



# Tamil Times Australia

All in one Tamil magazine from the best minds



Governor-General's  
Tamil Heritage Month  
message

Sir Nishan - Jaffna to  
a British Knighthood

Jyothee's mantra - Build the world you want to live in

February 2026, Issue 04

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**Tamil Times Australia stands as a voice for every Tamil heart across the nation, a celebration of identity, culture, and connection. Born from a vision to unite and inspire, the magazine brings together stories that matter, stories that reflect who we are, where we have come from, and where we are headed.**

**With each issue, we aim to honour the richness of Tamil heritage while embracing the dynamism of modern Australia. Our pages capture the triumphs, talents, and everyday experiences of Tamil Australians, from arts and culture to business, education, and community life.**

**Guided by experienced media professionals and supported by passionate contributors, Tamil Times Australia continues to serve as a platform where our voices are heard, our achievements celebrated, and our stories preserved for generations to come.**

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**We acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First Australians and Traditional Custodians of the lands where we live, learn and work.**

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## JYOTHEE MURALI – PAINTING TWO WORLDS AT ONCE

### Toronto to Melbourne: What brought you here?

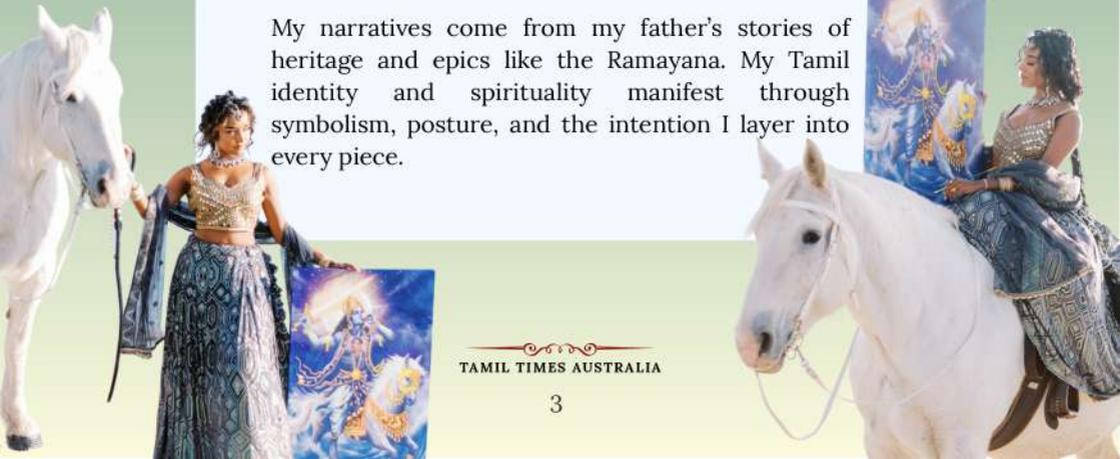
Melbourne is a creative hub where I'm expanding my work into lived spaces like restaurants and public murals. I'm blending contemporary design with traditional storytelling while testing scalable ventures like Astro Photobot, a mobile robot photo booth. Traveling has taught me to build impact globally, rather than being tied to one city. Connecting with Tamil youth? Visibility creates permission. I want to collaborate with local Tamil creatives to show them that our culture and career aspirations don't need to stay small.

### Where did the passion start?

It began at age two, drawing on walls with my parents' support. Growing up in Sri Lanka, I learned that art is about discipline, not just talent. A major turning point was dropping out of university to pursue art; shortly after, I collaborated on Michael B. Jordan's Naruto collection. This proved that taking yourself seriously forces the world to respond.

### How do you choose your stories?

My narratives come from my father's stories of heritage and epics like the Ramayana. My Tamil identity and spirituality manifest through symbolism, posture, and the intention I layer into every piece.





### **Diaspora Identity and Heritage**

I carry two worlds. I don't freeze culture in the past; I let it evolve in international spaces. My growing platform is a responsibility to show that Tamil identity belongs in luxury and creative leadership.

### **Eelam Roots and Belonging**

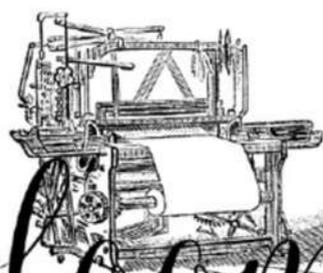
I connect through memory and the resilience of our people. I see my art as a bridge between generations—a space where our complexity can exist without being simplified.

### **Advice to Tamil Youth**

Don't shrink to fit a space; expand it. Consistency beats talent when talent lacks discipline. If I could tell my 18-year-old self one thing: Stop waiting for permission. Build the world you want to live in.



**Interview by Jeyatheepan**



*loom*

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## Unity in the Rain: A Grand Thai Pongal Celebration in Pendle Hill

The vibrant spirit of Tamil culture illuminated Sydney as the local community gathered for the Thai Pongal 2026 Grand Festival. Held on Sunday, the 18th of January, at Pendle Way, Pendle Hill, the event served as a magnificent showcase of gratitude, tradition, and community unity during Tamil Heritage Month.



The festivities commenced early at 7:00 AM, drawing families from across the city to celebrate the harvest festival. Organized through a collaborative effort by the Jaffna Hindu College Old Boys' Association (Sydney) and the Sydney Tamil Business Community, the event was a resounding success, blending spiritual significance with cultural pride.

### Highlights of the Day

The air was filled with the aroma of traditional Pongal being cooked in earthen pots, symbolizing prosperity and abundance. The celebration wasn't just about the harvest; it was a deep dive into the "Muthamizh" traditions—Literature (Iyal), Music (Isai), and Drama (Nadagam).







## A Vibrant Celebration of Heritage: Thai Pongal 2026



Victorian Tamil Cultural Association conducted Pongal Festival in Dandenong's Harmony Square. The whole place transformed into a color and culture this January as the community gathered to celebrate Thai Pongal 2026. The traditional Tamil harvest festival, centered on gratitude to nature and the Sun God, brought together thousands in a powerful display of multicultural unity.



The event was graced by Chief Guest Mayor Sophie Tan, the first Cambodian-Australian woman to lead the City of Greater Dandenong. In her address, Mayor Tan highlighted the city's pride in its diversity, noting that festivals like Pongal are the "heartbeat of our social cohesion." Joining her was the Hon. Gabrielle Williams, Minister for Transport Infrastructure and local Member for Dandenong, who praised the Tamil community's enduring contribution to Victoria's vibrant cultural fabric.

From the ritual boiling of the milk-and-rice Pongal dish to the rhythmic beats of traditional drums and mesmerizing dance performances, the day was a sensory feast. It was more than a harvest celebration; it was a testament to the harmony that defines Dandenong.

## Empowering the Future: Kamban Youth Forum Shines at Parramatta Pongal 2026

The vibrant spirit of Tamil heritage took center stage at Parramatta Pongal 2026, where the Kamban Youth Forum (KYF) team stood as a beacon of cultural pride and leadership. Known for their dedication to preserving the literary brilliance of the Kamba Ramayanam, the KYF youth members were seen engaging with a galaxy of distinguished guests, including local parliamentarians, community leaders, and visiting scholars.

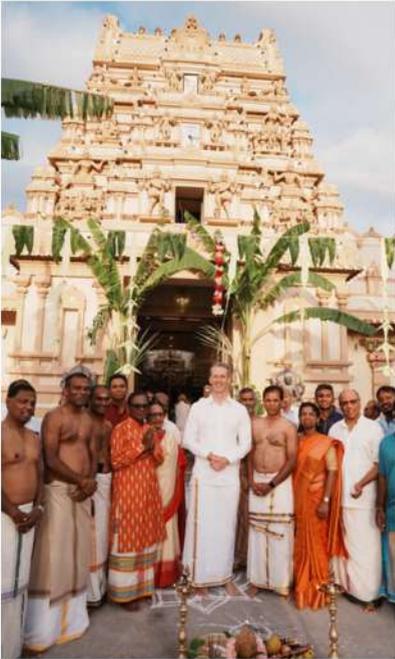


The forum's presence highlighted the bridge between ancient wisdom and modern youth. Throughout the festivities, the team shared insights into their latest initiatives aimed at making classical Tamil literature accessible to the digital generation. The distinguished guests praised the team's commitment to community service and linguistic excellence, noting that such grassroots leadership is vital for a thriving multicultural Australia.

As the sun set over Parramatta, the KYF team and their guests celebrated a shared vision: a future where tradition fuels innovation and unity.

## Bountiful Blessings: Pongal 2026 at Sydney Murugan Temple

The vibrant spirit of the Tamil harvest festival came alive at the Sydney Murugan Temple in Mays Hill this January 15, 2026. Hundreds of devotees gathered at the break of dawn to witness the traditional "Pongalo Pongal" ceremony, as the auspicious rice pot boiled over, symbolizing prosperity and abundance for the year ahead.



Adding significant prestige to the celebrations, **Andrew Charlton MP**, Federal Member for Parramatta, joined the community in full **Tamil traditional attire**. Dressed in a Vetti and Sattai, Charlton's participation highlighted his deep-rooted connection with the local Tamil community.

During the event, Charlton shared his heartfelt wishes, praising the community's contribution to Australia's multicultural fabric. He spoke warmly about the significance of **Tamil Heritage Month**, a movement he has championed in Parliament. The day concluded with soul-stirring bhajans and the distribution of sweet Pongal, leaving the diaspora with a renewed sense of cultural pride and unity.



## Thai Pongal & Tamil Heritage Month Wishes from Governor-General



Her Excellency the Honourable Sam Mostyn AC  
Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia

### *Thai Pongal and Tamil Heritage Month 2026*

As Pongal celebrations take place across the country and around the world, I am delighted to send my best wishes to the Tamil community in Australia as you mark this important festival of harvest, abundance and thanksgiving.

In 2025, I was warmly welcomed to Parramatta to celebrate Pongal with young people, friends, families and community members. It was a wonderful expression of the beauty and richness of Tamil culture through music, poetry, and food, which Australian Tamils share so generously at Pongal and throughout the year.

As Governor-General, I have promised to put care, kindness and respect at the heart of my work. Care in all its forms – care for each other and for those who care for others; care for our democracy and institutions; care for the way we discuss the issues of our time, not with anger, but with respect and kindness – is fundamental to Australia's wellbeing, unity and success. Our path to healing following the shocking antisemitic terror attack at Bondi in December will be built on our shared commitment to a future of peace, where every Australian belongs. I know that Australia's Tamil community is deeply committed to our national project to put care at the centre of who we are, as the source of our strength and belonging.

During Tamil Heritage Month, we reflect on the long history of Tamil culture, stretching back thousands of years, and honour the contribution of the Tamil community in every field of endeavour. In politics, business, public and community service, the arts, and sport, Australians of Tamil heritage give the gifts of their energy, innovation and creativity to building community and advancing the peace, prosperity and success of our nation.

Tamil Heritage Month is also a time to celebrate the extraordinary work of Tamil community language schools across the country. Inspiring generations of young Tamil Australians to know, understand and celebrate Tamil language, history and culture, the knowledge and traditions of Tamil culture are part of the story of modern, multicultural Australia.

In 2026, I hope that your Pongal celebrations are a source of optimism, joy and encouragement for you all.



## Thai Pongal & Tamil Heritage Month Wishes



### Australian Prime Minister, Hon Anthony Albanese

Tamil culture, emphasizing their valued contribution to Australia during Tamil Heritage Month. He conveys hopes for joy, prosperity, and blessings for the year ahead, recognizing the festival's themes of new beginnings, community, and togetherness.

### Hon Susan Lay, Leader of Opposition

Thai Pongal is a time of gratitude and reflection. It is a moment to give thanks for the gifts of nature and the harvest. It is also a celebration of renewal and harmony with the world around us, within our communities, and in our daily lives. For generations, the Tamil community in Australia has maintained rich cultural traditions, sharing food, stories, and celebrations that bring communities together and strengthen the multicultural fabric of our nation. This festival is also a time to recognise the Tamil community's strength, culture, and generosity of spirit. These qualities continue to enrich Australia's vibrant multicultural society.



### Western Australian Premier, the Hon. Roger Cook MLA

On behalf of all Western Australians, I extend warm wishes to the Australian Tamil community as you celebrate Thai Pongal and Tamil Heritage Month. "Tamil Australians have made a significant contribution to our State and nation, enriching our culture and strengthening our multicultural society."

## Jacinta Allan MP, Premier of Victoria

It's a beautiful time for families across Victoria to come together and celebrate your proud Tamil heritage. So I want to take a moment to recognise Tamil Victorians and the countless ways you contribute to our state. In my Labor government you'll always have a friend who celebrates your culture and understands the difference you make.



## Hon Peter Malinauskas MP, Premier of South Australia

The South Australian Tamil community has a well-earned reputation for their generosity in sharing their cultures, languages and traditions, strengthening the multicultural fabric that defines our state. During this Pongal Festival, and every day, the State Government is proud to support the Tamil community, and we acknowledge the valuable contributions your community makes to South Australia's social, cultural, and economic life.

## Hon Michelle Rowland MP Attorney-General

Tamil Heritage Month is also an important opportunity to recognise the rich history, language and cultural traditions that continue to be cherished and passed on from generation to generation. These traditions remain central to the strength and identity of Tamil Australians.

I take great pride in the multicultural community I represent and am honoured to represent one of the largest Tamil communities in Australia. Your contributions help strengthen and enrich the multicultural fabric of our society both in Greenway and across Australia.



## Hon Julian Hill MP, Assistant Minister for Citizenship

For many people, January is also marked as Tamil Heritage Month, honouring Tamil Heritage as one of the world's oldest living cultures. Tamil Australians play an important role in shaping our diverse society, sharing language, arts and culture that continue to enrich our national life. The values embodied in Thai Pongal, including gratitude, abundance, unity and respect for nature, resonate deeply across our multicultural nation.



## Hon Milton Dick MP - Speaker of Parliament

Thai Pongal reminds us to thank nature, farmers, family, and community for their blessings, while strengthening our cultural roots and values. For Tamils living across Australia, this celebration unites generations and communities, reinforcing our shared heritage, resilience, and spirit of giving.

Let us continue to celebrate our traditions with pride, harmony, and unity while contributing positively to Australia's multicultural society.

## Hon Mark Dreyfus MP

Thai Pongal is a time to give thanks, to reflect on the importance of family, culture, and hard work, and to recognise the deep connections between community, land, and tradition. It is also a time to celebrate the rich history, language, and cultural contributions of Tamil people, both in Australia and around the world.

Australia's strength lies in its diversity, and the Tamil community continues to enrich our shared national story through culture, enterprise, intellectual contributions, education, and community life.





## Hon Andrew Charlton MP

Tamil Australians have made an extraordinary contribution to our nation, enriching Australia with a culture that values education, hard work, family, and a deep respect for heritage. From small businesses to medicine, education, the arts, and community leadership, the Tamil community continues to strengthen the fabric of our multicultural society.

As we mark Tamil Heritage Month, we celebrate not only a proud history stretching back thousands of years, but also the vibrant future being built here in Australia by Tamil families, young people, and community organisations. Your language, traditions, and values are an important part of Australia's story.



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## FROM WISH TO WILL

Why You Need a Will and the Requirements  
for Making It Properly

PART 3

### Can I include overseas assets in my Will?

Yes, you can include overseas assets in your Will. That said, if you own property in other countries, it is often better to have a separate Will for each country where those assets are located. This helps avoid confusion and delays because each country has its own inheritance laws and probate processes.

If you use multiple Wills, make sure each one:

- Applies only to the assets in that specific country; and
- States clearly that it does not revoke your other wills.



### Why should I see a lawyer to prepare my Will?

A lawyer ensures that your Will is legally valid and clearly reflects your wishes. They can:

- (a) Advise on how to distribute your assets fairly and effectively;
- (b) Prepare a Will that meets all legal requirements in accordance with state legislation;
- (c) Identify and reduce risks of future disputes;
- (d) Provide guidance on tax implications and estate planning.

Seeking professional advice can save your family stress, time, and unnecessary legal costs later.

### Can a Will be contested?

Yes. In some cases, an eligible person, such as a spouse, child, stepchild or dependent, may contest a Will if they believe they have not been adequately provided for.

A well-drafted Will prepared by a lawyer can significantly reduce the likelihood of disputes or challenges.

Creating a will is more than just listing your assets and deciding who will receive them. It is a thoughtful gesture that shows care for your loved ones. A will offers peace of mind, knowing that your affairs are organised and that your wishes will be honoured.



**Author: Ms Thirumalai Selvi Shanmugam**

## Your 2026 Key to the Door: Navigating the Aussie Property Maze

The 2026 Australian property market has shifted gears. While the breakneck price surges of previous years have leveled out, the national median dwelling value remains high. For first-time buyers, success now depends on strategy over speed.



## Strategic Advantages

To break into the market, leverage these essential tools:

- The 5% Deposit Scheme: Bypass Lenders Mortgage Insurance (LMI) to save thousands upfront.
- Shared Equity: Programs like "Help to Buy" allow the government to co-purchase, lowering your monthly repayments.
- Stamp Duty Perks: Utilize state exemptions (often up to \$800k) to keep more cash in your pocket.

## The 2026 Landscape

With national growth stabilizing at 5-7%, the "rental cliff" is finally cooling, giving savers some breathing room. However, supply remains tight in mid-sized capitals like Perth and Brisbane.



**Pro Tip:** Get pre-approved now. In a low-inventory market, being "finance-ready" is your only way to outpace investors.

## Small Hands, Big Business: Australia's Newest Wave of Young Entrepreneurs

In a classroom in Perth, Western Australia, the conversation is shifting from video games to venture capital. A remarkable group of Year 6 students is proving that you are never too young to master the art of money management. Moving beyond the traditional piggy bank, these savvy youngsters are utilizing their pocket money to launch genuine business ventures and investment portfolios.



For these pre-teen entrepreneurs, financial literacy is more than just a school subject; it is a lifestyle. While many of their peers are spending, these students are strategizing. Some have successfully saved enough to purchase their own surfboards, while others have built profitable side hustles—such as professional bin-cleaning services—earning hundreds of dollars in the process.



The sophistication of their financial knowledge was recently highlighted in a local "Money Talks" session. It was revealed that several children possess a deep understanding of the stock market, tracking price fluctuations and calculating profit margins with the precision of seasoned traders.



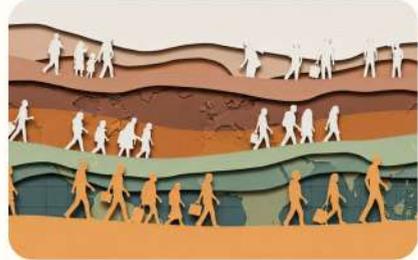
Financial experts suggest that these children are capitalizing on their most valuable asset: time. Analysts note that even a modest investment of \$50 per month from birth can grow into a significant fund of over \$18,000 by the time a child reaches adulthood. With major investment firms now introducing simplified platforms for parents and children to invest together, the barrier to entry has never been lower.

By turning chores into commerce and savings into shares, these Australian kids are redefining the "lemonade stand" for the digital age, proving that the future of business is in very capable hands.



# BIG SHIFT: NAVIGATING AUSTRALIA'S NEW MIGRATION FRONTIER IN 2026

In 2026, Australia's migration landscape has shifted towards a "skills-first" model, tightening requirements while prioritising high-demand sectors like healthcare, construction, and teaching.



## Key Visa Updates

The Student Visa (Subclass 500) underwent a major shift on 8 January 2026, with India, Nepal, Bangladesh, and Bhutan moved to "Evidence Level 3." This requires applicants from these regions to provide more rigorous financial and academic documentation. Additionally, the Genuine Student (GS) test has replaced older assessments, focusing heavily on career alignment.



## Skilled and Graduate Pathways

The Permanent Migration Program cap remains at 185,000 places, but with a clearer lean toward employer-sponsored visas. For graduates, the Temporary Graduate Visa (Subclass 485) now features a reduced age limit of 35 years and a restoration of standard stay durations, ending the pandemic-era extensions.

## Digital Streamlining

The Department of Home Affairs has expanded the Immi App, allowing for digital biometric submissions and smartphone-based identity verification, aiming to reduce processing times for low-risk applications.



# TAX SCHEDULE

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Tamil Times Australia is proud to spotlight a transformative initiative for our local professional community: the Tamil Business Hub. Strategically located in the heart of Toongabbie, NSW, this vibrant coworking space is more than just an office—it is a launchpad for entrepreneurs, freelancers, and small businesses across Western Sydney.

Designed to foster a culture where ideas flourish, the Hub provides a modern, fully equipped environment tailored to the evolving needs of startups and established professionals alike. Members gain access to high-speed internet, ergonomic workstations, and private meeting rooms perfect for client consultations. Beyond the desk, the shared kitchen and communal areas offer a warm space for connection.



True to its mission of growth, the Tamil Business Hub hosts regular networking events and workshops, ensuring you stay informed and inspired. We invite you to join this inclusive, supportive network and utilize these world-class facilities to accelerate your success.

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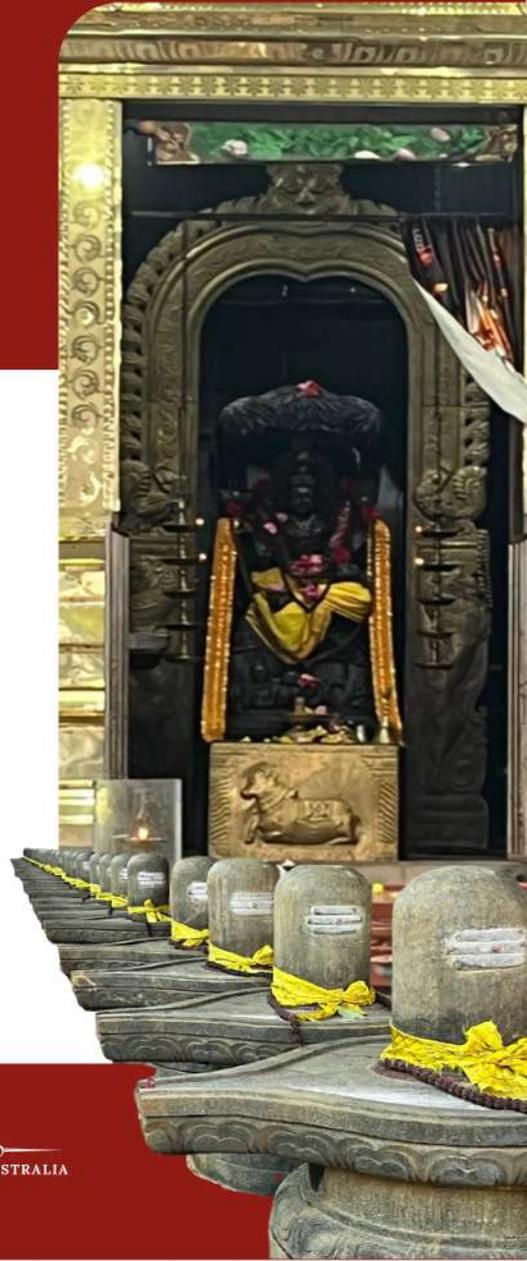
## The Stone-Scribed Symphony: A Pilgrimage to Jaffna's Palace of Devotion

In the quiet town of Navatkuzhi, where the A9 highway welcomes travellers to Jaffna, stands a monument that defies the digital age.

The Sivapoomi Thiruvasaga Aranmanai (Palace of Thiruvasagam) is not merely a temple; it is a sprawling 10-acre testament to Tamil spiritual heritage and the immortal verses of Saint Manickavasagar.

### STONE, SPIRIT, AND 108 LINGAMS

The architectural heart of the Aranmanai is a majestic Dakshanamurthy Temple, where the lord sits beneath a stone Kurumthai tree, symbolising the ultimate Guru. Circling the shrine is a breathtaking sight: 108 Shivalingams, each hand-carved from granite, draped in silk veshtis and adorned with rudraksha malas. Above each Lingam hangs a brass bell; as devotees move through the prakaram, the rhythmic symphony of ringing bells creates a meditative trance that echoes across the Palmyra groves.



What truly elevates this "palace" is its walls. In an era of ephemeral screens, the founders chose the permanence of stone. The complete works of the Thiruvasagam –658 sacred verses—are hand-chiseled onto polished black granite panels. Walking these corridors is a literal immersion into the "Siva Puranam," with the opening hymns inscribed in 12 different languages, welcoming a global audience to the soul-melting poetry of the 9th-century saint.

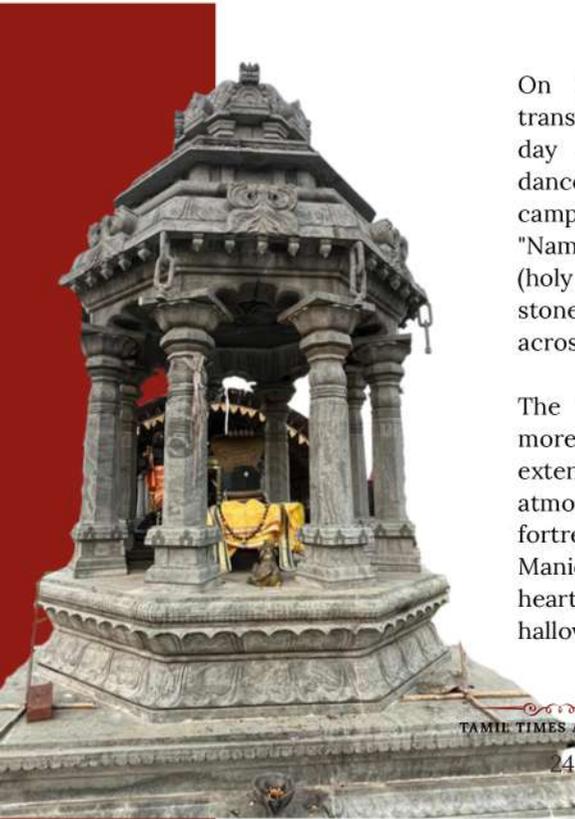


## A SACRED ARUTHRA DARSHANAM

On 3 January 2026, the Aranmanai transformed for Aruthra Darshanam, the day celebrating Lord Shiva's cosmic dance. The air was thick with the scent of camphor and the collective chanting of "Namasivaya." Witnessing the abhishekam (holy bath) of the deities amidst the stone-etched scriptures felt like a bridge across centuries.

The Thiruvasaga Aranmanai serves as more than a place of worship; with its extensive research library and serene atmosphere, it stands as a cultural fortress, ensuring that the gems of Manickavasagar continue to "melt the heart" of every visitor who walks its hallowed halls.

**Author: Nilakshan**



## *Gems in the Roadside Hum*

By the roadside's hum, a life estranged,  
Scissored from the flow, he rearranged.  
On the border he stands, a silent guide,  
Witnessing his stories, life's turning tide.  
Laughter's scattered gems, he claims as his own,  
Across the rain-kissed branch, the gutter's groan.  
He scurries, a bearer of sustenance true,  
For those the world forgets, beneath the sky of blue.  
This earth, a constant spin, a ceaseless whirl,  
His tiny life unfolds, in this bustling world.



**Poet: Saisakti sarvi**

## Master the Epic: Global Certificate in Kambaramayanam

Kamban Kalvi and the Tamil Valarchi Manram, in collaboration with Kongunadu Arts & Science College, are proud to announce a unique opportunity for youth worldwide: a free Global Certificate Course in the legendary epic, Kambaramayanam.

This comprehensive program is designed to bridge cultural heritage with modern learning, offering resources in both English and Tamil. Students will have access to high-quality videos, detailed notes, and interactive quizzes to deepen their understanding of this literary masterpiece.



The initiative kicks off with an introductory session by the Singapore National Library on January 18, 2026. The event will feature a special address by Thiru.V.Ramasubramanian, Former Judge of the Supreme Court of India.

### EVENT DETAILS

Dates: Jan 18, Feb 15, Mar 15, and Apr 19, 2026.

Time (India): 3:30 PM – 5:00 PM.

Platform: Zoom (Meeting ID: 929 0266 3469 | Passcode: 204886).

**Registration opens on April 19, 2026**, with classes officially commencing on May 1, 2026.

For more information, contact +61 407 912 532  
email [kambancourse@gmail.com](mailto:kambancourse@gmail.com).



**Author: Chandrika Subramanian**

## The Weight of Inheritance: Choosing What We Carry

The obsession with perfection is often the greatest barrier to cultural expression. I spent years paralyzed by the fear that my Tamil wasn't "pure" enough, choosing shame over effort. This pressure to be flawless frequently leads to a quiet, selective abandonment of heritage.

We are constantly negotiating which parts of our identity to carry and which to leave behind as "too heavy." For older generations, culture was a survival mechanism—unquestioned and fierce. For the diaspora, it feels like an elective choice.

However, this isn't a loss; it's an evolution. In the diaspora, identity is shaped by intention rather than proximity. We fold ourselves into new spaces, holding onto fragments that make sense in our current lives. As we inherit this responsibility, we must recognize that culture doesn't have to be perfect to be preserved. We are simply learning to carry it differently.



*Our identity is no longer reinforced by proximity, but by the weight of what we choose to carry*



### Author: Ashwini Satheeshkumar

Ashwini is a Sri Lankan Tamil Australian and a second-generation migrant who cherishes the part of her culture that feel true to her while thoughtfully questioning the traditions she wants to hold on to

A BOLD ATTEMPT THAT FALLS SHORT OF ITS PROMISE



Rating: 3/5

Parasakthi sets out to tell a story rooted in Tamil history and the anti-Hindi protests, a bold theme that sparked anticipation of a sparkling historical and political narrative. While it doesn't fully deliver on every expectation, it does offer moments worth appreciating.

The film attempts to blend historical context with fiction. Sadly, the fictional elements feel a tad unoriginal and inauthentic. Two scenes shine: the first when Sivakarthikeyan re-surfaces as leader of the 'Purananooru Padai' and the other when he calls for "[Tamil thee] paravattum". They showcased the potential of the movie.

The villain, portrayed as psychotic, feels exaggerated... perhaps intended as a metaphor for Hindi imposition. While that choice may divide opinions, it does spark conversation about cultural identity and resistance. The romance subplot, though cute, seems unnecessary. It does, however, offer one glimpse into Madras and Madurai in the 60s, albeit a rose-tinted one.

*For young Tamils, whether overseas or at home, the heavy drama might feel cringeworthy. One theme that might resonate with first-generation migrants is the struggle of competing with native English speakers. But even that felt disconnected as Australia's inclusive approach with interpreters and language support makes this less of a lived reality for many here.*

The audience turnout on day 2 of the movie release at Chadstone Hoyts in Melbourne was low, and perhaps many wished they were at Vijay's Jananayagam instead. Still, Parasakthi keeps viewers in their seats, waiting for depth and meaning, even if it doesn't completely glue them there.

Sudha Kongara's Parasakthi is an earnest attempt to revisit history and identity but feels like a missed opportunity. You walk in expecting historical and political relevance, but leave feeling underwhelmed on both fronts. While it may not hit every note perfectly, it sparks dialogue and offers some moments that make you sit up. For those curious about Tamil culture and its political backdrop, it's worth a watch, just go in with tempered expectations.



**Author: Ramya Manoharan**



## TAMIL CINEMA AT A CROSSROADS AS INDUSTRY PREPARES FOR A NEW ERA

The Tamil film industry is at a pivotal turning point as it navigates the transition from established icons to a new generation of leaders. The impending exit of Vijay, who is retiring from cinema to pursue politics with his party, Tamilaga Vetri Kazhagam, leaves a significant void in the traditional "mass hero" star system. His final project, *Jana Nayagan*, marks the end of a dominant box-office era.

In his wake, actors like Sivakarthiseyan are stepping up, signaling a shift toward more diverse, content-driven narratives.

Sivakarthiseyan's *Parasakthi* gets mixed reviews. Meanwhile Vijay's *Jana Nayagan* still faces legal issue for release.

Beyond individual stars, Kollywood is embracing structural change.

Younger directors are increasingly prioritizing social realism and experimental storytelling over formulaic appeal.

As the industry balances theatrical spectacles with streaming growth, it is moving away from star-dependence toward a more sustainable, story-first future.



Author: Sachin Kanagasundaram

# TAMIL IN THE AI ERA



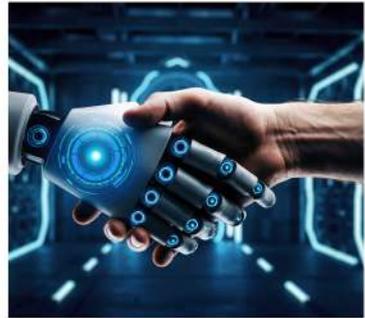
## BRIDGING HERITAGE AND INNOVATION



For young Tamil-Australians, the distance between Sydney and Chennai is no longer measured in miles, but in megabytes. As the diaspora seeks to maintain its linguistic roots, Artificial Intelligence has emerged as a powerful cultural bridge.

### THE EVOLUTION OF AI OVER TIME AND ITS IMPACT ON GEN Z

Gone are the days of struggling through dusty textbooks. Today, Gen Z and Alpha learners use AI-powered tutors like Talkpal and Talkio to practice conversational Tamil with real-time pronunciation feedback. These tools allow students to move beyond "home Tamil" to master the complex nuances of the language at their own pace.



Perhaps most inspiring is the digital revival of classical literature. Young tech-enthusiasts are leveraging Natural Language Processing (NLP) to translate and analyze the Thirukkural. By using AI to break down 2,000-year-old couplets into relatable, modern contexts, they are ensuring that Valluvar's wisdom thrives on social media feeds and apps. In the AI era, Tamil isn't just a language of the past; it's a vibrant, data-driven future.

## Rising Star: Vethahi Named 2025 Intern of the Year

Gold Coast Health is proud to celebrate Vethahi, our 2025 Intern of the Year, as she marks an exceptional first chapter in her medical career. Driven by a childhood spent supporting ill family members, Vethahi's journey into medicine was fueled by witnessing the profound impact of compassionate, coordinated care.

"Seeing health professionals support my family through our darkest periods inspired me to give back," she reflects. Now a vital part of the team, she praises the holistic care and strong community spirit that define the Gold Coast Health experience.

As the 2026 intake of junior doctors arrives, Vethahi's advice for the next generation is simple yet vital: "Utilise your amazing team, always support your colleagues, and never hesitate to ask for help."

A dedicated clinician with a bright future, Vethahi is certainly one to watch as she enters her second year of service.

“**SEEING HEALTH PROFESSIONALS SUPPORT MY FAMILY THROUGH OUR DARKEST PERIODS INSPIRED ME TO GIVE BACK THROUGH MEDICINE**”

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## Meet the WA Tamil ATAR Toppers 2025

The School Curriculum and Standards Authority (SCSA) of Western Australia introduced the Tamil Background Language ATAR syllabus in 2023, with the class of 2025 sitting the inaugural exam. After studying 12 topics across personal, community, and global perspectives, 25 students completed the course, with many scoring above 80%. Top scorers Nivethiha Manoharan, Akanila Satheeskumar, and Shivanyarasy Anukarthy share their journey.

**Shriram: Congratulations! What sparked your interest in taking Tamil as an ATAR subject?**

**Nivethiha:** I have spoken Tamil with my parents from a young age. I felt learning it was better than any other language because it is my mother tongue and a vital part of my identity.

**Arasi:** Tamil is one of the oldest languages with scriptures offering life lessons useful for daily life. The ATAR exam was a perfect opportunity to showcase my Tamil identity.

**Shriram: Could you explain how this new Tamil ATAR subject works?**

**Akanila:** It consists of 12 main topics explored through three perspectives: personal, community, and global. We make detailed notes and practice writing, reading, listening, and speaking for each assessment.

**Arasi:** You learn about preserving nature and developing your identity. It's about more than just culture; it's about bringing younger generations along on the journey.

“

*It's about more than just culture; it's about bringing younger generations along on the journey.*

*~ Shivanyarasy Anukarthy*



“

*It helped me understand my duty as a Tamil in a multicultural country and showed me ways I could contribute to society.*

*~ Akanila Satheeskumar*

**Shriram: How did you prepare for the assessments?**

**Nivethiha:** I did past papers and revisited notes from Tamil school. I read Tamil magazines and news articles to immerse myself, and practiced planning writing topics quickly.

**Akanila:** I took detailed notes and reviewed sample questions. Before speaking exams, I focused on vocabulary and fluency. Reviewing and learning from my mistakes was also key.

**Shriram: What was most challenging, and how did you overcome it?**

**Nivethiha:** The personal investigation oral exam preparation was tough. I overcame it by splitting my research and practice into specific time chunks to work more efficiently.

**Arasi:** Balancing Tamil with other subjects was hard since I only studied it on Sundays. Proper time management and equal distribution of study time helped me manage.

“

*I felt learning Tamil was better than any other language because it is my mother tongue and a vital part of my identity.*

~ Nivethiha Manoharan

**Shriram:** How do you feel now having received your results?

**Arasi:** Proud and relieved. I put in a lot of hard work to be able to read, write, and speak Tamil properly.

**Nivethiha:** Honestly, I feel relieved because I wasn't sure what my score would be; I was very happy to see the result.



**Shriram:** How do you plan to contribute to your Tamil identity in the future?

**Nivethiha:** I plan to return to Tamil school to teach younger generations and perhaps explore opportunities as an interpreter.

**Akanila:** I will participate in cultural events and stay connected with Tamil literature and arts to pass our heritage to the next generation.

**Shriram:** What advice would you give to younger students?

**Akanila:** Start early and stay consistent. Take detailed notes and seek help from teachers and peers.

**Nivethiha:** Ask your teachers for feedback whenever possible. Practice writing often, as it is a major aspect of the whole examination.



**Interview by Shriram Narendran**

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## A CALL FOR ACTION: COMMISSIONER SIVARAMAN TACKLES AUSTRALIA'S 'BILE OF RACISM'

“

*Facing hard truths is the only path to genuine safety. It is time for a National Anti-Racism Framework that moves beyond rhetoric into action*



In the harrowing aftermath of the antisemitic terrorist attack in Bondi, Race Discrimination Commissioner Giridharan Sivaraman has launched a high-profile media blitz, appearing on Sunrise, Today, and ABC Radio National to demand urgent systemic reform.

Speaking with The Guardian, the Commissioner warned that Australia is at a crossroads, describing a "visceral increase" in racially motivated hate. His message is clear: we cannot merely "socially cohere" our way out of violence; we must dismantle the structures that allow it to thrive.

Commissioner Sivaraman is advocating for a three-pronged response:

- **Immediate Implementation:** Adopting the National Anti-Racism Framework to provide a legal roadmap for equality.
- **Digital Accountability:** Regulating social media platforms to halt the "unchecked flow" of profitable hate speech and disinformation.
- **Community Leadership:** Investing in community-led solutions to identify and tackle extremism at its roots.

*As the nation heals, Sivaraman insists that facing these "hard truths" is the only path to genuine safety for all Australians.*



## From Jaffna's Streets to a British Knighthood: The Journey of Sir Nishan Canagarajah

In an exclusive interview with Aruliniyan Mahalingam for the Jaffna Monitor, Professor Sir Nishan Canagarajah, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Leicester, reflects on a life defined by resilience and the transformative power of education. Recently knighted for his services to higher education and equality, Sir Nishan's journey began far from the halls of British academia—in the war-torn streets of Jaffna.

Growing up in financial hardship, Sir Nishan recalls a childhood of "quiet dignity." At fifteen, he stood a three-day vigil by his father's hospital bedside until his passing—a moment that reshaped his world. Despite the family's economic collapse, he maintained a disciplined routine of study and sport, eventually becoming the first in his batch to graduate from Cambridge.

"Talent exists everywhere," Sir Nishan tells the Jaffna Monitor. "The real problem globally is not a lack of talent, but a lack of opportunity." This belief drives his leadership today. From supporting Afghan and Ukrainian refugees to establishing the Centre for Digital Epidemiology at the University of Jaffna, his career is a testament to opening doors for others.



“

**"Grasp every opportunity and don't be afraid. Even if something feels intimidating, try it. You may surprise yourself."**

Remaining deeply connected to his roots, Sir Nishan's humility is legendary among peers; he is still the man who returned from Cambridge in his simple "Bata slippers." His advice to the youth of Jaffna is clear: "Grasp every opportunity and don't be afraid. Even if something feels intimidating, try it. You may surprise yourself."



## WHY MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS IN OUR COMMUNITY

Despite being safe and successful today, many in our community still treat mental health as a whispered secret or a sign of failure. To understand why, we have to look at our history.

Many of our elders arrived in Australia carrying the heavy burdens of war and displacement. In the struggle for survival, emotional well-being was sidelined; talking about feelings was a luxury few could afford. Furthermore, back home, we were grounded by extended families and rituals. Here, the isolation of long work hours and financial pressure has replaced that safety net. For older generations, "mental health" was often synonymous with "madness," creating a lasting stigma.

Today, this gap in understanding creates a silent crisis. Elders face loneliness, while the second generation struggles with the weight of modern careers and cultural expectations. Too often, support is only sought at a breaking point, even though early intervention changes lives.

Mental health is not a "Western" concept or a weakness; it is a fundamental part of our humanity. Our culture has always valued emotional health through togetherness—think of the collective healing found in sharing a meal or celebrating Pongal. By reclaiming these traditions of connection and shedding the shame, we can begin to treat our minds with the same proactive care we give our bodies.

***When we support each other and bring these conversations into our homes, we build healthier families and generations.***

**Check out [www.thadam.com.au](http://www.thadam.com.au) or follow on @thadamofficial**

### **By Thadam**

Thadam is a Sydney-based non-governmental organization (NGO) dedicated to improving mental health within the Australian Tamil community.





## SELF-FIRST AID FOR A HEART ATTACK WHEN ALONE

If you experience symptoms like chest discomfort, shortness of breath, or pain spreading to your jaw/arm, your immediate actions are critical:

**Call Emergency Services First:** Do not hesitate. Immediately call your local emergency number (e.g., 911, 999, 112). State your symptoms and location clearly. Follow the dispatcher's instructions.

**Rest Immediately:** Stop all activity. Sit or lie down in a comfortable position that eases your breathing, such as sitting on the floor with your head and shoulders supported.



**Take Aspirin (If Appropriate):** If you are not allergic and have no bleeding disorder, and the emergency dispatcher confirms, slowly chew and swallow one regular-strength (325mg) or four low-dose (81mg) aspirin tablets. Chewing helps it enter your bloodstream faster to help prevent further clotting.

**Take Prescribed Nitroglycerin:** If you have been prescribed nitroglycerin, take it as directed by your doctor.

**Ensure Access for Paramedics:** If possible and without exertion, unlock your front door.

**Stay Calm:** Take slow, deep breaths. Panicking increases your heart rate and the heart's workload. Focus on the fact that help is on the way.

**Do not drive yourself to the hospital or rely solely on nitroglycerin. Time is muscle-get professional help immediately.**



## Elevate Your Everyday: Small *Shifts* for Big Impact

In our fast-paced world, wellness often feels like a chore. However, true lifestyle transformation doesn't require a total overhaul; it's hidden in the small, intentional choices we make daily.

**Prioritize Movement,** Not Just Exercise Don't wait for the gym. Take the stairs, walk during phone calls, or stretch while the coffee brews. Frequent, low-impact movement keeps your energy consistent and your mind sharp.

**The Power of Digital Detox** Reclaim your focus by silencing notifications for one hour each evening. Use this "analog hour" to read, cook, or connect with loved ones. Your nervous system will thank you for the break from the blue-light buzz.

**Master Your Morning** How you start defines your finish. Before checking your emails, drink a glass of water and set one clear intention for the day. This simple ritual shifts your mindset from reactive to proactive, ensuring you lead your day rather than letting it lead you.

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# Call for Submissions: Capturing Our Roots Down Under

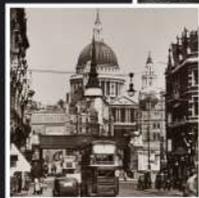
Every family has that one faded photograph—a snapshot of a new beginning. Whether it's a grainy image of your grandparents arriving at Port Melbourne or a Polaroid of your first backyard cricket match, these photos are the threads that weave our community's history together.



*Sweet memories*

We are inviting you to share these precious moments with us. We want to see the faces, the fashion, and the landscapes of your family's early days in Australia. Accompany your photo with a 100-word story about a "first" Aussie experience: that first taste of Vegemite, the shock of a blistering summer, or the first time you saw a kangaroo.

Your full article and images will be published in their entirety on the Tamil Times Australia website ([www.tamiltimes.com.au](http://www.tamiltimes.com.au)).



## How to Enter

Email: [info@tamiltimes.com.au](mailto:info@tamiltimes.com.au)

Format: High-resolution scan (JPEG or PNG)

Deadline: On or before 10th of every month

*Aesthetic*  
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 **Tamil Times CONTRIBUTOR PACK**

**Thank you for your interest in contributing to Tamil Times.**

We welcome high-quality articles that inform, inspire, and connect the Tamil Australian community—covering community stories, diaspora connections, business/professional insights, culture, interviews, events, and opinion pieces.

**Submission Deadline: Due date: 10th of each month**

**What to Submit (Required)**

- Please send a complete submission pack including:
- Final article text (Word / Google Doc link / plain text)
- Suggested short heading (5–10 words preferred)
- Pull-out quotes/highlights (2–3 short lines we can feature in the layout)
- Author name (as it should appear in print)
- Author photo (clear headshot)
- Accompanying images related to the article (high-resolution where possible)

**Optional (recommended):**

- 1–2 line author bio
- Image captions and photo credit (where applicable)

**Images – Quick Guidelines**

- Send high-resolution originals (avoid low-quality screenshots).
- If your images include identifiable people, please ensure you have permission to publish.
- Include captions (who/what/where) and credits if needed.

**Article Size (A5 Print Format)**

Please choose one option:

1 x A5 page: ~160 words

2 x A5 pages: ~320 words

**Email your submission to: [info@tamiltimes.com.au](mailto:info@tamiltimes.com.au)**

Subject line suggestion:

Tamil Times Article Submission – [Your Name] – [Short Topic]

We look forward to publishing your story in Tamil Times.



# Tamil Times

**Melbourne :**

- 07th Feb (Saturday) - Isai Priyanin Isai Sangamam by TCECA  
 07th Feb (Saturday) - Haricharan & Saindhavi Live Music concert  
 14th Feb (Saturday) - Anbar Thematic Bharathanarya Dance  
 14th Feb (Saturday) - Fundraising event for our Children, Victoria  
 21st Feb (Saturday) - Grand Innisai Iravu 2026, Victoria  
 07 & 08th Mar (Saturday, Sunday) - Kamban Vizha 2026, Victoria  
 21st Mar(Saturday) - Iyal Isai Nadaga Vizha, Victoria  
 21st Mar (Saturday) - Guruguhanjali Music Event, Victoria  
 13th Jun (Saturday) - Signing Fish Annual Dinner  
 29th Aug (Saturday) - Ishta Tatpalliar's Bharathanatiyam Arangetram,

**Perth :**

- 01st Feb (Sunday) - Thai Poosam Festival at Perth Bala Murugan Temple  
 13 & 14th Feb (Friday & Saturday)- Mahashivratri with music, Perth  
 21st Feb (Saturday) - Vanni Rehabilitation Event, Perth  
 28th Feb (Saturday) - Pongal Tamil Harvest Festival 2026, Midland

**Queensland :**

- 07th Feb (Saturday) - Pongal Festival by Queensland Tamil Mandram

**Sydney :**

- 03rd Feb (Tuesday) - Pongal Celebrations TACA, Sydney  
 08th Feb (Sunday) - Violin Concert, Sydney Murugan Temple  
 21st Feb (Saturday) - Vanavil 2026 Musical Event, Girraween NSW  
 21st Feb & 22nd Feb (Saturday, Sunday) - Thyagaraja Aradhana 2026, Sydney Music Circle  
 21st Mar (Saturday) - T.M.Krishna Music concert, Sydney Opera House  
 19th Apr (Sunday) - Tamil New Year Celebrations, Girraween Park, NSW  
 06th & 07th June (Saturday, Sunday) - Swara Laya Fine Arts Music Programme, Sydney

**Brisbane :**

- 18th Apr(Saturday) - Tamil New Year Celebrations, Sri Lankan Association of Central Queensland

**Please send your event flyers to [vanakkam@tamiltimes.com.au](mailto:vanakkam@tamiltimes.com.au) to be included in Tamil Times Event Calendar. For full event details visit our website [www.TamilTimes.com.au](http://www.TamilTimes.com.au)**

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