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Journal

APRIL 2020
VOL 14 ISSUE 11

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Practicing social distancing will help slow the spread of COVID-19

By Harrish Thirukumaran

"Social distancing bends the curve and relieves some pressure on our heroic medical professionals. But in order to shift off current policies, the key will be a robust system of testing and monitoring – something we have yet to put in place nationwide, tweeted by Barack Obama, the former President of the United States on April 8, 2020. He notes that lifting these measures before robust testing and monitoring can take place would undo progress being made in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic.

This came about as New York Gov-

ernor Andrew Cuomo announced on Monday, April 6 that he increased the maximum fine up to \$1,000 in the state for individuals that violate its strict social distancing rules during the outbreak as it addresses its high number of cases. It is in response to many residents of the state not taking the rules seriously, placing others in danger of contracting the virus.

In Canada, there are some that are trying to find loopholes around social distancing such as talking to one another from apartment balconies or with lawn chairs on driveways. However, public health experts are warning that these are not worth the risk. Prime

Minister Justin Trudeau has stated there have been instances where Canadians are ignoring social distancing rules blatantly as well. According to microbiologist Jason Kindrachuk, the coronavirus is transmitted by respiratory droplets, which are released into the air when infected individuals breathe, talk, sneeze or cough. The droplets will generally travel about two metres before they hit the ground.

Similar to what Obama has said about the measure, social or physical distancing is proven to be one of the most effective ways to reduce the spread of illness during an outbreak.

One of the most important steps you can take is maintaining a distance of at least 2 arms-length or 2 metres from others as much as possible. Other ways to practice social distancing is to take public transportation during off-peak hours and staying home as much as possible, including for meals and entertainment. More information about social distancing can be found on the Government of Canada website. Practicing social distancing will help slow the spread of COVID-19.

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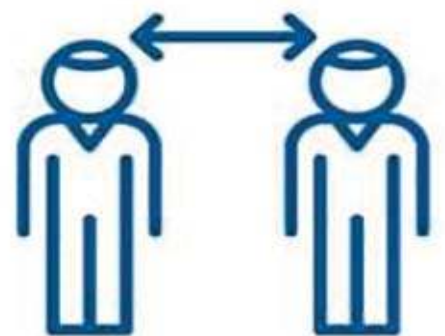
Novel Coronavirus

Help stop the spread of COVID-19

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- Physical distancing means keeping 2 metres apart from others

City of Toronto's call for 'Social Distancing' on their Facebook page



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Ontario Extends School and Child Care Closures to Fight Spread of COVID-19

Province announces second phase of Learn at Home to support continuity of learning

March 31, 2020 1:15 P.M.

Office of the Premier

TORONTO — Due to the rapidly evolving COVID-19 outbreak, the Ontario government announced that schools and child care centres will remain closed to protect the health and safety of students and staff. This extension is being made on the advice of the Chief Medical Officer of Health.

Today's announcement was made by Premier Doug Ford, Stephen Lecce, Minister of Education, Ross Romano, Minister of Colleges and Universities and Christine Elliott, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health.

To ensure continuity of learning, the government is launching the second phase of Learn at Home. Developed in conjunction with education partners, the government is establishing clarity for parents, enhancing education supports, and creating opportunities for teachers and educators to connect with students.

"The decision to extend school closures was not made lightly. We know from the medical experts that the next two weeks will be critical in the fight against COVID-19 and that's why we're taking further action to keep our kids safe and healthy by having them stay home," said Premier Ford. "At the same time, we cannot put the school year in jeopardy. That's why we're providing additional tools for at-home learning and ensuring students from kindergarten to Grade 12 to postsecondary education can finish their academic year and get the credits they need to graduate."

Public schools will remain closed to teachers until Friday, May 1, 2020, and to students until Monday, May 4, 2020. As these dates come closer, this decision will be re-evaluated based on public health advice. The closure may be extended if necessary to protect the health and safety of students, families and staff. Private schools, licensed child care centres and EarlyON



programs will also remain closed until April 13, according to the Declaration of Emergency, which only allows closures to be extended for one 14-day period at a time. Select centres designated to support frontline health care workers and first responders will remain open.

As previously announced, no student will have their graduation compromised by COVID-19 and the Ministry of Education continues to collaborate with the Ministry of Colleges and Universities to ensure that there will be no barriers to accessing postsecondary education.

"We will do whatever it takes to keep students safe from COVID-19 - which is why we have extended the school closure period and why we have unveiled a teacher-led program that keeps students learning while at home," said Minister Lecce. "By providing clarity for parents, enhancing support for students and enabling the teacher-student relationship, we are ensuring our children continue to safely learn - providing some sense of stability and hope for them amid this difficulty."

Via news.ontario.ca

Province Supports Postsecondary Students During COVID-19

Ontario Enabling Students to Complete the Academic Year, Offering Loan Payment Deferrals and Financial Support for Institutions

March 31, 2020 9:00 A.M.

Ministry of Colleges and Universities

TORONTO — The government of Ontario is easing the financial burden on students and making sure they can complete their studies during the COVID-19 outbreak by temporarily deferring payments for Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP) loans and making online learning supports, including year-end exams, available to postsecondary institutions.

"During this unprecedented period, it is important to help students and current borrowers, so students can continue with their studies and borrowers do not have to worry about making loan payments," said Premier Ford. "Our government is doing everything it can to ensure our college and university students can take their exams and complete their school year while studying remotely."

To support borrowers during this difficult period, loan repayments will be subject to a six-month interest-free moratorium until September 30, 2020. This means that during this time, borrowers will not be required to make any loan payments and interest will not accrue on their OSAP loans.

Borrowers can still make one-time payments via their online account or online banking if they want to repay their loans faster. Payments during this period will go entirely towards their loan principal.

"Students and their families make great sacrifices to attend postsecondary education and it is incumbent on us to do everything we can to ensure this academic year is not put in jeopardy," said Minister Romano. "I want to thank our postsecondary institutions for their leadership in adopting alternative ways for students to study and take exams, while ensuring they practice physical distancing and stay safe."

To ensure students can successfully



complete the academic year, Ontario has finalized an agreement with eCampusOntario to make digital learning supports available to postsecondary institutions. These interim digital learning supports, available in both French and English, will provide publicly-assisted colleges and universities with the technology they need to conduct year-end assessments, while preserving student privacy and the integrity of academic assessment.

Ontario will work with other partners who may be interested in offering digital learning, such as Indigenous Institutes and private career colleges. Supports will be accessible on an as-needed basis and limited to those courses and programs where formal exams are required.

The province is also distributing \$25 million in additional funding to publicly-assisted colleges, universities and Indigenous Institutes to help address each institution's most pressing needs in the wake of the COVID-19 outbreak such as deep cleaning, purchasing medical supplies or offering mental health supports.

Via news.ontario.ca

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International Day of Sport for Development and Peace 2020:

Follow Recommendations of the World Health Organization on Staying Fit in Self-Isolation with COVID-19

By Harrish Thirukumaran

“The game has its ups and downs, but you can never lose focus of your individual goals and you can’t let yourself be beat because of lack of effort,” said Michael Jordan. Jordan was considered a legend in the sport of basketball as a six-time National Basketball Association (NBA) champion and five-time NBA Most Valuable Player, among other numerous accolades. It is a sentiment that describes sports overall and the sorts of experiences that they should entail for people. However, it also can promote more goals for individual countries themselves. That is what is expressed by International Day of Sport for Development and Peace (IDS DP).

It is an annual celebration of the power of sport to drive social change, community development and to foster peace and understanding. Based on its vast reach, unparalleled popularity and foundation for positive values, sports are ideally positioned to contribute towards the United Nations’(UN) objectives for development and peace. To raise awareness of this potential, April 6 was declared as IDS DP by the UN General Assembly. This date was chosen because of its historical link to the very first modern Olympic Games on April 6, 1896. The adoption of this Day signifies the increasing recognition by the UN of the positive influence that sport can have on the advancement of human rights, and social and economic development.

Sport encourages multiple objectives in society such as individual development, health promotion and disease prevention, promotion of gender equality, and social integration and the development of social capital. Many organiza-

tions of the UN system, including the International Forum on Sport, Peace and Development, organized jointly with the UN Office on Sport for Development and Peace, have already established partnerships with the International Olympic Committee (IOC). The mission and role of the Committee, as set out in the Olympic Charter, are placing sport at the service of humankind and promoting a peaceful society and healthy lifestyles by associating sport with culture and education and safeguarding human dignity without any discrimination whatsoever.

On April 6, 2020, the IDS DP will be known as a moment when the IOC and the whole Olympic Movement join the global effort to encourage everyone to be active and stay healthy at a time when the world is fighting an unprecedented health crisis, and when populations are being asked to stay at home to contain the spread of COVID-19. Sport and physical activity are essential to stay fit and healthy, especially in this time of uncertainty and social distancing. Physical activity improves mental health, helps beat negative thoughts, lowers stress and depression, and strengthens the immune system.

Social media messaging begun during the week of 23 March, focusing on these health benefits of participating in sporting and physical activity, especially in this time of uncertainty and social distancing. A second phase (1 April - 6 April) of online activity, focuses on sport’s ability to bring people together in solidarity for a cause. To stay fit in self-isolation during this time of uncertainty with COVID-19, you can follow the recommendations of the World Health Organization such as walking, standing up, or home-based exercises like planks or back extensions.

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Monsoon Journal wishes Readers, Advertisers, Distribution outlets & Well wishers A Happy

Happy Easter

April 12, 2020

and Happy ‘Sarvari’ Chithirai & Sinhala New Year

April 14, 2020

Canada Historical Milestones:

April 13, 1927

The Ottawa Senators win their 10th Stanley Cup. They defeat the Boston Bruins by a score of 3 to 1 in front of 8,000 spectators filling the Ottawa Auditorium. The team has a dream season, finishing with 30 wins, 10 losses and 4 ties.



“Which scientist or doctor is not secretly praying for a miracle?” - Arundhati Roy (b: Nov 24, 1961) Writer

Printing the Winds of Change around us All lands home, all men kin.

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Prime Minister announces new partnerships with Canadian Industries to fight COVID-19

March 31, 2020

Ottawa, Ontario

Canadian businesses and manufacturers are stepping up to fight the COVID-19 pandemic. The Government of Canada is working with these companies to ensure our health care workers have the tools they need to care for Canadians across the country.

The Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau, today announced progress under Canada's Plan to Mobilize Industry to fight COVID-19, which increases Canada's ability to respond to the outbreak with necessary medical equipment and supplies.

The Government of Canada is investing \$2 billion to support diagnostic testing and to purchase ventilators and protective personal equipment, including for bulk purchases with provinces and territories. Personal protective equipment includes things like more masks and face shields, gowns, and hand sanitizer.

On March 20, 2020, the Government of Canada called on Canadian businesses and manufacturers to help deliver critical health supplies. Since then, the government has spoken directly with almost 3,000 Canadian com-



panies that have offered their expertise and capacity to meet the country's need for personal protective equipment and critical health supplies.

The Government of Canada has signed new procurement agreements with Canadian companies Thornhill Medical, Medicom, and Spartan Bioscience to purchase and boost capacity to manufacture equipment and supplies including portable ventilators, surgical masks, and rapid testing kits. The government has ordered millions of supplies to ease the pressure on health care facilities. It has also signed letters of intent with five companies – Precision Biomonitoring, Fluid Energy Group Ltd., Irving Oil, Calko Group, and Stanfield's – to produce additional

test kits, hand sanitizer, and protective apparel including masks and gowns.

The government welcomes the cooperation of other companies and industries that have answered the call to action and offered their support in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic. This includes efforts from companies to re-tool their facilities and double their production capacity, to collect and donate existing supplies and equipment, and to combine resources to manufacture needed supplies more quickly. Companies like Magna, General Motors, Toyota Motor Manufacturing Canada, Ford, Linamar, Shell, Suncor, Alibaba Group, and The Home Depot have helped Canada's health care professionals by donating personal protec-

tive and safety equipment and sanitizing supplies.

In addition, \$50 million has been made available in funding for members of the Next Generation Manufacturing Supercluster to develop and scale-up new, in-demand technologies, equipment, and medical products. This includes technologies and products to test and treat Canadians, such as novel virus detection tests, vaccines, therapeutics, and symptom management treatments. It also includes medical equipment to care for Canadians, such as ventilators, peripherals, personal protective equipment, and cleaning and sterilization chemicals and equipment.

These measures are part of the larger strategy the Government of Canada is implementing to protect Canadians and prevent the spread of the virus. Collaboration with Canadian manufacturing and innovation is an important part of this strategy, which will ultimately result in better health and safety for Canadians, as well as a more resilient health care system.

Via pm.gc.ca

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Ontario Increasing Health and Safety Measures to Better Protect Frontline Nurses from COVID-19



March 30, 2020 3:58 P.M.

Ministry of Health

TORONTO — Ontario is taking further action to protect frontline nurses and to recognize their clinical training and experience to help to keep Ontarians and hospitals safe and healthy during the COVID-19 outbreak.

The province, in collaboration with the Chief Medical Officer of Health, and in consultation with the Ontario Nurses' Association (ONA), Ontario Health and the Ontario Hospital Association (OHA), is issuing a directive on health and safety standards for frontline nurses in hospitals in order to prevent exposure to and transmission of COVID-19. These standards have been developed with the guidance of clinically trained frontline nurses, hospital leaders and public health experts.

"It is critical that we are protecting our frontline nurses who are fighting to protect us from COVID-19 every day," said Christine Elliott, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health. "We are collaborating with our partners in the health system to implement this new directive

to ensure that nurses have the protection they need to safely provide the best care for their patients."

This directive outlines:

- Precautions for interactions with suspected, presumed or confirmed COVID-19 patients, including relying on the clinical education and training that nurses receive to use their professional and clinical judgement;
- Point-of-care risk assessments for every patient interaction to assess appropriate health and safety measures; and
- Training on safe use of all personal protective equipment (PPE).

The directive also addresses the ongoing stewardship and conservation of the current level of PPE supplies as the government aggressively pursues all available efforts to increase this supply to ensure the appropriate health and safety control measures are in place to mitigate the transmission of infections. A joint statement from the province, the Chief Medical Officer of Health and the ONA can be found here.

Via news.ontario.ca

Councillor witnesses the generosity of Scarborough-Agincourt residents and businesses

Apr 4, 2020

TORONTO – Today, Jim Karygiannis, Councillor for Ward 22, Scarborough-Agincourt, and Mike Merriman, EMS Unit Chair for CUPE Local 416, witnessed the generosity of several Scarborough-Agincourt residents, businesses and institutions as they donated Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to Toronto's Paramedic Services.

These businesses are exhibiting the best of being Canadian," said Jim Karygiannis.

"They are stepping up to the plate and helping in this very difficult time."

The donations were made by

• Woodside Investment Management donated 216 hand sanitizer bottles

• Beijing Association of Canada donated 10000 N95 Masks

• China City donated 5000 N95

Masks

• Scarborough Chinese Baptist Church donated 2400 masks

"On behalf of Toronto's paramedics, I want to thank the people who made these donations possible," said Mike Merriman. "These donations will help keep paramedics healthy so we can continue to serve Torontonians. The donations also give paramedics a boost in morale and shows that people appreciate what we do."

"I put out the call to local stakeholders, community associations, businesses and residents indicating that our paramedics needed personal protective equipment (masks, hand sanitizer, etc.)" Mr. Karygiannis stated. "This is the third time in the last several weeks I have been able to watch Scarborough-Agincourt businesses and institutions answer the call."

Statement by the Prime Minister on the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

March 21, 2020

Ottawa, Ontario

The Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau, today issued the following statement on the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination: "Today, on the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, we reflect on the progress made in Canada and around the world to end all forms of racial discrimination. We also acknowledge the work we still need to do so that everyone can live in a world where their rights are respected and they have an equal opportunity to succeed."

"To achieve the goal of a just and equal future, we first need to listen. When we follow the advice of leaders,

role models, and community members, we can make real progress."

"In the past weeks and in the days and weeks ahead, we all have and will continue to feel the impacts of the rapidly evolving COVID-19 global pandemic. It is more important than ever to avoid the spread of fear, misinformation, and stigma. In times of need, our strength is determined by our ability to support and care for each other, as neighbours and as a community."

"On behalf of the Government of Canada, I encourage Canadians to stand up together against discrimination and racism, and to promote our values of respect for diversity, inclusion, and openness."

Via pm.gc.ca

Statement from Markham Mayor Frank Scarpitti

If not a lockdown, we need a crackdown

April 6, 2020

I am calling on Premier Doug Ford and Solicitor General Sylvia Jones to ban being within 2 metres of another person in public spaces, and to include this mandate in the existing provincial emergency orders, with an exemption for people who live together. This means police services across the province, including the OPP, need to step up their game and to enforce what is in the emergency orders and fine violators.

We need consistency. This is a serious public health crisis and public health officials say we are in a critical stage of the pandemic. This is not the time to ignore their recommendations. If provincial numbers are realized, that means more people will die from COVID-19 this month alone than are killed in traffic accidents across Ontario annually. In a flood or forest fire, we would urge people to evacuate those areas to minimize the loss of life. Social evacuation is now the new normal. Stay home. Save lives.

I have reached out to businesses throughout Markham asking them to donate personal protective equipment (PPE) to protect health care providers in our community including for Markham Stouffville Hospital, Markham Home for Seniors, Bethany Lodge and Yee Hong long-term care facilities which are already experiencing a critical shortage of supplies.

Our thoughts and concerns go beyond Markham. I have spoken to Chief Harvey Yesno of Eabametoong First Nation, Markham's Indigenous partner, regarding the situation on the



ground in the remote First Nation community, which now has one confirmed case of COVID-19. He says there is increased anxiety and expressed concerns over a chronic shortage of nurses and other medical personnel. Thank you to the senior levels of government for giving them assurances that protective equipment will be provided soon.

Ideas keep pouring in, an ICU physician reached out with a wonderful suggestion to support health care providers and first responders by affording them time to shop for food and supplies, as was given to seniors. I strongly urge grocery stores, pharmacies and essential businesses to dedicate some time and provide special checkout lanes to spare our heroes from waiting in line, so they can get back to keeping us safe.

Despite the concerns, I am hearing stories of compassion and strength in the face of adversity. Thank you to all the generous residents and businesses who are rising to action in service of our communities.



Statement by Federal NDP **NDP** **NDP**

Singh Calls for Direct Help for All Canadians, Proposes Fixes to CERB

April 7, 2020

TORONTO – Today, NDP Leader Jagmeet Singh sent a letter to the Prime Minister suggesting ways to make sure everyone who needs financial help to get through this crisis, gets it. Singh continued his push for direct financial assistance for all and encouraged sending a direct payment of \$2,000 – with an additional \$250 per child – to everyone in Canada.

“There are millions of people across the country who are worried about their health, their loved ones, and how they will pay their bills as we continue to face this pandemic. We must find a way to make sure everyone in Canada can get through these unprecedented times with enough money to pay their bills; a job to go back to; and a safe place to live,” said Singh. “As we have been saying for weeks, the quickest and best way to make sure government help gets to everyone who needs it, is to immediately send direct financial assistance to all Canadians.”

Singh encouraged the Prime Minister to move away from the complicated means-based system and implement a universal direct payment to all. The Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) – even with changes the government has made – has proven to be complicated and leaves out many Ca-

nadians who need support. One study by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives found that one third of Canadians in need are not eligible for the emergency benefit or Employment Insurance and will be left without any government help.

Singh also proposed specific amendments to CERB to ensure people who are currently left out – such as students, those who were unemployed before the pandemic that were not eligible for EI and workers who continue to receive some form of modest income – would also get the help they need.

“The consequences of having a program that excludes the most vulnerable are as tragic as they are human. More people will run out of food, more people will lose their homes, and more people will end up on the street unless we do something. When the House of Commons returns, we have the opportunity to make changes so that all Canadians can get help. Let’s get it right this time,” added Singh. “New Democrats believe in Canadians’ desire to care for each other. And we believe that Canadians should be able to expect their government and all parliamentarians to lead. They want us to do our best and do all we can to help them. By working together, I think we can do just that.”

Canadians need help now. Send direct assistance to everyone

April 6, 2020

TORONTO – Today, on the first day that Canadians can finally apply for the Canada Emergency Response Benefit, the Prime Minister has admitted that it doesn’t go far enough and leaves people behind. NDP Leader Jagmeet Singh pointed out that a direct payment to everyone across the country would make sure that no one falls through the cracks. As New Democrats have been saying for weeks, direct payment of \$2,000 – with an additional \$250 per child – to everyone in Canada would make sure that people who have been left behind by the government’s announcements can get the help they need.

“People are telling us they need help now. They’re worried they’re not going to qualify for the government’s program and that if they do, they’re worried they’ll have to wait too long to get the money they need to pay their bills in time,” said Singh. “Let’s help people right away. Not in a few weeks or next month. The government should send direct assistance to everyone now.”

Rent was due last week, and many people throughout the country had to make the devastating decision between paying for rent or paying for food. According to reports, one-third of people who need help will not qualify



for the government’s program. Instead of coming up with new announcements to patch up the holes in their current plan, Singh argues the government should finally follow the lead of other countries and move forward with direct assistance for everyone.

From physiotherapists to students and artists to people making less than \$2000 per month, NDP offices have been flooded with people sharing their concerns about how they’ll make ends meet, while the government leaves them behind.

“To get through this crisis, Canadians need money to pay their bills, a job to go back to, and a safe place to live. It is up to us to make sure people get the help they need to get through this,” added Singh. “New Democrats will continue to work to get help to everyone who needs it. We’re all in this together.”

The Canadian Agency Network (tCAN) and member Dyversity Communications Provide Free Advertising & Marketing Counsel



Toronto, March 30, 2020 – The Canadian Agency Network (tCAN) is planning to provide advice to aid small, medium and large businesses, and not-for-profit organizations, during these uncertain times. During the COVID-19 pandemic, tCAN members are ready and able to help organizations across Canada by offering free communications aid, counsel and guidance.

“Businesses large and small and across all industries are feeling the economic threat this crisis brings,” said Frank Palmer, chairman of tCAN. “The tCAN family of agencies felt that we could provide some relief by lending our expertise in marketing and advertising to those who are uncertain about how to weather this storm. Whether it

is communicating with clients, suppliers or customers – we’re here to help.”

During this unprecedented time, organizations can consult with a vast network of advertising and marketing agencies across Canada. After visiting the tCAN website, users are encouraged to search for a province or industry, which will then populate a list of independent marcom agencies and the contact information to reach them.

The tCAN network is comprised of veteran marketers from the Canadian advertising landscape who have maintained their businesses through crises such as SARS and the financial crisis of 2007-08, among others. Through these experiences, tCAN members are ready and able to help organizations build re-

siliency during these precarious times.

“Business owners across the gamut need to have a strategic communication plan in place especially during crisis situations,” says managing director of tCAN, Bill Whitehead Jr. “As experienced communicators, we want to share our expertise with organizations who may or may not have the capabilities in-house to manage this situation.”

“In the cultural space, small and medium business owners are feeling overwhelmed and stressed during these challenging times. We understand, and are here to help as part of this tCAN outreach. With our years of experience

in the ethnic markets, we are eager to help them find the solutions, be it with their in-language communication, multicultural consumer insights, suppliers, and more,” adds Albert Yue, President & CEO, Dyversity Communications.

Learn what actions can be taken now to best weather the COVID-19 storm, and how to plan for the future to build a business that can be more resilient through times of crisis by visiting <https://tcn.co/>. Please refer to the membership directory for the member and expertise best suited to your requirements.

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South-East Asian countries urged to 'do more' to fight COVID-19

17 March 2020

Health

With South-East Asia reporting more than 480 cases of COVID-19 and eight deaths, the World Health Organization (WHO) on Tuesday called for countries to "act now" and urgently scale-up "aggressive" measures to tackle the disease.

Poonam Khetrpal Singh, WHO Regional Director, warned that the situation is evolving rapidly.

"More clusters of virus transmission are being confirmed. While this is an indication of an alert and effective surveillance, it also puts the spotlight on the need for more aggressive and whole of society efforts to prevent further spread of COVID-19. We clearly need to do more, and urgently", she said.

The 11 countries in WHO's South-East Asia Region are home to over a quarter of the global population.

Eight have confirmed cases of the novel coronavirus disease: Thailand, Indonesia, India, Sri Lanka, Maldives, Bangladesh, Nepal and Bhutan.

Dr. Singh said the numbers indicate that some countries are clearly head-



UNSPLASH/AALOK ATREYA

People across the world are taking precautions against the COVID-19 coronavirus, including the man taking a ride in the photo above.

ing towards community transmission of the viral disease.

If this occurs, they will have to work to slow down transmission, as well as end outbreaks.

"We need to be geared to respond to the evolving situation with the aim to stop transmission of COVID-19 at the earliest to minimize the impact of the

virus that has gripped over 150 countries in a short span of time, causing substantial loss to health of people, societies, countries and economies", she said. "Urgent and aggressive measures are the need of the hour. We need to act now".

Dr. Singh highlighted the critical importance of continuous efforts to

detect, test, treat and isolate patients, and to trace contacts.

People also are asked to follow WHO advice on reducing transmission through measures, such as proper handwashing, covering coughs and sneezes, and practicing social distancing.

Via news.un.org

Shah Rukh Khan offers his office for BMC quarantine facility

04 Apr 2020

PTI

The local municipal body, Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC), took to social media on Saturday to thank Shah Rukh Khan and Gauri for the help

Days after Shah Rukh Khan and his wife Gauri Khan announced several initiatives to help the central and state government in their fight against the coronavirus pandemic, the superstar has now opened his office for treating COVID-19 patients.

The local municipal body, Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC), took to social media on Saturday to thank Shah Rukh and Gauri for the help.

"We thank @iamsrk & @gaurikhan for offering their 4-storey personal office space to help expand our Quarantine capacity equipped with essentials for quarantined children, women & elderly. Indeed a thoughtful & timely gesture," BMC's official Twitter handle post read.

Sharing the civic body's tweet, Shah Rukh and Gauri said they are glad to get the opportunity of contributing in BMC's efforts towards taking care of the people of Mumbai.

"When we say 'mybmc', then it's with a sense of ownership and pride in all the efforts your teams are putting up to fight COVID-19. We both are



thankful that we could be a part of your attempts to help and care for Mumbai-kars," the couple wrote on their respective Twitter handles.

The 54-year-old superstar on Thursday announced various initiatives to help the country during the crisis.

The actor has taken the help of his companies -- Kolkata Knight Riders, Red Chillies Entertainment, Meer Foundation and Red Chillies VFX -- to provide support to the central and state governments.

SRK along with Gauri and business partners -- Juhi Chawla and Jay Meh-

ta -- will be contributing to the PM-CARES Fund through IPL franchise Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) and will also make a donation to the Maharashtra CM's Relief Fund through his film banner Red Chillies Entertainment.

Apart from this, the actor's NGO Meer Foundation will work with the Maharashtra and West Bengal governments for the supply of 50,000 Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for the healthcare professionals and has also tied up with Ek Saath - The Earth to provide daily food requirements to over 5500 families for at least a month in Mumbai.

The NGO, in association with Roti Foundation, will provide 3 lakh meal kits to 10,000 to underprivileged people and daily wage labourers for at least a month in Mumbai and will support 100 acid attack victims in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal and Uttarakhand.

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UN launches COVID-19 plan that could 'defeat the virus and build a better world'

31 March 2020

Health

The UN chief launched on Tuesday a new plan to counter the potentially devastating socio-economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, calling on everyone to "act together to lessen the blow to people".

"The new coronavirus disease is attacking societies at their core, claiming lives and people's livelihoods", said Secretary-General António Guterres, pointing out that the potential longer-term effects on the global economy and individual countries are "dire".

The new report, Shared responsibility, global solidarity: Responding to the socio-economic describes the speed and scale of the outbreak, the severity of cases, and the societal and economic disruption of the coronavirus.

"COVID-19 is the greatest test that we have faced together since the formation of the United Nations," underscored the UN chief.

"This human crisis demands coordinated, decisive, inclusive and innovative policy action from the world's leading economies – and maximum financial and technical support for the poorest and most vulnerable people and countries."

As strong as weakest health system

Mr. Guterres called for "an immediate coordinated health response to suppress transmission and end the pandemic" that "scales up health capacity for testing, tracing, quarantine and treatment, while keeping first responders safe, combined with measures to restrict movement and contact."

He underscored that developed countries must assist those less developed, or potentially "face the nightmare of the disease spreading like wildfire in the global South with millions of deaths and the prospect of the disease re-emerging where it was previously suppressed".



UN Photo/Mark Garten

UN Secretary-General António Guterres briefs the media on the socio-economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Let us remember that we are only as strong as the weakest health system in our interconnected world", he stressed.

Focus on most vulnerable

In tackling the devastating social and economic dimensions of the crisis, the UN chief pushed for a focus on the most vulnerable by designing policies that, among other things, support providing health and unemployment insurance and social protections while also bolstering businesses to prevent bankruptcies and job losses.

Debt alleviation must also be a priority he said, noting that the UN is "fully mobilized" and is establishing a new multi-partner Trust Fund for COVID19 Response and Recovery to respond to the emergency and recover from the socio-economic shock.

"When we get past this crisis, which we will, we will face a choice", said the UN chief, "we can go back to the world as it was before or deal decisively with those issues that make us all unneces-

sarily vulnerable to crises".

Referencing the 2030 Agenda and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), he maintained that in recover from the COVID-19 crisis must lead to an economy focused on building inclusive and sustainable economies that are more resilient in facing pandemics, climate change, and the many other global challenges.

"What the world needs now is solidarity," stressed the Secretary-General. "With solidarity we can defeat the virus and build a better world".

Measures to cope with coronavirus impacts

• Global actions must include a stimulus package reaching double-digit percentage points of the world's GDP, with explicit actions to boost the economies of developing countries.

• Regional mobilization must examine impacts, monetary coordination, fiscal and social measures, while engaging with private financial sector to support businesses and addressing

structural challenges.

• National solidarity needs to prioritize social cohesion and provide fiscal stimulus for the most vulnerable along with support to small- and medium-sized enterprises, decent work and education.

Grim 2020 socio-economic estimates

The report includes estimates from a host of UN agencies.

According to the UN International Labour Organization (ILO), five to 25 million jobs will be eradicated, and the United States will lose \$860 billion to \$3.4 trillion in labor income.

The UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) projected a 30 to 40 per cent downward pressure on global foreign direct investment flows while the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) saw a 20–30 per cent decline in international arrivals.

Via news.un.org

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9 Years after Don 2, Shah Rukh Khan & Priyanka Chopra to reunite for Gaga's Coronavirus Benefit Gig

Pop music superstar Lady Gaga on Monday announced a worldwide telecast featuring Shah Rukh Khan, Priyanka Chopra Jonas, Paul McCartney, Lizzo, Billie Eilish and others to support healthcare workers responding to the global coronavirus outbreak.

The event, called "One World: Together at Home," will be shown on multiple television and digital networks around the world on April 18. It will be hosted by late-night television comedians Jimmy Kimmel, Jimmy Fallon and Stephen Colbert.

The event will also mark Shah Rukh's reunion with Priyanka after nine years, even though it'll be a virtual one. The two previously worked together in Farhan Akhtar's *Don 2*.

Gaga, who said she helped curate the celebrity lineup, called in to World Health Organization's coronavirus briefing on Monday to unveil the project, a joint effort with advocacy group Global Citizen.

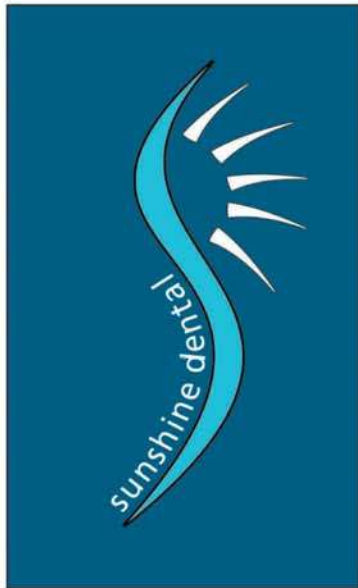
Organizers already have raised \$35 million to help with the crisis, Gaga said. The money will benefit WHO's COVID-19 Solidarity Response Fund. Their goal is to raise funds in advance of the upcoming telecast so viewers can "sit back and enjoy the show you all deserve," she said.

The event will feature appearances and performances by Alanis Morissette, Andrea Bocelli, Billie Eilish, Chris Martin, David Beckham, Elton John, John Legend, Keith Urban, Stevie Wonder and others, according to a statement.



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Supporting front-line staff at Scarborough Health Network



Doctors, nurses and staff on the front lines at Scarborough Health Network (SHN) are bravely working navigate the ongoing and rapidly changing COVID-19 outbreak. However, there is still much to be done to ensure that the hospital has what it needs to continue the fight against the virus and to care for Scarborough's patients and families.

"Our hospitals are facing a number of urgent equipment needs as resources are dedicated to control the outbreak and treat our patients," says Alicia Vandermeer, President & CEO of SHN Foundation. "We have now established the COVID-19 Emergency Fund to ensure our hospital teams are well-equipped to deliver exceptional care. As well, we are working to address shortages of personal protective equipment (PPE) through our ongoing Help Our Heroes PPE Drive."

Urgent equipment needs include

(but are not limited to) ventilators, ECG and vital signs monitors, ICU beds, IV pumps, hemodialysis machines and hyperthermia units, as well as PPE such as procedure masks, N95 masks, hand sanitizer and face shields (reusable and disposable).

Thanks to matching gifts of \$100,000 each made by the Nanji Family Foundation and the Krawczyk Family Foundation, donations to the COVID-19 Emergency Fund will have even more impact. As of April 7, the Fund has generated more than \$215,000 in support for front-line staff at SHN.

If you would like to make a gift, or are interested in supplying PPE to front-line hospital staff, visit SHN-Foundation.ca. For more information on COVID-19 directly from SHN, including self-assessment tools, visitor and screening policies and how to keep you and your family safe, visit SHN.ca/COVID-19.

Help give SHN physicians and staff the tools they need to fight COVID-19

Scarborough Health Network's response to the ongoing and rapidly changing COVID-19 outbreak has been swift and decisive, thanks to the dedication and brave work of our physicians, nurses and staff on the front lines.

In this time of need, SHN is urgently seeking help to purchase medical equipment needed to care for our patients and families in response to COVID-19. Your donation to the Emergency Fund will go directly towards supporting those serving on SHN's front lines by equipping them with the tools need-

ed to continue the fight.

Do you or your business have PPE or supplies that could help keep SHN health care teams and patients safe? Email PPEdonations@shn.ca or visit our landing page for more details.

If you have any questions, please contact the Foundation by email at foundation@shn.ca or by phone at 416-431-8130. For larger donations, please contact Michele Varela, Vice President, Philanthropy directly by email at mvarela@shn.ca or by phone at 416-508-6278.

CELEBRATING DONOR GENEROSITY IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19



**Gulshan & Pyarali G.
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As Scarborough Health Network continues to navigate the ongoing and rapidly changing COVID-19 outbreak, our hospitals are also grappling with the urgent need for medical equipment that is critical in treating patients with the virus. To meet this need, donors from the Scarborough community and beyond are continuing to come forward and supporting our outstanding physicians, nurses and staff on the front lines with incredibly generous donations that will help SHN secure this much-needed equipment.

To lead the charge, the Nanji Family Foundation has made a generous \$100,000 gift to match your own donations to the COVID-19 Emergency Fund. SHN is grateful for this incredible gift, which will help inspire others in the community to support our hospital teams in this time of crucial need.

The Foundation would also like to

publicly recognize those donors who have stepped up with significant support in a time of great need for our community and great challenge for our hospitals. We are incredibly grateful as well to those in the community who have stepped forward with significant donations of personal protective equipment (PPE) to address critical shortages during this challenging time. In addition, we are recognizing the local Scarborough businesses who have helped support the brave work of our hospital physicians and staff by donating meals, gift cards and other services.

SHN and SHN Foundation are extremely grateful to these donors for their support, and we remain grateful to all of our supporters for their generosity, which helps us continue to serve Scarborough patients and families with exceptional care – today, tomorrow and every day.

Coronavirus (COVID-19) Information

Scarborough Health Network (SHN) is closely monitoring the COVID-19 pandemic. We are well-prepared across our health network, following guidance from the World Health Organization, the Public Health Agency of Canada, and Toronto Public Health. We are also working with the Ministry of Health, Ontario Health, and other hospitals to ensure the strongest and safest response to any potential cases of COVID-19 at SHN.

At SHN, you're in good hands – at

each of our hospitals (Birchmount, Centenary, and General) and community satellite sites. Our doctors and clinical teams have the medical expertise to treat you safely and compassionately, no matter what brings you in to see us.



HOW CAN I PROTECT MYSELF FROM COVID-19?

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Psychological wellness during the COVID-19 pandemic



Fear, stress, anxiety and worries are a normal reaction to insecurity, uncertainty and things that may hurt us. As the number of COVID-19 pandemic cases continues to increase throughout the east coast to west, fear, stress and anxiety around the COVID-19 virus have risen. Majority of Canadian society, new COVID-19 pandemic makes for a very unsure future and a lot of anxieties around social life, family members and love ones, works...etc.

People who already living with the general anxiety diagnosis, or experience a chronic anxiety or fears might discover their daily level of anxiety worsening; and that deeply affecting into their education, work/carrier and ability to take part in important family, community and social responsibilities, their economy, and other psychological-physical and spiritual parts of their lives.

We react differently to stressful situations that can depend on previous physical and mental health background. Stress for the period of an infectious disease epidemic can incorporate anxiety, fear and worry about you and your loved ones, sleeping dif-

ficulty, appetite, changes eating patterns, increased substance abuse, alcohol and other drugs dependency...etc. Citizens with pre-existing psychological conditions should remain with their treatment plan include psychotropic medication, therapy/counselling, social worker supports, online meetup groups and support hotlines.

The evidence-based approach Cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) techniques deliver an effective way of 'thinking and doing' that strategies help to manage difficult moods, fears and anxieties. Many paper-pencil CBT techniques help develop a routine for yourself and your family, find & Change troublesome thoughts, reduce fears exercise, overcome overwhelmed feelings, and modify thinking and actions in meaningful ways.

Mindfulness is thought of a "mind state," and a "practice; Mindfulness practices include breathing and relaxation, progressive muscle relaxation also helpful during pandemic fear-related anxiety and stress.

Mental Health Resources available to you (Ref: <https://www.ottawapublichealth.ca>)

If you are in crisis, please contact the Mental Health Crisis Line (24 hours a day/7 day a week) at 613-722-6914 or if outside Ottawa toll-free at 1-866-996-0991.

If you (or your child) are experiencing thoughts of suicide or harming yourself, please call 9-1-1.

Telephone Mental Health Resources

- Kids Help Phone (Bilingual) - 1-800-668-6868
- Youth Services Bureau (Bilingual) - 613-260-2360 or 1-877-377-7775 (toll free for Eastern Ontario)
- Good 2 talk (Bilingual) - 1-866-925-5454
- Distress Centre Ottawa and Region 24/7 (English) - 613-238-3311
- Mental Health Crisis Line 24/7 (Bilingual) - 613-722-6914 | Outside Ottawa: 1-866-966-0991
- First Nations and Inuit Hope for Wellness Help Line 24/7 (Bilingual, Other) - 1-855-242-3310
- Ottawa Rape Crisis Centre Crisis Line 24/7 (English) - 613-562-2333 | 24hr line: 613-562-2333
- Assaulted Women's Helpline – Ontario (English, Other) – Text 24/7 to

#7233

• Ontario Online & Text Crisis Services (English) – Chat 2:00 pm to 2:00 am | Text 2:00 pm to 2:00 am to #258258

• Canada Suicide Prevention Service (Bilingual) – Text 4:00 pm to 12:00 am to #45645

Online Mental Health Resources (<https://www.ottawapublichealth.ca>)

For information: cope with and reduce stress and anxiety, talk to children about COVID-19.

• The Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH)

• BounceBack - Mental Health phone line support with a coach and online videos

• Big White Wall – 24/7 Peer to Peer online mental health support network.

Substance Use Disorder support: Breaking Free Online (BFO) is a confidential online platform to help support wellness around substance use.

Nuwan Fonseka PsyD

Founder of Integrative Mindfulness Center Inc.



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For a confidential discussion about including Scarborough Health Network Foundation in your Will and other gift options, contact Verna Chen at 416-438-2911 ext. 6040 or email vchen@shn.ca



SHNFoundation.ca



BY THULASI MUTTULINGAM

HUMANS OF NORTHERN SRI LANKA

"Humans of Northern Sri Lanka" is a Facebook Community page by Thulasi Muttulingam, a journalist based in the North of Sri Lanka. To follow the updates, "Like" the page at: www.facebook.com/pages/Humans-of-Northern-Sri-Lanka

REPORT FROM JAFFNA

Even as I write, the first death due to hunger - that of a 10 years old dalit child from India, is being reported on the news. Somehow the news comes as a shock. I had expected our respective governments to swing into action before this tragedy struck. So far though, neither the Indian nor the Sri Lankan governments have addressed the problem.

I worry about how daily wagers live. But it's lockdown in Sri Lanka - has been for more than 10 days now. I can't go out and ask.

Calls to social activist friends who might have at least telephone contact with these groups are dire. The poor who live on daily wage earnings of less than \$10 per day could not afford to stock up like the middle and upper classes just before lockdown. And when they lost their livelihoods during lockdown, they locked down with no food or access to food via money.

The rest of us are doing OK.

A week into lockdown, trucks began to ferry our streets selling fresh produce and other essentials like rice, milk and sugar. Those of us with cash in hand are able to buy. The rest are left high and dry.

As an introverted person, I do not mind the lockdown.

As a middle class person - albeit one temporarily laid off from my job - the lack of cash flow is not pinching me at the moment either. It's a distant worry but not an immediate one.

The middle classes can keep the wolf from the door for a few months more. We have some money in the bank - and now the government is planning to introduce mobile ATMS to help us withdraw our life savings to offset the economic shutdown.

A few of us continue to work online too.

And as always, the Jaffna adage of getting a government job at whatever cost, bears out its wisdom in times like these. Government employees will continue to get their salaries regardless of whether they work online or not.

And that's not to mention the workers still on the frontlines - the hospital workers, the garbage collectors, for that matter even the farmers and fishermen. They all continue to work, that the rest of us might live.

As a middleclass person, I am aware of my privilege.

I keep wondering when the government will start delivering sustenance to the truly needy.

It hasn't materialized yet. Just before lockdown, President Gotabaya announced reduction in prices of dhal and tinned fish. Yet he didn't note how that was going to be financed without ripping off the retailers who would have paid for that stock already at higher prices.

And now trucks plying our roadways certainly are not selling those items at the reduced price ideally affordable to the poor. Some of the prices are even jacked up 40-50 percent above normal - as the middle classes we will still pay. What the poor are doing though, is beyond me to fathom.

We have a system called 'Samurdhi' in Sri Lanka whereby the government gives sustenance to the poorest of the poor. Unfortunately, it's not necessarily the poorest of the poor who always get into the Samurdhi benefit schemes. I know some middle class families who have wrangled their way into it too. The samurdhi families are being delivered extra sustenance by the government - which is to be appreciated. It's not enough though. Many a poverty stricken family have been left out of that system, it was never intended to cover all of them.

One of the advantages of living in a place like Jaffna or Batticaloa though, is the access to land. People here have the habit of cultivating useful home gardens growing greens, vegetables and fruits aplenty.

If it came right down to it, we could barter fruits and vegetables and even rice with the neighbours and live off the land - however that too, is a middle and upper class preserve.

Where people live is not an accident in our areas. The dominant castes appropriated the best lands - the most fertile ones with the best ground water tables, for themselves. The oppressed castes - also of course the ones who will make up the majority of daily wage labourers, are relegated to barren lands with little to no ground water resources - thereby having little to no access of living off the land either.

Nevertheless, a hardy few manage to grow a few greens. I fear this is going to be their only option for now.

Life is hard for everybody in the times of the corona virus. But it's hardest for the poorest.

I sincerely pray, we do not hear of too many deaths of hunger along with those lost to the virus.

Sri Lanka's economy is mainly sustained by these people - the garment factory workers,

Use of Cloth Face Coverings to Help Slow the Spread of COVID-19

How to Wear Cloth Face Coverings

Cloth face coverings should—

- fit snugly but comfortably against the side of the face
- be secured with ties or ear loops
- include multiple layers of fabric
- allow for breathing without restriction
- be able to be laundered and machine dried without damage or change to shape

CDC on Homemade Cloth Face Coverings

CDC recommends wearing cloth face coverings in public settings where other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain (e.g., grocery stores and pharmacies), especially in areas of significant community-based transmission.

CDC also advises the use of simple cloth face coverings to slow the spread of the virus and help people who may have the virus and do not know it from transmitting it to others. Cloth face coverings fashioned from household items or made at home from common materials at low cost can be used as an additional, voluntary public health measure.

Cloth face coverings should not be placed on young children under age 2, anyone who has trouble breathing, or is unconscious, incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the cloth face covering without assistance.

The cloth face coverings recommended are not surgical masks or N-95 respirators. Those are critical supplies that must continue to be reserved for healthcare workers and other medical first responders, as recommended by current CDC guidance.

Should cloth face coverings be washed or otherwise cleaned regularly? How regularly?

Yes. They should be routinely washed depending on the frequency of use.

How does one safely sterilize/clean a cloth face covering?

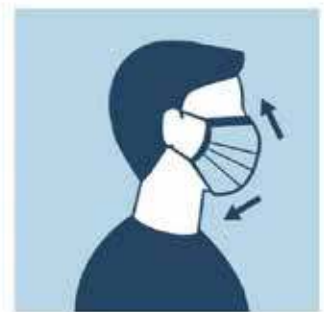
A washing machine should suffice in properly washing a cloth face covering.

How does one safely remove a used cloth face covering?

Individuals should be careful not to touch their eyes, nose, and mouth when removing their cloth face covering and wash hands immediately after removing.



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cdc.gov/coronavirus

the tea pluckers.. But now the government has left them high and dry. The garment factory workers were forced to work well past the lockdown - then sent home without pay.

The tea estate workers finally won the right to Rs.1000 per day wages, earlier this year after a long endured battle - but then the factory owners refused to pay them. This was an issue even before the corona - but now with corona lockdown too - that sector is especially hard hit. Families on the tea estates are already scrambling for food apparently. They were already quietly going hungry before the lockdown and now reached a critical stage. Yet as the most marginalized of the marginalized, hardly anyone is highlighting their plight or seeking a resolution for it.

Well, some are though. I know of this despite the lock down, only due to input from a social activist contact, Rev. Fr. Dixon, a priest of the Anglican mission in Maskeliya.

He is trying to organize sustenance for the many starving people of Maskeliya through his church - which is active in Jaffna and other parts of the country too.

If you want to donate to alleviate the starvation of the people back home, here is the Church's bank account: All Saints Church, Maskeliya, Hatton National Bank a/c no: 021 01000 2066,

SWIFT code: HBLILKLX001.

Sewn Cloth Face Covering

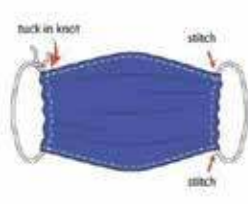
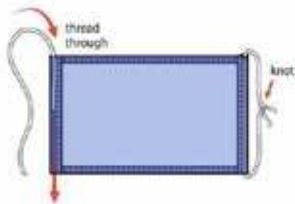
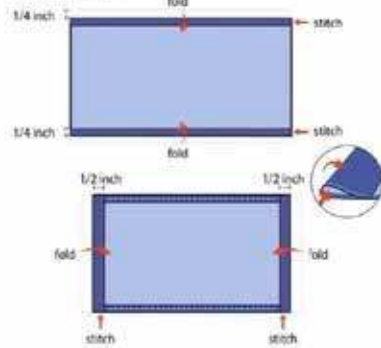
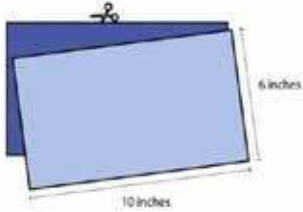
Materials

- Two 10"x6" rectangles of cotton fabric
- Two 6" pieces of elastic (or rubber bands, string, cloth strips, or hair ties)
- Needle and thread (or bobby pin)
- Scissors
- Sewing machine



Tutorial

1. Cut out two 10-by-6-inch rectangles of cotton fabric. Use tightly woven cotton, such as quilting fabric or cotton sheets. T-shirt fabric will work in a pinch. Stack the two rectangles; you will sew the cloth face covering as if it was a single piece of fabric.
2. Fold over the long sides 1/4 inch and hem. Then fold the double layer of fabric over 1/2 inch along the short sides and stitch down.
3. Run a 6-inch length of 1/8-inch wide elastic through the wider hem on each side of the cloth face covering. These will be the ear loops. Use a large needle or a bobby pin to thread it through. Tie the ends tight. Don't have elastic? Use hair ties or elastic head bands. If you only have string, you can make the ties longer and tie the cloth face covering behind your head.
4. Gently pull on the elastic so that the knots are tucked inside the hem. Gather the sides of the cloth face covering on the elastic and adjust so the cloth face covering fits your face. Then securely stitch the elastic in place to keep it from slipping.



Quick Cut T-shirt Cloth Face Covering (no sew method)

Materials

- T-shirt
- Scissors

Tutorial

1. Cut out a T-shirt.
2. Cut out a 6-7 inch wide strip from the bottom of the T-shirt.
3. Tie the strings around neck, then over top of head.

Bandana Cloth Face Covering (no sew method)

Materials

- Bandana (or square cotton cloth approximately 20"x20")
- Rubber bands (or hair ties)
- Coffee filter
- Scissors (if you are cutting your own cloth)

Tutorial

1. Cut coffee filter.
2. Fold bandana in half.
3. Fold filter in center of folded bandana. Fold top down. Fold bottom up.
4. Place rubber bands or hair ties about 6 inches apart.
5. Fold side to the middle and tuck.
6. Fold side to the middle and tuck.
7. Wear the bandana face covering.

I don't usually call for donations, but at a time neither the government nor NGOs have been able to step up, we have to do what we can. Please donate what you feel able to. And take care of yourselves too.

I hope and pray you and your families remain healthy, happy and stable. Take care Canada.

Symptoms

Woke up with an itchy throat yesterday which rapidly developed into a phlegmy-cough.

A cough that wouldn't subside - my body was wracked with coughing for several hours in the morning.

Googled symptoms of corona and saw that a constant cough was a major symptom. Started hyperventilating.

Fortunately my housemate is the sensible kind.

She pointed out I had been battling various stressors the previous night and told me to re-set my panic buttons.

Years of living in high-stress environments means I have developed unhealthy coping mechanisms - primarily that I submerge my anxiety into my subconscious mind and don't get obvious anxiety symptoms - no heart rate increase etc - to the extent even I don't realise it's the stress affecting me and causing other reactions in my body.

A good 20 minutes of meditation and telling myself to face and re-evaluate whatever was causing the stress in my personal life - (don't worry everyone, I have a roof over my head and food to eat which is more than enough for now.

The stressors are real but not earth-shattering) - and the cough subsided. As in completely disappeared. *poof*

Sigh! It's a good wake up call to keep myself physically as well as mentally healthy, and to get my priorities straight.

Stay safe everyone. We all are battling minor as well as major stressors right now - take the time to re-set your buttons as needed.

Kidding ourselves that we are laughing at memes doesn't always cut it.

Trust and Quiet ones

In a way I think of the lockdown as introverts' revenge.

We didn't plan this, but it's good to see extroverts gasp for air in a world not designed for them - as we introverts have to do the rest of the time.

Been doing a lot of introspecting - nothing else to do after all - during the lockdown.

Trying to self analyse, understand what makes me tick, what makes the world around me tick...

I'm an INFP on the Myers-Briggs scale. You should try out that personality test if you haven't already.

There are some accuracies in how it predicts who you are and how you behave.

So like the typical introvert I am, I have also been lurking on various INFP forums where they discuss themselves and their life experiences. I noticed one thing that comes up is that many of them have been harassed by people who are quick to judge them for the sin of being 'too quiet'.

I've repeatedly run into this in my life too - people becoming paranoid that I was hatching some nefarious plot to undermine their collective security when in fact I was exclusively only minding my own business. Simply because you can't trust the 'quiet ones' apparently.

Where exactly did this paranoia over the 'quiet ones' come from? Appears to be a worldwide phenomenon.

Fear of missing out

My FOMO life these days:

- Want to be productive on all my pending writing projects but never even get around to it.
- Receive validation from online articles that people are experiencing anxiety and it's OK not to be productive.
- Decide to read a book.
- Wonder what I am missing out on facebook.
- Open facebook. Open all the links to various interesting articles, videos and podcasts friends have shared.
- Try to go through all the links.
- Jump back on FB because of fear of missing out something unfolding there in the meantime.
- Rinse and repeat.
- Have 60 odd tabs that remain unclosed for a week because if I store them in my online reading app, I am sure I will never get back to them.
- Add some more tabs to be read / watched / listened to, each day.
- Go to bed just as day breaks the next day and wonder where the day went.
- Fall asleep with a heavy sense of FOMO that others locked down must have been much more productive.



Special Feature

Take it or Leave it



What Is Peace?

What is my message? And you've all heard "peace ambassador", "peace ambassador." Don't, don't get taken up by that. In my opinion, you're all peace ambassadors because you all have peace in you. So you have, you're also peace ambassadors.

But the problem is that word, peace is possible— it's not a problem if you understand what peace is. If you don't know what peace is, 'is possible' really becomes 'impossible.'

And as I travel the world and I say to people 'peace,' and people have no idea what peace is. No idea. For most people, escaping from their problems is peace. You see? Let me ask you a question. Why do you want peace? Why? Why do you want peace? Well, so what? You want dahl too, no? Do you like rice? Do you like rice? So, you like rice too. But that doesn't say 'rice as possible.' That says 'peace is possible.' Why do you want peace? Ahh, to be happy. Oh, how many of you want peace because it makes you happy? Raise your hand.

So, next question. Why do you want to be happy? It feels good? That's why you want to be happy, because it feels good? Why do you want to feel good?

Most of us have no idea what peace is.

**Peace is not about problems,
the good and bad, the confusion.**

It is a part of your nature.

Why do you want to be happy? Why do you want peace? So, is your happiness not always there? Does happiness fall from the sky? Does happiness grow in the field? What is your happiness? What is happiness?

To you, your bus is leaving and you're not on it, and the bus driver sees you running behind the bus and he stops. "Thank you. Thank you. Thank you." Is that what peace is, getting on the bus?

So, I'm asking these questions because I want to engage you. I want you to think; I want you to understand that peace isn't running away from your problems. Peace isn't about your problems. Peace isn't about the good and bad. Peace isn't about the confusion.

What is peace? As human beings, we have two parts to us; it's just a physical rule. You cannot have one-sided coin. Every coin has two sides. Even if you

split the coin to get rid of one side, you will still have two sides. Just the law of nature, right? So, every time you are confused, guess what the other side of that is.

Clarity—that far away.

When you find yourself in darkness, light is that far away. When you find yourself in sorrow, happiness, joy is that far away. I'm just being, so you can see, it's less distance than that, believe me.

You have two natures in you. You have kindness. You have clarity. This is your nature too. Kindness, clarity, compassion, joy, light is your nature too. And confusion, anger, frustration is also your nature. So don't get, you know, like, "Oh yeah, I like that. I like, light is my nature." No, darkness is your nature too. Darkness is your nature too. But so is light; so is light.

So there is a place in you, the place where that light is, where that joy is, where that clarity is, where that understanding is, and that, experiencing that place will bring you peace. That's what peace is. That's what peace is.

- Prem Rawat

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Praise the Lord, He has ascended
From the tomb, that shut Him in.
Praise of countless believers delighted,
To rejoice, He conquered sin.

Near the tomb his disciples waited;
To anoint Him lying there.
They were told that He had conquered
Death and sin be aware.

All the disciples believed, but one:
Later Jesus showed him; His hands
Said, you have seen and believed
Blessed are those not seen, yet believed.

Lord, we beseech you for the people:
Taken ill, and suffering in hundreds
Blood you shed will save those people.
Cursing death; from raising its head.

Risen Lord, thou in thy power:
Will not let your kin to suffer,
Pierced hands of Thine will bless us
And save us from all sin and mess.

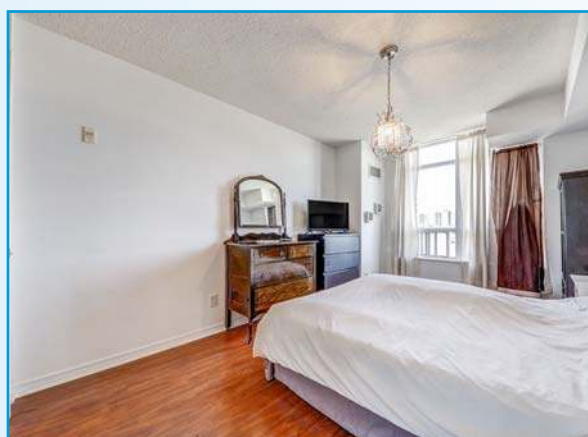
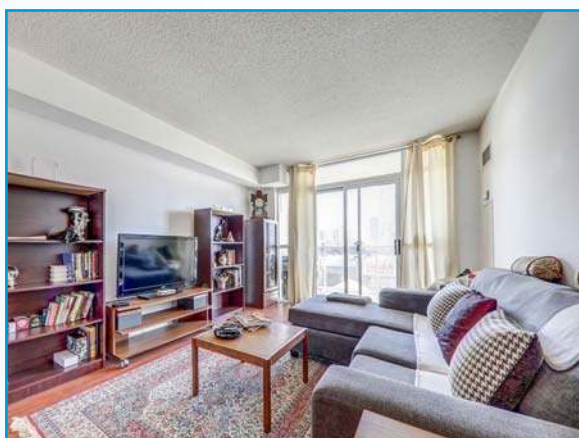
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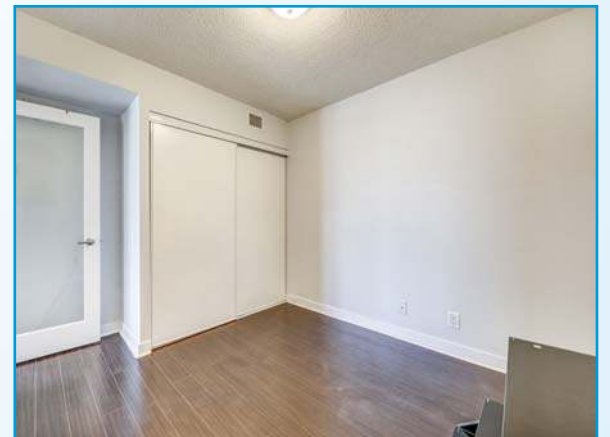
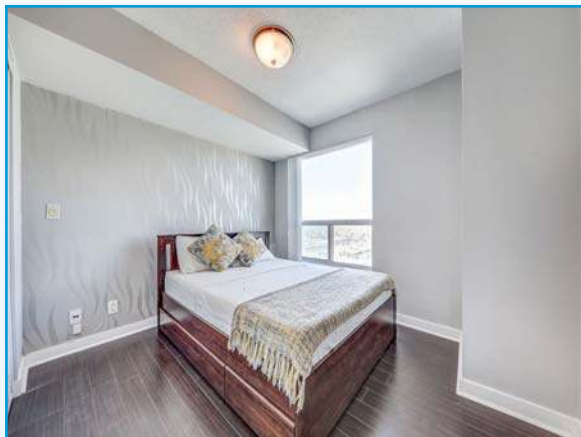
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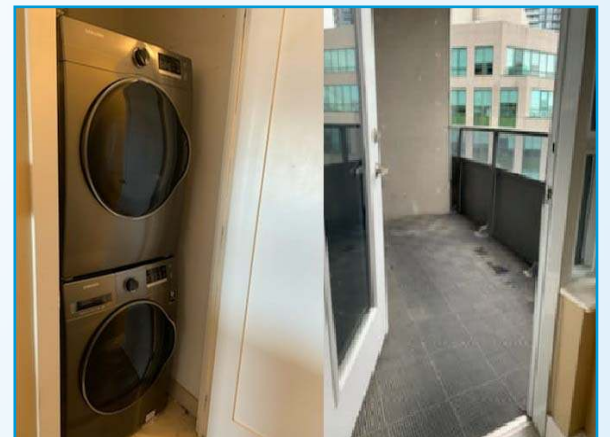
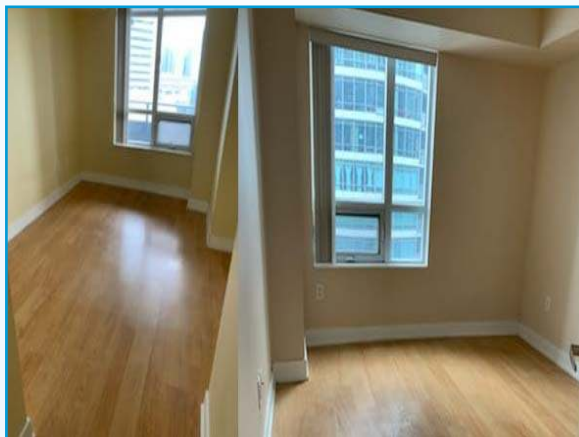
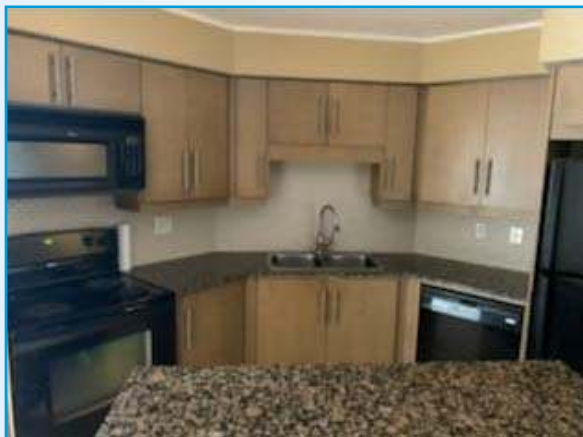
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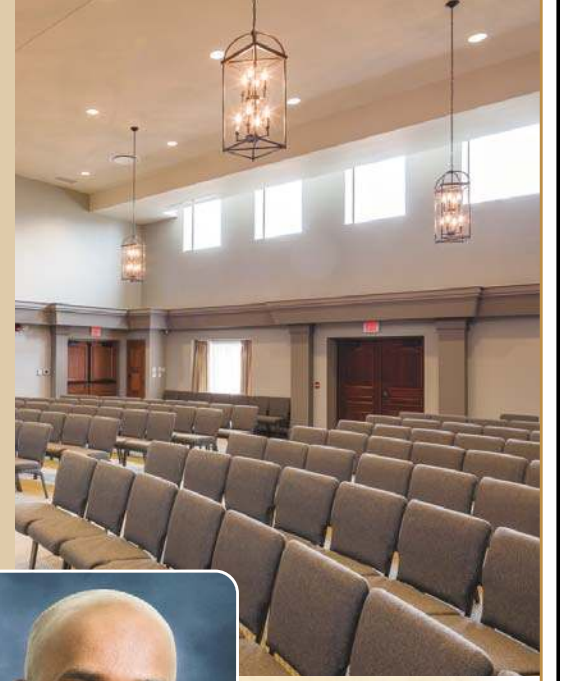


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THE STORM ON RED EARTH

By: Kumar Punithavel

Sundar had just moved on to the High school. Many new friends and some from his former school too had joined him in the new school. Life started pretty easy and good in the new school. Being a sportsman and good in studies too, made him very popular among his classmates in the new school. He was a good basketball player, and was selected to the school team. Sundar's parents had migrated from Ceylon after the ethnic violence in that country. Though born in Canada, his parents had taken the trouble to teach him his mother tongue Tamil. He was fairly competent in Tamil too.

After an interschool basketball match a lovely young lass came running from the crowd of spectators of school kids and hugged him congratulating on his excellent play. But instantly she became aware of the surroundings. Realizing everyone was staring at them both, the girl and Sundar became embarrassed. The girl quickly disappeared melting into the crowd. But the memory of her lovely face and sparkling eyes lingered in Sundar's memory forever.

Next day during the recess Sundar was sure he saw that lovely face stare from the other end of the long corridor, but before he could reach that corner, she had disappeared. However, he did not have to wait long to meet her. The very next day he saw her at the school canteen seated alone and having coffee.

After initial introduction they started a long conversation. Her name was Christina and was in the same school obviously, but in a different class. Like him she too was a second generation Canadian but from Vietnam.

Both had a very long chat that day, and missed the class that afternoon. She confessed that she felt shy when she saw everyone stare at them the other day at the game and that is why she ran away. She blushed when she did the confession. Sundar really liked her too and soon they became very close friends. Both families came to know each other and Sundar with his parents had gone to visit Christina for the Christmas dinner.

Sundar when chatting with Christina showed some of the pictures, he had on his cell phone, of his ancestral home and other sceneries taken in Ceylon. Looking at a picture of a temple Christina observed that in Vietnam too there are some Hindu temples built nearly thousand years ago by a Tamil King. The parents of both observed certain customs that are common to both communities. What started as a sincere admiration of a basketball player, had turned to a love affair.

It was a hot summer day afternoon, after heavy rain, Sundar and Christina had gone to Thomson park. They were strolling on that bright sunny day on a foot path, after the heavy rain. The ground was still wet

and the small rivulets were flowing with muddy red water. Looking at this sight Sundar was reminded of a two thousand years old Tamil poem he had learned in the class when he was much younger.

Holding Christina tight and leaning on the side railing of the narrow foot bridge he said, "Darling, I am reminded of a poem I learnt many years ago. Written some two thousand years ago, it classically describes our love to each other". Christina responded, "What is it? You have roused my curiosity immensely. You mean to say two thousand years ago someone has composed about you and me?", she said. Sundaram responded, "Honey, the verse was composed by a poet called *Sempulapayaneerar*, as the fortieth verse in an anthology of love poems called *Kurunthokai*. The author of the poem must have been anonymous, but was called by that name, as it mentions as one in red earth land". Christina's curiosity increased with all the introduction.

Sundaram continued, "Darling, my mother is a Tamil from Ceylon, born in Jaffna a town in north Ceylon, whereas your mom a Vietnamese lady born in a far-off town in North Vietnam, but today they know each other. Obvious question is how? The first line of the poem is:

யாயும் ஞாயும் யாராகியரோ?

meaning

My mother and yours how did they knew?

The poem follows in the next line inquiring about the fathers of both of them. In the very next line, he

mentions about the lover's fathers, by questioning how they are related, thereby bringing the relationship to focus. The second line is:

எந்தையும் நுந்தையும் எம்முறை கேளிர்?

meaning

My father and yours, how they are related?

Sundar went on, "Darling, he starts the poem with our parents, for we won't be there without them. Isn't it interesting to note the poet is focusing the reader about the lovers who when they wed the parents too will become kin? So, in the next line he observes the lovers too were strangers until recent past. We are from far off lands, and did not know each other until the day we met each other at the Basketball match. He mentions in the next line:

யானும் நீயும் எவ்வழி அறிதும்?

meaning

You and me how did we knew each other?

It must have been after a summer day like today, after a storm when the great poet wrote the next two lines of the poem. For he must have seen the rain which but condensed clean water vapor on the clouds fallen on the red earth merged with red soil both losing their individual identity and becoming one, we too by our love to each other lost our identity to become one! The poet compares the relationship to the clean storm water that has fallen on

the red earth, like this muddy water that runs down this stream we too have lost our identity. The moment before it touched the soil it was pure water free of any of the soil, but the moment they touch they merged together never to be separated. He wrote:

"செம்புலப் பெயல்நீர் போல அன்புடை நெஞ்சம் தாம்கலந் தனவே"

meaning

Like the rain merged in red-earth, Our loving hearts merged together!

Christina was indeed mesmerized by the words of the poem which was written two thousand years ago by a Tamil poet treating the humanity become kin by the power of love. What noble thought if people shed their individual identity and think of them as human beings. The first three lines of the poem raised three questions and the last two lines gave the answer to all as love. World would become a paradise indeed. Will there be a day when this great Tamil poet wish become true?

My mother and yours how did they knew?

My father and yours, how are they related?

You and I how we know each other? Like the rain merged in red earth, Our loving hearts merged together.

"யாயும் ஞாயும் யாராகியரோ? எந்தையும் நுந்தையும் எம்முறை கேளிர்?"

யானும் நீயும் எவ்வழி அறிதும்? செம்புலப் பெயல்நீர் போல அன்புடை நெஞ்சம் தாம்கலந் தனவே"

- vecteezy.com





“The Power of Education”



J A Rajah

*‘Nannilaikkan thannai niruppanum ,thannai
Nilaiakalakki keeliduvanam, nilayinum
Menmelutharthi niruppanum, thannaith,
Thayaiyahacheyvanum than’.*

- Verse: 248.

The education one acquires makes a person to achieve elevation or get lowered in his position due to lack of it or reach greater heights and enable such person to occupy superior jobs due to such high quality education. Such is the inherent power of education.

Investment in knowledge pays the best interest. Education is the passport to the future, for tomorrow belongs to those who prepare for today. If one wants to be powerful in life, he should learn. The function of education is to teach one to think intensely and to think critically - intelligence plus character- that is the goal of education.



SHARIA LAW AND THE MUSLIM QUEST FOR CULTURAL PURITY

By: J A Rajah

A. The Nature of Sharia Law:

Sharia law is a set of moral social or behavioural codes to help Muslims to live according to the will of God or Allah. Harsh penalties are imposed on those who violate the law in countries where the Muslims live in large numbers. The severity of punishment varies widely from country to country, but in some nations it can include flogging, stoning or amputation of a limb. Sharia family law also allows the arranged marriage of female children and severely limits the rights of women. Various Muslim societies strongly support the Sharia law. Muslims across Europe, Asia, the Middle-East and Africa are serious about these codes of conduct. Even in Western countries they want their people to observe the Sharia Law. The percentage of Muslims who say they want their people to abide by the Sharia Law varies from 99% in Afghanistan to 8% in Azerbaijan. However, there is considerably less support for severe punishments such as cutting off hands or executing people who convert from Islam to another faith. Whipping, stoning and amputation are rejected by modern Islamists. In the western world, Sharia law has been called a source of hysteria. In Canada, Sharia Law has been banned in Quebec by a 2005 vote of the National Assembly. Many Muslims favour democratic government over authoritarian government; they also like a democratic society governed by Sharia Law.

B. Muslims and Western Secular Culture :

Many Muslim nations favour the Sharia legal system as the law of their land. Sayyid Qutb, an Egyptian intellectual insisted that Sharia Law was essential for the worship of Allah and that it was an essential force to oppose the West's moral permissiveness. Qutb and other Muslim leaders believed that only through Sharia law that Muslims can combat the moral chaos of Western secularism. Qutb's writings greatly influenced the development of radical Islamist views in modern times. According to him western cultures are pervaded by materialism, godless ideologies and sexual promiscuity. Western trends have created a moral chaos and has also has led to a virtual renunciation of Islamic patterns of worship and codes of human behaviour and



conduct. The Western secularism has retained its democratic political tradition but lost its moral foundation. It now builds its morality on shifting sands of human reasoning rather than upon the absolutes of Judeo-Christian ethic that helped shape Western views of right and wrong in earlier times. St. Paul, the greatest communicator of the Christian faith asserted that "whatever causes us to sin, whether the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh or the pride of life, we offer every part of it to the Lord. An instrument is only as good as the capability of its user, and in the hands of God, our areas of sin can be turned into instruments of righteousness but this involves a deliberate and constant offering of these areas to God". The Muslims appear to follow these lines with great dedication and faithful adherence to lead clean lives. The Muslim world looks at modern Western culture and sees voyeuristic violence in its movies, the virtual abandonment of sexual boundaries, graphic depictions of sexuality in pornography and even in mainstream entertainment, gender confusion and ridicule of traditional family structures. Strip teases, sexual orgies, nudist shows and programs of these types are to be avoided. The morality that once governed Western public life has been marginalized and even reviled. Women dress in scanty clothes in the name of fashion. Some girls taking part in worship teams were seen in scanty clothes undesirable in a religious setting. Christophobia -the fear or loathing of Christian belief or influence -is openly expressed by public officials and academics, and orthodox Christianity is now mocked in blatant public displays of secular bigotry. These

actions are met with no public disapprobation whatsoever. Whether one agrees with these changes or not, it is difficult to dent their speed and breath. These effects definitely display a negation of Christian values and behavioural patterns. On the other hand the Muslims have always adopted a worship pattern that ensures constant touch with God in addition to personal cleanliness. They pray five times a day and they also clean themselves before kneeling down for prayers. They expect their women to wear hajibs to cover their bodies to avoid being viewed sexually. Their precautionary religious procedures seem to be justifiable in the wake of increased sexual violence in the modern world.

C. Islamic Dedication to Religious Principles.

Divine Law is God's revelation of right and wrong, and the Bible cautions, "where there is no revelation, the people cast off restraint; but happy is he who keeps the law" (Proverbs 29:18). In abandoning it biblical moral heritage in favour of an "anything goes" secular morality, Western society has 'cast off all restraint'. Many in the West now consider morality to be nothing more than a "social construct". Secularists believe that "you can't legislate morality", but in one way or other, civil laws reflect society's view of right and wrong. For instance, if we think that it is wrong to rob banks, we pass laws against it. So, an important sense all laws legislate a morality. Many Muslims enjoy Western pop culture, a clear majority of Muslims think that Western entertainment harms mo-

ality in their country. They also feel that Western cultural imports undermine morality: sub-Saharan Africa (65%), South Asia (59%), South-east Asia (51%), and the Middle East-North Africa region (51%). Most Muslims chose Sharia because it provides a societal defense against Western secularism's moral chaos and confusion. The Muslims are aware that that Western secular values may creep into the Muslim world through its soft power of media dominance. Western popular songs encourages loose morality and immediate satisfaction, placing love and life and its pleasures over everything else, totally oblivious of religious belief, and of punishment and reward in the hereafter. Christians are resisting the secular forces and are holding on to their faith's immutable principles. In the US, charter schools are flourishing and homeschooling is a rapidly growing phenomenon. In a survey, 77% indicated that moral instruction is their major factor in their decision to homeschool. Enrollments in religious and secular private schools are flourishing. Christian feels that their traditional virtues should be preserved. The Muslims feel that their Sharia Law provides an effective way of stopping the onslaught of Western secularism and to preserve the purity of their faith. Muslims have always been dedicated to their faith and religious principles which have helped them to maintain a characteristically different way of life. Their quest for moral purity is worthy of emulation. Their emphasis on internal and external cleanliness in worship is awesome. Therein lies the secret of their pursuit of purity.

About The Tortoise and the Hare



Agshayaa is a huge hockey-enthusiast. She dedicates much of her free time to the sport and is an excellent player. Pictured above is Agshayaa in front of a Wayne Gretzky statue in Bradford, Ontario.

By: Agshayaa Suresh

The tortoise and the hare is a really famous fable by Aesop. It is my favourite fable of all. The moral of this fable is really true, which is one reason why I like this fable so much. This fable has so many lessons and morals for kids to learn and for helping them avoid being overconfident, like the hare. In this essay, I will retell the story, discuss the moral of the story, and explain why it is my favourite fable.

One day, there was a rabbit who always bragged about how fast he was, and how no one could be faster than him. The tortoise decided to challenge the rabbit to a race. The rabbit laughed at the tortoise because he was slow and

could never win. As a result, the rabbit agreed to race. On the day of the race, the rabbit ran as fast as he could. On the way, he saw a carrot patch close to the finish line. He decided to munch on the carrots because the tortoise was so far behind.

He had plenty of time to spare. After eating, the rabbit became sleepy, so he decided to take a five minute nap. While the rabbit was sleeping, the tortoise was still running the race. The tortoise took his time, taking one step at a time. He eventually passed the rabbit. Without giving the rabbit a warning, the tortoise arrived in front of the finish line. The crowd was screaming. Suddenly, the rabbit woke up, and he ran as fast as he

could to cross the finish line first. But it was too late! The tortoise crossed the finish line first and won.

The moral of this story is that being slow and steady wins the race. The turtle didn't give up even though it took slow steps. The tortoise was determined and did not stop for a second. The rabbit had taken his win for granted. The rabbit was not managing his time by eating carrots and taking a nap. However, the tortoise was managing his time by not stopping even a single second, which led him to win the race. Another moral of the story is to never underestimate your opponent. Every person is talented in their own way. Even if they may seem like they are not as good as you in some way, they can surprise you. It is important not to judge someone too soon.

There are so many reasons why I chose to write about this fable in this essay. One of the main reasons why is because in this fable, it teaches many

lessons. I always make sure I never give up, like the tortoise. I make sure that I am never overconfident even if I am presented with something that seems easy to do. I won't be overconfident because when the rabbit was too sure of himself, it caused him to lose the race. I always make sure I manage my time for homework, projects, and assignments, just like the tortoise. He had great success because of his time management. The things that I have learned from this story has helped me to be successful in my life, too.

Although the rabbit seems to be the faster animal of the two, it is the tortoise who ultimately won the race. The moral of the story teaches others to be slow and steady with everything you do. Never underestimate your opportunity, and make sure to never give up, like the tortoise. What is your favourite fable? What is the moral of that fable?



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HOW FAR CAN THE HUMAN EYE SEE?

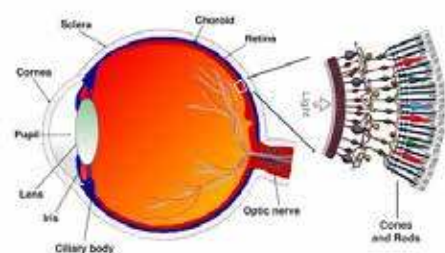
Eyes Can Do Incredible Things from Finding Galaxies Millions of Light-Years Away

By: Uthayan Thurairajah



The human eye can see things depend on how many photons a distant object or source emits. The most distant object visible with the naked eye is the Andromeda galaxy, located a surprising 2.6 million light-years from Earth. The galaxy's one trillion stars collectively emit enough light for a few hundred photons to hit each square millimeter of Earth every second (Wolchover, 2012). It is more than enough to excite our eyes at night. The brightness of a candle glow and the way a bright thing dims according to the square of the distance away from it. The vision scientists conclude that one could make out the faint glimmer of a candle flame up to 30 miles away (Wolchover, 2012).

The light from something to appear it need to be spatially extended rather than point-like light because it must excite at least two neighboring cone cells in our eye. An object is expected to subtend an angle of at least one arcminute (or one-sixtieth of a degree) to excite adjacent cones. The full moon we perceived is about 30 arcminutes



across, whereas Venus is barely resolvable as an extended object at around one arcminute across. Human-scale objects are resolvable as extended objects from a distance of just under 3 km (Wolchover, 2012). For example, we would be able to make out two distinct headlights on a car at that distance.

OUR EYES HAVE LIMITS

Our eyes are amazing things, but they have fundamental limits. In a room – what do you see? All those colors, the walls, the windows. It is weird to think that how we perceive this precious environment boils down to light particles called photons bouncing off these objects and onto our eyeballs. This photonic fire gets flooded by approximately 126 million light-sensitive cells. The different direction and powers of the photons are translated by our brain into different shapes, colors, brightness, all shaping our technicolor world.

Our sense of vision has certain limitations. We cannot see radio waves emanating from our electronic devices, and we can spot the tiny bacteria or coronavirus right under our noses. Beyond our visible spectrum, the higher energies and shorter wavelengths, we find the ultraviolet band, then X-rays, topping off with the gamma-rays, whose wavelengths are in

the mere trillionths-of-a-meter range. We can examine the fundamental limits of natural vision with advances in physics and biology. "Everything you can discern has a threshold, the lowest level above which you can and below which you can't," says Michael Landy, professor of psychology and neural science at New York University.

We have two types of photoreceptors known as rods and cones. The cone cells deal in color, while rod cells allow us to see in grayscale in low-light conditions. The pigment molecules (opsins in retinal cells) absorb the electromagnetic energy from influencing photons and



generate an electrical surge. The signal travels via the optic nerve to the brain, where the conscious perception of color and image is formed.

NUMBER OF PHOTONS TO SEE

What is the smallest number of photons we need to see? Cone cells yield color vision, typically need a lot lighter to work with than the rods. That's why in low-light situations, color diminishes as the monochromatic rods take over visual duties. Tests first conducted in the 1940s show, one quantum (a photon) of light is enough to trigger our perception. "Human eye can respond to a single photon," says Brian Wandell, professor of psychology and electrical engineering at Stanford (Hadhazy, 2015).

The photosensors in the eye can react to a single photon. The neural filters only pass a signal to the brain to trigger a conscious reply when at least five to nine photons arrive within less than 100 milliseconds. If we see a single photon consciously, we will feel too much visual "noise" in low light. Therefore, the filter is a necessary adaptation, not a weakness (Gibbs, 1996).



The cones are active in bright light, but the iris constricts. It is called photopic vision. When you enter a dark room, the eyes first adapt by opening up the iris to allow more light. The chemical adaptations that make the rods sensitive to light take time. After few minutes, we see much better in the dark, but we have very little color



vision. It is known as scotopic vision.

SIZE & DISTANCE TO SEE

There is no intrinsic limit to the tiniest or most distant thing we can see. We can spy an object of whatever size, distance, or compactness transfers a photon to a retinal cell. Visual acuity drops off over greater distances. "The vision is the amount of light that lands on the eye," says Landy. "It is the total number of photons. We can make a light source extremely tiny and small, but if it is strong in photons, you can still see it." On a clear night, a candle flame can be spotted from as far away as 48 kilometers. Our eyes are routinely flooded by photons, so stray quanta of light from great distances get lost in the wash.

The night sky, with its dark setting punctured by stars, offers some startling examples of long-distance vision. Stars are enormous; many we see in the night sky are millions of kilometers in diameter. Even the nearest stars are



more than 24 trillion miles away and are therefore so diminished in size our eye cannot resolve them. We can still see stars as a sharp, gleaming point. The individual star in the night sky is in our Milky Way. The farthest object we can see with our naked eye is the Andromeda Galaxy, located 2.5 million light-years from us. The trillion stars in the Andromeda Galaxy add up to just a fuzzily luminous patch in the sky. In terms of its apparent size, the galaxy is six times the diameter of the full Moon. Few of its photons reach our eyes.

EARTH'S CURVATURE

People often use the term "sightline" to describe the line of sight from an audience member's seat to the stage. But a sightline is a person's eye visual angle to see an object or things. The curvature of the Earth is the primary factor that can decrease the sightline apart from typical visual obstructions such as trees, buildings, and clouds. The Earth is curved around 150mm per kilometer. As a result, the farthest edge that you can see is about 5 kilometers (Healthline, 2019).

DISTANCE AND BRIGHTNESS

We cannot pick out individual stars in the Andromeda Galaxy. The limits of our visual resolution, or acuity, come into play here. Visual acuity is the ability to see the fine details such as a point or a line as separate from another without them blurring together. We can think of acuity's limits as the number of "pixels" we can discern. Several factors set the boundaries for visual acuities, such as the spacing between the cones and rods packed onto the retina. The optics of the eyeball itself prevent every available photon from alighting upon a photoreceptor cell, are essential as well.

Distance affects Brightness. The brightest star Vega is about 25 light-years from Earth. Vega looks like a candle flame in the night sky without a telescope or any other visual aid. The scientists were wondering how far away actual candlelight on Earth and still see the same appearance as Vega. Texas A&M University researchers did some experiments and concluded that candlelight about 400m apart has a brightness similar to Vega (Healthline, 2019). The scientists experimented further to determine the maximum distance you could be from a candle flame to see it at all.

- Seeing a candle flame: The scientists concluded that someone with a healthy vision could see candlelight from about 2.5 kilometers away, assuming that there was no fog or other obstructions.

- The Moon's face: The moon is about 384,400km away, and it is easy to see some of its cavities, gaps, and fields on a cloudless night.

- From the highest peak: The view from Mount Everest in the Himalayas — the world's tallest summit at about 870m above sea level — offers a view of close to 316km in every direction, according to a user-



generated map. Due to the elevation, though, clouds often obscure the view.

- From the Airplane: If you are in an airplane at an altitude of around 10,500m above the Earth, you can look down and see highways, rivers, farms, and other landmarks rather easily in daylight. Nothing is blocking your view, and the only real limit to how far you can see depends on your eye health and visual acuity.



Uthayan Thurairajah, Ph.D., RSE, LC, P.Eng., FEC, is a Project Manager at WSP with over twenty years of experience in Electrical Engineering and Lighting field, and he also holds a Lecturer position at Ryerson University & professor at Centennial. Uthayan is a member of several Canadian and international professional association including Professional Engineers Ontario (PEO) and Association for Prevention Teaching and Research (APTR). He has worked on multi-disciplinary lighting and electrical projects for various clients. He researches the subject of light and lighting and taken part in several projects. He also has extensive research experience in the value of lighting design in the mental, emotional, and social well-being of a person. He is a frequent presenter and author of lighting design & health. He is passionate about integrating science and health into the lighting design.



MANAGING YOUR MONEY

Reaching for long-term investment goals with short term responses – wrong

David Joseph, M.A.(Economics), CFP®, CLU

Investors dread volatile markets and, too often, their response is to jump out of investments when the market goes down and attempt to jump back in when it goes up. But it's a historical fact that markets will always fluctuate and the price of any stock or equity mutual fund is bound to be somewhat volatile in the short-term. The one proven approach for taking away much of your investment risk is simply this: time in the market. Study after study has proven that time in the market delivers much better returns than trying to time the market. Here are some recent findings in support of a long-term investment strategy.

- Many of the strongest market returns occur in the periods immediately following sharp

declines in equity markets. Since 1950, following the worst 12-month periods of

performance on the S&P/TSX, the market has made solid gains just 12 months later with only one exception. And within five years, the markets were up significantly – meeting and exceeding long-term return expectations.*

- History has shown that economic

recoveries following recessions are typically both

strong and durable. In fact, periods of expansion that came on the heels of downturns

averaged 57 months, or close to five years. After 1960, the average period of expansion following a recession was even longer at 71

months, or close to six years.**

- Although negative returns in the short-term are relatively frequent, the possibility of

receiving a positive return greatly increases as the investment term lengthens. For

example, between 1960 and 2015 staying invested in the market (S&P/TSX) for a year

resulted in a positive return in 74.7% of the one-year periods, while staying invested for

15 years resulted in a positive return of 100% of the time.**

- In any one-year period, the returns of the S&P/TSX Composite Index have been as high as 86.9% and as low as -39.2%, a range of over 126%. However, when investors

diversify their holdings and invest for the long term, this volatility de-

creases significantly.

For example, a “moderate” portfolio invested for five years would have experienced a

range of average annual returns from -5% to +28%, and if invested for 20 years, from

+8% to +15% (S&P/TSX 1970-2015 – range of returns before taxes).*

So, as these findings once more prove: Staying invested ensures you are always capitalizing on the upside of the market and reducing the impact of short-term market volatility. Most importantly, the possibility of receiving positive returns greatly increases as your investment term lengthens. Of course, having a properly diversified portfolio with the right mix of investments that matches your tolerance

for risk is also key to achieving your long-term investment goals. Your professional advisor can help you do that within the right overall financial plan for you.

*Source: Investors Group Strategic Investment Planning

** Source: Investors Group Portfolio Analytics, National Bureau of Economic Research

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Ontario Allows Cannabis Delivery and Curbside Pick-up from Authorized Retail Stores During COVID-19

TORONTO, April 07, 2020 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- Due to the COVID-19 outbreak, the Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario (AGCO) is authorizing cannabis retail stores in Ontario to offer delivery and curbside pick-up services. This new temporary measure is the result of an emergency order introduced today by the Government of Ontario to help fight against the illegal cannabis market. The order will last for 14 days, with the possibility of an extension if the government's Emergency Order on business closures is extended.

Authorized cannabis stores will be permitted to sell, deliver, and offer curbside pick-up of cannabis and other items from Monday to Sunday, between 9 a.m. and 11 p.m. The maximum purchase amount of 30 grams of dried cannabis (or equivalent) per transaction remains in place. All involved in the sale and delivery of cannabis must hold certification from CannSell to ensure

products are sold responsibly. Retailers must continue to comply with all laws and regulations ensuring cannabis is not sold or delivered to anyone under 19 or who appears to be intoxicated.

Curbside pick-up allows customers to order and pay for their products in advance by phone or online. When the customer arrives at the store for pick up, store staff will bring out the order, which must be in its original packaging, to the customer waiting in an area. The transaction will be captured by the store's security cameras. Payment must be completed at the time of the order, not during the pick-up.

Only the licensed retailer or an employee may deliver cannabis on behalf of the store. Cannabis must be delivered in its original packaging to the residential address specified in the order and received by the purchaser or another person who resides at the place of delivery who is at least 19 years of age.



Jean Major,
Registrar and CEO, AGCO

During this period, the government is placing a temporary pause on the issuing of retail store authorizations. The AGCO will not issue new store authorizations until the government's

emergency order has been lifted. In the meantime, the AGCO will be able to issue Retail Operator Licences and will continue processing store authorization applications and conducting eligibility assessments to the extent possible, so businesses will be prepared to move forward once restrictions are lifted. To date, the AGCO has issued 423 Retail Operator Licences and 59 Retail Store Authorizations.

QUOTES

"We've been working closely with the Government of Ontario on ways to support cannabis retail store operators and legal recreational cannabis consumers since the stores were ordered to close following a provincial order declaring a state of emergency. This new measure helps address consumer demand and maintain a revenue stream for store operators while supporting the government's broader objectives."

Jean Major, Registrar and CEO, AGCO

What's next for home prices amid COVID-19?

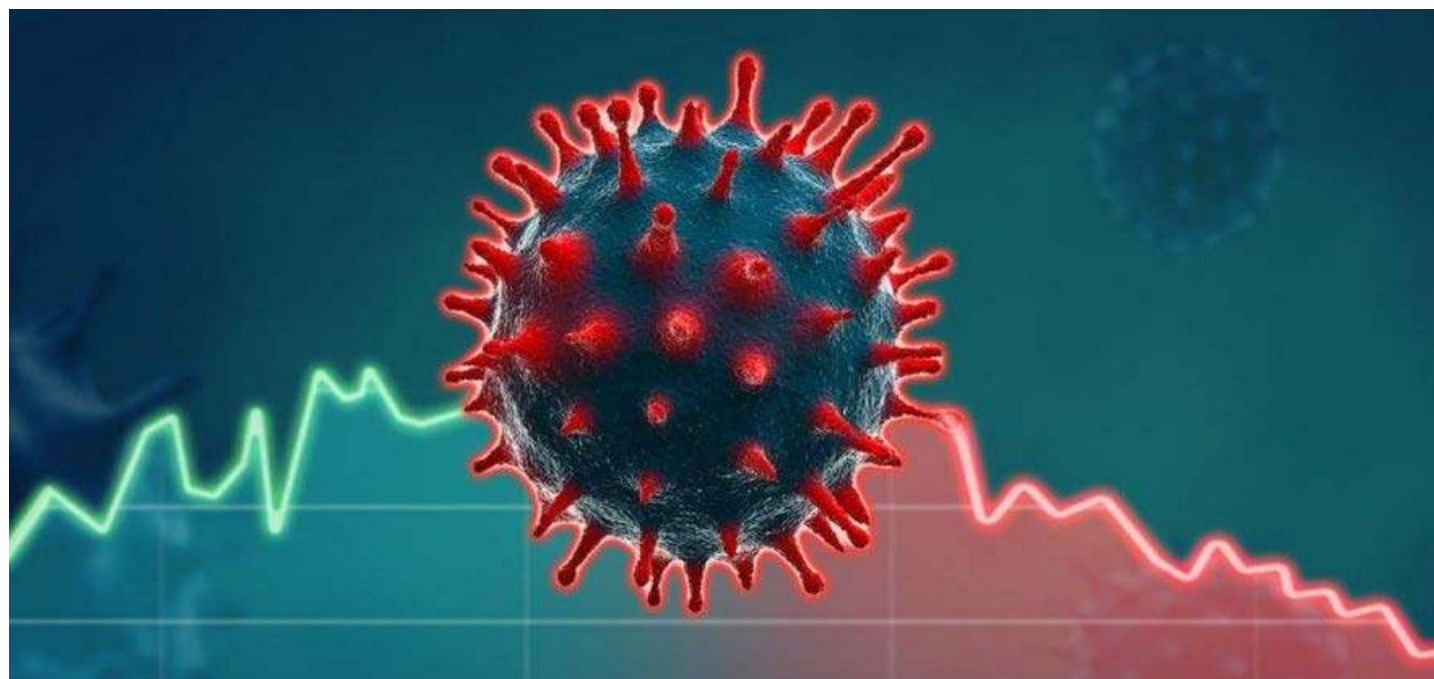
By Penelope Graham

To say much has changed during the last month would be a huge understatement as the spread of the COVID-19 virus has risen to global pandemic proportions.

While the definition of "essential" business varies from province to province, in some provinces real estate services have been given the go-ahead to continue. However, given the intimate face-to-face nature of a real estate transaction, agents and brokerages will need to take drastic measures to continue to operate safely – it's hardly business as usual as the need to social distance and isolate must be a priority for all.

While initial recommendations included conducting business by virtual means – such as paperless documentation, video showings and the cancelling of all open houses – the most recent guidelines from provincial and municipal real estate boards are calling for agents to cease operations altogether, except in extreme circumstances when clients have an urgent need to complete a transaction.

For example, the Toronto Regional Real Estate Board says, "This was primarily to ensure people who had already bought or sold a home but are still in the process of finding a new



home or selling their existing property, were not left in limbo during the provincial shutdown."

Essentially, as long as the risk of COVID-19 pervades, buyers and sellers without an absolutely crucial need to be in the market won't be, which will lead to a stark slowdown in activity just as the spring market was revving up.

While it's impossible to determine how long sales could be affected, and there isn't exactly a precedent for how this health crisis may play out, there is one economic event that could be comparable in how the housing market was affected – the 2008-2009 global recession.

sion.

According to analysis by Zoocasa, benchmark real estate prices dipped across the nation during this time period by eight per cent from \$370,900 to \$341,700. The drop was most pronounced in the Greater Vancouver area, which experienced a 14-per-cent decline, from \$575,400 to \$497,000. Losses were smallest in the Greater Toronto Area, down six per cent from \$367,100 to \$344,900.

However, these price declines didn't become the norm – as any market watcher will tell you, the decade between the end of the aughts and the

start of 2020 ushered in a period of astronomical price growth in Canada's major cities. Canada-wide, home values have surged 75 per cent, from \$362,300 to \$634,300, while gains were even more pronounced in the largest urban centres. Vancouver home prices rose 82 per cent from \$560,500 to today's searing price tag of \$1,020,600, while Toronto home prices were up a whopping 135 per cent from \$359,500 to \$846,100.

News Courtesy:

REM, April 7, 2020



Sports



BATTLE OF THE NORTH

(Central vs St. Johns 114th encounter)



Central's batting slowed down. Yet they batted carefully and took the score to 150 runs in 57.3 overs in their 1st innings. The top scorer was the captain V. Viyaskanth who scored 30 runs. St. Johns in return batted cautiously and took the score to 118/3 at the end of the 1st days play.

Resuming batting on the 2nd day St. Johns batted patiently and took the score to a huge total of 291 at the close of their 1st innings. The chief scorers were

A. Sikethan (49) and T. Dinoshan (44). Central had to face a tough task of scoring a huge total for a win. Both Matheeswaran Sansajan (15) and Balaruban Inthujan (13) who remained at the crease overnight resumed day 3 with the score at 51/3. Both expected to score past the deficit and set a reasonable target for the visitors. However over enthusiastic Inthujan lost his patience threw away his wicket and returned to the pavilion after scoring 57 runs off 76 balls which included 5 fours and 3 sixes. Following his dismissal M. Sansajan returned to the pavilion after scoring 27 runs. With his exit Central's chances of scoring a reasonable score slackened. It was cake walk for the St. Johns as one by one the remaining batsmen fell, Central was bowled out for 124 runs in 45. 4 overs, 17 runs below the deficit. Anton Saran was the star performer who ran through Central's batting line up with a haul of 5 wkts for 32 runs. St. Johns won the match by an innings and 17 runs. Supporters of St. Johns College had a field day when the last wicket fell. They swarmed to the pitch in jubilation while the hosts remained dispirited. No

untoward incidents happened. Due to the unfortunate run outs in the beginning Central's enthusiasm and confidence became shaky; they couldn't come out of it. May be next year Central might bounce back and become a formidable challenge to St. Johns.

After several decades I went to witness this year's encounter hoping to see all what I saw and enjoyed during my school days. I was thoroughly disappointed to find the whole scenario completely changed. During our time one whole week is a week of celebrations. Present and past students went about cheering along the streets in vehicles waving flags beating drums blowing trumpets and utilising other improvised instruments to maintain the tempo. It was real fun without damaging public property or causing inconvenience to the public. But now revelling in public is completely restricted. All cheering and amusements are confined within the cricket ground. During our time the ground reverberated with thunderous cheering; bails bails let them fly, wickets wickets let them fall, send the ball over the rope. Those days the resounding music of the guitars mouth organs accordions and bongos together with the singing and dancing by the present and past students of both schools were heard. The famous chorus singing is still ringing in my ears-Glory glory haleluja...as we go matching along. Now only the beating of the drums and blowing of the trumpets is heard. The whole fabric of society has been damaged during the war and afterwards. I really felt sad as I left the ground.

C. Kamalaharan

With mounting enthusiasm I stepped into the ground to join the cheering supporters thronged there to witness the 114th annual encounter between Jaffna Central College and St. Johns College. The whole area within the enclosed ground presented a festive atmosphere with brightly coloured chocolate and blue, red and black flags fixed high fluttering in the breeze while past and present students of both schools waved their flags cheering their teams. The rhythmic beating of drums and other percussion instruments together with the rattling sound

of the trumpets provided further impetus to the occasion.

Prior to the commencement of the match both the captains arrived at the pitch for the tossing of the coin. St. Johns captain N. Sowmiyan winning the toss opted to field. After the traditional introduction of the teams to the principals of both schools the match commenced. At the start both teams seemed equally balanced. But it was tragic mishaps that befell the host when three run outs resulted in the three top order batsmen returning to the pavilion. It was due to the silly attempts of the batsmen to score runs when St. Johns had a strong fielding side. Following the run outs





Monsoon Kitchen



GENIE SISTERS

SAMAYAL
SANTHAI



Welcome to our recipe corner! We sisters will entice you with recipes that we have fallen in love with and teach you a little Tamil along the way, as all the ingredients will have their Tamil names. Both of us love to cook and we have developed very different styles. Niranjini has a very refined palate and cooks more contemporary world cuisine with an Asian touch. Rajini is a seasoned homemaker who loves making traditional dishes for her friends and family. Follow us on Instagram: @ninjaeatsfood and @tamil_food

Eat more, learn more!

Sisters Niranjini Mandalia and Rajini Nathan are both food enthusiasts from England. Niranjini, who lives in London, has a degree in Human Biology and is a trained chef. She makes it her business to know everything about what she eats, from nutritional value to source producers. Follow her food obsession on Instagram @ninjaeatsfood.

Rajini, lives in Toronto and has a background in psychology. Her speciality is in Tamil food from around the world, catch up on her meal ideas on Instagram @tamil_food.

Kotthamalli- Back to our roots!

This time we are living through is one of uncertainty and can take a toll on everyone's wellbeing. The best way to protect yourself is to stay indoors, limit your contact with those outside, practice good hygiene and advise others to do the same. If you have the common cold, sniffles or just feel like your immune system can do with a pick-me-up, this age-old recipe also known as malli thanni is definitely one you should try.



Ingredients:

- ✓ 2 tbsp coriander seeds (kothumalli)
- ✓ 3 cups water (thanni)
- ✓ 2-inch piece of ginger, sliced (inji)
- ✓ 1 garlic clove, pounded (poondu/ulli)
- ✓ 5 peppercorns (milagu)
- ✓ 1 piece of Turmeric bark (maramanjai)
- ✓ Palmyrah Jaggery/honey, to taste

Method:

In a pan, lightly toast the coriander seeds until you can smell the aroma of the seeds coming out. Add the water, ginger, turmeric bark, peppercorns and garlic and let it all reduce down to one cup. Once it has reduced, strain the liquid into your cup and if desired, add jaggery/honey to sweeten the taste. For children aged 6 and above, add ¾ warm water to ¼ cup malli thanni and sweeten according to taste.

This may taste bitter, but the health benefits are undoubtedly worth it!

Try making this recipe this month and

Hashtag

#monsoonjournal on Instagram and send us your pics, comments and feedback. Spread the love (and recipe!)



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The Concerns and Participation Regarding the Coronavirus (COVID-19)



By Saiva Temples in
Toronto GTA and Montreal

The Saiva priests and members of the Boards of Directors of almost all the temples assembled on Sunday March 15, 2020 in the auditorium at the Canada Kandasamy Temple located at 733 Birchmount Road, Scarborough. The meeting was chaired by Samy Appadurai and the following decisions were made unanimously:

1. Our temples always abide by the rules, regulations and directives given by the three levels of the government of

Canada as such the Federal, Provincial and Municipal government and this will also be the case during period of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

2. Our temples exhibit and get to know about the directives and pass along the information provided by the public health department of the Provincial government

3. We have committed to curb the spread of the coronavirus by making use of the appropriate equipment in the temples.

4. The Priest and the Board of Directors are to behave in a proactive

manner and have a respectful relationship with the public and also advise the public to be aware and act accordingly.

5. In accordance with the directives, the temples will continue to provide spiritual services to devotees and others.

6. As for as the preparation of "prasadam", it should be prepared in accordance with the regulations regarding safe food handling and provided to the devotees.

7. Although the attendance of the public is not being encouraged due to social distancing, if there are seniors

who insist on attending, we will make some sort of special arrangements for them.

8. We encourage and expect those who are suffering from a cold, fever, sneezing, and cough to be in isolation

9. We shall make changes and notify the public of any changes.

10. We will also share important messages and information including the those of the government from time to time amongst our network.

Thank you

Samy Appadurai

samykanata@yahoo.ca



Tribute to my Grandparents

by Siva Ganeshalingam

This is a tribute to my maternal grandparents- Sinnathamby and Muthupillai (Thankam); their hard life and their struggle to raise the family, surmounting more than their fair share of problems on the way. They were undoubtedly the pioneers who paved the way for the prosperous lives of their descendants where some of them reached enviable heights in a variety of professions around the world.

I am not the only grandchild for them. They had only three kids but abundantly blessed with fourteen grandkids and thirty great grandkids. Some of them are much better and accomplished writers than me. One day, they might come out with their own memories about the loving grandparents we shared.

One of Grandma's deepest worry in the initial years of her married life was not being able to conceive a child for about ten years that nearly destroyed her marriage. She pleaded and cried for divine help in many Hindu temples in the Jaffna peninsula. Realizing that the expected help was not on her way, she eventually decided to travel further away to Mannar to pray in front of Madu Matha and determined to stay there till she gets a favorable signal from her.

The yearly festival was going in the church at the time she was there. One day, after continuous crying for hours, she was exhausted to the bone, and fell asleep on the bare ground under a tree. She had a dream where a woman appeared and assured her that her prayers will be answered without any further delay. True to her words, my mother was born within a year and three years later, they were blessed with a boy. With the blessing of two kids in quick succession, their married life was on track with remarkable improvement in marital harmony. But still, there were other challenges of different kind sprung up unexpectedly to test the extent of their resilience.

The first was the unexpected death of Grandpa's only sister. He was very close to her sister. The unfortunate demise of her (my paternal grandmother) and her husband, one after another, at a relatively young age, made grandfather to be very sad and emotionally fragile. With the loyal and sincere support from Grandma, he decided to take his sisters kids into their fold to provide seamless care as if they were their own children. His beloved nephew later became my father. I occasionally teased grandpa when he was in a good mood,



"Grandparents know how to do the things that warm a heart They touch our lives with loving care right from the very start"

telling him that he did with a selfish motive with the intention of getting his fair complexioned nephew to marry his dark complexioned daughter.

Few years later, a sudden twist of fate had more debilitating impact than anything he experienced so far in his life. He was terribly unfortunate to catch some sort of infection at the prime of his life while walking through Poonagary swamp on his way from Vanni to his village.

Grandpa was admitted in Manipal hospital in life threatening condition. He was in the hospital for months and she was with him most of the time. It was a trying time for Grandma emotionally, logistically and financially.

Still, there was a silver lining in the whole episode. Grandpa, being a self made businessman doesn't trust people easily. That included his wife too. But he started having a change of heart while lying on the hospital bed. He thought how lucky he is, to have a wife like her. Her dedication, love, sincerity and the readiness to sacrifice overwhelmed him. For the first time, he decided to trust her as an equal partner in life and looked upon her with love, respect and deference.

Although the doctors managed to save his life, the deformity lingered throughout the rest of his life. He became lame with extremely limited use of one of his legs. He tried to walk putting all the strength in his good leg and literally drag the other one along with it. His deformity made him to be more dependent on his wife. Their daily routine became inextricably intertwined. After about six years, they have been blessed with another son, my uncle Gnam.

Unable to hold onto any outside business as before, Grandpa decided to start a small grocery store in the house. When their only daughter (my mother) got married, they gave the property as dowry to her and moved to a place almost at the centre of the village. Grandpa thought its location was well suited for his grocery business and started working tirelessly to make it a fully flexed store called "coupon Kadai" in Tamil.

He was determined not to allow his debilitating condition to diminish his life. Still, the physical pain aggravated by difficult customers irritated him with the inevitable result of raised voices in the store. Grandma, on the



other hand, had the rare ability to read people and situations on an emotional and personal level, charming the accusers with her megawatt personality. She always ended up resolving the problem before the conflicts combusted into conflagrations.

The time I was born in 1946, my mother was only seventeen. Caring for a baby was a burden when she herself was still a Teen. Grandma's assistance in every aspect of child rearing during my formative years was crucial to compensate Mom's immaturity. So, I ended up literally growing up with my grandma and became extremely close to her.

I vividly remember her crying uncontrollably at Chunnakam railway station before I got into the train to travel to Colombo for the flight to London for higher studies in September 1967. She thought she will not be alive to see me again. I tried my best to console her and controlled my emotions. But in the train, my resiliency had reached its limit and I started crying too.

I was very happy to see my Am-mama again after 7 years. My grandfather passed away but she was relatively healthy. She took active part in the preparations for my wedding and was still around to hold her first great grandson with pride gleaming through her glassy eyes. She struggled for ten years to conceive her own child and not even in her wildest dreams, she thought of holding a great grandson in her life time.

Grandpa's world for the rest of his life was cloistered within the walls of his coupon kadai. The store was attached to the house, making it convenient for him. He only goes inside the house to eat and sleep. He opened the store from 8 am to 8pm throughout the week including weekends. He refused to have any assistant except Grandma.

His favorite person in the whole family was my Mom, he fondly addressed as "pillai". I had a glimpse of his love

for her during an incident in his stores. Mom used to buy all the groceries in his store on credit. At one point, she owed him about Rs 1000 – pretty large debt at that time. It was a difficult time for us in the family of seven kids.

Grandpa reluctantly told my Mom that she owed about Rs 1000 and requested her to pay that as soon as possible. Mom, without considering the emotional resonance of her action, removed her "thali kodi" and tried to give it to him to keep till she pays the debt. As somebody who was accustomed to unquestioning deference from her precious daughter, he was completely taken aback. With tears in the eyes, he refused to even touch the "thali kodi" and with a wavering voice told her to forget about the debt and consider it as additional dowry to her.

I am the oldest grandson for my grandparents. I don't remember Grandpa carrying me or hugging me at any time. I doubt whether he did this with his other grandkids either. I attribute his behavior to his limited emotional expressiveness. Although, he didn't show any emotional attachment, we are sure that we were not out of his mind or out of his heart.

Grandma was completely the opposite. She showered me with unlimited love and never hesitated to show open and sincere affection and attachment. When someone you love becomes a memory, that memory becomes a treasure. Memories of Grandma are indelibly engraved in my brain. It is difficult to express in word, how much I owed her. I miss her a little too much, a little too often and a little more every day.

For all what she had done for me, I didn't have a chance to do anything to repay her. I was not in the country during the last years of her life. I could not even attend her funeral – one of the unfortunate episodes of my peripatetic life that left an unfading scar in my mind.

OBITUARY



Tribute

Pamela Palarajah

“faced life’s umpteen problems victoriously”

February 08, 1939 - March 18, 2020

Pamela Palarajah, who passed away recently at the age of 81, lived a courageous life facing umpteen problems bravely with utmost confidence in the grace of God. Her funeral was held on Friday, March 20, 2020 at Chapel Ridge Funeral home. She was living with her daughter at Ajax at the time of her death. She was in the Ajax hospital for a few months until her demise.

She hails from Chavakachcheri, where she belonged to a fairly affluent family. Her father was the owner of the Deivendra Theatre, which was the only source of entertainment to the Chava folks at that time. Pamela was born semi-blind at the time of her birth and had a permanent squint. She was unable to attend school for long as result of her handicap. However, she proved to be an adept at cooking and held cookery classes for girls at her home. Pamela was subsequently married and had two daughters; one of these had the same handicap. Even her marriage did not last long as it ended up in divorce. She lost her handicapped daughter in a road accident. She was later found to be having breast cancer. In spite of her ailments, she was able to join her daughter in Canada-who had got married and settled down in Canada.

Her funeral service was presided over by Mr. James Fraser, an elder of the Toronto Free Presbyterian Church in the absence of Pastor Saunders. Due to the Corona-virus situation, the service had to be cut short. Paying his tribute, her only grandson Shayan said that his grand-ma was a woman of astounding courage and faith and had such frame of mind which came to her rescue at times of challenges. She had always been helpful and attached to him and praised his dad Donald Devaparan for giving all the help he could to look after his grandma when she was at the hospital for nearly six months. Both his parents-Donald and Rajani tried their utmost to bring her back to normalcy. Shayan’s aunt Nishanthi Balasunderam gave a special solo which emphasized the presence of God in our times of trouble. Pastor Benjamin Devadason who gave the sermon said that Christians have the faith in eternal life bestowed to them by the death of Christ on the Cross and Pamela could be confident of



the blessed assurance because she led a life of prayer and faith in the love of God. Though the number of attendees was curtailed due to

the pandemic situation, the funeral service was a remarkable celebration of the life of this gracious mother of faith and courage.

THE HINDU TEMPLE SOCIETY OF CANADA

Richmond Hill Ganesha Temple

Compiled by **Kidambi Raj**

Part IV

SIGNIFICANCE FOR WHAT

1. Why do we need a Guru?

Guru is a Sanskrit term for a *teacher, guide, expert or master of certain knowledge or a field*. Therefore, the Sanskrit word Guru means the one who dispels the darkness and takes towards light. This is explained in *Advayataraka Upanishad, Verse 16*: The syllable **gu** means darkness, the syllable **ru**, he who dispels them. Because of the power to dispel darkness, the guru is thus named. According to Hindu tradition, a Guru is a reverential figure to the student, with him serving as a counselor, who helps mold values, shares experiential and literal knowledge. He also serves as model in life, an inspirational source who helps in the spiritual evolution of a student. A guru is also one's spiritual guide, who helps one to discover the same potentials that the guru has already realized.

The oldest references to the concept of **guru** are found in the earliest Vedic texts of Hinduism. The **guru** and **gurukulam**, a school run by guru, were an established tradition in India by 1st millennium BCE, and these helped compose and transmit the various Vedas, the Upanishads, texts of various schools of Hindu Philosophy, and the post-Vedic Sastras ranging from spiritual knowledge to various arts.

According to scriptures, being born as a human among the eight million species on earth is the biggest blessing one can ask for and only when someone is doubly blessed, does he/she gets a Guru in life. It is said that a Guru does not accept or reject anyone. It is the student or the disciple, who accepts Guru as his/her Guru.

There are four benefits for having a Guru and they are:

a. **Wisdom Blossoms**: The presence of a Guru is essential for any learning to happen. By reading lot of books, one can only gather information. But real wisdom is bestowed upon us only by the Guru principle; by acknowledging the Guru in one's life. When you consciously acknowledge the Guru, you learn more. Guru brings strength to emotions and sharpness to intellect.

b. **Helps you progress in life**: There is an ancient saying in India, that says, **Guru bina gathi nahi**, which means *there can be no progress in life without a Guru*.



Events, situations, concepts, can make one feel stuck. Sometimes, one doesn't even realize that he/she is stuck. It is the Guru's presence that makes them realize that they are stuck and helps them come out of it. Many times, Guru's presence also protects one from getting stuck in the first place

c. **Fulfillment of Desires**: To acquire anything in life, we need guidance. We need someone to help to achieve what we want. A Guru guides you to get your desires fulfilled. But sometimes we are not sure of what we want or our desires become endless. Then, the Guru tattva gives us what is good for us, and not necessarily all that we want.

d. **Inner Freedom**: The Guru makes sure you do not remain in the elusive world. He says, come

on, wake up and look at the ultimate reality of this universe, that is freedom and liberation.

What is the reason behind a Guru being glorified?

Sun has to open his eyes for eliminating darkness, similarly Enlightened Guru has to bestow his grace to make experience who we are.

We can't open the locked door without key, similarly we cannot realize the God in you without an enlightened Guru. There is no creation without Brahma, similarly there is no sacred knowledge without Enlightened Guru.

Medicine is created by God to cure our diseases. Likewise, a Divine power is created by God to destroy and thereby unify our mind with God, that magnificent divine power is Enlightened Guru.

You have to light the lamp to eliminate darkness – You have to serve an Enlightened Guru to eliminate the darkness that covers knowledge.

2. WHY DO WE DO NAMASKARAM/NAMASTE INSTEAD OF SHAKING HANDS?

Namaskaram/Namaste is an Indian gesture used to welcome guests are relatives, as well



as acknowledging strangers, and works both as salutation and valediction. This gesture is said to express honor, courtesy, politeness, hospitality and gratitude to the other person.

The word Namaste is derived from Sanskrit. Namaste is formed by joining two words, **namas** and **te**. **Namas** means bow, adorations, obeisance and salutation; and **te** means to you. Therefore, the literal meaning of Namaste is **bowing to you**.

Namaste is part of the daily procedure in India. You would often get to see this gesture in various Indian Classical Dance forms, in everyday religious rituals and yoga postures.

How to do Namaste?: While saying Namaste in the traditional style, one must bow slightly and press both the hands together, with fingers pointing upward, thumb on the inside near the chest and palm touching. This is called **Pranamasana** or the **Prayer Pose** or **Anjali Mudra**. Nowadays, people say Namaste without the bow as well, but when you say it with the bow, it makes the greeting more formal and respectful, especially when you say this to an elder or an important person.

Spiritual implications of Namaste: According to Hindu customs, Namaste has a spiritual meaning too. Hindus believe that **the divine and the soul is the same in everybody**. So, when you say namaste to someone, it implies, **I bow to the divine in you**. This gesture is also associated with the **Brow Chakra**, i.e. the mind centre of the third eye. Therefore, when you meet someone in person, you do not just meet a physical being, but you meet their mind too. And when you say Namaste by bowing your head and joining your hands, the gesture implies, **may our minds meet**. This is a great way of expressing your love, respect and friendship to the person whom you meet.

Though this has its origin in India, Namaste is now known and used throughout the world. Much of this

has been due to its use in Yoga. Students will often bow in respect to their teacher and say Namaste at the end of the class.

Pranama a combination of two words in Sanskrit, **Pra** and **Anama** is a respectful salutation among Hindus. It literally means **bowing forward**.

Namaskar is one of six types of Pranamas and they are:

1. **Ashtaanga** (**Ashta** means eight and **Anga** means body parts): Touching the ground with the knees, belly, chest, hands, elbows, chin, nose and temple.
2. **Saashtanga** (**Shasta** means six and **Anga** means body parts): Touching the ground with toes, knees, hands, chin, nose and temple.
3. **Panchaanga** (**Pancha** means five and **Anga** means body parts): Touching the ground with knees, chest, chin, temple and forehead.
4. **Dandavat** (**Dand** means stick): Bowing the forehead down and touching the ground.

5.

Abhinandana (Congratulations to you): Bending forward with folded hands touching the chest.

6. **Namaskar** (Bowing to you): The same as doing Namaste with folded hands and touching the forehead.

Of all the above forms of **Namaskars**, **Saashtaanga** Namaskar where all angas (body parts) touch the ground is also related to a process where one's ego is removed and in turn he develops a form of humility.

Also, Saashtaanga shows the thought of helplessness. By doing this Saashtaanga Namaskar, you are sending a message to God that you are helpless and you need His blessings. The Saashtaanga Namaskar is also a symbol of Saranaagati (Surrender) at the feet of the Lord.

Women are not allowed to do Saashtaanga Namaskaram because according to scriptures, the reason is that the womb and the breasts of women should not touch the ground.

SHAKING HANDS:



The traditional handshake plays a central role in our daily lives. We shake hands with

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HINDUS BELIVE IN AND DO

people we know and those who are new to us. A handshake communicates our personality and mood to people and we use them as a mutually acceptable way of agreeing to seal the deal in endless scenarios.

But if we stop all the handshaking for a moment and take a closer look at the science behind this gesture, things might not seem quite so pleasant. This is in part because the human body contains many different types of bacteria. Some are good and we rely on these



to keep us healthy. Others are not so good and might make us sick. We constantly gain and

lose bacteria and so we are never sure when we might pick up an infection. Surfaces act as a route of transmission for bacteria and therefore every time we touch a surface, we share bacteria unknowingly. This is why the risk of picking up an infectious disease is increased in places such as toilet seats. But we never ever give even a single thought about picking up bacteria you share when shaking somebody's hand. That is why doing Namaste instead of shaking hands is not only good but also safer.

IMPORTANT TO NOTE:

With the **COVID-19** Pandemic situation, everyone is advised not to shake hands or physical contacts while meeting, to prevent the transmission of bacteria from one to the other. This is only under the present situation all over the world. But the habit of not shaking hands and instead doing Namaskaram/Namaste has been followed by Hindus for several thousands of years. This is just one example of what has been observed/followed by Hindus for several thousands of years that are becoming the norms now in rest of the world.

3. WHY IS IT NECESSARY TO GIVE DAANAM (Donation/Charity/Giving)?

The concept of Daanam:

For Hindus, Daanam, (giving) is an important part of one's dharma (religious duty). Dharma has a wide variety of meanings such as eternal law, duty, conduct, behavior, morality and righteousness. Each person has a dharma towards family, society, the world and all the living things. It is said that doing donation or giving away daan is one of the noblest deeds that one can do in his/her life. Giving away something to someone in need is good karma and brings you happiness and nobility in life.

Different types of Daanams:

The well-known Hindu text, the **Bhagavad-Gita (17.20-22)** speaks of three types of giving and they are:

- A gift that is given without any expectation of appreciation or reward is beneficial to both giver and recipient.
- A gift that is given reluctantly and with the expectation of some advantage is

harmful to both the giver and the recipient.

• A gift that is given without any regard for the feelings of the recipient and at the wrong time, so causing embarrassment to the recipient, is gain harmful to both giver and recipient.

Charity is more than merely giving; it involves the sharing of resources with others, be it wealth, food or other things. It may involve giving to philanthropic causes, like providing rest-houses, planting trees, digging wells.

The story of King Rantideva:

Daanam includes selfless seva or service to those in need. Most Hindus are familiar with the story of King Rantideva, who was known for his generosity. When his kingdom was struck by a devastating famine, the King wanted to share the sufferings of his subjects and so fasted for 48 days until all his people were fed. When he was about to break his fast with a glass of water, he heard a cry of a thirsty man. So, he gave his glass of water to the man. As he was about to take a morsel of food, there appeared an unexpected hungry guest to whom he gave it. The compassionate king remarked to his ministers, who were concerned about his welfare: ***I do not desire from God the great state attended by divine powers or even deliverance from rebirth. Establishing myself in the hearts of all being, I take on myself their suffering so that they may be rid of their misery.***

There are four forms of Daan (Charity) called **Dadashri** and they are: Food (**Aahara-daan**), Medical Care (**Aushdha-daan**), Spiritual knowledge (**Gnan-Daan**) and The State of Absolute Non-Violence (**Abhaya-daan**).

4. Why do we prostrate before parents and elders?

Hindus prostrate before their parents, elders, teachers and noble souls by touching their feet. The elder in turn blesses us by placing his/her hand on or



over our heads. Prostration is done daily, when we meet elders and particularly on important occasions like the beginning of a new task, birthdays, festivals etc. In certain traditional circles. Prostration is accompanied by **abhivadana**, which serves to introduce one-self, by announcing one's ancestor's family and social stature. An elder or person being respected stands on his/her feet. Touching the feet in prostration is a sign of respect for the age, maturity, nobility and divinity that the elders personify. It symbolizes our recognition of their selfless love for us and the sacrifices they have done for our welfare. It is a way of humbly acknowledging the greatness of another. This tradition reflects the strong family ties, which has been one of Hindu's enduring strengths.

The good wishes (**Sankalpa**) and blessings

(**aasirvaada**) of elders are very highly valued by Hindus and we prostrate to seek them. Good thoughts create positive vibrations. Good wishes springing from a heart full of love, divinity and nobility have a tremendous strength. This is why the posture assumed, whether it is in the standing or prone position, enables the entire body to receive the energy thus received.

The different forms of showing respect are:

Pratuthana – rising to welcome a person.

Namaskaara – paying respect (homage) in the form of **Namaste**.

Upasangraham – touching the feet of elders or teachers.

Saashtaanga – prostrating fully with the feet, knees, stomach, chest, forehead and arms touching the ground in front of the elder.

Pratyabhivaadana – returning a greeting.

Rules are specifically prescribed in Hindu scriptures as to who should prostrate and to whom. Wealth, family name, age, moral strength and spiritual knowledge in ascending order of importance for qualified person to receive respect. This is why a King, though a ruler of the land, would prostrate before a spiritual master. Epics like Ramayana and Mahabharata have many stories highlighting this aspect.

5. Why do we not touch papers, books and people with the feet?

Hindus are forbidden from touching books, paper, pens, pencils, musical instruments etc., with their feet, as they are all considered source of knowledge. If by accident, a book or a paper gets touched by feet, it is a mark of disrespect and touching it in a manner of praying is apologizing to the book or paper as well the deity.

For Hindus, knowledge is sacred and divine. So, it must be given respect at all times. The custom of not stepping on educational tools is a frequent reminder

of the high position accorded to knowledge in Indian culture. From a very young age, this wisdom fosters in us a deep reverence for books and educational materials. This is also the reason why we worship books, musical instruments, instruments and tools once a year on Saraswathi Puja or Ayudha Puja day, dedicated to the Goddess of learning. In fact, each day before starting our studies we should pray by chanting:

*Saraswathi namstuhyam Varade kaama roopini,
Vidyaarambham karishyaami Sidhibhavatu me sadaa*

The above prayer says: O Goddess Saraswathi, the giver of boons and fulfiller of wishes, I prostrate to you before my studies. May you always fulfill me.



CITY OF BRAMPTON TAKING ADDITIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY MEASURES AGAINST COVID-19 – CITY HALL AND FACILITIES CLOSED, EVENTS AND PROGRAMMING CANCELLED

BRAMPTON, ON (March 13, 2020) – Following today's Peel Public Health announcement on additional COVID-19 Precautions to Protect Peel, the City of Brampton has made significant changes to services and programming to help protect the health and wellbeing of our community.

City-Run Events

All City-run events taking place between March 14 and April 5 are cancelled. All community events taking place in City facilities will also be cancelled during this period.

Recreation Programming and March Break Camps

Effective Monday, March 16, March Break programming is cancelled. Additionally, Recreation programming is cancelled from March 16 to April 5. Full refunds will be provided. Please contact connects@brampton.ca for more information.

City Facility Closures

To help prevent the spread of COVID-19, all City facilities including City Hall, Recreation and Community Centres, Performing Arts Venues, and Brampton Library branches will close from March 16 to April 5 inclusive.

Council Meetings

Effective March 16 to April 5 inclusive, all City Council, Committee of Council and Committee of Adjustment meetings are cancelled.

The Rose Brampton

Effective March 16 to April 5, 2020, all events scheduled at City of Brampton Performing Arts Venues, including The Rose Brampton, are cancelled or postponed. Performing Arts venues are closed to the public until April 5, 2020.

For more information, please contact The Rose Brampton's Box Office during operating hours (Monday to Saturday, 10 AM to 6 PM) at 905 874 2800 ext. 62803 and 62804, or email boxoffice@brampton.ca.

Critical Services

All critical services, including Fire and Emergency Services, Brampton Transit, Traffic Services, By-Law Enforcement, Road Operations, Security Services, Animal Services and POA Courts will continue to operate as usual to support our community.

To help protect the health of our employees and residents, the City has increased frequency of cleaning and disinfecting hard surfaces and seats in buses, facilities and terminals.

Emergency Operations Centre – City of Brampton Emergency Response Plan Activated

The City of Brampton continues to follow the advice of Peel Public Health. While the City has not declared an official emergency on COVID-19, Brampton's Emergency Management Office has activated the City of Brampton Emergency Response Plan at a Level 2. This decision enables a more rapid response to dedicating specific resources to prevention and containment.

COVID-19 Assessment Centre – Peel Memorial

William Osler Health System has opened a COVID-19 Assessment Centre at Peel Memorial Centre for Integrated Health and Wellness to screen and assess people in our community who are experienc-

ing possible symptoms of COVID-19. The Osler Assessment Centre is not a walk-in clinic. Assessment Centre Hours are from 2 pm to 8 pm, seven days a week. This facility is located in a self-contained area at Peel Memorial and does not impact other patients who are attending the Urgent Care Centre or outpatient services at the site. Osler continues to be a safe place to receive care.

For attendance at City events and programming, individuals are encouraged to follow Peel Public Health's recommended hygiene practices:

If you have been asked to self-monitor, please follow the advice of your healthcare provider.

Wash your hands often with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

Avoid touching your eyes, mouth and nose as much as possible.

Avoid contact with people who are ill and their items. Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue. If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve or elbow, not your hands. Wash hands after coughing and sneezing.

Maintain a healthy lifestyle, including a healthy diet, exercise and enough sleep, to enhance your body's immune system.

Get a flu shot. You are more likely to contract influenza than COVID-19 and being sick lowers your immunity to other germs.

If you need to self-isolate, please follow the advice from your healthcare provider.

The City of Brampton takes COVID-19 seriously and continues to follow the advice of Peel Public Health. The most up to date information is available at www.peelregion.ca/coronavirus.

Message from Mayor

Patrick Brown

"The City of Brampton is taking the additional steps of closing services and facilities, and postponing events and programming in order

to limit the spread of COVID-19. These important steps will protect the safety and health of Brampton residents. We recognize the impact these closures have on residents and are continually evaluating and responding to this evolving situation. We encourage residents to follow recommended hygiene practices and forego unnecessary use of Brampton Transit."



Mayor Patrick Brown tunes in remotely to City's Tele-Town Hall on COVID-19

City of Brampton announces Brampton bars, restaurants and food establishments to cease in-person service to contain COVID19 spread

BRAMPTON, ON (March 16, 2020) – The City of Brampton supports Peel Public Health in following today's announcement from the Province of Ontario directing bars, restaurants and food establishments to stop in-person service to help control the spread of COVID-19.

In addition, Peel Public Health strongly recommends the closure of nightclubs, movie theatres and concert venues effective 12:01 a.m., March 17, 2020.

Peel Public Health urges everyone to make efforts at social distancing. Social distancing is about avoiding physical contact and staying a safe distance away from others (approximately 2 metres).

Peel Public Health continues to strongly recommend that residents who have travelled outside of Canada, including to the United States, should self-isolate for 14 days.

While many restaurants, bars and food establishments have already taken the civic-minded step to voluntarily change how they do business

to protect Peel residents, any business in Peel that chooses to defy either the Province's or Peel Public Health's recommendations will be subject to orders under the Health Protection and Promotion Act.

The City of Brampton encourages residents to support local food service establishments by utilizing available take out and pick-up options.

For the most current updates and frequently asked questions (FAQs) on City services, and facility and programming closures, please visit: www.brampton.ca/covid19.

For current information from Peel Public Health information, visit: www.peelregion.ca/coronavirus.

"Getting ahead and helping prevent community spread of COVID-19 requires quick, collective action. The City of Brampton fully supports today's Peel Public Health recommendations prioritizing community safety by temporarily closing all local food establishment's dine-in services, including restaurants, bars, and coffee shops. The City of Brampton is committed to minimizing the impact of the unprecedented action being taken in response to COVID-19. It is more important than ever that we remain united as a community, and I ask for the public's continued support as we navigate the weeks ahead."

- Patrick Brown,
Mayor, City of Brampton



BRAMPTON



Community Watch

Mayor Patrick Brown's Statement on Declaration of Provincial State of Emergency

March 17, 2020: "Brampton City Council is in full support of this morning's announcement by Premier Doug Ford declaring a Provincial State of Emergency in response to COVID-19.

Effectively immediately, this decisive and extraordinary measure will order the closure of facilities providing indoor recreational programs, libraries and schools defined in the education act, all licenced childcare centres and all bars and restaurants except those offering takeout and delivery. It also mandates that public events of over 50 people are prohibited, including parades, events and services in places of worship until March 31.

Declaring an emergency provides exceptional means to deal with exceptional situations and may open the way to additional resources including supplies and services. The decision also protects volunteers who may now be covered by WSIB and draws public attention to emergency information.

The City of Brampton supports any action needed to flatten the curve of COVID-19 and protect the health of our community, our province, and our country.

The City of Brampton will continue to support the public by providing essential services vital to day-to-day life including transit, fire and emergency services, and by-law and enforcement that ensures emergency service access across the City.

The City is committed to keeping Brampton residents informed and will continue to provide more information about the City's response to COVID-19 as it becomes available."



Left to Right: Councillor Jeff Bowman, Fire Chief Bill Boyes, Regional Councillor Rowena Santos, and Emergency Management Officer Alain Normand at Brampton's Emergency Operations Centre for Tele-Town Hall on COVID-19

CITY OF BRAMPTON DECLARES STATE OF EMERGENCY IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19

BRAMPTON, ON (March 24, 2020) – Today, following consultation with City Council and on the recommendation of the City's Emergency Management Team, Mayor Patrick Brown declared a State of Emergency in the City of Brampton in accordance with the City's Emergency Management Plan.

This is a significant step in supporting the Province of Ontario's and Region of Peel's efforts to help contain the spread of COVID-19.

This declaration will help the City's ongoing emergency response efforts by allowing more flexibility and speed as we take action to help prevent the impacts of COVID-19.

The City of Brampton will continue to support the public by providing essential and critical services vital to day-to-day life, including Brampton Transit, Fire and Emergency Services, and By-law and Enforcement that ensures emergency service access across the City.

The City is committed to keeping Brampton residents informed and will continue to provide updates on the City's response to COVID-19 as they become available. For more information, visit www.brampton.ca/COVID19 or follow @CityBrampton on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram.

"Today's declaration supports the City's ongoing emergency response efforts by allowing more flexibility and speed as we take action to mitigate the impacts of COVID-19. We are taking the necessary steps to protect our community and the City will spare no measure in doing so. We all have a responsibility in this, so at this time please stay home. We will get through this together as a City."

- Patrick Brown,
Mayor, City of Brampton

"The City's administration initiated our Emergency Response Plan at Level 2 on March 13, which upgraded to a Level 1 Major Emergency on March 17, in response to COVID-19. Today's declaration provides additional agility for City staff to respond effectively and quickly to this situation, and reflects how seriously the City takes this matter and the safety of our staff and public we serve."

- David Barrick,
Chief Administrative Officer, City of Brampton

City of Brampton announces Mayor's COVID-19 Economic Support and Recovery and Social Support Task Forces

BRAMPTON, ON (March 17, 2020) – Brampton Council continues to take significant steps to address the COVID-19 situation across the city. Today, the City of Brampton announced two specialized task forces to support the local economy and vulnerable communities: the Mayor's COVID-19 Economic Support and Recovery Task Force and the Mayor's COVID-19 Social Support Task Force.

These two groups will work closely with the City of Brampton Emergency Operations Centre and City staff to coordinate effective responses.

Mayor's COVID-19 Economic Support Task Force

This group will be co-chaired by Michael Palleschi, Regional Councillor for Wards 2 and 6, Michael Palleschi, and Paul Vicente, Regional Councillor for Wards 1 and 5. It will be responsible for coordinating recommendations and measures to support business relief efforts in Brampton. Council will work on these efforts with local stakeholders including the Downtown BIA and Brampton Board of Trade.

Mayor's COVID-19 Social Support Task Force

This group will be co-chaired by Rowena Santos, Regional Councillor for Wards 1 and 5, and Jeff Bowman, City Councillor for Wards 3 and 4. This task force will coordinate recommendations and response to homelessness and food security to provide necessary social supports for Brampton's vulnerable communities.

For the most current updates and frequently asked questions (FAQs) on City services and facility and programming closures, please visit: www.brampton.ca/covid19.

For current information from Peel Public Health, visit: www.peelregion.ca/coronavirus.

"While City Hall remains closed to protect Brampton residents and employees, Council continues to work to ensure we are collaborating to support the local economy and vulnerable communities. Together with our stakeholders, we are committed to minimizing the impact of COVID-19 in Brampton."

- Patrick Brown,
Mayor, City of Brampton

City of Brampton COVID-19 response update

SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING OUTCOMES

BRAMPTON, ON (March 25, 2020) – At its Special Council Meeting today, Brampton City Council ratified decisions on significant changes to services and programming in response to COVID-19.

Highlights of the meeting include: the City of Brampton declaring a State of Emergency, free Brampton Transit fares, a change to Brampton Transit service and new boarding and riding practices, the ability for residents to defer taxes without interest or late fees for five months, and a discussion on the importance of promoting social distancing city-wide.

State of Emergency

On March 24, following consultation with City Council and on the recommendation of the City's Emergency Management Team, Mayor Patrick Brown declared a State of Emergency in the City of Brampton in accordance with the City's Emergency Management Plan.

This is a significant step in supporting the Province of Ontario's and Region of Peel's efforts to help contain the spread of COVID-19.

Declaring an emergency provides exceptional means to deal with extraordinary situations and may open the way to additional resources, including supplies and services. This declaration helps the City's ongoing emergency response efforts by allowing more flexibility and speed as we take action to help prevent the impacts of COVID-19.

Brampton Transit Updates

Effective Saturday, March 21, fare payment is not required and customers will only be able to board through the rear doors of buses until further notice. Customers with accessibility needs who require the use of the ramp may continue to use the front doors.

There will be enhanced Saturday Service Monday to Friday. Details can be found here. Saturday and Sunday service will continue on their regular schedules. Brampton Transit administrative offices at 185 Clark Boulevard and 130 Sandalwood Parkway West are closed to the public.

A variety of additional safety measures were implemented March 23 to help reduce the spread of COVID-19 in the community. More on these measures can be found here.

Property Tax Deferral

The City of Brampton has waived the interest and late fees on tax payments for the five-month period of March 18 to August 19, 2020 in response to COVID-19. This means that the City of Brampton allows residents the ability to choose to make the outstanding interim tax payments by August 19, 2020 without incurring penalty and interest.

Payments will continue to be accepted and processed by the City. Payments can be made at

financial institutions, through online banking or dropped off at the drop box located at City Hall lobby adjacent to the parking garage elevator. For more information, read the City's Tax Payment FAQs.

Enforcing Social Distancing

Recognizing the critical role that social distancing and physical separation plays in preventing the spread of COVID-19, Council requested that staff prepare regulation to support enforcement of social distancing and physical separation measures during the COVID-19 emergency.

New regulation being explored includes, but is not limited to: requiring a 2.0 metre separation distance between persons, other than immediate family members with whom a person resides; and limitations and/or restrictions on the use of public playgrounds.

Stay Connected

The City is committed to keeping Brampton residents informed and will continue to provide updates on the City's response to COVID-19 as they become available. For more information on the above decisions and all of the City's efforts to support the community in response to COVID-19, visit www.brampton.ca/COVID19 or follow @CityBrampton on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram.

More Information

City of Brampton COVID-19 Peel Public Health – Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Province of Ontario: Ministry of Health – Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)

City of Brampton declares State of Emergency in response to COVID-19 Brampton gives residents ability to defer taxes and waives all penalties for five months Brampton Transit to introduce free fares, rear boarding, half capacity buses, and more, effective March 21 and March 23

"As we navigate the coming months, the City will spare no measure in its efforts to help keep our community safe and prevent the spread of COVID-19. I would like to once again thank Council, City staff, and our community for their continued support as we work through this together."

- Patrick Brown,
Mayor, City of Brampton

"Today's Special Council meeting provided the opportunity for City Council to approve recent decisions regarding service changes in response to COVID-19. Council ratifying these decisions will allow our team to continue to be nimble in our response to help reduce the impacts of COVID-19 in Brampton."

- David Barrick,
Chief Administrative Officer, City of Brampton



Community Watch



BRAMPTON

CITY OF BRAMPTON CLOSES ALL PARKS TO HELP PREVENT THE SPREAD OF COVID-19

BRAMPTON, ON (March 26, 2020) – Effective immediately, all 500+ parks in Brampton are closed to the public, until further notice, to help prevent the spread of COVID-19.

This includes:

- playgrounds
- leash-free dog parks
- all outdoor sports facilities and outdoor fitness equipment
- picnic shelters
- Signage indicating park closures will be installed at City parks this week.

These closures are aligned with Peel Public Health's direction to residents to practice physical distancing and avoid gatherings in public settings.

Residents should contact the City's Security Services to report an issue at 905.874.2111.

For the latest updates on what the City of Brampton is doing during the COVID-19 situation, visit www.brampton.ca/COVID19.

"At the City of Brampton, our priority is and always will be the health and safety of our residents. We are committed to doing as much as we can to help prevent the further spread of COVID-19. We have been urging residents to maintain physical distancing, and in order to flatten the curve, we need to take on tougher measures to get the message out. It is absolutely crucial that residents understand the seriousness of this situation and importance of physical distancing and staying home at this time."

- Patrick Brown, Mayor, City of Brampton

"Today's announcement to close all Brampton parks reaffirms our commitment to keeping our residents and staff safe during this time. COVID-19 is a fast evolving pandemic, and we are monitoring the situation and continue to take steps accordingly."

- David Barrick, Chief Administrative Officer, City of Brampton

Brampton Transit to introduce free fares, rear boarding, half capacity buses and more, effective March 21 and March 23

BRAMPTON, ON (March 20, 2020) – Today, Brampton Transit announced that starting Saturday, March 21, fare payment is not required customers will only be able to board through the rear doors until further notice in response to COVID-19. Customers with accessibility needs who require the use of the ramp may continue to use the front doors.

Starting Monday, March 23 and until further notice, the following changes will also take effect:

Enhanced Saturday Service for Monday-Friday. Details can be found here.

Saturday and Sunday service will continue on their regular schedules. Brampton Transit administrative offices at 185 Clark Boulevard and 130 Sandalwood Parkway West will be closed to the public. With no fare payment required at this time, all issuance of Brampton Transit Senior ID cards, Veterans cards and PRESTO sales are suspended. For lost and found inquiries, customers can call 905.874.2750 ext. 62732.

To reduce COVID-19 transmission in the community, Brampton Transit will also implement the following on March 23: Bus loads will be limited to half seated capacity to support social distancing practices. This means that once buses are half-full, stops will be bypassed and passengers may be left behind. Every effort will be made to deploy buses to pick up the remaining passengers.

On busier routes, articulated buses will be put in place to assist with passengers' ability to maintain social distancing while on board. This means that Züm articulated buses may be seen on regular routes. Please pay attention to the destination signs on the buses.

To ensure there is adequate distance between everyone on the bus, including employees, seats will be identified with yellow tape and passengers are asked to not sit in these seats. Brampton Transit terminals and its contact centre will maintain regular hours of operation at this

time. Any change in hours of operation will be communicated at www.bramptontransit.com.

An enhanced cleaning and disinfecting schedule remains in effect. It is Brampton Transit's goal to disinfect all hard surfaces, operator compartments and seats every 48 hours. Facilities and terminals that have hard surfaces will be wiped down and disinfected on a daily basis. Riders are encouraged to carry their own personal disinfectant when traveling, such as hand sanitizer or wipes, and wash their hands often. The City of Brampton is working closely with its partners at Peel Public Health and the Brampton Emergency Measures Office to continue to monitor risks. Visit www.brampton.ca/covid19 for regular updates and visit www.bramptontransit.com or follow @bramptontransit on Twitter for service updates.

"We are committed to ensuring Brampton is a Healthy and Safe City during this extraordinary time, and as such we are implementing free fare, rear boarding and half capacity buses. Brampton Transit is a critical service that helps many residents access necessities, and we are dedicated to its accessibility. Together with our stakeholders, we are committed to minimizing the impact of COVID-19."

- Patrick Brown, Mayor, City of Brampton

"The City of Brampton is committed to providing safe transit opportunities for Brampton residents while we ensure the continued safety of our Transit operators. To maintain our services, today's announcement ensures that we are continuing to put safety front and centre during this challenging time."

- David Barrick, Chief Administrative Officer, City of Brampton

CITY OF BRAMPTON HOSTS LARGEST TELE-TOWN HALL EVER ON COVID-19

BRAMPTON, ON (March 18, 2020) – Tonight, the City of Brampton hosted its largest Tele-Town Hall ever, with 14,962 Brampton tuning in to listen in and join the conversation on the City's efforts to help protect the community and prevent the spread of COVID-19. Dr. Lawrence Loh, Medical Officer of Health, Region of Peel and Dr. Frank Martino, President and CEO, William Osler Health Centre, also spoke to how residents can do their part to protect themselves.

Hosts and Guests on the call included:

- Patrick Brown, Mayor, City of Brampton
- Rowena Santos, Regional Councillor, Wards 1&5

- Jeff Bowman, City Councillor, Wards 3&4
- Bill Boyes, Fire Chief, Brampton Fire and Emergency Services
- Alain Normand, Manager, Brampton Emergency Manager
- Dr. Lawrence Loh, Medical Officer of Health, Region of Peel
- Dr. Frank Martino, President and CEO, William Osler Health Centre
- Randy Patrick, Staff Superintendent, Peel Regional Police

A link to the full discussion is available here.
https://www.dropbox.com/s/o3bpd1khh5r0slx/COVID19_Townhall_March%2018.mp3?dl=0

CITY OF BRAMPTON GIVES RESIDENTS ABILITY TO DEFER TAXES AND WAIVES ALL PENALTIES FOR FIVE MONTHS

BRAMPTON, ON (March 21, 2020) – Today, the City of Brampton waived the interest and late fees on tax payments for the five-month period of March 18 to August 19, 2020 in response to COVID-19. This decision will be ratified at a future council meeting.

Under section 3.8 of the City's Emergency Management Plan during an emergency, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, authority has been provided to the City to take such actions "as may be required to protect life, property, the environment, and the economy within the boundaries of the City of Brampton."

This and the announcement regarding the changes to Brampton Transit service are consistent with the City's continued priority during the COVID-19 emergency to ensure the safety and well-being of our community.

Residents and businesses should note the following:

Neither interest nor late fees will be charged for the second instalment of taxes, which was due on March 18, or for the third instalment, which is due on April 22.

Those who sent postdated cheques to the City for their April tax instalment and would like to cancel the payment may do so by calling 311 by April 15.

April instalments for April 1, 15 and 22 will be withdrawn for those who have pre-authorized tax payments through their bank. Those who have pre-authorized tax payments for May can cancel their instalment by calling 311. In order to resume the pre-authorized payment at a later date, the payment holder will need to re-apply to the City.

Tax payments will continue to be accepted and processed by the City. View a full list of payment options at Brampton.ca website.

Special forms are available at Brampton.ca.

"Brampton Council understands the real financial pain and struggle our residents are going to be facing during this pandemic. This is why we are giving every resident who wishes the opportunity to defer property taxes with no penalty for five months. We work for you and we heard loud and clear this was something the community wanted during this period of economic adversity."

- Patrick Brown, Mayor, City of Brampton

"The City has its community's needs top of mind, especially during this challenging time. We are responding quickly and effectively to best serve Brampton's residents and businesses. While City facilities are closed, several services and supports remain available in alternative ways."

- David Barrick, Chief Administrative Officer, City of Brampton

As one of the fastest-growing cities in Canada, Brampton is home to 650,000 people and 70,000 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 Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram. Learn more at www.brampton.ca.

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