model learning. At the end of the day, the most overwhelming key to the child's success is the personal involvement of the parents. It is not what they do to them, by what they have taught them to do, that will make them but how they become a model for them to imitate and live successfully. The children learn by living and the parents provide the parameters for them. Child's emotional needs must come first; learning is ineffective if they do not feel safe and understood. Education is not just the task of the school; it is a partnership where the parents provide the ride and wheel for development.



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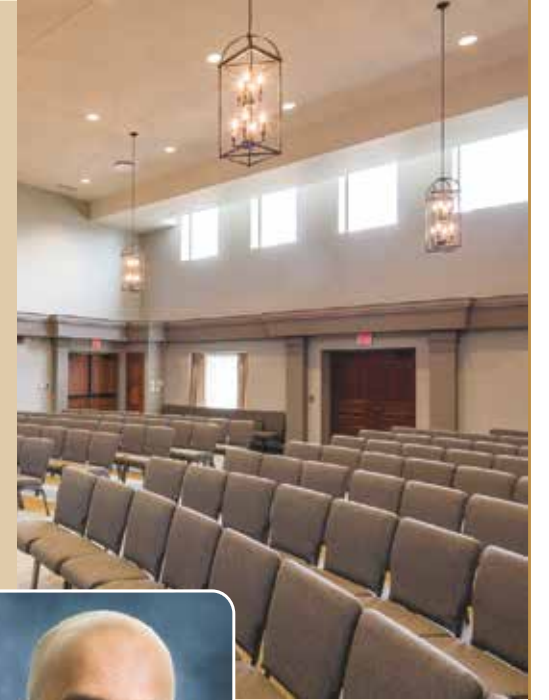
உங்கள் உறவொன்றை பிரிந்து தடுமாறும் வேளையில் இறுதி நிகழ்வுகள் பற்றிய கவலை உங்களுக்கு வேண்டாம். அனுபவத்துடன் கூடிய அன்பான சேவையை வழங்குகின்றோம்.

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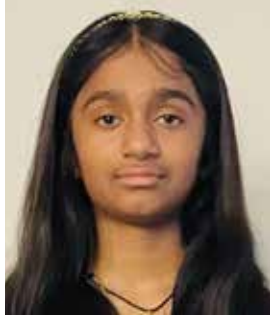
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MY FAVOURITE ADVERTISEMENT

My favourite advertisement is the “New Kid” commercial from Doritos. The commercial is really surprising for me. The commercial begins with a mom telling her son to try to make some friends as she



By: Abina Maheswaran
(Grade 5)

hands him a bag of Doritos chips. On the school bus, he sits down with his bag of chips and offers a Doritos chip to another kid on the bus. She takes the chip, and this gets the attention of all the students

on the bus. Everyone on the bus is screaming for Doritos, including the school bus driver! When they realized the bus was unattended, it was already too late. The bus crashed and the boy ended up with a neck brace. The commercial ends with the kid frustratingly returning the bag of Doritos to the mom as he tells her to make friends instead.

Firstly, this is a good advertisement because everyone understands the commercial. Everyone understands what it feels like when you’re the new kid in school and don’t have any friends. The mom is worried that her son would be lonely in school, so she comes up with the idea to give him a bag of Doritos chips before getting on the school bus. The mother wants the students to talk to him with the bag of Doritos as bait. He is happy with this plan and follows along.

In this commercial, the bag of Doritos is the hero and helps him make friends. On the school bus, when he shared a chip with a kid beside his seat, everyone else wanted one too. Everyone, including the bus driver, stopped what they were doing, and they all came over to him to ask for a Doritos chip. The Doritos chips made him the popular kid on the bus, and this made him happy.

The commercial comes to a downfall when everyone surrounding the new kid realizes that the bus is still moving along the road, and the bus driver is not driving the bus. The bus passes the school, and everyone



starts screaming. The bus crashes, and the Doritos logo appears.

This commercial has a funny and unexpected ending. Instead of coming home with friends from the first day of school, the boy comes in with a neck brace. The bus crash made him

sprain his neck, and he jokes about his own mom’s advice. He expresses his frustration and returns the bag of chips to his mom and tells her to make friends instead. The bag of chips helped him to make friends, but it also made him get injured.

In conclusion, my favourite commercial is the “New Kid” Doritos commercial. The commercial is easy to understand, the chips saves the day, but also made him get injured at the end. This is what makes the

commercial a funny advertisement because of the plot twist. However, this commercial does a good job of telling people that having a bag of Doritos would make them popular and have an unforgettable experience.



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RICHMOND HILL EARNS HIGH MARKS FOR ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION

More trees, lower emissions and greener choices are building a healthier community



Lake Wilcox

Richmond Hill continues to lead on environmental protection, with strong results highlighted in the City's second and newly released Environmental Scorecard.

The Scorecard tracks progress on Greening the Hill: Our Community, Our Future, the City's Environment Strategy from 2020 to 2024, while also referencing data from the 2015 to 2019 Scorecard to show progress over time. It shows meaningful improvements across key areas that support a healthier, more sustainable community. Highlights include:

- A 5.3 per cent increase in tree canopy coverage – the equivalent of more than 107,000 new trees
- Significant reductions in corporate energy use and greenhouse gas emissions
- Lower corporate and community water consumption
- One of the highest waste

diversion rates in Canada, holding steady at 68 per cent

- 85 kilometres of new active transportation infrastructure, including bike lanes, trails and sidewalks

The Scorecard also reveals the importance of collaboration in response to increasing challenges from climate change and urban growth. In 2025, the City continued to work closely with residents, community groups and partner organizations to turn environmental goals into on-the-ground action. Notable accomplishments include:

- Hosting Climate Ready Homes workshops and one-on-one consultations with residents, in partnership with Toronto and Region Conservation Authority
- Approving new Micromobility and Electric Vehicle Charging strategies to support cleaner, more sustainable transportation choices

- Modernizing zoning, bylaws and the tree permit system to grow and protect Richmond Hill's urban forest

- Working with residents to plant 9,367 trees, restore 3.1 acres of natural areas, and remove litter from 195 parks, trails and neighbourhoods

- Making simple, low-cost improvements to road curbs near Lake Wilcox to help nesting turtles cross the street safely

These actions reflect Richmond Hill's commitment to protecting local ecosystems, reducing environmental impact and making it easier for residents to participate in building a greener city.

For more information about Richmond Hill's environmental programs, achievements and how to get involved,

visit

RichmondHill.ca/Environment.



SPRING PREPARATIONS WELL UNDERWAY IN MARKHAM AFTER A WINTER TO REMEMBER!



After one of the snowiest winters Markham has experienced in nearly 80 years, warmer weather has finally arrived. The City's Operations teams have been working tirelessly to transition from an intense winter season into full-scale spring maintenance, ensuring Markham is ready for residents and visitors to enjoy throughout the warmer months.

"This winter was extraordinary in so many ways, and our staff rose to the challenge," says Mayor Frank Scarpitti. "From navigating historic snowfalls to immediately shifting into spring maintenance, our Operations employees continue to work year-round to keep Markham safe, clean, and beautiful. Their dedication and professionalism throughout all the seasons are truly unmatched."

This year's heavy snowfall and repeated freeze-thaw cycles created significant wear on sidewalks, roads, and streetlights. Markham continues to use advanced artificial intelligence (AI) software from Visual Defence Inc. to detect surface flaws, prioritize repairs, and maximize the efficiency of our road maintenance program. Software like this has allowed our crews to work as efficiently as possible, helping them identify and repair over 2,700 potholes annually, with over 1,100 completed so far this year. If residents see an area on the road that

requires work, they're encouraged to report it through the City's Report A Problem service.

The spring and summer months allow us the opportunity to slow down and spend time outdoors. Markham is home to 336 beautiful community parks and 243 kilometres of recreational trails. Hours of hard work, dedication, and expertise go into developing, building, and maintaining these outdoor spaces. Staff from departments including Operations, Planning and Urban Design, Engineering, and many others all play a role in ensuring we Keep Markham Beautiful.

Reminders for residents

While out this spring and summer, we hope residents will continue to do their part to help keep our City clean for everyone to enjoy. You can find helpful community tips in our Good Neighbour Handbook. By working together, we can ensure our City spaces remain clean and enjoyable.

A few friendly reminders:

- Put household waste, recyclables, and organic waste (including pet waste) in the correct container. Learn more at markham.ca/WhatGoesWhere.
- Do not litter in City parks and

open spaces, including disposing of household garbage in these areas

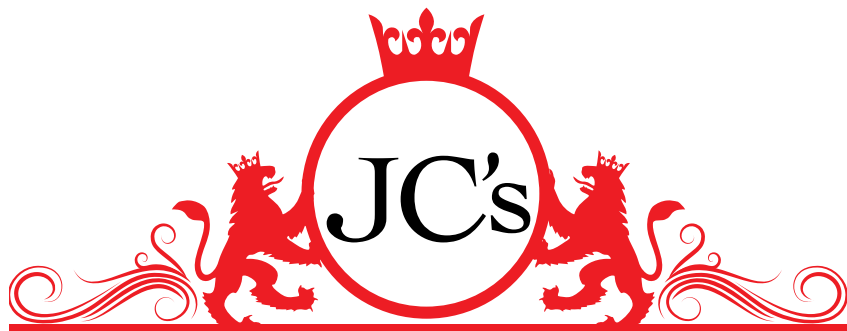
As they enjoy the long weekends and holidays this summer, residents are asked to please take note of when fireworks are allowed (and when permits are required). Fireworks are not allowed on City property, including parks, fields, and roads. Learn more at markham.ca/Fireworks.

About Markham

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

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COMMUNITY WATCH



Durham Tamils Association Celebrating 26 Years Of Serving Our Tamil Community

The Durham Tamil Association has proudly served the community for 26 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.

COMMUNITY BRAVES THE CHILL FOR DTA'S ANNUAL EASTER FUN DAY



Despite overcast skies and chilly temperatures, dozens of families gathered at J. Clarke Richardson Collegiate on Sunday, April 5, 2026, for the Durham Tamil Association's (DTA) Annual Easter Egg Hunt and Family Fun Day. The "less-than-ideal" weather proved no match for the community's enthusiasm as residents arrived bundled up and ready to celebrate.

The event kicked off at 10:00 AM with a popular Pancake Breakfast, providing a cozy escape from the damp air. Attendees warmed up with fresh pancakes, hot chocolate, and coffee, transforming the morning into a vibrant social hub before heading outdoors for the signature egg hunt and festivities. The remarkable turnout served as a testament to the community's resilience and spirit, proving that a little grey weather couldn't dampen the holiday cheer.

Successes like these are a true reflection of community dedication. The DTA noted that this event would not have been possible without the tireless help and support of their youth and adult volunteers, alongside the committed board members who worked behind the scenes to ensure every detail was in place.





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DTA'S HOMELAND PROJECTS

DTA is proud to announce that we have completed over 130 homeland projects as of Apr 30, 2026. Watch out more for this year as we wish to continue this momentum and provide more opportunities back home.

Thank you to Mr. Subramaniam Kathirithamby & Mr Maylvahanam (Sri Lanka) for coordinating this project.



DTA'S SENIORS

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

THANK YOU TO DTA'S ANNUAL SPONSORS

DTA thanks our annual sponsors Computek College of Business, Healthcare & Technology. **Nava Wilson LLP. Chapel Ridge Funeral Home & Cremation**, and all our sponsors for your continued support throughout the year. If you are interested in being annual sponsor please reach out to the below contacts.

For more information on all DTA's Community Support Programs and Sponsor contacts

please visit: [www. DurhamTamils.Org](http://www.DurhamTamils.Org)

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Location: DTA Center 66
Harwood Ave S Ajax Phone# 905-428-7007

DTA SENIOR'S MAY MONTHLY MEETING

DTA Senior's monthly meeting will be held on Sunday May 31, 2026 at 5:00 pm at DTA Centre.

66B Harwood Ave S, Ajax, L1S 2H6.

Event Time: 5-9 pm

Please, all Senior (ages 55+) members attend the meeting.

Register online - durhamtamils.org

Members who were born in this month, please mention in the comments section to organize your cake-cutting at the meeting.

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CITY OF BRAMPTON STRENGTHENING INVESTMENT IN ARTS AND CULTURE BY ASSUMING OWNERSHIP AND OPERATIONS OF PEEL ART GALLERY, MUSEUM AND ARCHIVES

On April 23, 2026, Peel Regional Council approved the transition of Peel Art Gallery, Museum and Archives' (PAMA) ownership and operations to the City of Brampton, effective January 1, 2028. Archival services will continue to be delivered at the site through an agreement with the Region of Peel.

Through this transition, the City will assume full ownership of the region's most significant cultural assets and include them as a key component of creative sector growth and tourism development, marking an exciting investment that will deliver long-term cultural and community benefits for residents, businesses, artists and arts and culture organizations.

Located in the heart of Downtown Brampton, the 60,879 sq ft complex, including the Historic Peel County Courthouse, Gaol, Land Registry Building and former Hydro Headquarters are key heritage buildings in the Region of Peel and a major landmark in the city. The museum holds 14,000 recorded artifacts, in addition to 29,000 archaeological objects, and the Art Gallery holds 6,200 pieces. Together, the site and its assets are valued at more than \$60 million, as outlined in the Region of Peel's September 2025 report here.

As one of Canada's largest cities, Brampton remains one of the only major municipalities without its own art gallery and museum. The transition of PAMA allows the City to leverage an established facility rather than developing a new network of cultural infrastructure, which would require significant new capital investments. Avoiding new capital costs allows Brampton to redirect these resources toward programming reflective of Brampton's people, places and stories, community access and partnerships, maximizing value for local taxpayers.

Downtown Revitalization and Hazel McCallion Light Rapid Transit

With a revitalized and more vibrant downtown, significantly improved transit connectivity to a much larger catchment area and an anticipated transit stop near the museum, PAMA will be able to capitalize on a larger pool of prospective visitors to downtown Brampton, while being served by what will likely become one of Peel region's most efficient and effective transit lines.

The committed tunnelled LRT will provide faster and more reliable transit service along the Hurontario corridor, resulting in more efficient and significantly improved connectivity within the region. The completed line will also act as a catalyst to create a more vibrant, sustainable corridor and downtown.

PAMA's ownership and operations transition aligns with the revitalization efforts already underway in downtown Brampton, including major city-building projects like Riverwalk, revitalized streetscapes, enhanced public squares, the future tunnelled LRT and new developments like the Centre for Innovation and the



Peel Art Gallery, Museum and Archives, Brampton, ON

Heritage Theatre Block.

Building on this work, an enhanced and localized governance model, funding and vision of PAMA will help:

- Attract creative industries and talent
- Build civic pride and community connection
- Strengthen localized placemaking
- Drive local traffic and support local businesses
- Create educational opportunities for residents of all ages

Next Steps

A PAMA Transition Board including representatives from the City of Brampton, City of Mississauga, Town of Caledon and the Region of Peel, will guide the transition over the next two years.

As part of this work, the City of Brampton will review current operations, and develop an updated operating model and budget prior to assuming ownership of PAMA's museum and art gallery.

Details on how the community can provide their feedback throughout this process will be shared as the transition work begins.

PAMA remains open to the public throughout the transition period. For more information on exhibitions, programs, and membership, visit pama.peelregion.ca

Quotes

"This is yet another defining moment for Brampton. Local ownership of PAMA is a strategic investment that allows the City to build on an existing \$60 million cultural asset while avoiding the significant costs of constructing a new facility from the ground up. This move gives us the opportunity to build on the transformative infrastructure upgrades underway and further animate our downtown, support local businesses and create a destination that reflects the diversity and creativity of our city." - **Patrick Brown, Mayor, City of Brampton**

"This transition provides the City a real opportunity to better align programming, partnerships and investments with the needs of our residents and growing creative sector. With direct oversight of PAMA, we can better

connect it with Brampton's network of cultural spaces like Alderlea, the Rose Theatre and Bovaird House, while delivering stronger community impact and value for taxpayers." - **Rowena Santos, Regional Councillor, Wards 1 and 5; Chair, Community Services**

"With the LRT and other major investments in our downtown, we have a timely and unique opportunity to position PAMA as a cultural destination that draws visitors from across our city and beyond. That kind of foot traffic is critical to supporting small businesses and creating a lively, connected downtown. I also look forward to hearing from the community on the enhanced programming they would like to see in the future of the facility." - **Martin Medeiros, Regional Councillor, Wards 3 and 4**

"Brampton is one of the most diverse cities in Canada, and this transition allows us to ensure our cultural institutions reflect that reality. By expanding programming and partnerships, we can create space for more voices, more stories and more community-led initiatives, while also strengthening the local economy." - **Dennis Keenan, Regional Councillor, Wards 3 and 4**

"This transition allows us to rethink how a museum and gallery can serve a modern, growing city. As we plan for future operations, our focus will be on increasing access, expanding community partnerships, and delivering programming that drives both cultural participation and economic activity. By leveraging an existing facility and integrating it into Brampton's broader network of cultural services, we can invest more directly in people, experiences and partnerships that benefit residents, the creative community and businesses alike." - **Bill Boyes, Commissioner, Community Services**

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



CITY WARNS ABOUT FRAUDULENT QR CODES ON PARKING MACHINES

Residents and visitors are advised to remain cautious about fraudulent QR codes placed on parking machines across Mississauga.

On April 22, 2026, the City became aware of fraudulent QR code stickers appearing on parking Pay and Display machines, also known as parking machines, in Downtown Mississauga. City staff removed fraudulent QR code stickers from parking machines after becoming aware of a scam targeting drivers.

These unauthorized QR codes are designed to redirect users to third-party payment sites that are not affiliated with the City. Scanning and using these codes put your personal and financial information at risk.

Upon becoming aware of the issue, City staff responded immediately, within an hour, to locate and remove roughly 80 fraudulent QR code stickers from affected parking machines. City crews were deployed to check all parking machines and will actively monitor them to help prevent further incidents and ensure that more fraudulent QR code stickers are not posted.

The City wants to reassure residents that this issue was addressed quickly and that routine parking use remains safe. City staff continue to monitor parking machines and equipment and respond quickly to reports.

Similar scams have been reported in cities across Canada like in Vancouver, Montreal, Ottawa and Toronto.

What residents should know

In Mississauga, QR codes stickers posted on parking machines are never used to collect payment for parking. Parking and payment instructions can be found on the parking machine digital screen or on surrounding official City signage. The only way to pay for City parking is through parking machines using the digital payment prompts, where certain payment options are accepted like coins, payment apps like Apple Pay or Google Wallet or major credit cards (Visa, Mastercard, American Express) at all locations.

Any QR code found on a City paid parking machine is not legitimate and should not be scanned.

How to spot a fraudulent QR code

Fraudulent QR code stickers are often placed over existing signage or payment instructions and can redirect users to fake payment websites that look legitimate but are designed to steal personal and financial information.

Residents are encouraged to watch for these common warning signs before



The fraudulent QR code is blurred in this photo of a City pay parking machine.

scanning QR codes. Here are a few things to look for:

- A sticker placed on or near a parking machine, rather than built into the equipment.
- A QR code that asks you to scan to pay for parking.
- A payment website that looks official but has a slightly different web address or spelling.
- QR codes that appear to include partial logos or branding to look legitimate.

Anyone who encounters a suspicious QR code on a City paid parking machine is encouraged to avoid scanning it. Instead report it directly to the City by calling 311. By calling 311, City staff can remove fraudulent stickers quickly and protect others from falling victim to the scam.

What to do if you scanned and paid for parking using this fraudulent QR code

Anyone who may have scanned one of these codes should know they are not alone. Peel Regional Police regularly warn residents that scammers increasingly use fraudulent links and QR codes to steal personal and financial information.

Scams like this are occurring in cities across Canada. Anyone who suspects they have fallen victim to this scam and may have scanned a QR code should know they are not alone and, where personal or financial information has been compromised, are encouraged to:

- Immediately contact their credit card company and or financial institution and report the incident so appropriate steps can be taken.

- Report it to the City immediately by calling 311.

- Monitor financial account activity for unauthorized transactions or suspicious activity.

If you're a victim of fraud, visit a Peel Regional Police Division/Community station to file a Fraud Report. Reports are not taken over the phone.

Peel Regional Police advise the public to be cautious when asked to provide payment details through unfamiliar websites or digital prompts, especially in public spaces. Residents are encouraged to verify payment methods through trusted sources and report suspected fraud to their financial institution.

How does the City use QR codes

The City may use QR codes in official promotional materials to share information or direct users to City webpages. Those QR codes are accompanied by clear branding and a City customized URL that residents can type directly into their browser.

QR codes will never be placed on parking machines or used to process parking payments.

The City wants to reassure residents that on street parking in Mississauga remains safe to use. QR codes have never been a legitimate method of payment at City parking machines. Avoiding QR codes and using the payment instructions shown on the parking machine screen fully protects residents from this type of scam.



The fraudulent QR code is blurred in this close-up photo of a City pay parking machine.



SPECIAL FEATURE

DASHAVATARA TEMPLE, DEOGARH, UP, INDIA

Compiled by Kidambi Raj

INTRODUCTION

The *Dashavatara Temple* is an early 6th century Vishnu Hindu temple located at *Deogarh*, Uttar Pradesh in the *Betwa River Valley* in north central India. The temple site *Deogarh*, also spelled *Devgarh* (a Sanskrit word meaning *fort of gods*). This ancient temple is below the Deogarh hill, towards the river, about 500 m (1, 600 ft) from a group of three dozen Jain temples with dharmasalas built a few centuries later and the *Deogarh Karnali Fort* built in early 13th century. The Dashavatara temple is about 30 km (19 m) from Lalitpur town in Uttar Pradesh, 220 km (140 m) west of Khajuraho, 250 km (160 m) south of Gwalior, 230 km (140 m) northeast of Bhopal, and about 400km (250 m) southwest of Kanpur. It has a simple, one cell square plan and is one of the earliest Hindu stone temples still surviving today. Built in the Gupta period, the Dashavatara Temple at Deogarh shows the ornate Gupta style architecture.

Though the temple at Deogarh is dedicated to *Vishnu*, it includes in its small foot print images of *Shiva*, *Parvati*, *Kartrikeya*, *Brahma*, *Indra*, *Rive Goddesses Ganga* and *Yamuna*, as well as a panel showing the five *Pandavas* of the Hindu epic *Mahabharata*. The temple was built out of stone masonry bricks. Legends associated with Vishnu are sculptured in the interior and exterior walls of the temple. Also carved are secular scenes and amorous couples in various stages of courtship and intimacy.



According to Alexander Lubotsky, this temple was built according to the third *khanda* of the Hindu text *Vishnudharmottara Purana*, which describes the design and architecture of the *Sarvatobhadra-style* temple, thus providing aflourit for the text and likely temple tradition that existed in ancient India. Though ruined, the temple is preserved in a good enough condition to be a key temple in the Hindu temple architecture scholarship, particularly the roots of the North Indian style of temple design.

The *Dashavatara Temple* is locally known as *Sagar marh*, which literally means “*the temple on the tank*”, a name it gets from the square water pool cut into the rock in front. Sagar-marh or temple by the tank, no less emphasizing the connection of holy water and pilgrimage with temple cuts in early medieval temple contexts.

HISTORY

Deogarh is an ancient site. Numerous inscriptions in different languages and scripts have



been found here, as have a series of Hindu, Jain and Buddhist monuments. These suggest that it was once a significant human settlement, likely a location on an imperial trade route that brought people from different linguistic backgrounds to it. According to Madho Vats, Deogarh nestled within picturesque hills in north, west and south along with its abundant waters was conveniently located between the major ancient economic centres such as *Patalipura* (Patna), *Kashi* (Varanasi), *Sanchi*, *Udayagiri*, *Ujjain*, *Bhilsa* and *Bagh*. Cunningham in 1875, noted that the inscriptions he found in Deogarh during his tour were in Gupta script and few others he could not decipher. The ones his team was able to read were Hindu Sanskrit inscriptions that started with phrases such as *Om Namah Shivaya*, and some of the dates included within the inscriptions meant that the various inscriptions ranged from 808 CE to 1164 CE, none before the 8th century or after the 13th century. Cunningham reported about the colossal statues of the Thirthakaras in the Jain temples site and then added an extensive report on the solitary Hindu Deogarh temple which he called *Gupta Temple*. At the very end of his report, he remarked that the architectural style and themes displayed in the Dashavatara temple suggest that the temple must have been built before 700CE, with his guess being 600 to 700CE.

ARCHITECTURE AND LAYOUT

Architecturally, the temple is small but tastefully articulated. The surviving *jagati* is elevated and square, with a central sanctum approachable by steps on either side to facilitate circumambulation. The *cellar* is accessed by a richly ornamented doorway through personified river goddesses and topped by reliefs of Vishnu and accompanying figures.

Over the sanctum previously stood a pyramidal tiered *shikhara* of receding tala, characteristic of early nagara experimentation, while corner projections on the base indicate subsidiary shrines or the structural vocabulary of a *panchayatana* complex. The continuous narrative friezes of the plinth and the door jamb compositions crystallize Gupta conventions: measured proportions, restrained yet expressive mod-

eling, and concern with narrative clarity and iconographic program. Reconstruction attempts vary, but all concur that Deogarh marks a significant phase in the shift from wooden models to pure stone temple idioms in North India.

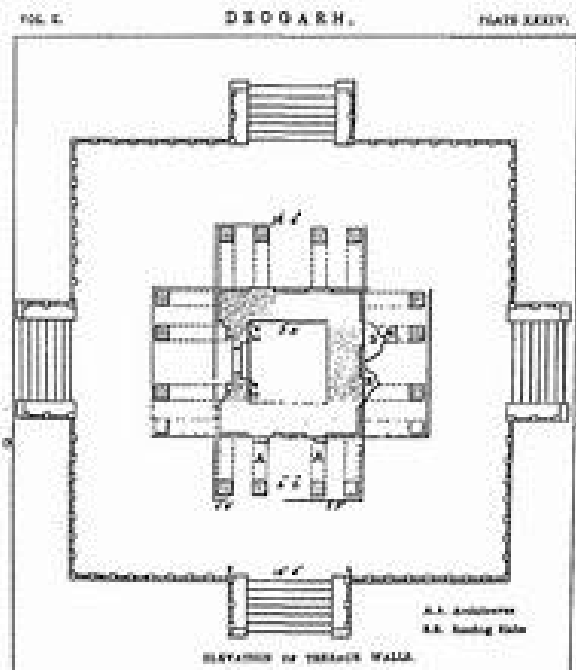
Motifs and Sculptures:



The Sculptural imagery in the Dashavatara Temple at Deogarh functions as a remarkably unified visual language that synthesizes mythological, theological, as well as secular subjects into a single general language of stone. The temple imagery revolves around a frequent depictions of the deity, Vishnu in His cosmic identity and His avatara depictions, especially and dramatically in the *Anantashayana* or *Narayana* panel, where the deity reclines upon the serpent, *Ananta Shesham* with creation coming forth from Vishnu's navel. This dramatic and didactic imagery represents the theological ideal of preservation as related to the cosmos and rebirth in a cyclical fashion. These imageries are bordered by the onomastic descriptions of the important Avatara figures, such as *Varaha* raising the earth from the primeval waters, *Narasimha* rending asunder the demon *Hiranyakashipu*, and *Vamana* stepping forward to measure the three worlds, and later epics of *Lord Rama* and *Lord Krishna* told in condensed but dramatic reliefs commemorating the *Ramayana*, *Mahabharata* and *Bhagavata Purana*.

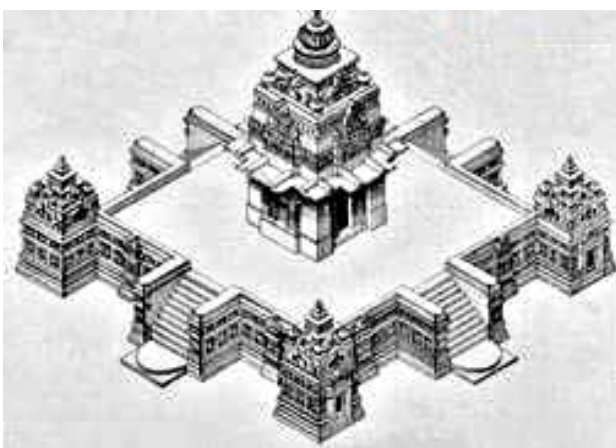
These mythical figures are interceded by the threshold guardians and gate-personae of the rivers *Ganga* and *Yamunam* beneficent omen of purification for the traveler and markers of sacred provenance. Weaving into the cycle of mythology are motifs of the quotidian and fertility, lovers embracing, musicians, court life,

SPECIAL FEATURE



and the hunt, which embody Gupta values of prosperity and worldly pleasure, emphasizing the conviction that the temple was not simply a locus for ritual worship but a microcosm of cosmic, natural, and social order. Stylistically, the figures possess serene faces, attractive poses, and folded drapery, creating an impression of narrative simplicity and the availability of devotion. Collectively, the motifs at this temple express the Gupta synthesis of Kingship, Theology, and aesthetics in which Lord Vishnu's role as defender and cosmic sustainer assumes a quality of flourishing and cultural refinement in the earthly world.

The Dashavatara Temple of Deogarh continues to be a determining monument for anyone tracing the evolution of the North Indian temple and the early Vaishnava visual culture. Its small-scale architectural design, its elegant relief sculpture and its narrative intensity combined give a densely packed lesson in how early medieval Indians employed stone to structure sacred space, tell communal myths and incarnate theological concepts. Preserved fragments in museums and surviving in situ fabric combined offer both close visual examination and wider interpretive accounts of patronage, pilgrimage and the development of



religious traditions. For both modern visitors and scholars, the site enables an unmediated, unique experience of Gupta-period tastes, influencing still live debates around temple origins, text-visual correspondence and the social life of images in pre-modern Indian society. Conserving Deogarh, and being responsible to interpret it and explaining to future generations the encounters that have occurred, there is part of the work yet to come for archeologists, historians and heritage managers.

SCULPTURAL MARVELS

The temple's exterior walls are adorned with **high-relief sculptures** illustrating Hindu mythological narratives, particularly focusing on Vishnu's avatars. These panels serve as an artistic and religious representation of Vishnu's

role as the preserver and protector of the Universe. Some of the notable sculptural depictions include:

- **Vishnu Reclining on Shesha (Anantashayana Vishnu):** One of the most famous, depicts Lord Vishnu resting on the serpent *Shesha*, a common motif in Vaishnavism. This scene symbolizes the cosmic cycle of creation, preservation and destruction.
- **Gajendra Moksha (Liberation of the Elephant King):** A dramatic depiction of Vishnu rescuing the elephant Gajendra from a crocodile, symbolizing divine grace and protection.
- **Narasimha (The Man-Lion Incarnation):** An image of *Narasimha*, one of Vishnu's ten avatars, showcasing His ferocious form as He defeats the demon Hiranyakashipu.
- **Krishna Leela (Krishna's Divine Play):** The temple also features intricate carvings related to *Krishna's life*, including his childhood exploits and His battle with Kaliya, the serpent.

RELIGIOUS AND CULTURAL IMPORTANCE

The Dashavatara Temple is significant not only for its architectural advancements but also for its **religious and cultural symbolism**. It embodies the early expressions of **Vaishnavism**, a sect of Hinduism devoted to Vishnu, which gained prominence during the Gupta period. The temple's depiction of Vishnu's avatars align with the **Puranic texts**, which were gaining literary prominence during his time.

Apart from religious significance, the temple also demonstrates the fusion of **art, mythology, and philosophy**. The intricate carvings serve as a visual scripture, educating devotees about the cosmic functions of Vishnu. The temple's placement in Deogarh, near the **Betwa River**, further suggests its importance as a pilgrimage site in ancient India.

INFLUENCE ON LATER TEMPLES

The architectural and sculptural elements of the Dashavatara Temple significantly influenced later North Indian temple designs. The introduction of **shikhara** and elaborately carved doorways set a precedent for later temples built in the **Nagara style**, which became the dominant architectural form in North India.

Temples such as the **Lakshmana Temple in Khajuraho** and the **Kandariya Mahadeva Temple** show stylistic inspirations that can be traced back to the Dashavatara Temple. The transition from simple rock-cut shrines to highly ornate temple structures was shaped by such early examples, making this temple a crucial milestone in the evolution of Hindu temple architecture.

RELIEFS AND MUSEUMS



The Dashavatara temple had numerous plinth panels of about 2.5 ft by 2 ft. each, with friezes related to secular life and themes of Hinduism. Some of these reliefs were found during excavations at the site, some recovered nearby and identified by their location, the material of construction and style. Many are lost. The recovered reliefs are now housed in major museums. Some of the significant reliefs identified include:

- **Ramayana Scenes:** A panel depicts the **Ahalya-Uddhara** legend where Hindu God Rama redeemed Ahalya. The scene shows Ahalya in a reverential state offering flowers, Rama and Lakshmana holding their bows and a rishi (monk) sitting nearby with a rosary. Other legends include the departure of Rama, Sita and Lakshmana for their exile and the three arriving at Sage Atri's hermitage; the Surpanaka legend; the Dandaka forest legend; the abduction of Sita by Ravana; the bullying of Sita by Ravana legend; the Sugriva victory legend and Hanuman bringing the herb containing mountain for Lakshmana legend.
- **Mahabharata and Vishnu Purana Scenes:** A panel narrates Lord Krishna's birth in prison legend, Yashoda and Nanda playing with Baladeva and Krishna; Krishna battling Kamsa legend; Krishna stealing bathing Gopi's clothes; the Sudama legend and a few others. One of the panels shows Vamana, Bali and Trivikrama legend and another, Narasimha saving Prahlada legend.

HOW TO REACH

- **By Air:** The nearest airport to Deogarh is **Jhansi** airport, located in Varanasi, around 112 km. way. From there one can hire a taxi or take a bus.
- **By Train:** The nearest railway station is **Lalitpur**, which is well-connected to major cities like, **Delhi, Kolkata** and **Lucknow**.
- **By Road:** Deogarh is well connected to major cities and towns in Uttar Pradesh through a network of well-maintained roads. You can also hire a taxi.



BEST TIME TO VISIT

The best time to visit Deogarh Dashavatara temple is during the winter months, between October and March, since during this time, the weather is pleasant, with temperatures ranging from 10 to 25 deg C, making it ideal for exploring the temple and its surroundings.

Visiting the temple during the Monsoon season (July – September) is not recommended, as heavy rains can make the roads and pathways leading to the temple slippery and challenging to navigate.

The summer months (April – June) can be pretty hot and humid, with temperatures soaring to 45deg. C, making it uncomfortable to explore the temple and its surroundings.

COMMUNITY WATCH



Sri Sathya Sai Baba Devotees of Scarborough Offer Blood Donation in a Spirit of Service

With humble hearts and a shared sense of service, the Scarborough Sai Centre continues its long-standing tradition of organizing blood donation clinics for the community. These clinics are held twice a year—once ahead of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba’s Aradhana Day in April and again before Swami’s birthday in October.

For nearly 20 years, this effort has been carried out as an offering of what Swami lovingly described as “liquid love” with the hope of helping to save lives. This year’s clinic was held on Saturday, April 18, 2026 from 8:00 AM to 3:30 PM at the Canadian Blood Services Clinic in Scarborough.

On this occasion, 125 members registered to donate, joined by participants from the Jarvis Club. By the end of the day, contributions were collected from 100 donors. Plasma was also donated by many of the donors. Plasma is in high demand at present. It is humbling to remember that each



donation has the potential to help up to three individuals in need.

SSEHV graduating students and alumni kindly supported the event through volunteering, assisting with logistics and documenting the day. The

clinic was coordinated with care and dedication by Balachandran and the assistance of others.

We remain grateful for the opportunity to serve and for the collective efforts that made this initiative possible.



COMMUNITY WATCH



OPIOIDS AND OTHER DRUGS ACCUMULATING IN FRESHWATER FISH

Researchers from the University of Waterloo detect antidepressants and opioids in fish exposed to urban wastewater



By: Media Relations

Fish living downstream of wastewater treatment plants are accumulating antidepressants, opioids and other drugs of abuse in their bodies, according to a new study.

Using a new analytical method they developed, a team of researchers from the University of Waterloo discovered that several substances that affect the central nervous system, including fentanyl, methadone and venlafaxine, were detected in small fish living in rivers that receive urban wastewater.

Previous research indicated that these substances have the potential to alter fish behaviour, development and reproduction, but this is the first time that scientists documented their distribution in wild fish in Canada. The findings improve our understanding of how this novel group of contaminants can enter and potentially accumulate in freshwater ecosystems, raising concerns about the potential for long-term effects.

“This research shows that fish are exposed to and can accumulate these novel drugs when exposed to even well-treated wastewater,” said Dr. Mark Servos, a professor in the Department of Biology and a researcher at the Water Institute. “Because wastewater treatment plants are not designed to remove pharmaceuticals, aquatic organisms are likely exposed to these chemicals downstream of most

communities where these drugs are prescribed or used illicitly.”

Using their new method, the research team found that male fish accumulated higher concentrations of some substances than females. Biological factors, such as physiology and metabolism, may influence how contaminants accumulate in different organisms.

“This research demonstrates the importance of developing sensitive



The researchers detected fentanyl, methadone, venlafaxine, and O-desmethylvenlafaxine in all species collected, including the greenside darter (University of Waterloo).



The novel method makes it possible to detect trace amounts of drugs of abuse in small fish (University of Waterloo).

analytical methods for monitoring emerging contaminants and improving our ability to assess their potential for impacts on aquatic ecosystems,” said Dr. Diana Cárdenas-Soracá, a postdoctoral fellow in the Department of Biology at Waterloo. “Hopefully this work will highlight the need to continue to characterize the diversity of new chemicals potentially entering the environment.”

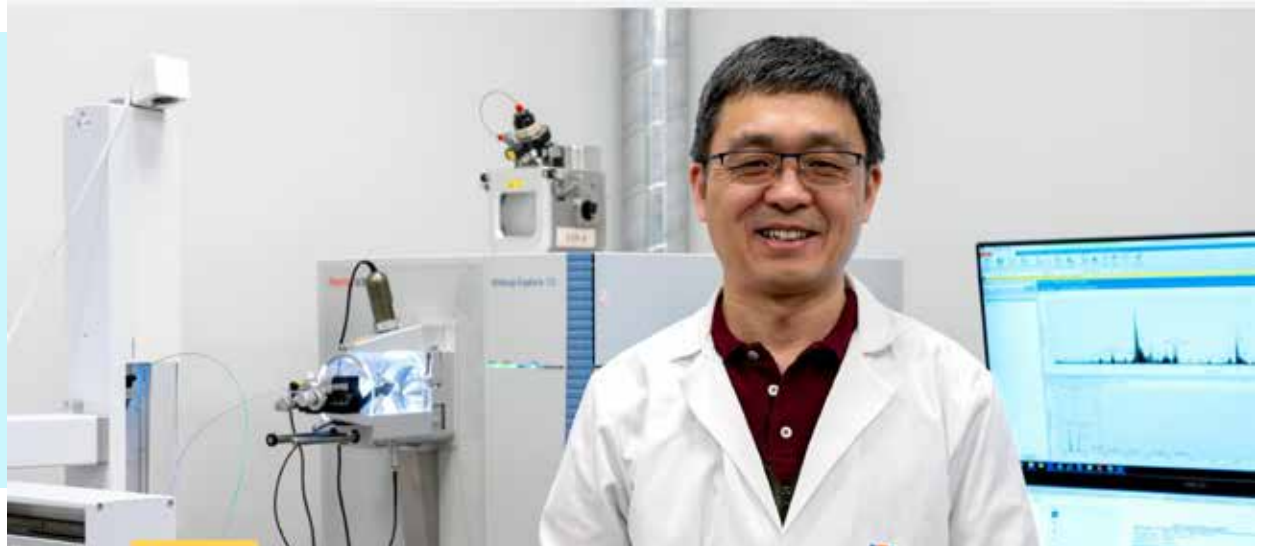
Future work will focus on understanding the factors that influence environmental exposure and what the bioaccumulation of these compounds means for fish health, including impacts on neurophysiology, behaviour, and reproduction.

The study appears in Environmental Pollution.



DIAGNOSING CANCER WITH A DROP OF BLOOD

Waterloo-based technology can predict myeloma relapse 2 to 11 months earlier than traditional methods



By **Mayuri Punithan**, *David R. Cheriton School of Computer Science*

What if doctors could more accurately diagnose and monitor blood cancer with a simple blood draw? This vision is becoming a reality thanks to research at Rapid Novor, a Waterloo-based company co-founded by Dr. Bin Ma, a computer science professor at the University of Waterloo.

Myeloma is a type of blood cancer that grows in the bone marrow. Typically, patients must undergo multiple bone marrow biopsies to diagnose the disease and to assess the treatment. However, this procedure is painful and invasive.

“Basically, the doctor has to insert a thick needle into the bone to extract marrow,” Ma says. “Then they test it to see if there are any cancer cells inside of it. Even after treatment, this procedure needs to be repeated once or twice a year to detect possible relapse.”

Most people diagnosed with myeloma are older than 65. Some may have mobility issues and fragile bones, making the biopsy procedure even more risky.

To address these challenges, Rapid Novor created EasyM, a non-invasive and highly sensitive blood-based test that traces a biomarker for myeloma called M-protein. Essentially, a physician can collect blood from a patient and send it off for analysis. Using EasyM, a lab can check if the sample contains M-protein and measure its quantity.

What’s key to EasyM is de novo sequencing, a computational biology

technique that can determine the amino acid sequence of a protein. M-protein is a classic biomarker for myeloma. However, the sensitivity of the existing method for M-protein measurement is too low due to interference from other proteins in blood.

“The amino acid sequence can help us differentiate the M-protein from other similar but normal proteins in the blood,” explains Ma, a pioneer in computational biology. “The experimental data is very noisy and has errors. Our team developed the de novo sequencing algorithm to figure out the sequence from the noisy data.”

Every patient’s M-protein sequence is unique — almost like a fingerprint — making it easier to diagnose and monitor myeloma. A doctor can compare a patient’s M-protein quantities at various time points to see if their cancer has improved.

Recently, Rapid Novor received a licence from the Ministry of Health, allowing clinics across Ontario to use EasyM. This milestone paves the way for Canadians to have access to a non-invasive tool for myeloma.

Importantly, EasyM can detect relapse two to eleven months earlier than the current standard of care. This benefit is attributed to EasyM’s high sensitivity and painless approach, which enables the early detection of the M-protein rise before the relapse and encourages frequent patient check-ups.

EasyM is not only more sensitive but also more effective. Myeloma can happen anywhere in the bone marrow. But as Ma puts it, “if the doctor is not digging in the right place,” they may receive misleading results on the patient’s progress.

In contrast, M-protein produced by the myeloma cells circulate in the blood throughout your body, meaning that you get the same readings wherever you take the blood. This is particularly important, as Ma’s research has found that patients who were deemed myeloma-free by the biopsy method still showed detectable levels of the M-protein in their blood.

For Ma, EasyM has been a 10-year journey. What motivated him was knowing that his pioneering work in computational biology could put an end to patient suffering.

“This problem was brought to us at a conference, and we happen to have the technology,” he says. “By chance, if you have a solution to a real-world problem, you feel like it’s your responsibility to make it happen to the people who need it the most.”

He also credits the University’s intellectual property (IP) policy, which grants Waterloo members ownership of their creations. This agency, complemented by Waterloo’s strong entrepreneurial ecosystem, empowers Waterloo researchers to turn their ideas into innovative solutions that drive real-world impact.

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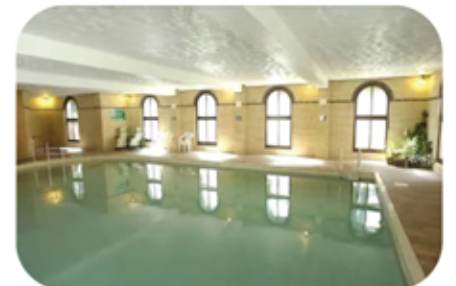
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DISCOVER THE ISLE OF WIGHT



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

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

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

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