

A *parfait media publication*

Monsoon Journal

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Ontario goes to the Polls on June 12

Ontarians will vote for a new Government on June 12 after Premier Kathleen Wynne decided to pull the plug than wait for her minority Liberal government to be defeated on her new budget



Tim Hudak,
Progressive Conservative Leader



Andrea Horwath,
NDP Leader



Kathleen Wynne,
Liberal Leader

By Siva Sivapragasam

Her decision to call for an election comes in the wake of NDP leader Andrea Horwath's announcement that her party will not support the budget presented by Premier Kathleen Wynne who heads a minority government in the Ontario Legislature. "This budget is not a solid plan for the future," Horwath remarked. "It's a mad dash to escape the scandals. It's time for change. We do not support this government any longer."

With the Progressive Conservatives and NDP vowing to vote against the budget, the minority Liberal government would have fallen on what amounts to a confidence vote in the legislature.

Premier Wynne visited Lt.-Gov. David Onley to request him to call a June 12 election after the NDP dropped the bombshell that they would join the Progressive Conservatives to shoot down the \$130.4-billion spending programme. Wynne blamed the PC Party and the NDP for forcing an election rather than supporting a plan that would see Ontario through its fragile economic recovery. "The budget would have improved people's lives with a made-in-Ontario pension plan, billions for transit and transportation infrastructure and grants for businesses to create jobs", Wynne

stated. Although the NDP got concessions out of the Liberals in the last two budgets, NDP Leader Andrea Horwath said she could no longer prop up a government that was plagued by scandal after scandal and couldn't trust the Liberals to keep all their budget promises. "The leopard is not changing its spots" she remarked.

"I cannot in good conscience support a government that people don't trust anymore," said Horwath. "This budget is not a solid plan for the future. It's a mad dash to escape the scandals by promising the moon and the stars."

PC Leader Hudak appealed to the Ontarians to take a look at his programme to make Ontario a better place to live. "If you want a turnaround plan to get Ontario working again, look at me, look at my team, look at my plan," he stated.

CBC provincial affairs specialist Robert Fisher said the move to force an election is a "big gamble" for Horwath and that she was able to convince her caucus that forcing an election would improve the NDP's position in the legislature.

"If she doesn't, she might be looking for a new job the morning after the next election," said Fisher.

May Day Move



Memories Matter: Tamil National Alliance Parliamentarian M.A. Sumanthiran MP boarded a bullock cart en-route from Point Pedro to Chavakachcheri, Sri Lanka North for Rally in the observance of May Day. International Worker's Day is May 1st and governments, political parties, groups worldwide held protests and rallies to limelight current socio-political conditions or celebrated the spring festival.

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The proceeds from the Dinner and Dance will go towards supporting the student loan scheme managed by Education Development Trust based in Vanni. This scheme provides loans to students who are pursuing post-secondary education from the war effected area in Sri Lanka. So far, Kalvi Connections has given more than 450 loans to students. Entering its third year, Kalvi Connections has raised more than \$150, 000 for local and international educational efforts.

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NDP Parliamentarians write to Foreign Minister Hon. John Baird MP regarding Sri Lanka

New Democratic Party (NDP) parliamentarians Rathika Sitsabaiesan MP and Paul Dewar MP on April 28th released the following letter to the media they wrote to Canada's Foreign Minister Hon. John Baird MP:

Dear Minister Baird,

We are writing to emphasize our serious concern about the recent decision by the Government of Sri Lanka to ban 16 international civil society organizations advocating for human rights and accountability in Sri Lanka. The ban specifically targeted groups advocating for an international inquiry into allegations of human rights abuses during the Sri Lankan civil war. The banned groups include two Canadian organizations that helped achieve the recent resolution at the United Nations Human Rights Council authorizing an investigation by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

The ban will prevent these Canadian organizations from supporting and communicating with other organizations in Sri Lanka, disrupting and impeding the important work of human rights defenders on the ground. The ban may also hinder the ability of these Canadian groups to fundraise and partner with other organizations in Canada. As the ban also identifies specific individuals including Canadians, we are concerned about the impact it may have on the privacy and freedom of Canadian citizens.

This decision by the Sri Lankan government is anti-democratic, unacceptable, and undermines efforts for accountability and reconciliation in Sri Lanka. While strong words of condemnation are necessary, they are not sufficient. Canada must take concrete actions to pressure the Government of Sri Lanka to immediately reverse its assault on international civil society.

Please let us know how the Government of Canada will respond to these continued efforts to undermine human



Paul Dewar MP



Rathika Sitsabaiesan MP

rights investigations and advocacy in Sri Lanka. In particular, is the Government of Canada considering targeted sanctions against individuals responsible for human rights abuses and repressive measures in Sri Lanka, or other financial and diplomatic sanctions as recommended by the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development in 2009? Furthermore, please inform us of measures being taken to protect Canadian citizens falsely accused of association with criminal activity.

We thank you for your consideration of this letter, and look forward to your response.

Canada Concerned by Sri Lanka's Inclusion of Canadians on Terrorist List

Foreign Affairs Minister John Baird and the Honourable Lynne Yelich, Minister of State (Foreign Affairs and Consular), on April 30th issued the following statement:

"We are concerned by the Government of Sri Lanka's listing of 16 entities and 424 individuals for purported links to terrorist activities, including some with ties to Canada.

"Sri Lanka's action has no legal effect in Canada: it does not constrain the freedom of listed groups and individuals to lawfully express their views in Canada. However, Canadians targeted by this list could be subject to possible questioning, detention or arrest by authorities in Sri Lanka.

"Diaspora communities play an important role in Sri Lanka's post-conflict reconciliation process. This action by the Sri Lankan government could further hinder progress on reconciliation. While we may share concerns about some of those listed, we remind the Government of Sri Lanka that it must ensure any measure taken to combat terrorism complies with its obligations under international law, in particular international human rights law.

"The Government of Canada remains committed to combatting all forms of terrorism. Under the provisions of the Criminal Code, Canada included the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam on its list



Hon. John Baird MP



Hon. Lynne Yelich MP

of terrorist entities in 2006 and added the World Tamil Movement to the list in 2008."

— (www.international.gc.ca)

Canada's Middle Class Now World's Richest

According to a major new study conducted by the New York Times, Canada now has the richest middle class in the world. It shows that middle class incomes have increased faster in Canada than anywhere else in the developed world.

For the first time in history, Canadian middle class families are better off than those in the United States.

"After-tax middle-class incomes in Canada — substantially behind in 2000 — now appear to be higher than in the

United States. The poor in much of Europe earn more than poor Americans", The New York Times said.

Taking credit on the findings about the New York Times study, Conservative Party of Canada on a posting on its website by Minister Jason Kenney MP said, "That's thanks in large part to our government's strong economic management, and to our historic tax cuts which have reduced the federal tax burden to its lowest level in fifty years".

Canada Suspends Voluntary Commonwealth Funds

Foreign Affairs Minister John Baird on April 14th announced that Canada will suspend its voluntary contribution to the Commonwealth Secretariat and reallocate the funds for the next two years.

"As host of the 2013 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting and current Chair in Office, Sri Lanka has a duty to take meaningful action on human rights, political reconciliation and accountability. However, Sri Lanka has failed to realize progress on any of these issues," said Baird. "Under the leader-

ship of Prime Minister Stephen Harper, Canada took a strong and principled stand in not attending the 2013 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Colombo, and the April 14th, 2014 announcement is an extension of that leadership.

"As Prime Minister Harper has stated, Canada believes that if the Commonwealth is to remain relevant it must stand in defence of the basic principles of freedom, democracy and respect for human dignity, which are the very foundations upon which the Commonwealth

was built," said Baird. "This decision was not taken lightly. We can no longer justify providing additional funding to an organization that turns a blind eye to human rights abuses, anti-democratic behaviour and religious intolerance in its member states."

While Sri Lanka is Chair in Office, Canada's \$10-million annual voluntary Commonwealth contribution will instead go for two years toward supporting initiatives that espouse the Commonwealth's values and help to deliver results for those who need them the most.

"Canada remains deeply concerned about the absence of accountability for alleged serious violations of human rights and international humanitarian standards in Sri Lanka," said Baird. "We will reallocate the funds to assist in combatting the practice of child, early and forced marriage, and help Commonwealth civil society advance the promotion of human rights. Canada will continue to work with its partners to uphold the Commonwealth's core values, which are cherished by all Canadians."

(international.gc.ca)

from the publisher's desk

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Retain a Willingness to Participate in the Electoral Process

Yes, it's that time of year again for Ontario. From the outcomes of foreseeable political circumstances, the province has now oriented itself into its 41st general election set for June 12, 2014. In an optimistic manner, this condition essentially provides Ontarians with the opportunity to rekindle their provincial version of electoral democracy. Ontarians have efficiently maintained the essence of their system through their contributions in the concrete form of voting. As a recognizable civil right, voting represents the foundational backbone for democracy that establishes the political legitimacy of both the provincial and national government. By exercising their voting right, citizens of Ontario, as the identifiable electorate, effectively ensure their array of voices is heard by the policy efforts of their Ontarian government.

Next, the Premier's election announcement does help to demonstrate the parliamentary principles driving this democracy. In that sense, this is best showcased by the electoral facilitation of either majority or minority governments in the Ontario legislature. For the duration of this new election campaign, not only can Ontarians learn more about their inherent right to vote, they can also appreciate the benefits of both styles of governance. For instance, a minority government can convey representation of Ontario's elective public through the clear inclusion of other important political parties. Subsequently, minority governments can easily promote an ability to foster genuine policy teamwork among divergent opinions in a legislative assembly.

In terms of accomplishing public goals, the electoral creation of majority governments speeds up policymaking processes to the efficient benefit of the electorate. Moreover, a majority government's intended effectiveness is signified by Ontarians' clear voter confidence in a well-rounded political party that can best achieve the aspirations for the province. However, the democratic will of the people has not necessarily been present based on previous elections in Ontario. The last election in 2011 recorded an immensely low voter turnout that stood at 49.2 percent. Accordingly, the voter turnout in Quebec's recent concluded 2014 election was

at 71.42 percent. This certainly can display a notion of an increasingly passive Ontarian electorate that has chosen to alienate Ontario's meaningful electoral process. This perception may be resultant of a lack of knowledge of Ontario's elections or from dissatisfaction in one's own ability to influence Ontario's democracy.

All in all, in consideration of Ontario's latest election, residents should invoke reasonable efforts to dissociate themselves from this political pessimism surrounding Ontario politics. As the voters, democracy will essentially gain natural footing based on Ontarians' proactive engagement in this new campaign to determine the political makeup of Queen's Park. One way for a citizen to mobilize for this election can be done through a commitment to inform themselves on Ontario's political parties and their discernible platform for change. To practically consolidate their individual voices, citizens should share an eagerness to register to vote through Elections Ontario to ensure their chance to decide upon their specific representation. These are only two of many ways Ontario's citizens can enhance the viable virtues of a sound provincial democracy.

Beyond its civic perspective, voting can be viewed as a thoughtful social responsibility by bridging enthusiasm and trust in Ontarians' intentional hope for a better province for all residents. As reiterated, a provincial democracy can only be workable if Ontarians retain a willingness to participate in its most significant aspect: the electoral process. This election has the potential of being a strong continuation of democracy based on the level of support of Ontarians translated through a great voter turnout. Through voter education and volunteerism, Ontarian citizens can also assist in providing for an intriguing and active election campaign to lead into the June 12 vote. The prospect of this campaign ultimately producing a majority or minority government in Queen's Park will be genuinely answered by the strength of an Ontarian public vote.

Contributed by:

Harrish Thirukumran

(Entering Third Year in 2014-15 at Brock University, Ontario)



Get voting info on: www.elections.on.ca

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“Nobody deserves your tears, but whoever deserves them will not make you cry.” – Gabriel García Márquez, (March 6, 1927 - April 17, 2014) Nobel Laureate

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

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May 9th National Day of Honour



Via The Privy Council Office (PCO):

The Prime Minister of Canada declares May 9, 2014, the National Day of Honour to recognise the important work done by our Forces' members.

Royal Proclamation:

Whereas Canadians, both at home and abroad, have honourably, courageously and loyally served Canada by participating in the Afghanistan mission from 2001 to 2014;

Whereas March 31, 2014 marks the end of the Canadian military mission in Afghanistan;

Whereas the strength and courage demonstrated by our men and women in uniform serving on the battlefield and supported by personnel from other government departments have advanced the national interests of Canada in the fight against terrorism;

Whereas the families of our men and women of Her Majesty's Canadian

Armed Forces and Canadian communities from coast to coast to coast have admirably and consistently supported the sacrifices being made by those serving in Afghanistan;

Whereas it is desirable to build and strengthen an appreciation in Canadians for their contribution to the Afghanistan campaign and to promote the special role our families and communities play when our sons and daughters are in foreign lands;

And whereas it is desirable to recognize our appreciation for the sacrifice of all those who serve our great nation and all those who have paid the ultimate price for freedom;

Therefore, His Excellency the Governor General in Council, on the recommendation of the Prime Minister, orders that a proclamation do issue declaring May 9, 2014 as a "National Day of Honour".

Canada Gravely Concerned by Deaths in Ukraine, Calls on Russia to Stop Inciting Violence

Foreign Affairs Minister John Baird on May 3rd issued the following statement:

"Canada is gravely concerned by the deteriorating security situation in eastern Ukraine and by the tragic deaths and injuries in the city of Odessa, which resulted from violence sparked by Russian provocations.

"Russia, through its state-sponsored incitement to violence and its direct support and coordination of illegal armed groups in Ukraine, continues its orchestrated campaign to threaten and destabilize Ukraine.

"The Russian Federation is only undermining and isolating itself further with these provocations. President Vladimir Putin must pull back his military assets from Ukraine's borders, end support for illegal armed groups and respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine.

"Canada remains determined to support Ukraine through this difficult time. We call for calm on all sides and will continue to work with our partners and allies to introduce new measures to discourage and deter Russian provocations."

Running to office to make a positive change, Raj Subramaniam is inspired by Hon. Jim Flaherty



Team Raj Subramaniam on April 13, 2014

Team Raj Subramaniam, candidate for Markham City Council representing Ward 5 recently issued the following statement on their recent activities during the "Keep Markham Beautiful Month":

On April 13, 2014, Raj Subramaniam and his team energetically gathered to participate in the "Keep Markham Beautiful Month". Raj Subramaniam is pleased to announce that his team cleaned 5 parks in Markham by collecting debris and garbage and made the parks beautiful again. He would like to congratulate his team for taking ownership to keep the parks clean, showing great teamwork and actively participating in the event.

Raj Subramaniam said, "The time and effort invested in the event was to promote a healthy environment and make a positive impact on the community and my children. My motivation to run for public office is based on grassroots activism and a passion to serve the community.

Parks are essential, open spaces needed in a community to encourage health and wellness. They have physical, social, psychological and environmental benefits. Many of us get stuck on a daily routine and don't remember our commitment to the environment. I strongly believe in all the benefits parks have to offer, and I will make it a priority to keep them clean and safe.

I am highly motivated to join public service and make a difference in the community. Every great politician was once a newcomer to public service. I want to stand by my words and create positive change in the office to benefit the public.

It is important to mention here that former federal finance minister Hon. Jim Flaherty recently passed away and left many people in grief. Team Raj Subramaniam held a two minute tribute to remember Mr. Flaherty prior to the park

cleanup. Mr. Flaherty was proud of his Irish heritage and was also a proud Canadian who served Canada compassionately. Politicians, such as Mr. Flaherty, who devoted their lives for public service, have further inspired me to pursue my dreams.

April is the month dedicated to keep Markham beautiful. I am aware that many events are happening around the city to make it beautiful. Our youth and residents have shown great initiative in helping keep Markham clean. I would like to keep the momentum going by arranging more activities people can participate in and take ownership in the development of their city. I intend to run my campaign by focusing on people's needs and by promoting awareness on real issues that should be addressed in the office.

I was told that we must do good deeds to receive everyone's blessings. I truly believe that doing good work will engage everyone in the community. I don't believe in spending unnecessary funds on marketing to promote myself. I want to put my time and effort in doing good deeds. Taking pictures at events is not for publicity. The purpose is to promote awareness. I want to put my heart and soul into making the community a better place for everyone."

Raj Subramaniam is passionate about making a difference and wants to dedicate his life to serving the public. Municipal council is one of the most productive institutions that serves the public. Team Raj Subramaniam has arranged several other activities to help the environment, seniors, children and families living in the city. Those of you interested in volunteering or want to learn more about his vision and dedication to the community, please feel free to contact the team: Team Raj Subramaniam at Tel: (289) 800-7605 or Visit: www.raj2014.ca



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Who planted the bombs in Chennai train?

by Col R Hariharan

Two low-intensity improvised explosive devices (IED) exploded in two adjacent sleeper coaches of the Bangalore – Guwahati tri-weekly super fast express just as the train streamed into the Chennai Central station around 7.15 AM on May 1. One young woman was killed and 14 others were wounded in the explosions. The city waking up to May Day holiday was stunned. And national media fed on increasingly stale diet of election news went hammer and tongs to dissect it.

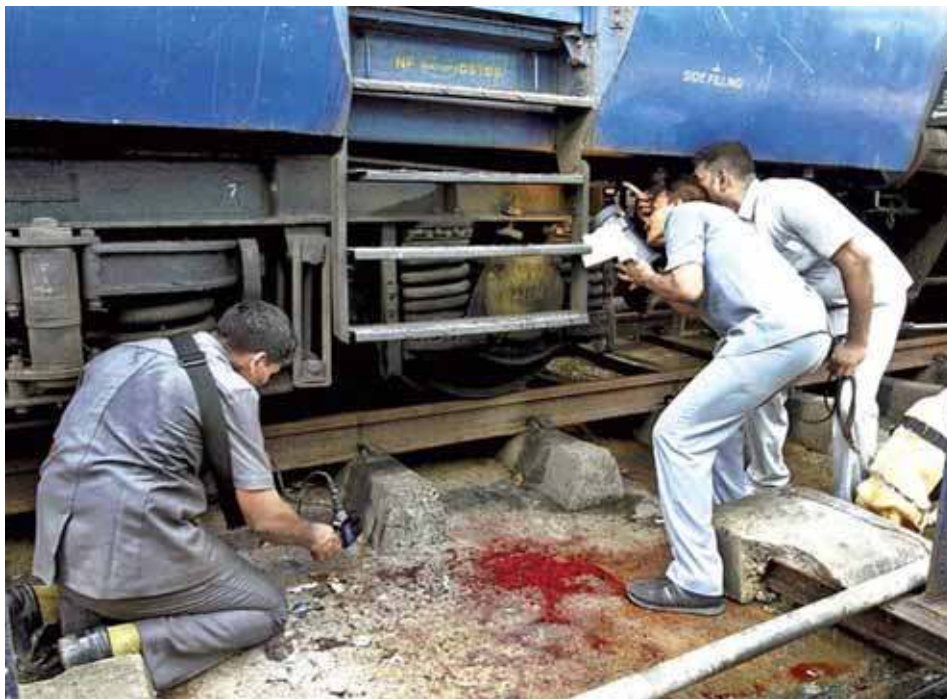
But the question, who planted the bombs in the train, still remains unanswered.

The Chennai police (CB CID) assisted by a NSG team is investigating the blasts. Preliminary investigation has revealed that ammonium nitrate, favoured by terrorists because it is commonly available as a chemical fertiliser



ern States regarding possible terrorist attack on the Gujarat Chief Minister during his electioneering in South India. According to railway sources, security arrangements in the two stations in Chennai were tightened after the alert was received.

The train was headed for Guwahati, capital of not only Assam state but North-east militancy as well. The train would have passed through parts of Andhra Pradesh and Orissa that were hunting grounds of Maoists and other Left Wing Extremist (LWE) groups. These compli-



Bomb squad personnel inspect the train where one of the blasts erupted from underneath a seat. The woman killed had been sitting in the seat where the explosion occurred. Pic-PTI

was probably used with a timer device in the IEDs. The media called the IEDs a professional job, leaving no doubt it was a terrorist handiwork. However, so far no terrorist organisation has laid claim to the heinous act.

As the train started in Bangalore, police are also looking for leads at their end. The police both at Chennai and Bangalore are also examining CCTV footages of the day recorded in the two stations for possible clues.

The train was running 45 minutes late and that probably saved more lives and damage to the train. Had it been running on time the train would have neared Nellore where Narendra Modi, the BJP's prime ministerial aspirant, was addressing an election rally on that day! Already a security alert has been issued to South-

cations have generated a lot of speculations about the terrorist body responsible for planting the bombs.

Despite some spectacular ambushes of paramilitary forces by Maoists, during the run up to the general elections their activities have been substantively restricted thanks to the tight security arrangements beefed up by additional forces. Same is the case in yhr North-east where general elections have been conducted peacefully. Moreover, North-eastern militant groups which are ethno-centric rarely operate outside their beat. Considering this, it is reasonable to remove both the LWE and Northeast insurgents from the list of suspected perpetrators. And that leaves only Jihadi terrorist groups as the suspects.

Chennai train twin bomb blasts: Woman victim was soon to get married

Homecoming turns tragic for Parchuri Swathi. In a few hours she would have come home to a warm welcome.

Her homecoming after a gap of four months was eagerly awaited since it was the first visit after Swathi landed a job at TCS Bangalore in January this year. She had applied for a week's leave from work to spend time with family.

The 24-year-old Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) employee, who lost her life in the Chennai train blasts on May 1st, was supposed to get married in two months.

Parchuri Swathi, an engineering graduate from a college in Hyderabad, had joined TCS in Bangalore only four months ago and was returning home with a friend when the blasts claimed her.

When the news of Swathi's death reached her family in Guntur, her parents and relatives were inconsolable. "She was to come home today. But now only her body is coming", Swathi's grief-stricken grandmother Katragadda Rajalakshmi said. "She was to marry in another two months."

"My granddaughter is a precious child who excelled in her studies," said Satyana-



Parchuri Swathi

rayana.

A report in The Hindu says - Swathi studied up to Class 10 at KLP Public School, completed Intermediate from St. Ann's College and later pursued B. Tech (EEE) from JNTU, Hyderabad. She got through GATE and pursued M. Tech from the same institution. Her parents, who hail from Jagarlamudi village are from agricultural background. They moved to Guntur to provide better opportunities for their children and have recently bought an apartment.

In this context, the arrest of a Sri Lankan national Mohammed Zakir Hussain in Chennai in a joint operation by Central intelligence and state police two days before the blast is of special interest. According to media reports, Hussain is said to have confessed to the police of working for Pakistani intelligence. He was on an assignment to recruit people for terrorist activities in Southern states and circulate fake Indian currency. Based on the information provided by him the Tamil Nadu Q Branch Police have arrested two of his associates suspected of working for the Pakistan ISI.

The report quoted to sources to say that Hussain had confessed he was tasked by Amir Zubair Siddiqui, Counselor (Visa) at the Pakistan High Commission in Colombo, to gather information on vital installations in Tamil Nadu and Karnataka. There was another Pakistani official named Boss alias Shah involved in this operation. Zakir said he had met the Pakistani officials many times in the past one year and sent photographs and maps of US Consulate in Chennai and Israel Consulate in Bangalore. He visited Chennai six times in the past one year on fake passports. Sometimes he came here as a textile and pharma merchant. It also said that Hussain was arrested by Singapore police for spying; he had spent three years in a prison there. He was also detained in Bangkok, the report added.

The Hindu quoted police sources to say that Hussain was also asked to prepare fake passports to facilitate the arrival of two Pakistani nationals in India.

Amir Zubair Siddiqui was also named as the handler in the case of another suspect Thamim Ansari of Adiramapattinam in Thanjavur district apprehended

in September 2012 when he was heading for the Tiruchi airport to take a flight to Colombo. Two DVDs containing visuals of the Army Para-Gliding training and a parade of the Army Signal Corps were seized from him. According to media reports, police claimed that he had admitted to having video-graphed vital installations, including the Nagapattinam Port and the Madras Regimental Centre in Wellington. In his confession Ansari said he was instructed by at the Pakistan High Commission in Sri Lanka, to take videos of sensitive defence installations in India.

These would indicate that Colombo continues to be the cockpit of Pakistan intelligence operations targeted against India. With convenient flights to all major cities of India and huge tourist and business traffic to and from Sri Lanka and India and comparatively laid back attitude to security prevailing in Southern states, it makes sense for Pakistan intelligence to use Colombo to sneak into India.

Pakistan intelligence's Colombo connections are nothing new. As early as 2003, terrorism expert the late B Raman had written that since 2001 Jihadi terrorist groups of the Al Qaeda-kind had been "paying more attention to other areas such as the Eastern province of Sri Lanka, which has a pocket of Muslim concentration" as well as Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore. Among such groups he rated the Lashkar-e-Tayyaba (LeT) as one organisation which had "a definite jihadi agenda in South India." It was constantly looking for opportunities to build a presence and capability for that purpose, he averred.

Contd. Next Page...



Contd. from Page 6

During the last decade or so Pakistan had been using Colombo as a base to launch intelligence operations to gather information on vulnerable targets in South India. On June 18, 2004 the late B. Raman commented upon a news item from the Colombo daily 'The Island' regarding Sri Lanka's concurrence to the appointment of Col Bashir Wali (retd.) as Pakistan High Commissioner to Sri Lanka.

According to Raman, it would be Col Wali's second posting to Colombo. He had served there in the 90s as the head of the Pakistani intelligence set up in the Mission.

But the pernicious part was that during Wali's first tenure in Colombo that Al Ummah, the terrorist organisation of Tamil Nadu expanded its activities in Tamil Nadu and Kerala. He had also used his close connections with the Tablighi Jamaat (TJ) which had been helping to recruit cadres abroad for a number of Jihadi terror groups like Lashkar-e-Tayyaba (LeT). Probably this is what resulted in sending a number of Tamil Muslims from Sri Lanka's Eastern Province to Karachi to study in the Binori madrasa on scholarships provided by the TJ Mufti Nizamuddin Shamzai who was considered god father of the Taliban, Al Qaeda and the Pakistani jihadi organisations. Later Col Wali moved to the Pak

High Commission in London. And it was during his tenure there that the LeT set up its secret cells in UK to recruit volunteers for Jihadi terrorist operations from amongst the Muslim community there. This ultimately led to the ban of LeT in UK.

Raman had written that while in Pakistan, Col. Wali used to attend regularly the annual conventions of the LeT and assisted terrorists in Punjab and J&K. "The training of the terrorists from Mumbai, responsible for the train blasts in March 1993, was allegedly organised by Col Wali on behalf of the ISI in association with Dawood Ibrahim, the leader of the criminal mafia and now a designated as an international terrorist because of his linkages with Al Qaeda and the LeT.

So it would be reasonable to conclude that there could be a Pakistan intelligence link based in Colombo to the Chennai train blasts. Whether the Indian Mujahideen or any other module of Pakistan intelligence was involved in it or not is not clear. Perhaps we will get to know it in due course.

(Col. R Hariharan, a retired Military Intelligence specialist on South Asia, served as the head of intelligence of the Indian Peace Keeping Force in Sri Lanka 1987-90. He is associated with the South Asia Analysis Group and the Chennai Centre for China Studies.)

Sri Lanka condemns Chennai train bomb attack



The Government of Sri Lanka has strongly condemned the twin blasts that took place at the Chennai Central Railway Station on 1st May 2014, on a train that had arrived from Bengaluru.

A Statement in the government news portal news.lk said, "The people of Sri Lanka share the pain and anguish of the

Indian people over this wanton act of violence targeting innocent civilians.

The Government and the people of Sri Lanka offer their deep condolences to the Government and the people of India, particularly the bereaved family, and wish a speedy recovery for those who have been injured in this cowardly attack."

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A round the World

Global Outsourcing and Technology services Company Aegis opens new facility in Sri Lanka

Aegis Limited, a global outsourcing and technology services company, on April 29th officially inaugurated its newest center in the heart of Colombo, Sri Lanka. This experience center was inaugurated by Dr. Lakshman Jayaweera, Chairman & Director General, Board of Investment of Sri Lanka in the presence of Aegis senior management and officials.

Aegis Sri Lanka will be a modern and world-class facility, replete with state-of-the-art technology, customer experience tools and global quality best practices for providing multi-channel Customer Lifecycle Management solutions. The center will have an initial capacity of 600 seats, which translates into 1000 direct white collared jobs and is expected to additionally generate two to three times indirect employment.

Sandip Sen, Global CEO, Aegis Limited said "Aegis has been a pioneer in identifying its global delivery footprint, and that led us to expand our presence in Sri Lanka. Aegis Sri Lanka reinforces the strategy of providing our customers the opportunity to tap a skilled talent market that is more aligned to their end user experience and life time value".

Aegis' new 5 storied facility will provide a holistic Business Process Management and technology solution to the domestic Sri Lankan market across Tele-

com, BFSI, Retail, Consumer, Hospitality and technology. Depending upon the business requirements, it would also cater to the off shore markets for the high end back office process management.

The company entered Sri Lanka in 2009 with acquisition of 80% shares of Ismart - Timex Pvt Ltd, which over the years has grown to over 350 professionals serving leading enterprises across Sri Lanka. This expansion marks Sri Lanka as a favorable market for ITES / BPM services. Aegis is playing a pioneer role in driving this growth by investing in talented youth of Colombo.

Sudhir Agarwal, President Global M&A and Strategic Initiatives said "Aegis has been steadily expanding its footprint in the Indian BPM market and the launch of this facility in Sri Lanka strengthens our footprint in South Asia. The stability of economy, strong economic growth, government support and skilled labor force will enable Sri Lanka to carve out a niche in the global outsourcing landscape"

Aegis currently employs over 350 BPM professionals in Sri Lanka. The company has plans of setting up more centers in Tier II and III towns of Northern and Southern Sri Lanka and is currently in discussion with several state government and local bodies. (via aegisglobal.com)

Pope Expresses Concern, Calls for Reconciliation in Sri Lanka

Pope Francis has expressed concern over growing ethnic tensions in Sri Lanka and encouraged bishops from the country to promote reconciliation and human rights to address the issue.

The Pope said much work needs to be done to achieve peace and harmony among people divided by ethnicity.

The Pope conveyed the message on May 3 to a delegation of bishops led by Cardinal Malcolm Ranjith as part of their ad Limina Apostolorum visit to Vatican to brief the pontiff about the state of the dioceses, local Catholic Church said.

Much work needs to be done to "promote reconciliation, to respect the human rights of all the people and to overcome the ethnic tensions that remain," the ColomboPage quoted him as saying.

The "rise of religious extremists who, in promoting a false sense of national unity based on a single religious identity, have created tensions through various acts of intimidation and violence," he

noted.

Father Benedict Joseph, the local Catholic Church spokesman, said that the Pope took note of the reconciliation efforts being undertaken after more than 25 years of the civil war, which experts and rights groups claim killed 40,000 Tamil civilians.

The pope expressed concern over the rise of inter-religious tensions in the region, he said.

Sri Lanka has seen isolated acts of inter religious violence with Muslims coming under harassment by extremist Buddhist nationalist groups.

Recently, the activists of Buddhist nationalist groups like the Bodu Bala Sena stormed the offices of a senior Muslim minister.

President Mahinda Rajapaksa last month (April 2014) ordered setting up of a special police unit to maintain religious harmony in the country. - PTI

Sri Lanka Muslim MPs ask President Mahinda Rajapaksa to protect community from hate crimes

A group of Sri Lankan Muslim legislators has asked President Mahinda Rajapaksa to act decisively to protect the minority community from a hate campaign carried out by some "Buddhist extremist elements".

The Muslim Council of Sri Lanka, an umbrella organisation of Muslim groups, said 16 out of the 18 Muslim lawmakers in a letter asked the President to act on the hate campaign against the community.

The Muslim MPs who have signed the letter also include some senior ministers who want Rajapaksa to end the hate campaign carried out against Muslims by the Buddhist nationalist groups like the Bodu Bala Sena (BBS), Sihala Ravaya and the Ravana Balaya.

"Muslim parliamentarians wish to bring to your excellency's kind attention the continued hate campaign, intimidation and threats to Muslims, carried out by some Buddhist extremist elements," the MPs said in the letter.

The letter stated that the Buddhist extremist groups have been targeting Muslim places of worship, Halal food, Muslim attire and the resettlement of

Muslims expelled from the north by the LTTE in 1990.

In the absence of any substantial support for their resettlement, the Muslim religious, political and civil society leadership has been soliciting support for their cause from donors of Muslim countries and individuals.

There has been some positive response from some of the donors and a number of houses have been constructed with their support, the letter said.

In recent days, direct contributions towards resettlement of Muslims from overseas had raised suspicion among the majority Buddhist groups.

Also recently, the activists of the BBS stormed the offices of a senior Muslim minister.

President Rajapaksa responded by setting up of a special police unit to deal with complaints of religion-based harassment.

However, the police unit's appointment is being seen as coming too late.

The Muslims have lodged many complaints of harassment against Buddhist groups.

- PTI

New Year Visit to Elders' Home in Sri Lanka North

The Chief Minister of the Northern Provincial Council Justice C.V. Wigneswaran visited to Elders' Home and State Receiving Home in Kaithady on 11 April 2014.

Chief Minister gave gift packets to the elders in the home to mark the Tamil-Chiththirai and Sinhala New Year. He promised to assist on their needs. He also visited to State Receiving Home and provided sweet items to the children.

Secretary to the Chief Minister S. Thiruvakaran, Director - Department of Social Services Mrs.N. Inparaj and Commissioner - Department of Probation & Childcare Services T. Viswaruban also accompanied in this visit.





Search Ends After Afghan Landslide Kills Hundreds

Hundreds of Afghan volunteers armed with shovels joined rescue teams in northern Afghanistan Saturday, May 3rd in a mostly futile attempt to locate survivors of a massive landslide that buried hundreds of villagers under tons of rock and mud.

By nightfall, however, authorities in the remote Badakhshan province village of Aab Bareek had recovered only two bodies and said they had given up hope of finding survivors. Rescuers also voiced fears of further landslides, after days of torrential rains in the area bordering Tajikistan, China and Pakistan.

Officials say at least 300 homes have disappeared and that the death toll could rise to as high as 500. Provincial Governor Shah Waliullah Adeb told reporters at the scene the houses were under meters of mud.

"We will offer prayers for the victims and make the area a mass grave," he said.

President Hamid Karzai announced a national day of mourning.

By late Saturday, May 3rd the focus of the disaster had shifted to food, water and other needs of the thousands of people displaced or evacuated from the disaster scene.

Authorities also sought to clarify early statements on the death toll, which some locals and aid agencies had placed as high as 2,700. A presidential spokesman and United Nations officials at the scene placed preliminary figures at 250-350 confirmed dead.

U.S. President Barack Obama and United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon offered formal condolences and promises of help.

– VOA News

Nigeria: Campaign of violence and abductions against civilians must end – Amnesty International

The deadly car bombing in a suburb of the Nigerian capital Abuja on May 1 displays a callous disregard for human life and highlights the urgency of bringing an end to the campaign of violence against civilians being waged by Islamist armed groups in Nigeria, Amnesty International said.

No group has yet claimed responsibility for this attack, which killed 19 people and injured more than 60 in the Abuja suburb of Nyanya. It comes less than three weeks after the armed group Boko Haram killed more than 70 people in a similar attack on the same area.

"Besides showing a callous disregard for human life, violent attacks targeting civilians, like the one carried out in Nyanya on May 1 are unlawful and must end immediately," said Susanna Flood, Director of Media at Amnesty International.

"Boko Haram and other armed groups must renounce their unlawful and counterproductive campaign of violence against civilians. The Nigerian authorities, for their part, must do more to protect civilians and bring the perpetrators of all such attacks to justice – but it is crucial that they do so without carrying out further human rights violations."

More than 1,500 people were killed in the first three months of 2014 amid fighting between Nigerian security forces and Islamist armed groups, which are based mainly in the north-east of the country but occasionally launch attacks in the capital and elsewhere. May 1st attack comes just days before the World Eco-



Amnesty is carrying out a global campaign "Bring back our Girls" to create urgent attention and awareness to the situation

nomic Forum on Africa opens in Abuja on 7 May.

The latest attack also comes as many Nigerians are demanding the release of more than 200 schoolgirls abducted in an overnight raid by an armed group in Chibok, north-eastern Nigeria, on 15 April.

Islamist groups including Boko Haram – whose name translates as a call to ban "Western" education – have carried out similar abductions on a smaller scale in the past.

On April 30th hundreds of people – including mothers of the abducted schoolgirls – marched to the National Assembly in Abuja to hand over a letter demanding more action from the Nigerian authorities to secure the girls' release.

"Amnesty International stands in solidarity with Nigerians calling for the

Apple's Sales Boom in Communist Vietnam



A fruit vendor walks past an Apple store in Hanoi, Vietnam, April 24, 2014
–pic by Reuters via VOA News

Communist Vietnam is suddenly Apple Inc.'s hottest market after its sales growth tripled in the first three months of the year, a rate five times faster than in India where it is spending heavily in a battle for market share.

Vietnam has barely received a mention from Apple executives in their regular briefings for financial analysts. But in a quarterly conference call on Wednesday, they were talking up the potential of the country.

Quarterly iPhone sales more than doubled and the strong growth appears likely to continue given Vietnam's predominantly young, tech-savvy population, rapid growth in internet and mobile phone use and a projected doubling of the middle class by 2020.

Vietnamese tech firms are fast cropping up, churning out apps such as Flappy Bird, which rose from obscurity to become one of the world's most downloaded mobile games.

Young Vietnamese thronging stores to buy iPhones worth up to half of their country's 2012 gross per-capita income say it's worth it.

"This cost more than two months' worth of my salary," said officer worker Pham My Linh, 23, moments after agreeing a payment plan for an iPhone 5. "But I need it, to feel more confident when hanging out with friends and colleagues."

The surge in demand comes against a backdrop of sluggish economic growth exacerbated by high levels of bad loans and business closures.

The economy grew 5.4 percent last year, a rate economists see as underwhelming given Vietnam's fast population growth and its retail and manufacturing potential.

But Vietnamese smartphone sellers

say a hunger for higher social status is driving Apple's sales, helped by price cuts and payment plans that make it easier to digest handset prices that exceed the monthly income of most urbanites.

The growing thirst for slick technology is not just benefiting Apple, but most firms offering tablets and smartphones, among them HTC and Samsung. Slower growth for standard mobile phones shows local appetite for upgrades to trendier handsets, industry experts say.

"I've seen no signs of an economic recession in this shop," said the manager of a Hanoi branch of FPT, Vietnam's biggest listed tech company. "People buy \$1,000 items with ease and a family buying three iPads isn't uncommon."

According to data released in January by market research firm GfK, smartphones accounted for 77 percent of mobile sales in Vietnam last year and the number of units sold grew nearly 135 percent from a year earlier. Tablet sales soared 250 percent in 2013 as prices fell by close to 27 percent.

Many companies are looking closely at Vietnam, where 15 million people live in two main cities, only 30 million use the internet among a 90 million population and two thirds are under 30 years of age.

Apple isn't the only beneficiary of its own brand appeal.

Fake iPhones with a near-flawless appearance are on sale for just 2 million dong (\$95).

"There are a lot of people out there who can't afford an iPhone but still want to look rich, which is why shops like mine can do well," said shop owner Nguyen Duc Hai, 33.

"Why pay 10 times more for a real iPhone just to build a luxury image and show off?" (Reuters via VOAnews)

immediate and unconditional release of the schoolgirls from Chibok and an end to the armed groups' abductions of civilians," said Susanna Flood.

"Armed groups carrying out such abductions should know that these are

serious violations of international humanitarian and human rights law, and Amnesty International will keep urging the Nigerian authorities to ensure those responsible are brought to justice in fair trials." (via Amnesty.org)



A round the World

Spotlight on Safety One Year After Bangladesh Building Collapse

By Anjana Pasricha

Nearly one year after a deadly building collapse in Bangladesh killed more than 1100 garment workers, efforts have begun to improve safety in the world's second largest supplier of clothing. Many of the victim's families still are waiting for adequate compensation, however, while hundreds of survivors are unemployed and coping with the trauma of that tragic day.

For the last 15 years, the owner of Bangladesh's Softex Sweater plant, Rezwan Selim, had been manufacturing clothes in a rented building in Bangladesh's capital. But in early March, his booming business screeched to a grinding halt when international inspectors told him to stop work because the factory was not structurally safe.

"I had no option but to evacuate. That is what I have done. The building needs to be retrofitted, and the retrofitting -- who is going to do it, who is going to pay for it? All these issues are being discussed," said Selim.

The closure is a result of the Accord on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh, an initiative launched by 150 mostly European retailers after hundreds of workers were crushed to death or injured when the eight-story Rana Plaza building collapsed a year ago. Although the factory on Dhaka's outskirts had developed cracks, workers were told to continue sewing clothes. It was the garment industry's worst-ever disaster.

The pile of rubble which still sits at the Rana Plaza site turned the global spotlight on the poorly-built, unsafe workshops that churn out apparel sold by global retailers in Europe and the Americas. The collapse put pressure on multinational retailers to ensure that the garment factories producing their labels are safe.

The tragedy has prompted key first steps to ensuring the protection of garment workers. The accord has resulted in the inspection of about 300 of 1500 buildings it plans to survey by September. Eight, including Selim's factory, have been completely or partly closed in an effort to avert another Rana Plaza type of disaster.

The accord is not alone in its safety inspections, reviewing structural, electrical and fire safety systems. Another group of more than 20 American and Canadian retailers is leading a similar effort and has ordered one factory to close. The two initiatives have created confusion, but observers say the efforts are headed in the right direction.

The executive director of the accord, Rob Wayss, sees the recent factory closures as an indication that change is taking place. But he admits that with much at stake for garment manufacturers, there is a measure of resistance.

"I think in some ways, though, it is unfortunate, the requirement that sus-



Fatema holds a picture of her son Nurul Karim as she poses for a photograph in front of her house in Savar, April 21, 2014. Fatema lost her son and her daughter Arifa, who were working at the Rana Plaza when it collapsed on April 24, 2013-Pic-Reuters/via VOA News

pension of production and evacuation of factory buildings is another indicator that progress is being made," said Wayss. "There is a price tag on the fixes, and so there has been a little bit of anxiety and a little bit of effort to try to push it back or slow it down."

Garment industry owners have expressed concerns about the expense of renovating buildings, saying the efforts could hurt Bangladesh's competitive edge and take business away to other Asian manufacturers. They want retailers to share some of the costs.

Activists point out that fears of global retailers reducing their footprint in Bangladesh in the wake of the disaster

have not come to pass, and business has boomed in the past year. They are calling on garment factory owners to do more to improve the industry.

Among them is Kalpona Akter, who heads the Bangladesh Center for Worker Solidarity.

"These days they are shouting that we don't have money and the accord is closing down our factory or the alliance is closing down our factory," said Akter. "They should not shout that they don't have anything and they cannot make changes. They should do their own inspections and shift all those unsafe factories to safe buildings."

The global spotlight since the Rana

tragedy also has put pressure on government to improve working conditions for garment workers. The monthly minimum wage has been raised from \$36 to \$68. Additionally, a law has been passed that allows workers to form labor unions.

Many feel that amid the focus on safety, though, the plight of those who were working on that fateful day in Rana Plaza has been overlooked.

For hundreds of them the nightmare continues.

ActionAid Bangladesh has surveyed more than 2,200 family members of victims and survivors. The group's deputy director, Aamanur Rahman, said many of them have not found alternate employment. The few hundred dollars they got as compensation from the government or welfare organizations has long been spent, and they need money for food and to pay off outstanding house rent and loans.

Rahman said many survivors are still coping with physical injuries or mental trauma suffered on that fateful day.

"Many of them still say they have a kind of phobia to work in a closed environment. Some of them are still suffering from insomnia," said Rahman. "Some of them are sometimes shocked by loud shouts. This kind of trauma still makes them panic [and prevents them] to return to their regular lives."

The question is whether the Rana Plaza disaster will become a turning point and ensure that the nearly 4 million workers in the industry never have to suffer a similar fate -- or will it be business as usual? — VOA News

SRI LANKA

Northern Development Foundation to regenerate society in the Northern Peninsula

By Siva Sivapragasam

A foundation to achieve post war regeneration of society in the Northern region of Sri Lanka has been established by a team of professional persons.

The vision of the Foundation is to achieve a flourishing post-war society in the North which will lead to social, cultural and economic revival with sustainable growth and prosperity. The Foundation will formulate a strategically designed programme for the revival and renewal of the war affected community in the Northern Province, particularly the Vanni region.

Among the issues identified by the Foundation are : poverty alleviation, health, nutrition, housing, education, vocational education, war disabled, war widows and their families, orphans and youth, environmental renewal and protection, livelihood support etc. The Foundation considers that these matters need urgent attention.



L to R: Chandra Jayaratne, K. Kanag-Isvaran, Kandiah Neelakandan

The first founders of the Foundation are Attorney-At-Law Kandiah Neelakandan, President's Counsel K. Kanag-Isvaran and Mr. Chandra Jayaratne,

The revival of the arts and Culture of the region is also considered as essential for social renewal and personal development. It is considered that support in this sphere is invaluable in invigorating the cultural pride of the Northern community. Sports is also acknowledged as important to overcome the psycho so-

cial trauma and promote among youth a spirit of competition and ambition to succeed.

The Foundation will also tackle the question of the re-emergence of class discrimination which has been aggravated due to the economic deprivation and social conditions.

The Foundation also expects the wholehearted support of the expatriate Sri Lankan communities in different countries to achieve their goals earmarked in the vision of the Foundation.



Health Benefits and Changes to the South Asian Diet



By: Jeavana Sritharan,
BHSc, MHSc,
PhD Student

As South Asians, we are accustomed to particular tastes, styles, and routines. These patterns have considerably remained the same throughout generations and have been successfully passed down-generation after generation. The South Asian cuisine has changed even less, as we strive to achieve the same style and taste of cuisine that dates back many years.

Many of us will continue to follow particular traditions, styles of cooking, or routines making it even more important to understand the health benefits of what we do and how we can improve these choices for ourselves and the future. We may think we are very different from our parents or past generations but over time similarities appear and we fall into the



same routines as our parents once did. Two main products that are considered the norm across most South Asians is the consumption of tea and curry powder or use of turmeric powder.

The benefits of tea

For many years, tea has and continues to be a key element in the East symbolizing happiness, health, and community. Tea is actually beneficial for reducing the risk for health conditions like diabetes or heart disease. It is definitely a better alternative to drinking other drinks like coffee because of the reduced levels of caffeine and the benefits of flavonoid compounds.

Green tea – antioxidants in green tea help to prevent growth of different forms of cancer, prevent artery clogging, helps to burn fat, and reduces the risk of neurological disorders. It contains a nutrient known as EGCG that helps to make the body feel satiated and is an effective can-

cer fighter.

White tea – this is less processed than other teas and so antioxidants it contains help to prevent fat cells from forming and slows down the aging process.

Black tea – this tea is full of polyphenols which prevent plaque buildup in teeth and reduce bad breath or oral bacterial growth. It can also help to prevent belly fat and it can slow down the onset of diabetes.

Oolong tea – this type of tea boosts metabolism and helps burn fat. As it contains the antioxidant, catechin and contains caffeine, this tea can raise your metabolism for up to two hours after consumption.

Ginger tea – ginger is a known anti-inflammatory product and is quick to work so this is very useful for pain reduction, especially for those who suffer from chronic headaches.

Nettle tea – contains antihistamine properties that can be effective for allergies, particularly seasonal allergies. It can help prevent allergy attacks and relieve symptoms that accompany aller-

gies. This type of tea needs to be brewed for at least 15-20 minutes.

Avoid overloading your tea with cream, milk, and sugar which can outweigh the benefits.

The magic of turmeric powder

The use of turmeric powder in South Asia dates far back in history as it was and continues to be used for flavouring foods, cosmetic purposes, and medicinal purposes. It is generally the main ingredient in most curry spices containing zero cholesterol and adequate vitamin B6, magnesium, iron, and fiber. Its main ingredient, curcumin, accounts for a majority of the health benefits as this ingredient contains anti-oxidant properties and boosts the body's immune system. It is significantly stronger than vitamin E and C in boosting the immune system. Curcumin also helps to stop or slow down the development of diseases like cancer and heart disease by down-regulating certain



inflammatory factors in the body. Studies have also shown that curcumin can reduce liver damage and might be useful for treatment in liver diseases. To reduce your risk of major diseases, it is important to reduce inflammation in the body. Inflammation is highly associated with multiple diseases including the development of obesity and diabetes. Turmeric can suppress the activity of specific cells like macrophages which are immune cells in fat tissues responsible for inflammation around the body.

It is clear that there are many health benefits of turmeric powder and it will always be used around the world. Turmeric is viewed as safe and effective but overconsumption is not recommended. Individuals may be sensitive to turmeric powder and this may cause increased stomach discomfort, especially in those who already experience chronic stomach problems or gall bladder problems. It is also to be used with caution if pregnant.

How much is too much?

As with any other food or drink, the rule of thumb is to consume in moderation. Even when products have outweighing health benefits, it is always better to consume these products in moderation so that you are actually gaining the benefits. Just by sprinkling powders or adding a teaspoon of the powder into your cooking can help provide the health benefits without overdoing it.

Over time, the South Asian cuisine has only slightly changed in terms of healthier alternatives but making small changes to how the food is made and changing consumption levels can allow you to enjoy all the different South Asian foods while moderating your intake.

The arrays of food choices we have are quite unique and by making healthier versions of these food choices, we are allowing for continued health promotion and education in the South Asian community.

What can we change?

As we know, diabetes, cholesterol, and heart disease are major concerns in the community, we need to cling on to small changes at a time in diet and lifestyle

choices in order for there to be a large impact in the coming years. The following are changes in diet that can improve your health:

Switch from using white rice to using brown or wild rice

Use 100% whole grain wheat flour when making specific foods like roti

Substitute fruits and vegetables for snacks instead of deep fried items like samosas or pakoras

Avoid dairy rich foods that contain high fat or make them with cheese and milk that contain less fat (such as skim or 1% milk, reduced-fat cheese)

Use less coconut milk because it is high in fat

Choose lean meat products and cut off the fat and skin before cooking (opt for steaming, baking, roasting, or barbecuing options)

When using butter, margarine, or oil, use alternatives less in fat (such as extra virgin olive oil)

These alternatives may seem overwhelming but with time these small changes will become habit and easy to increase and implement. Some South Asian restaurants are already beginning to make small changes to reduce oil and fat and increase use of whole wheat alternatives. These small changes may go unnoticed because they do not compromise the expected taste. It is just as important for restaurants to promote their healthy alternatives to encourage consumers to switch to these alternatives. If we, as individuals and families, are on board to make changes, then this can create a domino effect throughout the community. Ultimately, our goal is to reduce the outstanding health concerns that branch from our current consumption and lifestyle habits.

Jeavana Sritharan is a PhD Student in Medical Science at the University of Toronto. She is currently working with Cancer Care Ontario with the Occupational Cancer Research Centre and is the Co-Founder of the webpage, Health Perspectives. Contact email: info@healthperspectives.ca



Integration planning continues between RVHS and TSH

Rouge Valley Health System (RVHS) and The Scarborough Hospital (TSH) are proceeding with a joint integration plan for select services, building on their extensive work from the facilitated integration process of the last year.

“Both TSH and RVHS remain committed to integration of services. We will focus opportunities that align with the Central East Local Health Integration Network (Central East LHIN) priorities as identified in the 2009 Hospitals Clinical Services Plan and 2013 Integrated Health Services Plan,” said Rik Gander-ton, RVHS President and CEO.

“As part of the facilitated integration process undertaken over the past year, the hospital teams identified a number of opportunities to improve and better coordinate patient services for our community,” said Robert Biron, TSH President and CEO. “Those opportunities will be further explored and the hospitals will continue to actively engage our staff, physicians, and community throughout this process.”

Although RVHS and TSH are not proceeding with a merger at this time, the two hospitals have been working together to prepare a joint plan for moving ahead with integration strategies as directed by the Central East LHIN at their Board meeting on March 26. The integration opportunities presented in the joint plan leverage the collaborative workbook de-



velopment process that was completed last year and build on ongoing regional planning activities that are already underway.

The hospitals' joint public website, www.leadingforpatients.ca, will continue to be used as a means to keep stakeholders informed and engaged throughout the process.

The integration opportunities, identified by the two hospitals, fall into four categories:

- Planning for maternal, neonatal and paediatric services, which addresses the Central East LHIN Board directive;
- Opportunities identified in the 2013 integration workbooks, which were prepared as part of the facilitated integration process;
- New integrations to advance health system transformation in Scarborough; and
- Regional planning opportunities that build on existing initiatives.

Planning and implementation will occur later this year and into 2015. Progress reports by the hospitals will continue to be made at the public meetings of the Central East LHIN Board of Directors.

Rouge Valley welcomes surgeon and midwife

A surgeon piloting new procedures at Rouge Valley Health System (RVHS) and a multilingual midwife focused on helping families create positive birthing experiences have recently joined the hospital's team of care providers.

“As the diverse communities of Scarborough and west Durham continue to grow, so do the needs of our patients,” explains Dr. Naresh Mohan, chief of staff, RVHS. “The growth of our team means that Rouge Valley will have even more of our leading professionals available to provide the high caliber of care that our patients have grown to expect from us.”

New urologist helps expand Rouge Valley urology program

Urologist Dr. Zachary Klinghoffer has joined the hospital's urology program, which includes five urologists and two urogynecologists practicing at both hospital campuses in Scarborough and in Ajax. In his short time with the hospital, he has already provided a number of firsts for Rouge Valley. He has performed the hospital's first laparoscopic prostatectomy, a minimally invasive treatment for prostate cancer, and the first laparoscopic partial nephrectomy, a minimally invasive treatment for kidney cancer, which saves the healthy portion of a patient's kidney.

“It is exciting to be able to provide new treatment options to the patients in our community,” explains Dr. Klinghoffer. “Seeing patients able to return home

to their families sooner and recover from surgery in days rather than weeks is very rewarding.”

Dr. Klinghoffer earned a bachelor of science degree at the University of Toronto, and earned his medical degree at Queen's University. He completed his urology training at McMaster University, where he gained experience in all areas of urology, with a focus on advanced laparoscopic surgery.

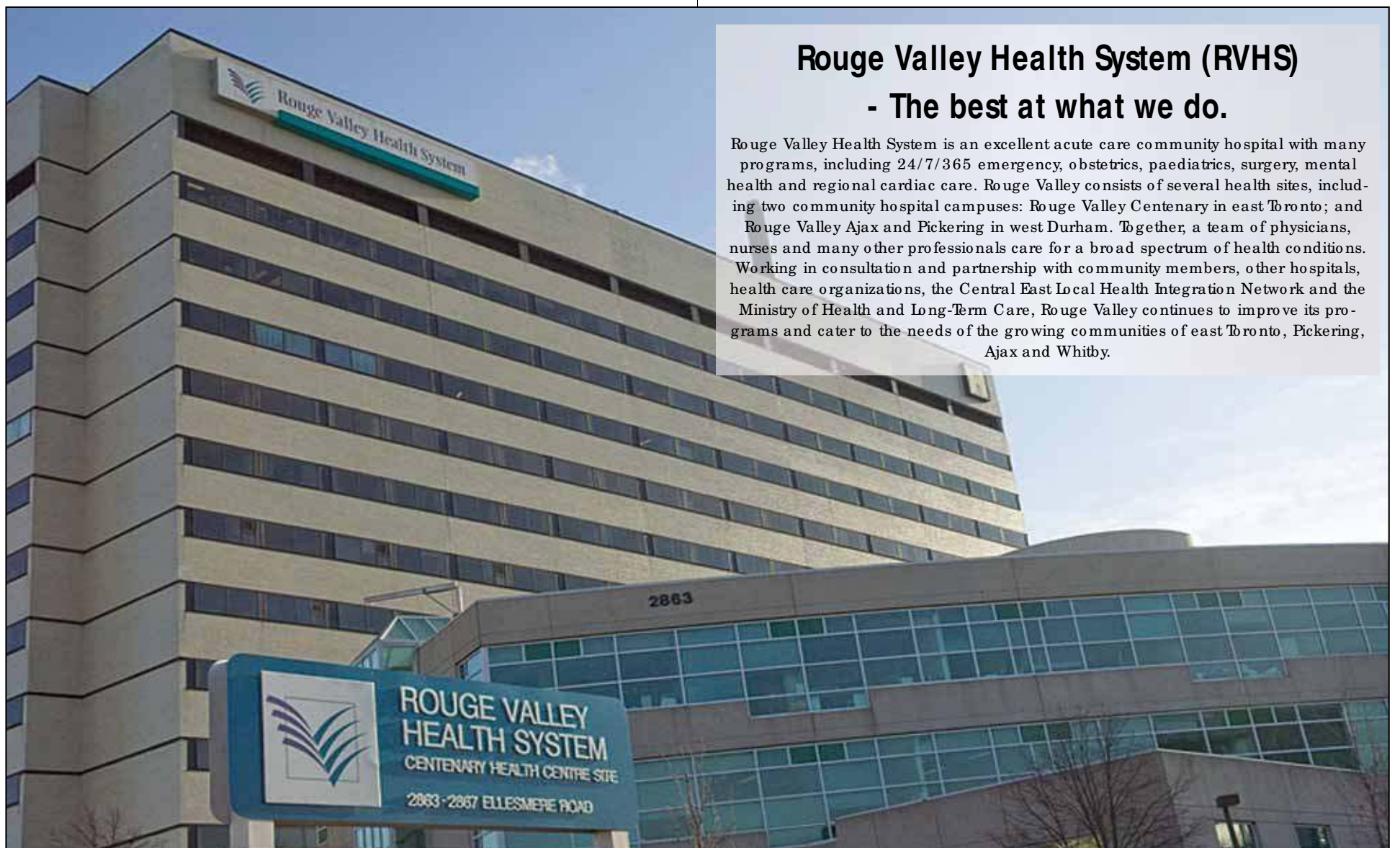
New midwife brings unique international experience

Rouge Valley has also welcomed a midwife to its team of health care professionals.

Originally from Iran, midwife Katrin Hassanzadeh completed her training at the Tabriz University of Medical Science. She has almost 10 years of experience as a midwife, including working in Iran for eight years and training students at Mahabad Azad University. She is part of the Sages Femmes Rouge Valley Midwives, serving women and families in Scarborough, Pickering, Ajax, and Whitby.

“I first became interested in midwifery when I was in high school where I developed an interest in women's biology,” says Hassanzadeh. “I believe that this is my calling, and I truly enjoy it. One unique aspect about midwifery is that you have the privilege of being a part of the birthing process.”

She speaks several languages: English; Turkish; Farsi; and Azerbaijani.



Rouge Valley Health System (RVHS) - The best at what we do.

Rouge Valley Health System is an excellent acute care community hospital with many programs, including 24/7/365 emergency, obstetrics, paediatrics, surgery, mental health and regional cardiac care. Rouge Valley consists of several health sites, including two community hospital campuses: Rouge Valley Centenary in east Toronto; and Rouge Valley Ajax and Pickering in west Durham. Together, a team of physicians, nurses and many other professionals care for a broad spectrum of health conditions. Working in consultation and partnership with community members, other hospitals, health care organizations, the Central East Local Health Integration Network and the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, Rouge Valley continues to improve its programs and cater to the needs of the growing communities of east Toronto, Pickering, Ajax and Whitby.



New program prepares patients for shoulder surgery

A new prehabilitation program at Rouge Valley Health System (RVHS) is improving outcomes for shoulder surgery patients by strengthening them before their procedures.

The shoulder prehabilitation program, or “prehab” as it is nicknamed, is a one-hour education session for patients preparing to have shoulder surgery at the Rouge Valley Ajax and Pickering (RVAP) hospital campus. It was introduced in March for the patients of Rouge Valley shoulder specialists Dr. Stephen Gallay and Dr. Joel Lobo. The class, led by a nurse and physiotherapist, teaches patients what to expect before, during, and after their shoulder surgery. Various topics are covered during the education sessions including: how to properly apply a shoulder sling; which exercises they can do immediately after shoulder surgery; and how to do each exercise.

By helping patients to become better prepared for their surgery, and providing physiotherapy support prior to surgery, the shoulder prehab is expected to improve the patient’s recovery. In addition, it helps bridge any delay, which might occur between the day of surgery and the start of formal physiotherapy. So far, 20 patients have already gone through the program with positive results.

“Our shoulder prehab program has helped to alleviate patient anxiety, from the time they enter the operating room, to the time they see a physiotherapist,” explains Amber Curry, surgical manager, RVAP. “Due to the nature of shoulder surgeries, many patients have to be extremely cautious after their procedure. With this program, they can become more educated on how to care for their shoulder, which can result in a safer, better and quicker recovery.”

RVHS already has a very successful prehab program for hip and knee replacement patients, which includes an education and pre-conditioning component. It helps patients become better educated about what to expect out of their hip or knee replacement surgery, and gets them in better physical condition before the procedure.

The focus of prehab is on educating patients about how to best care for their shoulder after surgery, and to encourage a safe and quicker recovery.

Patient finds program “very helpful”

The majority of shoulder surgery patients have a problem with their rotator cuff. These patients typically live very active lives. Learning how to care for their shoulder after surgery greatly improves their recovery.



David Leithead, 64, of Pickering, had surgery on his right shoulder to relieve intense pain he had for 18 months. The pain was preventing him from playing baseball and pickle-ball (a combination of badminton, tennis, and Ping-Pong). “I tried to play baseball, but I couldn’t throw overhand because the pain was so bad,” he explains.

After a cortisone injection didn’t relieve David’s pain, he was referred to Dr. Gallay, who diagnosed him with rotator cuff impingement syndrome. David was promptly scheduled for outpatient arthroscopic subacromial decompression surgery. The surgery was performed

successfully in April at RVAP, only four weeks after his initial consultation with the surgeon.

David was fortunate to be in one of the first groups of patients to move through the shoulder prehab program. “I found that prehab was very helpful for me. It helped to prepare me for the surgery. The booklet and education session showed me what exercises to do, so that I could get started right away.”

David, who is now doing physiotherapy, has also started doing exercises he learned in prehab at home every day for 20 minutes.

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Living Our Values

Providence Healthcare's Values – Social Justice, Compassionate Service, Sanctity of Life, Human Dignity, Community, Social Responsibility.

Earlier this year, Providence Healthcare held its 'Living Our Values' Awards, a recognition program for staff, volunteers and physicians who have made outstanding contributions by living out Providence's Values in their day-to-day work with patients, residents, clients, community partners, families, visitors and each other. Staff nominate each other and a staff panel selects the recipients based on the examples submitted with the nominations. In this edition, we highlight the first of three recipients of this year's awards.

More than a Florence Nightingale

"With physical brawn, a sharp mind, soft heart, quick wit and tough love, Parvin Hemati is the best rehab nurse a patient can have," say Parvin's colleagues. "And well-deserving of a 'Living Our Values' Award for the value of 'Compassionate Service'."

Parvin is a registered nurse in Providence Hospital's Orthopaedic and Amputee Rehabilitation program for patients who are recovering from a fracture as well as those recovering from hip and knee replacement. During her shifts, she uses every opportunity to promote her patients' recovery and independence, explaining to them the importance of self-care and taking active responsibility in their recovery.

She encourages them to take that extra step and walk that extra metre.

For patients on Parvin's floor, the things most people take for granted, like eating and walking, are the precious abilities they long to regain. Without a second thought, Parvin will forego her own breaks to sit with a patient and feed him or her to ensure they're eating and building up strength.

An example given in her nomination was about a patient with dementia who was unable to feed himself, so Parvin would sit with him, encouraging and entertaining him while feeding him his meal.

On weekends when patients don't have physiotherapy, Parvin appreciates the impact this has on their functioning and progress, and finds time to get them out of bed for a walk around the unit. For patients who are not able to walk about, she ensures they are out of bed, dressed and sitting in a chair.

It's not uncommon to hear Parvin clapping down the hallway, "Let's go, go,

go!" cheering on a patient during therapy – even patients not assigned to her care benefit from her singing and dancing.

Parvin's compassion is not only seen by her patients, but is also demonstrated in her interactions with colleagues.

Colleagues explain that every day she's here, she shows an act of kindness. Whether it's forgoing a break so a patient is ready for her occupational therapy and physiotherapy colleagues or being the first person to tell her team about a treat given by a patient upon discharge, she's selfless, hardworking and truly cares for the well-being of others.

While Parvin chose her profession well, she's more than a Florence Nightingale.

Her dedication to others and compassionate care extend beyond her patients.

She goes the extra mile for everyone. For her patients, that 'extra' could be a soothing rub with lotion to ensure their skin isn't dry. For her colleagues, it could

be sharing a piece of chocolate – even if it means dividing one square into 10 pieces.

Known as 'Mama Parvin', she's seen as a true believer and strong advocate of Providence Healthcare's 24/7 rehabilitation philosophy, taking every opportunity to promote patients' recovery and independence.

A smile, a laugh, even a belly dance, Parvin always has something to share with those around her.

"She uses her charms to uplift and motivate patients and fun and creative measures to boost morale," say colleagues. "Knowing Parvin is scheduled has a comforting and calming effect on all of us."

While Parvin left her home country and came to Canada to make a better life for herself, it's the lives of others that she makes better.



**Registered Nurse
Parvin Hemati**

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NURSE RETIRES AFTER 41 YEARS ON THE JOB



Lucy Townsend, middle, celebrates her retirement after 41 years at The Scarborough Hospital.

As a small child in Jamaica, Lucy knew from a very young age that she wanted to be a nurse. Other opportunities cropped up along the way, but she pursued her dream, received her training and never looked back.

"When I was about nine years old there was a polio outbreak," recalls Lucy Townsend, who recently retired from her position as a registered nurse of 41 years with The Scarborough Hospital (TSH). "My cousins went to receive their nursing training to help with that outbreak, and I knew that's what I wanted too."

Throughout her early school days, Lucy's classmates pictured her as a lawyer. After high school, she worked

at a bank and was offered full support from her manager to remain in the financial sector. But Lucy's heart was in nursing; and in 1971, she immigrated to Scarborough, Canada and began her career.

"I worked in Toronto at a small hospital for a while, but I lived in Scarborough so I applied to The Scarborough Hospital," says Lucy.

The stars aligned and Lucy was hired at The Scarborough Hospital (TSH) the same day she submitted her application. Now, 41 years later Lucy has decided to retire from her position in the hospital's Medicine program.

"I worked mostly in medicine and long-term care," says Lucy. "But I'm going to miss the staff in every single area of the hospital – from the units to the kitchen staff to the porters to the telecommunications staff."

She adds that it's amazing how every department at TSH has always worked so well together to look after patients and how important that cohesiveness is to patient care.

"I want to thank everyone for their contributions in caring for our patients," says Lucy. "We are a great team and a great organization. It takes everyone as a whole to make us so great, and I'll miss my TSH family."

COMMIT TO GET FIT – PERFECT YOUR POSTURE



Greg Groves, personal trainer, leads two fitness classes at The Scarborough Hospital; Bootcamp and Perfect Your Posture.

Stand up straight, shoulders back, look forward. We've probably all heard those words at some point; maybe from our chiropractors, fitness gurus or even our moms when we were growing up. However, as health care professionals we spend a lot of our time hunched forward – whether it's helping a patient, working

at a computer, transporting patients, charting or preparing patient meals.

The Scarborough Hospital's (TSH) Fitness Centre offers a specialized class – Perfect Your Posture – with specific exercises designed to improve posture, which can result in reduced lower back pain, better circulation, increased

flexibility, and even just to help us look our best.

"This kind of workout is so important for people who work in a hospital," says Greg Groves, a TSH fitness instructor with more than 12 years of experience in training. "Every single exercise we do is designed to address issues with posture, and of course we throw in some cardio to get a full body workout."

Greg began teaching at TSH about two years ago and enjoys working with such a diverse group of professionals.

"It's a nice change working in a hospital setting," says Greg. "I started teaching Bootcamp, but started to notice some commonalities in

my students' postures. So I developed this class and am starting to see people transform."

Greg still teaches his bootcamp class every Monday and Wednesday at the hospital's Birchmount campus, and added

Perfect Your Posture to the fitness class rotation every Thursday at the General campus.

Greg began his career as a trainer years ago when there wasn't a lot of money to be made in the industry. He worked for six years before he couldn't support himself on training alone, and left his work. Following his departure from training, Greg gained a significant amount of weight, but his passion for fitness, nutrition and helping others kick-started his comeback.

"In 2007, I decided to lose the weight and I actually made a point of starting my program just before Christmas," says Greg. "I did that to show my clients that not only is it possible to get into great shape, but that there is never an excuse. If I can do it, they can do it."

Greg adds that there are four holidays people always use as excuses to either wait to start a fitness program or let their program slide – Thanksgiving, Easter, Halloween, and, of course, Christmas. Since starting his own transformation journey right before Christmas, it helps show his clients that it is possible to become healthy and fit at any time. "Today is the day," expresses Greg.

Greg has also studied nutrition and helps his clients set up meal plans, which consist of 70 to 75 per cent of any weight loss regime.

"I'm so happy I got back into it," says Greg. "I feel better and seeing my clients feel better, transform and reach their goals is amazing. I have the best job in the world!"

TSH POSTS LEADING RESULTS IN PROVINCIAL OBSTETRICAL REGISTRY

The Scarborough Hospital's (TSH) performance in Ontario's pregnancy, birth and childhood registry not only exceeds our peer hospitals, but in many cases also rates ahead of the entire province.

The Better Outcomes Registry and Network (BORN) was established in 2009 to collect, share and rigorously protect critical data about each child born in the province. It is funded by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care and administered by the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario (CHEO). The BORN database includes information from every birthing hospital and midwifery practice in Ontario.

TSH receives regular "dashboards" documenting our results over a three month period in key performance indicators, including episiotomy, induction, caesarean section and breastfeeding rates, as well as pre-natal and newborn screening. The dashboards show how TSH compares to benchmark targets, with the provincial rate and with peer hospitals in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) that provide the same level of neonatal care and have the same number of deliveries.

The Family Maternity Centres at the General and Birchmount campuses posted outstanding results in the latest

dashboards covering the period from November 1, 2013 to January 31, 2014. Some of these results included:

→ No women had to be induced for non-medical reasons before 41 weeks gestation at either the Birchmount or General campus. This was considerably lower than GTA peer hospitals, as well as the provincial rate of 18.6%.

→ The number of women with low-risk pregnancies who had a repeat caesarean section at 37 to 39 weeks gestation was just 2.4% at the General campus and 6.3% at the Birchmount campus. This was considerably lower than GTA peer hospitals, as well as the provincial rate of 35.5%.

→ Only 8.9% of women at the General campus and 7.8% of women at the Birchmount campus who delivered vaginally had an episiotomy. This is a better rate than the benchmark target of 13%.

"Our performance in these key quality metrics is a result of a concerted effort by everyone in our Maternal Newborn and Child Care program to deliver safe, evidence-based care to our patients," said Barb Scott, Patient Care Director of the Maternal Newborn and Child Care program. "By monitoring and reporting on best practices in obstetrical care, BORN is setting a high standard for all hospitals and midwives across the province," said Dr. Georgina Wilcock, Co-Medical



Director, Obstetrics.

"We are proud that the BORN results reflect the excellent care we provide to women and their babies at our hospital. Our ongoing commitment is to provide the best and safest care."

This is not the first time TSH's Maternal Newborn and Child Care program has achieved such exceptional results. For the last two years, the hospital has had the best rates in the GTA for proving women with a successful vaginal birth after caesarean section, as

measured by the Canadian Institute for Health Information's (CIHI) Canadian Hospital Reporting Project (CHRP).

"The Scarborough Hospital delivers about 5,000 babies per year, and continues to be a regional leader in Women's Health services," said Dr. Nathan Roth, Co-Medical Director, Obstetrics. "Our success reflects our collaborative care model combining patient choice with the expertise of our clinical professionals and placing a high value on an interprofessional team approach."

Frail seniors benefitting from innovative partnerships and programs at TSH

A number of innovative partnerships and programs in The Scarborough Hospital's (TSH) Specialized Geriatrics program are improving the care and coordination of support services for frail seniors in Scarborough.

"We are very excited to broaden our partnerships with Carefirst Seniors and Community Services Association, St. Paul's L'Amoreaux Centre and TransCare Community Support Services to further integrate our services to support the care of seniors in the community," said Nancy Veloso, Patient Care Director, Medicine, Geriatrics and Oncology at TSH.

"We appreciate the funding investment and support from the Central East Local Health Integration Network (Central East LHIN) to allow us to design and implement innovative service models that can best meet the needs of our community. This support has enabled us to greatly enhance the transition process from hospital to home for seniors and help them avoid future hospital readmissions."

In partnership with Carefirst, TSH launched the "Assess and Restore" program to support elderly patients in returning home again by integrating



services available at Carefirst into the patient's discharge plan before they even leave the hospital.

Patients being discharged from hospital who are identified to be at especially high-risk for hospital readmission can also be referred to the six-week "Virtual Ward" program. In the Virtual Ward, social workers from both TSH and Carefirst act as 'navigators' who reach out to discharged patients to ensure they fill prescriptions,

attend follow-up appointments with their family doctor or specialist, and receive ongoing health education.

"Our partnership with The Scarborough Hospital's Specialized Geriatrics program allows us to become an integral part of the patient's health care team and be able to truly understand their needs so services are ready the day they return home from the hospital," said Alice Mui, Program Director of the Chronic Disease Management and Prevention Program at Carefirst.

Several months ago, the Central East LHIN announced the expansion of the GAIN (Geriatric Assessment and Intervention Network) Clinic at TSH to provide outreach into the community in partnership with Carefirst and St. Paul's L'Amoreaux Centre. This is an initiative that demonstrates collaboration between hospitals and community service agencies to provide the ongoing support and care to seniors in the community that most need specialized attention.

TSH's "Wrap Around Services", a trial project initiated in collaboration with TransCare and the hospital's social work team, assists patients who need additional

services to help them return home, such as respite resources like overnight caregiver relief. "There has been great value in having an on-site Community Support Services Coordinator from TransCare be part of the Wrap Around Services project at The Scarborough Hospital," said Gurprit Matharu, Director of Integrated Care at TransCare.

"We are able to assess each client on a case-by-case basis and support them from the time they are in hospital through to their transition home and back into the community, addressing their needs over a short or long-term basis, as needed."

TSH has also expanded on pre-existing initiatives in its Specialized Geriatrics program. Additional therapy services have been invested to the Geriatric Activation Program (GAP). GAP is focused on optimizing the functional and cognitive status for patients on the hospitalist general medicine units to enable them to return home again upon discharge.

For more information on The Scarborough Hospital's programs and services for seniors, visit <http://www.tsh.to/areas-of-care/seniors/>.

IMPROVED PROCESSES AT THE SCARBOROUGH HOSPITAL LEAD TO ENHANCED PATIENT SAFETY AND COST-SAVINGS



Betlehem Getachew (left), Registered Nurse, and Frances Cappello (right), Registered Practical Nurse, use the wound resource guide and patient pamphlet to help maintain consistency and provide education when it comes to wound care management.

The Scarborough Hospital (TSH) has successfully reduced its rate of hospital-acquired pressure ulcers by more than half, which has resulted in improved care and safety, as well as a cost savings of more than \$350,000.

This success was achieved through a series of co-ordinated organizational improvements in process, systems and structures including: LEAN Rapid Improvement Events (RIE) used to redesign processes; moving patient assessment forms into an electronic documentation format; broad staff engagement through local discussions; and problem solving in unit-level improvement huddles.

"TSH looked at the pan Canada rate for facility-acquired pressure ulcers and saw the number was 11 per cent," says Nurallah Rahim, Patient Care Director, Surgical Services, Orthopaedics and Rehabilitation at TSH. "Together, the

team decided to set our target below the 7.4 per cent benchmark, and we are happy to report that following the RIE, our rate is now 2.94 per cent."

The need to address pressure ulcer prevention stemmed from a best practice standard at TSH around ulcer prevention and skin assessment, which has not always been consistent.

"We want to ensure our patients receive the highest quality of care," says Jackie Baptiste-Savoie, Clinical Nurse Specialist at TSH. "To do that, we must have a consistent process in place and support our staff by providing access to education and tools."

Jackie adds that it's also important to consistently report whether or not patients arrive at the hospital with pressure ulcers, so for benchmarking purposes TSH can accurately track the actual number of pressure ulcers that were acquired onsite.

"RIEs are meant to encourage staff to challenge the status quo and identify inefficiencies in routine practices. I am really impressed with the focus the team had and their willingness to challenge themselves even if meant stepping out of their comfort zones," says Alfred Ng, Director, Innovation and Performance Improvement Office at TSH. "It's a great example of what these events are meant to do."

The RIE process aims at affecting positive change by adding value to the patient experience and increasing patient satisfaction, and TSH has achieved significant success in many areas throughout the hospital since implementing performance improvement initiatives. The hospital is committed to expanding these initiatives, which will build on current success, as well as develop best practices to enhance care for continued excellence in the future.



Special Feature

Good Friday - Last Words of the Greatest Man who ever Lived

by JJ Atputharajah

In the hurry and flurry of modern world people have adopted new lifestyles, which make them forget about the consciousness of sin. The excuse they give is ignorance. Identification of sin or awareness of right and wrong is essential to a life of peace and orderliness. These are indispensable for peaceful co-existence in this world.

These words taken from the book entitled 'Whatever became of Sin'- by Dr. Karl Menninger were quoted by Pastor Vinson Samuel when he spoke about Jesus's last words from the Cross at the Good Friday service of the Bridle- Town Tamil Christian Church.

The service as usual was woven round the last words spoken from the cross by Jesus.

The words were: 'Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing'- Focussing on the interest of others even in the midst of suffering'; 'I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise'- Blessed assurance of forgiveness and salvation,. 'Dear woman, he is your son'(to John), 'Here is your mother'- Christ's humanity; 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?- Bearing the weight of the worlds' sin, Jesus cried to God; 'I am thirsty'- fulfilment of messianic prophesy/desire for the salvation of humanity'; 'It is finished'- Final act of

obedience to the will of God; 'Father into your hands, I commit my spirit'- complete trust in God. The words on the cross were well brought to light with relevant bible lessons, meaningful songs and prayers.

The choir rendered a memorable performance for the glory of God, with the help of both western and oriental musical instruments. Special mention should be made of the song- 'Kalvary siluvayile' - which has an enchanting tune and sung extremely well by the dedicated choir. The sacrifice of Christ on the cross for the redemption of the world was well brought to light by the Good Friday observance which was a wonderful source of blessing for all those who attended the service.



Vatican declares Popes John Paul II and John XXIII Saints

by Raymond Rajabalan

On April 26th, 2014 Pope Francis has declared Popes John Paul II and John XXIII saints, in front of a crowd of hundreds of thousands. He praised his two predecessors as "men of courage" at the Vatican service, the first time in history that two popes have been canonized at the same time.

The Mass was attended by Pope Emeritus Benedict, who quit as pope last year, and about 100 foreign delegations.

Analysts say Francis is trying to balance the conservative legacy of John Paul with the reforming zeal of John.

The ancient rite of canonization unfolded under grey skies in a packed St Peter's Square. In keeping with tradition, Pope Francis, was approached and requested to add his two predecessors to the long list of Catholic saints. And at the third time of asking, he granted that request. Then ornate, silver containers holding holy relics of new saints were shown: a trace of blood from John Paul II, and sliver of skin taken from the body of John XXIII. Both men were hugely influential figures in the story of modern Catholicism. The Italian Pontiff, John XXIII,

is seen very much as a liberal, reforming figure. The Polish Pope, John Paul, on the other hand, was much more conservative. And their elevation to the sainthood on the same day is being seen as an attempt to draw together the liberal and the more traditional wings of the Church.

At the climax of the service, Pope Francis said in Latin: "We declare and define Blessed John XXIII and John Paul II to be saints and we enroll them among the saints, decreeing that they are to be venerated as such by the whole Church."

Relics of each man - a container of blood from John Paul and a piece of skin from John - were placed near the altar. Pope Francis paid tribute to the two new saints as "priests, bishops and popes of the 20th Century". "They lived through the tragic events of that century, but they were not overwhelmed by them. For them, God was more powerful," he said.

The Vatican estimated some 800,000 pilgrims had poured into Rome to see the two-hour ceremony first-hand. "Four popes in one ceremony is a fantastic thing to see and to be at, because it is history being written in our sight," said Polish-Polish-Dawid Halfar.



Giant portraits of the two popes flanked Francis as he celebrated Mass



Pope Francis greeted crowds from the "popemobile" after the ceremony



Notable guests include Floribeth Mora, who claims John Paul II cured her of a serious brain condition

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Special Feature

SADHGURU:

Dear Sadhguru, as I move into a position of power, how can I avoid becoming corrupted by it?

Power doesn't corrupt, people are corrupt. When they get empowered, it becomes super visible. When the microscope is not on them, you don't see it. But someone who is not corrupt will not become corrupt.

First, let us understand what corruption is. If there is something called "me" and there is something called "you," corruption has started because what is "me" is more important than what is "you." Once "me" comes, "what is mine" and "what is not mine" will come. Once "this is mine" and "this is not mine" comes, corruption is deepened. If you get very attached to "what is mine" and "what is not mine" then it becomes well established. Like this it goes on.

That is why, all these years, I have been saying, "Let us make corruption cosmic!" The nature of who you are is such that you have to identify with something. If you identify with just the body, one level of corruption. When you get married, you identify with two bodies — corruption multiplied. When it becomes two, the corruption becomes a little bit bigger; people can see the conspiracy. Family is the first form of corruption. I am not speaking against it, I am just telling you. Suddenly, "what is ours" and "what is not ours" becomes important. Then comes community, nation, race, religion...different levels of corruption.

Essentially, corruption means, with whatever acts of wellbeing a human being commits, he is excluding somebody. If you have something, you want to give a little more to this person, and a little less to that person. This is corruption. The question is whether it is a socially acceptable form of corruption or not. For example, if something happens to your children, buckets of tears will come. But when other children are on the streets without clothes or food in their bellies, and not even a teardrop comes to you, you are corrupt. If we make you the prime minister, your corruption will be reported in the media. Right now, your corruption is not worth reporting because it is not of much consequence to other people. Anything that you empower gets blown up into a larger dimension of corruption. But don't wait to become a prime minister and then check out whether you are corrupt or not.

Most of the corruption on the planet is because you are identified with something limited. Limited identity is corruption. If you make your identity yourself, you will rob the person next to you. If you



Sadhguru Vasudev is a realized master, yogi and mystic, who has founded Isha Foundation, an international public service organization that strives for ultimate human well-being. For world-wide program information, visit www.ishafoundation.org

rary mystic rooted as strongly in worldly and pragmatic matters as he is in inner experience and wisdom. Named one of India's 50 most influential people, he has addressed prominent global forums on issues as diverse as socio-economic development, leadership and spirituality. He has served as delegate to the United Nations Millennium Peace Summit and the World Peace Congress and has been a special invitee to the World Economic Forum (2006-2009), the Australian Leadership Retreat (2006) and TED (2009).

His interviews are featured in The New York Times, BBC, Bloomberg, CNN and CNBC. He is the author of several books, the subject of four books and co-author of the Amazon Bestseller "Midnights with the Mystic". His public talks frequently draw crowds of over 300,000 people.

Founded by Sadhguru, Isha Foundation is a non-religious, non-profit organization with over 200 centers worldwide



Essentially, corruption means, with whatever acts of wellbeing a human being commits, he is excluding somebody.

make your identity for your community, you will do things for your community at the cost of some other community. If you are identified with the nation, you will do good things to your nation at the cost of another nation. That is not perceived as corruption, but it is corruption. Corruption is not a lack of morality. Corruption is essentially a limited identity.

The whole spiritual process is just to take an individual from a limited identity

to an all-inclusive possibility, not just intellectually but experientially. When you say, "I am a devotee," it means that "I have either dissolved" or "I am willing to dissolve." There is nothing here that is "me" or "mine." That is why we are striving so hard to reach the powerful in the world. If one becomes meditative, if one becomes a devotee, they are incapable of being corrupt.

Sadhguru J. Vasudev is a contempo-

and over one million volunteers. Isha Foundation offers Inner Engineering Online – a practical approach for inner transformation in a fast paced world. The course designed by Sadhguru presents simple, yet powerful tools for an individual to experience life on a deeper level with more awareness, energy, and productivity. This program is an ideal opportunity for those with time and travel constraints to experience the same profound effects of the traditional Inner Engineering program, which has impacted millions of people over the past 25 years. To learn more, view the free Introductory Talk, or to register visit www.InnerEngineering.com

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Royal Bank making it easier for newcomers to settle in Canada

RBC Royal Bank recently announced it has made a number of enhancements to make it easier for newcomers to manage their finances and settle in Canada. The changes being made recognize the unique needs of newcomers and better enable access to credit products, including options that require no Canadian credit history.

“Each year, we welcome approximately 650,000 immigrants to Canada and one of the common challenges newcomers face is establishing credit in their new home country,” said Christine Shisler, director, Multicultural Markets, RBC. “We want to be the bank that helps people with their important firsts - their first bank account, their first credit card, their first car purchase and their first home. These are significant milestones and we want to make the transition to Canada as seamless as possible by recognizing their needs and values.”

The changes affect three major areas of the journey to Canada: Buying your first car and home, establishing a Canadian credit history and getting recredited in your field. These changes will make it easier to get the credit products they need without waiting to build a Canadian credit history.

Buying your first car in Canada

Upon settling in Canada, many people require a vehicle. In a study conducted by RBC, about one in four (26 per cent) newcomers who have been in Canada for one year or less report they expect to



buy a vehicle in the next year. However, more than one-third (39 per cent) of these say they don't know how they are going to finance it. RBC has made it easier to make a first car purchase in Canada by introducing a new “no credit history required” loan at over 3,500 dealerships nationwide.

Buying your first home in Canada

Many newcomers buy a home within five years of arrival, and our research has shown that it can be a very challenging experience. Our new mortgage enhancements make it easier for newcomers to get into their first house in Canada sooner. We've extended the qualification period for RBC's Newcomer Mortgage pro-

gram from three to five years, enabling more newcomers to get a mortgage in the first five years of arrival in Canada, with or without a credit history.

Establishing a Canadian credit history

Although RBC does not require newcomers to have a credit history in order to purchase your first vehicle or home, establishing a credit history is a critical step upon settlement in Canada. In the same study, RBC found that one-third (32 per cent) of those new to Canada felt that having a credit card was a useful way to establish a good credit rating in Canada. Allowing flexible borrowing behaviour helps newcomers achieve goals

like buying a car or a house. RBC was one of the first banks to introduce the “no credit history required Unsecured Credit Card,” and with this latest enhancement has made it easier for the vast majority of permanent residents to qualify for a unsecured credit card.

Getting recredited in your field

Once they arrive in Canada, many workers may need to upgrade skills, and enroll in courses or school to receive Canadian accreditation in their chosen profession. To help newcomers with their career goals, RBC is expanding its unique Newcomer Skilled Loan Program to provide easier financing to support this important step.

“We want to help people achieve their goals in Canada, whether that's home ownership, buying a car or getting Canadian accreditation in their skill or trade,” said Shisler. “The changes we are making demonstrate RBC's desire to understand and adapt to newcomer needs, values and timelines. We're working to help them build the lives they want faster so they're on track for success in Canada.”

RBC's International Remittance service through RBC Online Banking has also changed, and will make it easier for clients to transfer funds in a low-cost manner with its expansion to the United States and other countries, including Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

14,000 New Immigrants receive valuable gifts and offers from 45 leading Canadian Brands through WelcomePack Canada

WelcomePack is a gift box full of free gifts and offers for you and your family to enjoy as newcomers to Canada. A valuable welcome made possible by 45 leading Canadian brands. From consumer products and services, to real estate and banking, to telecommunications and transport, to education, media and more, these gifts and offers cover many of your settling in needs. Having reached its mid-term benchmark of 14,000 packs distributed, the WelcomePack program aims to deliver 30,000 free gift boxes that provide newcomers with a ‘Welcome to Remember’ every year.

New immigrants, 18 years and above who have landed in Canada after September 1, 2011 are eligible to pick up this free welcome gift pack.

Further more, the program evolves into a rewarding relationship. WelcomePack recipients are actively engaged all year round with helpful tips and infor-

mation on various aspects of living in Canada, through a cutting-edge CRM system that delivers customized content. The ongoing information and offers are accessible to them through a designated member portal. In addition, they can also participate in activities for chances to win prizes.

WelcomePack recently launched its social media presence on Facebook, Twitter and Sina Weibo, to provide a platform for new immigrants to engage and share their experiences of settling in Canada.

In a survey conducted with WelcomePack recipients, an overwhelming 93% of respondents appreciated the program, products, offers and information being delivered.

The program's popularity and awareness has steadily increased throughout the year and its network of distribution points has expanded across the GTA. In addition, weekend distribution at key re-



tail and event locations have been activated to make it easier for newcomers to pick up their free WelcomePack; all they need to do is bring along their PR cards to validate their eligibility to collect this valuable and attractive gift pack.

Special distribution points during upcoming weekends: - BestCo Food Mart

at Huntingwood and Brimley – May 3 & 4 and May 10 & 11. BTrust Supermarket at Central Parkway West and Burnhamthorpe Road West – May 17 & 18.

Newcomers can visit www.welcomepackcanada.com to learn more about the program and to locate the nearest distribution centre.



PENGUINS

THE WONDER BIRDS



By: C. Kamalaharan

I have seen penguins in the zoos and aquariums, where the environment is man made, with a restricted area for them to move about. I longed to see them in their natural habitat. This was accomplished recently when I visited Philip Island in Melbourne, Australia. It was a bright summer evening when we reached Summerland beach, to watch the little penguins' parade, one of the most famous attractions in Philip Island. On arrival there, I found that the place was already bustling with tourists, who have come to watch the spectacular display. Elevated viewing platforms with tiered seatings have been constructed, for the visitors to get a conspicuous view of the parade. Tourists are also permitted to sit on the sandy ground, on both sides of the pathway, along which the penguins in groups waddle towards their burrows in the sand dunes (a small loose dry sand formed by the wind). There are rangers who provide informative commentary, regarding the safety of the birds and the set of rules to be observed by the tourists. Photography is totally banned as it might disturb the birds. The rangers will not permit the tourists even to have their cameras in their hands. Also absolute silence should be maintained when the parade is in progress.

Penguins live exclusively in the Southern Hemisphere especially in the Antarctica. They spend half their lives on land and half their lives in water. Though they are birds under the class Aves, they are flightless as their wings are modified into flippers which are highly adapted for swimming in water. Their bodies are also streamlined like that of aerial birds, to cut through water smoothly and easily. Penguins, regarded as the fastest swimming and deepest diving species among the aquatic birds are said to 'fly through water'. They use their webbed feet and tail as rudders for steering and flippers for propelling.

The little penguins leave their burrows before daybreak, reach the ocean, swim up to about 100 kilometers per day fishing and return at dusk. The penguin parade is an amazing spectacle never to be missed. The little penguins arrive in groups at sunset from the sea and wait on the rocky surface in the shallow water. It is really thrilling to watch them leaving the sea and parade in single file, waddling across the beach, using their short, strong legs, resembling the movement of the ducks. It is fascinating to watch their unusual upright waddling gait. Penguins also use their bellies to slide over ice and snow.

It is also intriguing to learn how the adult penguins feed the young ones. They hunt their prey, usually the krill (a crustacean similar to the shrimps), squid (a fast moving mollusk), fish and similar forms of sea life in the ocean, catch them

by their beaks and swallow them whole. Later the prey is digested in the stomach, transforming them into an edible form, for the young ones to be fed. Arriving at the burrow the adult regurgitates the food into its own beak and then pours it into the beak of the chick.

Respiration in penguins cannot be carried out under the water. They have to come to the surface to breathe. It's really delightful to watch them swim under the water, suddenly leap up to the surface, take a quick breath and go down.

Penguins are highly social birds living as a colony. It is surprising to know that they are monogamous. In a number of species, penguins

“Penguins are highly social birds living as a colony. It is surprising to know that they are monogamous. In a number of species, penguins mate with same partner year after year. Both the parents raise their chicks in the rookery (the breeding ground of penguins). There is division of labour in a family unit. At the end of every season the parents return to the rookery, but the male arrives first to establish a burrow site. Later it builds the burrows using pebbles, dense vegetation and holes in the ground.”

mate with same partner year after year. Both the parents raise their chicks in the rookery (the breeding ground of penguins). There is division of labour in a family unit. At the end of every season the parents return to the rookery, but the male arrives first to establish a burrow site. Later it builds the burrows using pebbles, dense vegetation and holes in the ground. A clear view of the burrows can be seen by the tourists as they walk along the boardwalk.

Penguins reproduce sexually through internal fertilization. They mate simply by pressing the cloacas of both the birds, as it happens in fowls. The impregnated female lays a single egg or two



The upright waddling gait



The burrows



Egg laying



Feeding the chick

and goes to find food. Here too the division of labour is upheld. In the absence of the female, the male incubates the egg and the chick is hatched. The male feeds the chick till the mother returns. Later both the parents take turns to look after the chick. They are so attached to each other that through their distinct call they can easily find their partners and the chicks, in the midst of a large gathering of penguins.

When little birds like penguins can stay with one mate as embodiments of faithfulness, fidelity and division of labour, we as human beings must be ashamed of ourselves, as some among us go for divorce even for trivial matters or disagreements.

As we sat on the elevated viewing platform with mounting tension, under low lit spotlights, we were able to see people's heads zooming back and forth, looking for the penguins. Just then a voice within our midst was heard, "Look there." All heads instantly craned towards the direction of the ocean. I couldn't see anything in spite of severe straining of my neck. A couple of minutes later my wife whispered, "There see on the rocky surface." "Yes I could see faint movements," said I. Gradually my vision became clear and I could see the little birds gently hopping on land. What an electrifying moment! To see them emerging from the sea and waddle in single file, towards their burrows. Leaving the viewing platform we followed them, watching from the elevated boardwalks, as they paraded towards their burrows. What an awesome spectacle to watch these little birds, strictly following a routine and leading a closely-knit harmonious life!



WORDS OF PEACE



Winning the Lottery

When bad times threaten, it's human nature to do everything possible to avoid them. Unfortunately, that's very difficult for someone who is not seeing clearly in the first place. Prem Rawat, who travels the world with a message of peace and hope, has a solution that helps people find within themselves the clarity and strength to overcome life's obstacles.

There's a joke, Mr. Rawat says, that describes the way most people behave in this world. A duck goes into a bar. When the bartender asks him what he wants, the duck says, "Do you have any grapes?"

The bartender says, "No. This is a bar. We sell alcohol here, not grapes. Go away."

The next day, the duck walks into the bar again, and when the bartender says, "What will you have?" the duck says, "Do you have any grapes?"

The bartender says, "Listen. I told you. We don't sell grapes here. If you keep this up, I'm going to pound a nail through your bill and nail you to this bar."

The duck says, "Do you have any nails?"

The bartender says, "No," and the duck repeats, "Do you have any grapes?"

"When I heard that joke, I really liked it," Mr. Rawat says, "because this is what we do. People say, 'This is how I want things to be,' completely overlooking

what the reality is. Then, when they feel threatened, they will do anything in their power to circumnavigate that threatening position, just like that duck."

Refusing to see reality, he says, is like trying to drive through dense fog.

"When that fog comes, it obstructs our vision. It obscures. It stops us from seeing what we need to see to proceed on this path of life. There are people who will tell you, 'Just clean the windshield.' That would be good if there were no fog. Then, yes, your windshield really should be clean, so you can see as clearly as possible—but when it isn't clear, cleaning your windshield is not going to help remove the fog."

In the same way, when bad times come, Mr. Rawat says, fear can take over and obstruct our vision. Then, we need to understand what's important in life.

"What is the most important thing? I realize that I cannot afford the fog," he says. "Drama comes; trauma comes. I can't afford that. I want to understand the passion of my heart."

Mr. Rawat offers a way to combat fear and darkness by turning to an experience of clarity and peace within the heart.

"I was given the sense to feel," he says, "and of all the things that I can feel, if I can feel that joy, if I can feel that peace, if I can feel that feeling within inside of me,

that is the most magnificent thing I have in this life.

"No matter what happens, you cannot lose the focus of this life. Even in your darkest hour, something is coming and giving you that gift of breath, of life, and it's very personal. As long as that gift keeps coming, do not lose hope."

The hope he talks about, Mr. Rawat says, isn't wish fulfillment.

"I don't know if you have ever bought a lottery ticket," he says. "Once you buy a lottery ticket, you get a lot of hope—the wrong kind of hope. Fulfillment of your wishes is not the hope I am talking about. Real hope is something else, and it has much to do with saying, 'Show me what I need to see. Give me the wisdom to be

able to recognize what I need to recognize.' That's very different from, 'Make my lottery ticket win.'

"The strength that a human being can have who has understood this in life, who has realized this in life, to me is awe-inspiring. I am alive today. That is the biggest lottery prize there is. To enjoy this life, to enjoy this gift—that's what it needs to be all about."

To learn more about Prem Rawat,
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Our Mission

CTCC shall be the nexus of the Tamil business community in Canada. It shall develop and foster entrepreneurship and community engagement by:

- Providing members with a forum to network, share ideas and experiences in order to promote mutual business success;
- Supporting emerging enterprises and entrepreneurs through seminars, workshops and conferences;
- Recognizing and promoting the success and contributions of Tamil Canadians;
- Promoting charitableness and volunteerism in the community; and
- Facilitating and strengthening opportunities for members in the field of trade and commerce, locally, nationally and globally.

CTCC Board of Directors 2014



Seated (L to R): Akila Kanagasabay, Sivan Ilangko, Jeyakumar Sinnadurai, Santha Panchalingam, Dilani Gunarajah
Standing (L to R): Sritharan Thurairajah, Sujana Shan, Guna Thuraisngam, Nimal Vinayagamurthy, Ajith Sabaratnam

Photo by: QuickSnaps.ca



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Best Entrepreneur 2014

Gajen Arumugam Lucvaa Kitchens



Best Entrepreneur Gajen Arumugam of Lucvaa Kitchens receives his Award from Ms. Penny Santiago, Vice-President of Royal Bank. With her is Mohan Sundaramohan, Manager - Royal Bank, Morningside & Milner Branch (R), and CTCC President S. Jeyakumar (L)

Gajen Arumugam of Lucvaa Kitchens was the winner of CTCC's Best Entrepreneur Award for 2014.

Gajen was originally a Math teacher in Jaffna Sri Lanka and arrived in Canada in 1986. He began his life here as a Statistical Process & Quality Controller in an automotive parts company that manufactured wiring harnesses for many car companies. He was gifted with an ability to look at a process and improve it. His proven track record made him rise up in the ranks. He later worked for a furniture company and later decided to start a company of his own.

When he began his own business he executed orders for family members and his close friends. Gradually the business began to improve and more jobs started coming. He made his company a one-stop shop for Kitchens, Cabinets, Clos-

ets, Built-Ins, and carpentry needs of the customer. The company today employs thirty two full-time persons, and a recent 'feather in the cap' for the company is an order for 300 kitchen cabinets for two new condominium buildings. He is fully committed towards customer satisfaction.

Lucvaa Kitchens is committed to deliver high quality custom designed kitchen cabinets done by talented professionals with more than twenty years of experience in designing, cabinet making and installation.

His marketing techniques center around catalogues, social network, company website and referral customers. Gajen believes in community support and is responsible for supporting students in the University of Jaffna with their studies. Gajen considers his Employees, Family and Friends are the keys to his success.



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Business Awards 2014

Best Woman Entrepreneur Award 2014

Sarogini Sivabalan S & S Engravers Ltd.



Best Woman Entrepreneur Sarogini Sivabalan of S & S Engravers Inc. receives her Award from Stan Muthulingam & Monty Muthulingam of CableShoppe Inc. Also in the picture is CTCC President S. Jeyakumar (L)

Sarogini Sivabalan is CTCC's Best Woman Entrepreneur for the year 2014.

She is a shining example of a business woman who weathered the storm to continue the business her late husband left behind when he passed away suddenly due to a terminal illness. With three young children, a home to run and a business to continue was no easy task for a homemaker. But she took up the challenge and is today happy that she did so.

S & S Engravers Ltd. was a modest small business that was begun by her late husband Sivabalan Velautham in the basement of his home in 1999. The business activities included the manufacture of Trophies, Awards and Engraving.

The basement run business gradually began to develop with the support of customers who trusted Sivabalan for the good quality work he provided. Among his

customers were corporate clients whose confidence he built. The Toronto District School Board Rogers, Cable Shoppe and Toronto Hydro were among his clients. The increasing trend in his business made him move into a warehouse. It was during this time that tragedy struck the family. He was diagnosed with a terminal illness and he passed away in two months. Sarogini was a courageous woman who took up the challenge to continue with the business that her husband had a passion.

With the support she received from her customers and suppliers she succeeded in continuing the business and expanding her customer base.

She considers the business as a mark of remembrance of her husband. She enjoys the support of her three children Piraveen, Rahgul and Mayurie who are her pillars of family support.

Award of Excellence 2014

Jeyarajan Ponnuchchamy Harry Pathmarajah Asokan Sabaratnam Princess Banquet Hall



Winners of the Award of Excellence Jeyarajan Ponnuchchamy, Harry Pathmarajah & Asokan Sabaratnam from Princess Banquet Hall receive their Awards from Ms. Fatima Zohra Nazehi, Director of CIBC's HLC Group. CTCC President S. Jeyakumar (L)

CTCC's Award of Excellence for this year was presented to Jeyarajan Ponnuchchamy and his two partners Harry Pathmarajah and Asokan Sabaratnam, owners of Princess Banquet Hall. This triumvirate established Princess Banquet Hall in 2006, which is now a leading provider of high quality banquet services for a wide array of events.

Over the years, Princess Banquet Hall has created several all-inclusive packages in order to ease the stress of planning events for customers. In addition to the variety of packages offered, Princess Banquet Hall also offers the option for clients to customize their events.

Jeyarajan Ponnuchchamy began his career as a videographer and soon established Jeya Video Production in 1987. By 2003 Jeya had entered the wedding planning market and, in 2006, he became the owner of a fully fledged banquet hall. In his venture, he is effectively assisted by his two partners - Mr. Harry Pathmarajah and

Mr. Asokan Sabaratnam.

Princess Banquet Hall has the capacity to cater to a wide variety of occasions, including corporate, cultural and wedding events. Jeya and his partners have been involved in this field for over twenty-five years.

Their success at princess Banquet Hall has allowed them to expand their business and they now own and operate Panemonte Banquet and Convention Centre. Jeya and his partners plan to expand in the future so that they can cater high profile events.

They have distinguished themselves in the industry by providing hospitality, time management and quality customer service that have always exceeded expectations. Princess Banquet Hall has created an everlasting image within the community by consistently providing exceptional banquet services. They attribute their continued success to the supportive community and their loyal clientele.

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Business Awards 2014



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Young Entrepreneur Award 2014

Vipoositha Gnanenthra Ovyian Photography



Best Young Entrepreneur Vipoositha Gnanenthra receives her Award from Vic Kazazian - Senior Vice President of Sun Life Financial Career Sales force. Also in the picture is CTCC President S. Jeyakumar (L)

Vipoositha Gnanenthra, CTCC's Best Young Entrepreneur for 2014 is the proud owner of Ovyian Photography, which specializes in Fashion and Wedding photography.

Vipoositha moved to Toronto, Canada at the tender age of seven from Jaffna, Sri Lanka. She was keen on becoming a Medical professional and graduated from the University of Toronto with an undergraduate degree in Neuroscience. As the saying goes 'failure often leads to success'; in Vipoositha's case not getting admitted into a Canadian medical school ended up being her luck. Following a year of trying out various jobs from working in a logistics start-up to working as a motivational speaker at a non-profit organization, she found herself enamored by the world of Fashion photography. Fashion, after all was always Vipoositha's love and passion growing up, and so the camera became her tool of expression just like a paint-

brush is to an artist. Vipoositha has been a photographer since 2009 and has taken photographs of local celebrities, shot numerous fashion magazine covers, and has had her work published in both print and online magazines. In the next several coming years, Vipoositha foresees her team expanding to include different types of creative talent.

Vipoositha is confident in her ability to succeed having proven great value to her customers by providing them with quality products. She dedicates most of her time towards Fashion photography from October to April, since Wedding season pre-occupies her time from May to September.

Vipoositha is happily married and attributes much of her current Ovyian Photography success to her best friend and husband, Gobi. They normally say that there is a woman behind every man's success. However, in the case of Vipoositha it is the other way around.



Best Marketing Entrepreneur Award - 2014

Richmond G. Paulpillai



Best Marketing Entrepreneur Richmond G. Paulpillai of All Saints University receiving his Award from Tony Tintinalli, Regional Vice-President of Bank Of Montreal. Also in the picture is CTCC President Jeyakumar (L)

Richmond G. Paulpillai, is the winner of CTCC's 2014 Best Marketing Entrepreneur Award.

He promotes medical education in Canada and overseas through two medical universities he owns in the Commonwealth of Dominica and in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. Paulpillai is also the Chancellor, President and CEO (Administration) of these two medical colleges. There are also two academies in the U.S. and Canada where students can further their education.

Paulpillai, an engineer by profession, became interested in and involved with medical colleges when his son joined a medical college in the Caribbean. After his son joined this particular college, he was able to persuade more students from Canada to begin their career in medicine at the school. Paulpillai's ability and promotional efficiency eventually earned him the post of Administrator to the university. He took the bold step of switching his own career from engineering to medical education.

In 2002, he and a business partner opened their own medical school in Aruba named All Saints University, with its head office located in Canada. Eventually, a proven track record and market-

ing efficiency brought them success as the school enrolment increased considerably over time. They then moved the university to the Commonwealth of Dominica and, following its rapid growth, subsequently opened another campus in St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

Today, they are proud that the schools have over a thousand students in the two campuses and the existing university sites are continuously expanding. The medical degrees offered by these campuses are recognized in the U.S., Canada and all Commonwealth countries, allowing their students to obtain residency placements in North America and other parts of the world in order to practice as medical doctors. Students from all over the world apply for entry into these medical schools.

Canadian Tamil students in financial difficulties are offered tuition scholarships, and many Tamils in the community who would not otherwise have been able to have the opportunity to become physicians have thus been able to reach their higher potential.

Paulpillai attributes the success of the medical schools to efficient teaching methods, word of mouth recommendations and the efficient marketing methods adopted.





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BMO PIFF | IFFSA | Toronto 2014 Launches

WITH EXCITEMENT, HUGE CROWD RUPAN BAL, JUS REIGN KICK OF THIS YEAR'S FESTIVAL



The 2014 BMO Punjabi International Film Festival (PIFF) and the International Film Festival of South Asia (IFFSA) officially launched April 24 at the Mississauga Living Arts Centre in Mississauga, Ontario. The launch of the largest South Asian film festival in North America featured a press conference, VIP reception and the North American premiere of the feature film, Jatt James Bond starring Punjabi actor and singer Gippy Grewal and co-star Zarine Khan.

"We are now in our third year with the festival going stronger than ever," said Sunny Gill, President of PIFF | IFFSA. "We're excited to have notable members of the Punjabi film industry on hand once again to launch this wonderful celebration of South Asian and Punjabi culture."

The huge crowd was entertained by young Canadian actors and YouTube sensations Rupan Bal and Jus Reign along with local dance group Nach Balliye.

The festival is celebrating its third year and has added IFFSA since last year to include other South Asian films beyond those related to Punjabi culture. This year's festival, running from May 15 to 19, will feature events in six cities, and films in 9 languages with over 50 films to be screened. Most festival events are free to the public thanks to the generous support of sponsors including title sponsor BMO Bank of Montreal and lead sponsors Great Gulf Homes and Insurance Bureau of Canada (IBC).

"PIFF | IFFSA's success does not come as a surprise to anyone who has

watched one of the films or taken part in one of the events in past years," said Paul Sabbagh, VP Commercial Banking of BMO Bank of Montreal. "This is one of the most fun filled and enjoyable cultural events of the calendar each year and we are honoured to support the entrepreneurial spirit of the festival and the community once again."

Dignitaries in attendance included Minister Tim Uppal, MP Andrew Cash, MP John McCallum, MPP Jagmeet Singh, MPP Dipika Damerla, MPP Bob Delaney, Mayor Susan Fennel, City Councilors Bonnie Crombie, Vicky Dhillon and Gael Miles, along with representatives from festival partners and sponsors including: Koodo, Sheridan College, CBC, Metroland, Ethnic Channels, MCC, PTC and the Marriott Courtyard Brampton.

Insurance Bureau of Canada partners with PIFF | IFFSA | Toronto 2014

The Punjabi International Film Festival (PIFF) and International Film Festival of South Asia (IFFSA) have announced that Insurance Bureau of Canada (IBC) will be sponsoring this year's festival. Together with IBC, the festival will showcase a selection of the best feature films, documentaries and short films from around the world, celebrating the rich diversity of South Asian and Punjabi cultures. As a sponsor, IBC will support several PIFF | IFFSA events and activities taking place from May 15th to 19th in various locations across the GTA.

"PIFF | IFFSA represents the growing richness and diversity of Canada's film industry," says Ralph Palumbo, Vice-President, Ontario, Insurance Bureau of Canada. "We are pleased to be a sponsor of this world-class celebration of South Asian and Punjabi arts and culture."

In addition to showcasing a line-up of feature, short and documentary films, BMO PIFF | IFFSA | Toronto 2014 will include gala events, film parties, concerts, industry events and more as it celebrates South Asian Heritage Month.

"This is the first year IBC has been a sponsor of this event and we are glad to see an important national association taking an interest in our annual festival," says Sunny Gill, PIFF | IFFSA President. "Much like the IBC, South Asian and Punjabi films are present from coast-to-coast in Canada and we are glad to use this entertainment as a way to present these unique cultures to this great country."

Most of the festival events are free to the public. Visit BMO PIFF | IFFSA | Toronto 2014 online at www.pifftoronto.com for all the latest information about the festival.

About BMO PIFF | IFFSA

BMO PIFF | IFFSA | Toronto 2014 will be a nine day extravaganza with short, documentary and feature length film screenings from around the world, on themes of Punjabi and various other South Asian cultures and identities. In addition, the festival will feature concerts, gala events, film parties, seminars, workshops and networking opportunities with government

representatives, business leaders, local organizations that support film development, film stars, producers, directors, members of the media and more. This year's FESTIVAL WEEKEND will take place from May 15 - 19, 2014 in Ontario, Canada with exciting and glamorous events planned for the cities of Toronto, Brampton and Mississauga. In addition, the launch events will happen during the month of April. FILMS IN MORE THAN NINE DIFFERENT LANGUAGES WILL BE SHOWCASED AT THE FESTIVAL.

About the Insurance Bureau of Canada

Insurance Bureau of Canada (IBC) is pleased to celebrate 50 years as a valuable resource for insurance information. Since 1964, IBC has been working with governments across Canada to make our communities safer, championing issues that directly affect Canadians and the property and casualty (P&C) insurance industry. IBC is the national industry association representing Canada's private home, car and business insurers. Its member companies represent 90% of the P&C insurance market in Canada. The P&C insurance industry employs over 118,600 Canadians, pays more than \$7 billion in taxes and levies to the federal, provincial and municipal governments, and has a total premium base of \$46 billion. To view media releases and other information, visit the media section of IBC's website at www.ibc.ca. Follow IBC on Twitter @InsuranceBureau or like us on Facebook.



Special Feature

Siva Yoga Swami's 50th Maha Samadhi Guru Pooja

Siva Yoga Swami's 50th Maha Samadhi Guru Pooja held on April 13, 2014 at Sangamam Hall in Scarborough. In this event head of Saiva Sittantha Temple Kauai-Hawaii, USA Satguru Bodinatha Veylan Swami attended and grace the occasion.



Sri Lankan Airlines – oneworld's newest member

Wednesday, 30 April 2014: Tracing its origins back to 1947, SriLankan Airlines, which becomes part of oneworld® with effect from midnight tonight, is today not only the flag carrier airline for Sri Lanka but also the largest international airline serving the Maldives and with a significant presence in southern India.

It has virtually doubled in size since peace returned to its home country four years ago and plans further substantial expansion to its fleet and network in the next few years.

It operates a fleet of 21 aircraft – including eight Airbus A320s/321s, seven A330-200s and six A340-300s – and has orders for 10 new aircraft, including four A350-900s.

Using the airline code UL, it carried 4.7 million passengers last year between its Colombo base and 32 destinations in



20 countries across Asia, Europe and the Middle East.

Its destinations include oneworld hubs Doha, Hong Kong, London Heath-

row, Kuala Lumpur, Moscow Domodedovo and Tokyo Narita, along with Bangkok and Singapore.

It has an established code-share

agreement with oneworld partner Malaysia Airlines and concluded code-share agreements today with alliance members Finnair and S7.

BOOK REVIEW



Special Feature

Resurgent India: (Glimpses of Rajiv Gandhi's Vision of India)

Author: PDT ACHARY

Pub: Pentagon Press (India)

By Siva Sivapragasam

Rajiv Gandhi was a reluctant entrant into politics. He was pushed into it due to the sudden and unexpected assassination of his mother, Indira Gandhi who was Prime Minister then. In a moment of the nation's grief, Rajiv the leader was born.

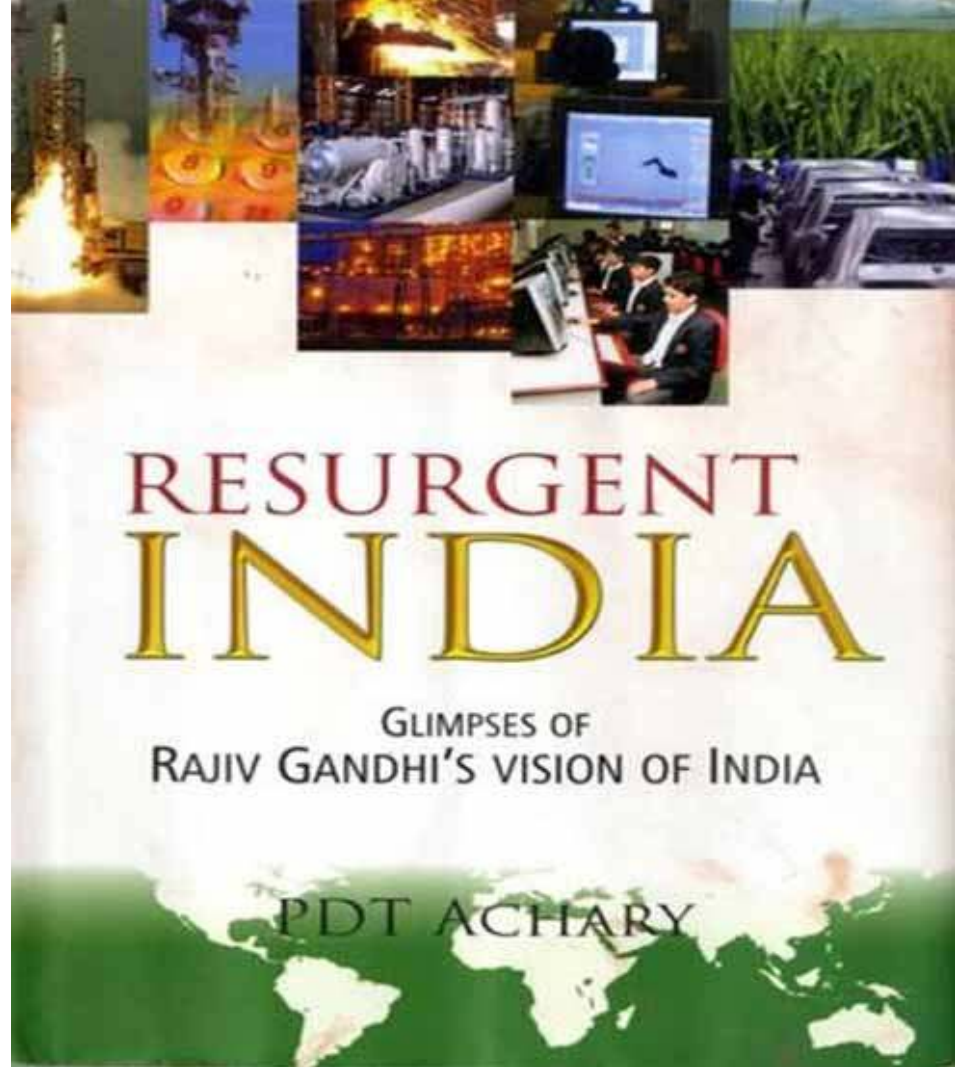
Resurgent India has been published at an appropriate time co-inciding with the Indian elections now in full swing. Resurgent India authored by PDT Achary, a former Secretary-General of India's Parliament, and the book is a history of the eventful years that Rajiv ruled India until his assassination by a suicide bomber. The book is in a sense an assessment of the varied contributions Rajiv Gandhi made to India. His ambition and task centered around blending India's glorious past with the developments of the modern age. He did succeed in his mission but could not complete it due to his untimely and premature death. The book attempts to find out the true significance of the contributions made by Rajiv Gandhi in different fields of national life.

This book objectively evaluates the contributions made by Rajiv Gandhi in

many areas of national life during his Prime Ministership. It contains chapters with a Prologue and an Epilogue. The prologue takes us through the major context and phases in India's history and highlights the continuity of its cultural and political traditions beginning from the Indus Valley civilization to the later part of the 20th century.

The book delves into the various accords he brought about on Punjab, Assam, Sri Lanka etc. These are some of his major achievements in finding solution to those intractable problems. He made Indians dream of the 21st century and a strong and vibrant India. This was the essence of his politics. The book captures this and presents a positive picture of his ideas, approaches, thoughts and achievements. The book is authored by a very knowledgeable person P.D.T. Achary who has been described as a recognized thinker, newspaper columnist and an expert on constitutional, parliamentary and political issues. Resurgent India was launched by Indian Vice President Hamid Ansari.

Resurgent India is certainly a Must Read and is available for purchase online from the Publishers, Pentagon Press (www.pentagonpress.in)



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Jim Flaherty (December 30, 1949 - April 10, 2014)

Full text of Prime Minister Stephen Harper's tribute at the funeral of former finance minister Jim Flaherty:

Wednesday, April 16, 2014

Gov. Gen. Johnston, Lt. Gov. Onley, colleagues from the Parliament of Canada, distinguished representatives of the diplomatic corps and of provincial and municipal government, acquaintances and admirers of The Honourable Jim Flaherty from across the country, dear friends.

As I said last week, what a sad time this is in the life of our country.

Only a few weeks ago, we had the occasion to issue political tributes to an extraordinary colleague upon the announcement of his intention to retire from public life, with the full expectation of another life ahead of him.

Little did we know that we would be here today, with that future torn from him, and for us to deliver more profound reflections.

This has been a traumatic event for many of us, but, of course, none more so than Jim's family.

Quinn, Galen, John, and especially Christine, we have lost a partner in politics, but you have lost a partner in life.

The turnout these past couple of days may be a small consolation, but it is the tip of the iceberg in a deep ocean of admiration and affection for Jim, and of much goodwill, kind thoughts and many prayers for you.

Please, take that to heart and God bless you.

For, I say, we have all lost a remarkable figure.

There are so many ways I could describe The Honourable Jim Flaherty.

He was a man who highly principled and ruthlessly pragmatic, combative but engaging, smart and educated, while never assuming that he knew it all.

He could be hard-headed, yet also soft-hearted.

He could display a quick and biting temper, but, far more often, a deep and gentle sense of humour.

He particularly enjoyed — and delivered — many jokes about his own shortness.

He observed that he never got in the way of his own power points, but, short as he was, upon the world stage he strode like a giant.

I do not say these things to imply that Jim was a contradictory person.

He was not in any way.

As a human being he was the complete package.

And, I am sure, these last few days, he has been genuinely enjoying all the tributes and some of them he even believes.

But, in all seriousness, it is a fact that Jim, as fiercely partisan as he was, was also genuinely liked and respected by his



PM Harper commemorates the life of the Honourable Jim Flaherty

opponents, liked by his enemies.

That's something in this business, something I envy — I can't even get my friends to like me.

There has been much talk about Jim's record and legacy, especially the softer side of that record.

Jim was not much for handouts.

But, as a true conservative, he believed in helping people who could not help themselves, or who had suffered misfortune.

And he especially believed in a hand up for those who needed, but only lacked, an opportunity, which is why he had a particular passion for, among others, the disabled.

I believe no single politician in the life of this country has done more for the disabled and their families than Jim Flaherty.

I could point to numerous initiatives, but Jim was most proud of his role in building the Durham Abilities Centre, dismissed by some at the time as a pork-barrel project, but now recognized as a tremendous regional institution and monument.

However, when all is said and done, Jim's most important contribution to our country, without doubt, came by virtue of his long service as minister of finance, especially by virtue of being minister of finance during and after the great global recession of 2008-2009.

I ask you to indulge me for a few moments to talk about that role, because we are talking about Jim making history, and I had the ultimate, front-row seat.

It began back in the fall of 2005.

Mutual friends told me that Jim Flaherty wanted to come to see me to talk about his political future.

I had met Jim many times, but knew him really only through the strong, positive, testimony of others.

We had lunch in my office.

Jim told me he wanted a change and was interested in federal politics, but was a bit sheepish about the fact he had not supported my leadership campaign.

I told him that meant nothing now, because I believed there would be a federal election soon and that, contrary to most, I thought it more likely than not that we would win.

I also thought we badly needed someone with his abilities and experience.

Of course, I had Finance in mind from the beginning, but Jim was actually, somewhat surprised, somewhat reticent about the portfolio at first.

Though, it's safe to say, it wasn't long before he decided he would never let go of it.

The relationship between a prime minister and his finance minister is always a special one.

But this, I can tell you, was more special than most.

Despite our very different educational backgrounds and life experiences, Jim and I were philosophically in sync on just about everything.

But, on the specifics of the many and complex priorities before us, we often had, at least initially, different views.

Now, we WASPs sometimes define an Irishman as someone, "who may not know where he stands, but is always ready to fight for it."

Well, no one could ever accuse Jim of not having an opinion, and he certainly was always prepared to fight for it.

As we talked through budget planning meetings, our divergences always narrowed and usually vanished.

When they didn't, occasionally I imposed a final decision.

Occasionally, I decided he was probably right.

And occasionally, I decided he was wrong but let him have his way, just because I got so tired of arguing with him.

By November 2008, Jim and I had both concluded,

not easily and certainly not what would have been expected, that the calamity befalling the global economic and financial system meant, among others things, that we had to run a deficit.

That is, not merely allow a modest deficit, but deliberately engineer as large a deficit as could be reasonably run, as a response to a collapsing marketplace.

So this, Jim did.

Canada announced one of the world's larger stimulus packages and he engineered the money out the door far more rapidly than most.

This people remember well.

What they remember less well is that that was not all there was to it.

Jim knew that, in the past, even modest, short-term deficit spending had resulted in severe, long-term fiscal problems.

So, even as he pushed out stimulus spending, he made changes in longer-term expenditure policies that would reduce their growth path.

And then, there was what Jim did not do.

He did not use the crisis to build new bureaucracies, to create permanent new programs, to recklessly enhance entitlements or to reverse any tax cut that had been legislated.



However, when all is said and done, Jim's most important contribution to our country, without doubt, came by virtue of his long service as minister of finance, especially by virtue of being minister of finance during and after the great global recession of 2008-2009.



He took other actions in housing and banking to ensure even greater long-term stability in our financial system.

And he put constraints on any excessive experimentations in monetary policy.

The result is this.

While, at one time, Canada was no better than middle of the pack, today in an uncertain world, Canada will have a balanced budget years ahead of others, with low debt and low taxes, and is recognized to be the best managed major developed economy.

That, my friends, is Jim Flaherty's legacy for this country.

It was something to see, up close.

A couple of years back, in Jim's presence, a colleague tried to put me on the spot by saying, "Prime minister, I think Jim Flaherty is the best finance minister in the world; do you think Jim Flaherty is the best finance minister in the world?"

Always being reluctant to shell out too much praise, but not wanting to disappoint Jim, I thought about it and found a line that met both our approvals.

I said, "Minister, I don't know for sure in absolute terms if Jim is the best finance minister in the world, but he is without a doubt the best finance minister per inch in the world."

But, friends, there is a back story to all of this.

As early as 2010, Jim said to me: "Prime Minister, I want to step down as finance minister and I don't want to run again. I've been in public life for 15 years now. I want to go into the private sector, so that I can make some money and put more aside for my family.

But," he added, "I won't do it unless I think we're out of the woods and the job of getting back into balance is done."

And every year after that, without any prompting from me, the call would come and Jim would say, "Prime minister, I'm still worried about the global economy and we're not yet in balance. I want to do one more budget."

And so he did year after year, work away on the next phase of the Economic Action Plan, even as, in the past couple of years, it became more and more difficult for him, and sometimes hard to watch, as everyone of you could plainly see.

Yet, let me tell you, when it mattered Jim was always up to it.

He always came to our budget meetings prepared, ready to play the game, always willing to mix it up in the corners.

And in the process, year after year, he deliberately set his own plans aside and put off his goals for his family.

Why?

Because, at heart, he wasn't in this, as is the stereotype, for money or for power.

Jim was driven by conviction, of loyalty to the cause and of duty to the country.

He believed he had taken on a responsibility for all of our families, not just his own and he was prepared to make sacrifices ultimately, although he did not know it, to sacrifice himself.

This year, looking at the state of the markets and the numbers in the budget, I knew that, when Jim's call came, it would be different.

And so, a few weeks ago in my office, I accepted his resignation and I told Jim that the meeting back in 2005 had been one of the best decisions of my political career, one of the most important for this government, and one of the most meaningful ever for our country.

That he had done a great job, accomplished what he set out to do, and that I understood and appreciated the sacrifice that it had entailed.

And I told Jim that he had truly been over these eight years, in my judgement, the best finance minister in the world, if not indeed, the best in our history.

I also wished him well in his next career and told him not to be a stranger.

Friends, I admit to you that I do not grieve for Jim.

I know that for Jim, the Lord has prepared a place where he can be free from the afflictions of recent times and in joy.

No, my friends, when a good one leaves, grief is for those who are left behind.

So, one more word for those, specifically for John and Galen and Quinn, "the boys," as your father always called you.

Let me just say this.

I lost my own father almost exactly to the day, 11 years ago.

From that period, I remember almost nothing of what I said or what was said to me, so powerful were the waves of emotion.

But once that passed, and perspective took hold, I came to appreciate my father's place in my life, probably even more fully and deeply than if he were still here.

And it is all good.

And it will be for you.

You are not "the boys" any longer.

You are young men.

Hold on to your mother and to your father's lessons, and know that there are many here and beyond who are there for you.

And, I say once again, from Laureen and my family and from all my colleagues, God bless you, the family, and farewell to our friend, Jim.

On behalf of a grateful country, we thank you.



Retirees' options for accessing home equity



Close to 11 million Canadians – 60 percent of the workforce – do not have access to a workplace pension plan, according to the Canadian Association of Retired Persons (CARP), which suggests that a looming pension crisis may lie ahead as the baby boom generation moves into retirement.

“With no pension or only a small one and after years of steadily increasing real estate prices, many individual’s largest retirement asset may be their home,” says Irwin Choleva, a Chartered Professional Accountant (CPA, CA) and partner with Shimmerman Penn LLP in Toronto. “It’s likely that many will want to leverage the equity they’ve built up in their homes as a source of cash flow.”

There are many ways people could access their equity, such as selling their home and downsizing to a cheaper one or even renting while also cutting back on their lifestyle, an approach that enables individuals to access some of their equity without incurring any additional debt.

“Some people’s retirement dream involves moving to a smaller house away from the city,” says Paul Morton, CPA, CA, of Ginsberg Gluzman Fage & Levitz LLP in Ottawa. “Many others may not want to move away from family. For them, the benefits of downsizing may be less, especially given that the appreciation in real estate has made even smaller condos quite expensive.”

For retirees who are determined to stay in their homes, what other options do they have? Two of the most popular choices are a reverse mortgage or a traditional line of credit. Since both are designed to allow homeowners to borrow against the equity in their homes, individuals need to consider whether they would be able to

sustain the associated debt over the longer term, assuming for example they live longer than the average person.

Reverse mortgages

Individuals over 55 years of age may be eligible for a reverse mortgage, allowing them access to up to 50 percent of their homes’ value. The actual amount obtainable through a reverse mortgage depends on the appraised value of the home and the ages of the homeowner and his or her spouse. As long as they continue to live in their homes, homeowners aren’t required to make any principal or interest payments. The reverse mortgage comes due when the home is sold, the last surviving homeowner dies or the homeowners no longer permanently reside in the home.

“Reverse mortgages are primarily designed so seniors can avoid the turmoil and upset of being forced to move out of a home they can no longer afford and find other accommodation,” Choleva says. “Once they receive the funds, there are no restrictions on how the homeowner uses the money except when there is a pre-existing mortgage or a secured line of credit on the house, in which case those debts must be retired first with the funds received from the reverse mortgage.”

Individuals can choose to receive the funds as a one-time lump sum payment, an annuity with a monthly cash payment, a combination of a smaller lump sum and smaller annuity, or they may draw down the funds as needed.

“Reverse mortgages have many attractive features,” Choleva says. “Unlike other types of loans, if the interest and principal of a reverse mortgage exceed the net fair sales value of the home at the

time the mortgage is due, the homeowner or his or her estate is not required to pay the difference.”

On the other hand, Choleva cautions, reverse mortgages also have some less appealing aspects that homeowners need to consider.

For example, interest rates on reverse mortgage are typically about two percent higher than the interest rates levied on traditional mortgages. Like traditional mortgages, interest rates on a reverse mortgage differ depending on the term, however fixed rates are not offered for longer than five years, though a variable rate is available. Interest rates on reverse mortgage loans also compound semi-annually.

While they are not required to do so, homeowners do have the option to pay the interest on the loan annually.

Traditional secured line of credit

An alternative to a reverse mortgage that homeowners may wish to consider is a secured line of credit, Morton says.

Like a reverse mortgage, the funds obtained through a secured line of credit are received tax-free and not added to the homeowner’s taxable income. Similarly, the proceeds won’t affect the homeowner’s eligibility for government benefits, such as Old Age Security. The homeowner’s costs to set up a line of credit are also similar, which include a real estate appraisal, legal fees and other administrative charges. With a line of credit, borrowers will likely also need to have sufficient income to make the required payments.

For homeowners who can afford the required monthly payments, Morton believes lines of credit may provide them

with better options, particularly around interest rates and repayment flexibility.

“Today’s low interest rates won’t last forever,” Morton says. “When they start to rise – and they will eventually – so too will the rates rise that are charged on a reverse mortgage. Those rates are already significantly higher than today’s market rates for other mortgages and loans. Five or ten years from now, when the prime rate is higher, they may be well above what the homeowner can handle.”

By contrast, interest rates on secured lines of credit are as low as the prime rate plus one-half percent. While homeowners do have to make monthly payments on a secured line of credit (unlike a reverse mortgage, where no payments are required until the loan is retired at death or the sale of the house), many lines of credit require payments of interest alone and not principal.

“If the homeowner comes into some money, perhaps through the sale of another asset such as cottage or the maturing of another investment, they can use that money to pay down the line of credit,” Morton says. “A reverse mortgage doesn’t offer that flexibility.”

While reverse mortgages and traditional secured lines of credit each have some attractive features and offer similar benefits, there are differences between the two. Both Choleva and Morton recommend that individuals consult a Chartered Professional Accountant about the benefits and risks associated with these and similar products, as well as other strategies that would best meet their needs and circumstances.

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MANAGING YOUR MONEY



Key pensions decisions that shape your retirement

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

Achieving the retirement lifestyle you want depends on many things – your health, your plans for travelling, volunteering or even starting a new career – but among the most important is having the financial resources to ensure your retirement lifestyle goals become reality. If you are a member of a pension plan, you have some important decisions to make which will have a strong impact on the amount and length of your pension.

Whether your retirement begins tomorrow or somewhere down the road, the time to begin real retirement planning is now – especially when it comes to ensuring you'll have the retirement income you need to realize all your retirement dreams. Here's your retirement planning quick start guide.

1. Decide when your want to retire If you decide to retire 'early' you'll have fewer years to save for retirement. If you retire after 65, you can continue the tax-saving, income-building advantages of investments held in your Registered Retirement Savings Plan (RRSP) until the end of the year in which you turn 71.

2. Decide on your retirement lifestyle Will you keep working at least part of the time, or even start a business? If so, you can save less in advance because even a little extra employment income can go a long way.

3. Conduct a retirement/income analysis Estimate your monthly retirement living expenses like utilities, insurance and mortgage payments. Also consider additional costs such as travel, hobbies, and other forms of entertainment.

Your monthly retirement income will be an accumulation of benefits and payments from various sources – and to get the most out of them, while paying the least amount of tax, you need to know what they are.

Source 1: Public Income Programs

and Pensions – in other words, what the government will pay you in retirement.

Know your government sources of income Find out how much income you can expect from government sources like the Canadian Pension Plan (CPP) or the Québec Pension Plan (QPP) and Old Age Security (OAS).

Old Age Security (OAS) The Old Age Security pension is a monthly payment available to Canadians aged 65 and older who apply and meet certain requirements. Unlike CPP, it is not dependent on a person's employment history and a person does not need to be retired from a job to qualify. It provides a basic monthly pension benefit at age 65. Benefits are taxable, adjusted for inflation, and 'clawed back' in increasing amounts as your individual net income climbs above a threshold amount. Individuals with lower incomes may also qualify for the Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS). High income seniors must pay back all or a portion of their OAS if their annual income exceeds a certain amount. If 2014 net income before adjustments is greater than \$71,592 (\$70,954 for 2013) then you will have to repay 15% of the excess over this amount, to a maximum of the total amount of OAS received. The clawback threshold is indexed each year in the same manner as federal tax brackets and personal tax credits. For anyone whose net income exceeds \$115,716 in 2014, the full amount of OAS is clawed back.

The Canada Pension Plan/Québec Pension Plan ((CPP/QPP)

The Canada Pension Plan is a form of retirement income that is open to all Canadians who have worked and paid into the system through deductions from their paycheques. The amount a person receives under the system depends on how much and for how long a person contributed, along with the age at which a

person started receiving CPP payments. It pays a monthly pension to people who have been employed and contributed to CPP/QPP. Benefits are approximately 25% of your average annual earnings during your working life up to certain limits. Benefits are indexed to inflation, are taxable, and can start at a reduced amount as early as age 60, or as late as age 70 with an increase.

Source 2: Employer-sponsored Pension Plans – in other words, what your employer provides.

Defined Benefit (DB) pension plans provide a specific pension amount paid to you for your lifetime after you retire. The amount of a DB pension benefit is set according to your age, length of service, and salary. It may or may not be indexed for inflation.

Defined Contribution (DC) pension plans are also known as money purchase plans and do not guarantee the amount of your future benefits. DC retirement income depends on accumulated contributions and the investment returns earned by these contributions.

Source 3: Individual Retirement Plans – in other words, what you will provide.

When you retire, investments held in your Registered Retirement Savings Plan (RRSP) can be converted to income in three ways:

A Registered Retirement Income Fund (RRIF) is like an RRSP in reverse. Instead of contributing to it, you withdraw from it. A RRIF offers the flexibility of a wide range of investment choices

as well as your choice of the amount you wish to withdraw each month (subject to an annual minimum withdrawal based on the value of the investments in your RRIF and age.)

An Annuity offers the simplicity of a guaranteed lifetime income but can't be increased to keep up with inflation or escalating living costs.

Cash – convert investments in your RRSP to cash and you will be subject to tax on the entire amount. Not the most attractive option in most cases.

It is important to recognize that CPP and OAS are retirement supplements-not retirement plans in themselves, and need to be combined with other savings including company pension, RRSPs and TFSAs.

Know what you can expect from investments held in your Tax Free Savings Account (TFSA), RRSP and other investments. Also know the rules governing the withdrawal of income and the taxes that may be applied. Add up all sources of monthly retirement income including your savings and investment withdrawals. Compare this against your estimate of monthly retirement living expenses. If you come up short, you may need to rethink your planned retirement lifestyle, ramp up your savings strategies, or both.

Disclaimer:

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Community Watch

Ontario Sri Lankan Pensioners Association held its 4th AGM

The Ontario Sri Lankan Pensioners Association (OSPA) held its 4th AGM on April 5, 2014 at the Family Miracle Church 1100 Bellamy Road, Scarborough, presided over by Regis Jogendra, President, The invitees were: Hon'ble Mitzi Hunter, MPP Scarborough-Guildwood; Logan Kanapathi, Markham Councillor and contender for Federal Liberal nomination; Gary Anandasangaree, Barrister & Solicitor, Human Rights Activist and contender for Federal Liberal nomination, Sri Lanka's Consul General Asoka Gulawita, Rev. David Loganathan of Miracle Temple and Kirew Kanagasabai, Broker, Home Life Today Realty Ltd.

The President Regis Jogendra after welcoming all those present including the invitees said that among others they were pursuing two important issues, namely the non-payment of the uniform increases granted by Sri Lanka Parliament to all pensioners irrespective of their residence, but not paid to those in Canada and the non-award of pension to those displaced due to displacement as provided by the Ministry of Public Administration No:14. He said that the Consul General had regretted his inability to attend but had said that any concerns raised by members be notified to him for attention by him.

Hon' Mitzi Hunter MPP thanked the President and Association for inviting her assured that she would lend her support in whatever way possible for their cause. Logan Kanapathi, who donated the second prize for the Fund Raising Lottery that was held on that day assured his support to the cause of the pensioners. Gary Anandasangaree also said that the pensioners were those who had worked faithfully and

diligently and given their services to their government were duly entitled to their rewards in return and he would lend his support for them. Kirew Kanagasabai said that he having seen the activities of the OSPA would continue to support them in the future as well. It was unanimously resolved that the Board of Directors be empowered to take all necessary action to achieve the objects and help the members in all possible ways. It was also resolved that the activities should be extended to hold social events also.

The following were unanimously elected to the Board for the ensuing year: Messer's. President: Regis Jogendra; Vice-President: Stanley de Silva and Maya Kandiah; Secretary: S. Velautham; Treasurer: N. Sathananthan; Asst. Secy: R. Shanmugaratnam; Asst. Treasurer: N. Viveganathan; Board Members: K. Vaidivelu; R. Ragupathy; N. Skandarajah; T. Thangarajah; Siva Sivaramalingam; Douglas Tissaveerasinghe; S. Matheiparanam; K.C. Nadarajah; S.L. James Sr.; R. Sundaralingam; V.V. Somasegaram; Kirthie Perera; Auditor: M. Velauthapillai; Advisor Manuel Jesudasan, Barrister & Solicitor. The Secretary Mr. Shanmugaratnam in proposing the vote of thanks, thanked all those present and the invitees for their presence and participation also Kiew Kanagasabai for donating the first prize, Logan Kanapathi for the second prize and Board Member N. Skandarajah for the third prize. He also thanked Rev. David Loganathan for providing the Hall free of charge for their AGM. Lunch was served at the end of the meeting. The meeting came to a termination by 1.00 p.m. Long live the OSPA.



ONTARIO VOLUNTEER SERVICES AWARDS - 2014

Six members of the Scarborough Senior Thamils' Association were recognized for their 10 Year & 5 Year volunteer service. They were presented with lapel and certificate by Mr. Bas Balkissoon, M.P.P; for Scarborough-Rouge River at the Ontario Volunteer Service Awards ceremony that took place on Wednesday, April 16, 2014 at the Brighton conven-

tion Centre, 2155 McNicoll Avenue, Toronto, Ontario.

Those in the picture are Mrs. Mathura Pathmanathan, Mrs. Jeyarane Poopalingam, Mrs. Nageswary Thurairajasingam, Mr. Bas Balkissoon, M.P.P., for Scarborough-Rouge River, Mr. Muthiah Thevarajah and Mr. Somasundaram Kanesu. (Mr. S. Navaratnam - absent)



Tyrone Fernando files nomination papers for Town of Ajax

On March 6th 2014 Mr. Tyrone Fernando filed his nomination papers for Town of Ajax, Regional Councillor Wards 1&2 for local Council elections on October 27th 2014. Tyrone is a Sri Lankan and migrated to Canada as an independent Immigrant 25 yrs ago. He has lived in Ajax for the last 13 Yrs. He operates his own Business and is the President and CEO of Geesha Foods International Inc. he has shown tremendous leadership in his community and is a Service oriented person. He has organized several community events, which include Fund Raising Projects for "Children's Wish Foundation" and "Roses of Durham". He also organized a "One Match"

Clinic in association with the Canadian Blood Services in order to find a match for Patients suffering from Luekemia. He was also the Past Grand Knight of the Knights of Columbus, Council 6161. He is a professional Marketing Graduate, graduating from The Chartered Institute of Marketing London England and was a Senior Lecturer for these Professional exams conducted at Colombo Business School in Colombo 3. If elected he will be the first Sri Lankan to be represented in the Town of Ajax Council. If anyone is interested in volunteering or supporting his candidature in any way you could contact him at 416 804 0762 or email at contact@tyronefernando.ca



Handing over nomination papers to Manager of Legislative Services- Nicole Wellsbury



Silver Nite 2014 Gala

The 25th annual dinner gala Silver Nite 2014 organized by the Hindu College Colombo Alumni Association of North America was held on April 12, 2014 at Woodbine Banquet Hall. Current President of the association Elanko Ratnasabapathy welcomed and addressed the packed house of old boys, spouses and guests. Popular Toronto musical group Shiners lead by an old boy of school entertained the crowd by their musical performance.

(Pictures by: Gnane Gnanendran)





TAMILculture

VOLUME 2

TamilCulture - the 1st Online Tamil Lifestyle Media Brand has collaborated with Monsoon Journal to bring you some of their most popular articles. We hope you enjoy this spread.

THE TAMIL MILLIONAIRE NEXT DOOR

THEY SAY GOOD FENCES MAKE GOOD NEIGHBORS. I SAY I DON'T NEED A FENCE WITH MY NEIGHBOR RAVI. RAVI AND HIS FAMILY ARE EVERY HOME OWNER'S DREAM NEIGHBORS. A PICTURE PERFECT YOUNG TAMIL FAMILY OF HUSBAND, WIFE AND TWO TODDLERS. THE ONLY CATCH IS RAVI IS ALSO A MILLIONAIRE. A MILLIONAIRE AMONG THE MIDDLE CLASS IN OUR NEIGHBORHOOD- A NEW MEMBER OF THE MUCH MALIGNED 1%.

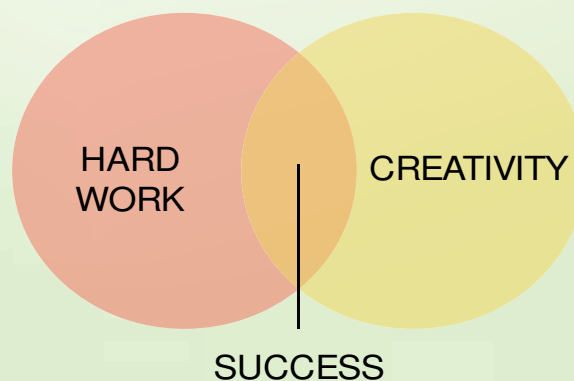
AUTHOR: RON

I've always wondered what makes some people wealthy, many a middle class and a lot poor. Is it luck? Effort? Then there's the issue of wealth and happiness. Can money buy happiness and peace of mind? Is the 1% a happy lot? Ravi held the answers I was looking for.

I met Ravi in University. He was a man of few words and always ready to learn new things. He did not talk about people, instead he chose to discuss ideas. He was entrepreneurial at heart and always experimenting with new ideas. He succeeded in some and failed in others, but that did not deter him. When he was a student, he grew organic vegetables in his garden and delivered them door to door in the neighborhood to help put himself through school.

Ravi is a popular person in our neighborhood. He is the first one to shovel the snow at five in the morning long before everyone else is starting their day. His garage is clutter free, grass well-manicured and backyard is full of flowers in the spring. He became the benchmark for all the wives in our neighborhood to compare their husbands against.

After graduation, Ravi held on to his job and started a tax and bookkeeping business part time. "You don't become rich working for someone else," he once quipped over the fence. He dabbled in the stock market and lost some money. I always knew he was scheming, plotting, running his imagination wild and up to something. I lost track of him in recent years.



I invited Ravi for a BBQ this spring. What was meant to be a show of neighborliness turned out to be a view into Ravi's mind, thoughts and wealth. Ravi had finally succeeded in his efforts. About 10 years ago Ravi bought a small house in a university town to rent out to students. The cash flow was good. More than that, he saw the demand and opportunity and scaled with leverage the number of houses to over 10 in a short span of time. He caught the real estate wave at the right time. The price appreciation and cash flow over time had put a big smile on his face and envy on mine. Still, Ravi appeared like an average Tamil Joe. There was no outward sign of wealth. No Maserati in his driveway. I confronted him.

"I don't believe in logos," he said. "I believe in experiences." I understood him immediately. Money had indeed brought happiness to him. He did not go on a vacation to Cuba. Cuba, he said, was for the masses. He flew first

class to Fiji. Money had bought him the peace of mind. He never really cared about what his boss thought about him nor was he there to compete with his co-workers to win the rat race. Indeed money had allowed him to buy the experiences he wanted. Experiences including a personal chef to cook organic food for his family, membership in an exclusive club, expensive parties to entertain and interact with people who enhanced his life. He had outsourced most of his day to day work and focuses only on what he enjoys the most.

Ravi's success is due to his relentless effort. He is not a tycoon who started a resource or technology company and made millions overnight. He made money in his own ways – slow and steady, a typical story of a middle class millionaire. He got the risk and reward equation right. He is a person who is looking for ways to transform one dollar into two. He is a millionaire today and I have no doubt will be a multimillionaire tomorrow. As for me, I am glad the fence is short enough to get some words of wisdom from Ravi.

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Taking Matters into My Own Hands: How I Sought Help to Manage My ADHD

Author: Meera Navaratnam

My name is Meera. I am a 20 year old Tamil female living in the GTA. I attend university. I like to watch hockey, dance Bharatanatyam, take care of my pets, and play video games. I also have ADHD.

ADHD

Artistic Daring Humorous Dynamic

Well that's a new one, isn't it? It isn't every day you hear a quality of that kind lumped in with the others. I would have not expected it myself had it not been for a series of events that made me take a step back and think about the person I really was.

Early in my childhood, I was praised for being a model student. I had demonstrated the values necessary to be deemed the "perfect" daughter: bright, well-behaved, and capable of excelling at any task I was approached with. These qualities served as the foundation for not who I wanted to be, but rather who I supposedly needed to be. I dedicated my efforts to work towards this image of perfectionism, and I was well ahead of the crowd in that regard.

As I got older, however, I was expected to handle larger and more varied workloads. My time had to be delegated accordingly to a growing number of commitments and tasks now required more focus from me. While this transition seemed to go more smoothly for my peers, I found myself not able to sustain the mental effort to do the same. Reading was a chore as I spent 15 minutes fixated on a single paragraph. My brain refused to remember or process anything, and the effort to get through a single page wore me out. I found myself turning away from school work in favour of easier mental tasks, such as surfing the web. This escape was not available to me during tests and exams, however. Questions would lose meaning to me as I attempted to understand them within the time constraint. Despite the extra studying I was required to do, my efforts were in vain. I would receive yet another C- as a result of not carefully reading the question.

"It is just a phase," I thought. "I just need to work harder. I am certainly capable of handling this in the future."

It did not stop there. These struggles continued to spill over to other areas of my life. I was despondent and distracted while having conversations, and often found myself asking people to repeat themselves. The more I drove, the more fearful I was of creating an accident as I ran stop signs and red lights without a second thought. I could not even be bothered with completing housework; promising to take the pizza out of the oven but then immediately getting sidetracked by something else.

My challenges overwhelmed me considerably more when I moved out and attended university. Every bad grade I had received was followed by an effort to work harder, and each one ultimately ended in failure. I was overcome with grief, and the depression shortly followed. I would succumb to severe anxiety when I picked up a pencil; breaking down in fear that I would repeat my mistakes once again. My everyday functioning was impeded by panic attacks and the lack of motivation. I was no longer able to work towards the person I wanted to be.

Upon approaching my parents about the issues I faced, their responses struck me in the same, frustrated manner, but with increasing frequency:

"You make so many careless mistakes! You could have gotten a higher mark if you just paid attention!"

"You forgot your lunch AGAIN? Why do you forget things that you do every day? You always have your head in the clouds!"

"I told you to do the laundry! Instead you sit here on your computer and waste time! You are so lazy!"

The recurring scolding seemed like a regularity growing up, and I was convinced that any explanation for my inability to follow directions was an excuse. Even to this day, it is hard to completely accept that I have a disorder, as I was unknowingly conditioned to adhere to a stigma that was a product of my culture. It was not until I had reached the beginning of my independence and started viewing the world through an unfiltered lens that I came to a stark realization. The difficulties I had in my life were not "typical" of those of my peers, who were more satisfied with their lives. I had a serious problem that prevented me from being as happy and successful as I could possibly be. It was a problem that was previously incomparable because it was repressed by the age-old notion of "You look fine, therefore you are fine."

I finally acted on my hunches and started to do some research. After weeks of researching websites and articles, my problems were consistent with the symptoms of Attention-Deficit Hyperactive Disorder, or ADHD. I read through various forums, and I found that the personal accounts of those that identified with ADHD resonated with me in a way that was all too familiar. These individuals had also received treatment in some form, and had seen significant improvement over the course of their lives. Never have I so feverishly desired the same improvement, and I knew I had to stop at nothing to achieve it.

Upon recognizing that I needed to seek treatment, I set out on a mission to finally get it. This was a personal and secret mission, as I knew that enlisting the help of my parents would result in a fruitless effort. I was initially held back by the thought of betraying my parents' trust; something that I valued greatly. Getting an assessment alone would cost a lot of money, not to mention that I needed to be deceptive about my trips to the clinic. Ultimately, I decided that my health issues were only understandable to their full extent by me, and only I could experience what the best treatment would be. I would unfortunately inflict some damage on my relationship with my parents when it came to major decisions involving medication and finances, but the resultant benefits would outweigh the costs. Once I came to terms with all of this, I went ahead and booked an appointment. I had undergone the assessment, and the verdict had me relieved: I was diagnosed with having a textbook case of ADHD.

It is odd that I would be satisfied with an outcome like that, right? Why was I happy that I had just been told that I had a neurological dysfunction, one that hindered my ability to function well within this society?

It was because I was finally given a reason for my problems. It wasn't an attack on my character, or that everything I tried to do was wrong. Rather, another part of me had been finally uncovered after years of struggling and disappointment. I felt as if all of the questions I ever had about myself were finally answered. Now it was time for me to receive treatment, and it was at this point that I had to bring my parents into the picture.

I told them what the psychiatrist had told me, and you can imagine how well that went. I was met with disbelief, criticism, and disappointment. They were opposed to the idea of me taking a pill every day and the side effects that would come about. I had to keep a firm stance, as I had let them be the judges for far too long. I reasoned with them that I was old enough to make my own decisions about my health, and that this was not something that they could comprehend at the time.

I reassured them that I had done the research necessary, and while my body would undergo changes during the transition, it would be worth it in the end. They were frustrated with my persistence and thought they were losing control of me but after a good back and forth of conflicting ideals, they eventually relented.

They realized that even as parents, they did not know how everything worked outside of the teachings they grew up with. My mother and father were not necessarily happy with the fact that I would be on medication for a good while, but they still respected that I had to do what was best for me. This was not a victory over my parents; instead it was an acknowledgement that everything that they could impose was not always applicable to my circumstances. I couldn't have asked for anything more from them. They were finally showing more openness on their part, and it was a step in the right direction.

After months of enduring the effects of my medication and the seemingly endless string of doctor's appointments, I feel like both my old self and a new person. My concentration and memory have improved significantly. Maintaining focus is now an effortless thing, and I am more attentive to my day-to-day activities. My university transcript is starting to fill up with grades that I had not seen in over 10 years. Aside from reaffirming my capabilities, I have also made improvements that not even I could have foreseen. My anxiety has diminished to a level where I find myself taking more initiative with every goal I want to reach. I am able to vocalize the thoughts and opinions floating around in my head with little fear. I find myself taking control over my own decisions; ones that have determining factors on my happiness. The need to comply with that coveted image of perfection was no longer there. I used to cling onto that ideal so tightly, thinking that I needed it to be successful. I have now come to the realization that success was possible without my parents, and by extension, Tamil society, telling me what is right. Doing what was best for me while disregarding traditional beliefs about mental health is what has gotten me where I am today, and so far, I feel far from regretful.

It can be difficult to decide what is best for yourself while factoring in the well-being of those around you. At the end of the day though, it is your life – only you know what will bring you the utmost happiness. Do not let the expectations of others stop you from seeking out the help you need. Mental health clinics and help groups are located everywhere, and if you doubt or suspect even the slightest aspect of your mental health, don't be afraid to take matters into your own hands. Challenging the social constructs that have shaped your very being presents steep risks—it's no wonder that we often fear the unknown. But the potential to live your life on better terms than you have ever known is worth venturing into uncharted territory.





The Great Gluten-Free Craze

Author: **Sujantha Nathan**

At this juncture my curiosity was piqued regarding all things gluten-free. I wanted to know and learn what all the fuss was about, and what better way than to immerse oneself in it. So it didn't take much convincing before I decided to give the gluten-free diet a go.

Here I was all ready to become a glutenista!

Now that I had decided to embrace this diet, all of a sudden gluten-free items seemed to pop up everywhere. How could I have been so blind to aisles of gluten-free products in the grocery stores, I wondered in amazement. There were your basic run of the mill gluten-free products. And if that didn't tickle your fancy, there were gluten-free organic products and even better gluten-free organic vegan products – the choices were endless.

What is gluten you wonder? Well in simplified laymen's terms, think of gluten as the glue-like substance that gives wheat and other products their chewy structure.

If one is to look in the rear-view mirror, they will recall that not too long ago gluten-free food was only consumed by hippies and those with coeliac disease.

So why the sudden avoidance of gluten you ask? Well, the wheat products we consume today have been drastically modified to where it now bears little resemblance to the original wheat that our grandmothers used. Sadly, most wheat these days is genetically modified. The modifications made to wheat was an attempt to end world hunger by producing larger crop yields. Unfortunately, while harvests increased so did gluten levels. But world hunger never ended!

I guess it's the high levels of gluten in wheat with genetically modified elements that has many latching on to the gluten-free craze. Why did it even make a big splash on the news that Gwyneth Paltrow had put her children on a gluten-free diet? Does this mean that her daughter Apple can't have bread?

What happened next all transpired accidentally.

I was seated for a nice dinner at a fine establishment pouring over my oversized menu when I came across the letters 'gf' printed next to certain dishes. Pardon me, but 'gf' stands for girlfriend in my texting world. Without a clue and slightly annoyed I wondered aloud, "What in God's green earth goes 'gf' stand for?" From across the table boomed the words "gluten-free, silly." Silly indeed – that's how I felt.

That's when I decided what better time than the present to dive into my current craze. And so I ordered my first gluten-free meal. It consisted of sustainable local fish with black rice, shaved fennel, squid, parsley and rouille. Despite my initial reservations, the dish was fork-licking delicious.



But all wasn't great in the land of gluten-free paradise. The big letdown came when I sampled the gluten-free, yeast free ancient grains bread. Let's say it was like a slice of cardboard made of grains and nuts! I chalked it up to a small bump on the road and kept on trekking on my path of gluten-free week.

The saving grace was when I found out that most South Asian curries were kosher to the gluten-free diet. I breathed a huge sigh of relief! Even better was the fact that many restaurants these days cater to their gluten-free patrons quite well. Why, there is even gluten-free beer – now that's something to be said!



Truth be said, the gluten-free diet wasn't that intrusive on my daily life. I have to admit that thanks to this diet I was forced to eat more wholesome food than usual. More importantly I became more aware of the ingredients that went into my meals. Sadly, out the window went: pasta, pizza, bread, cakes, muffins – the list seemed endless to my gluten loving self.

Be warned gluten-free doesn't mean fat-free. Yet many have professed that they have lost weight being on the gluten-free diet, and I too belong to that camp.

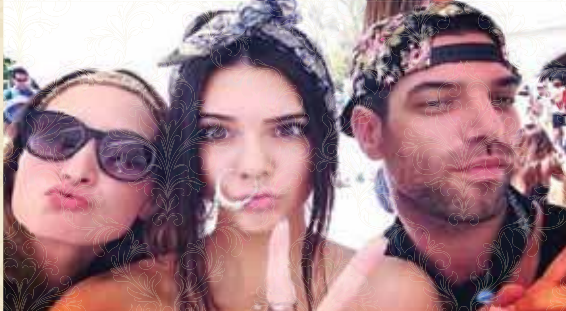
So how was it being a glutenista you ask? Not bad, not bad indeed. It's definitely not a diet for everyone. But if you are the adventurous type that is looking for the next craze diet to jump on to, then this sure is a good one to try.

My positive attitude towards the gluten-free craze prompted my gluten-free friend to ask, if I was adventurous enough to try the vegan diet. She had barely gotten to the end of the sentence before I vanished faster than Houdini. For a meat loving creature like me, the vegan diet would have to wait until my next life!





Coachella : Hipster Music Festival & Haven For Cultural Appropriation



The Coachella Valley Music and Arts Festival, commonly known as Coachella recently wrapped up in California and I have a bone to pick. Coachella attracts music lovers (who apparently don't know who OutKast is and boos them for half their performance...) from all over the world, but ultimately turns into a hipster fest. You'll find rich (predominantly white), snobby teenage celebrities like Kylie and Kendall Jenner and Selena Gomez, who rock pottus and South Asian wedding jewelry.

Now, I'm not into fashion, nor do I care to keep up with trends or the latest happenings. But what does irk me to the point where I want to physically lunge myself across the room (is that possible?) is how these boho-hippie-fashionistas appropriate South Asian culture. Not only do they not acknowledge the culture they're appropriating, they completely disregard the overall significance of it and the symbolisms they use as fashion props. Hello, colonialism, hello white privilege?

"But Thushaa, they're only appreciating the culture" is a rebuttal I hear far too often from non-South Asians and surprisingly, South Asians alike. What is appreciating a culture? Taking things from it and turning it into fads and trends? Appropriating cultures of PoCs (People of Colour), particularly through pop culture, has been happening for decades. Madonna did it, Lady Gaga does it, Gwen Stefani too. Despite public criticism by PoC, the popularity of it seems to have either skyrocketed in recent years or social media platforms such as Instagram have unfortunately garnered them more undeserved attention.

Author: **Mathusha S.**

So, how does cultural appropriation hurt South Asian culture? Simple – by allowing them, the outsiders to take what is of importance to us and commercialize it, diminishes the value, meaning and significance of what we've carried on for centuries. It also speaks to the power relationship and the subjugation we as marginalized, non-white communities can face.

Growing up in the 90s, I found myself surrounded by Tamil girls who felt that embracing their culture was embarrassing. "You're so fobby" they'd say to their friend when she came to school in gold bangles, jhumkis or little black pottus. It wasn't as though this was exclusive to Tamil girls or the Tamil community. My North Indian friends felt the same way. I never used to pay attention to the attitudes we developed around being uncomfortable with our traditions and values. It seemed almost normal to feel embarrassed by it.



Recently in Toronto, Reetu Gupta attended a Raptors basketball game rocking a South Asian outfit (she rushed to the game from a wedding). Since she sat seats away from Drake, cameras captured her on numerous occasions, which resulted in outbursts of embarrassment from mainly South Asian Tweeters. While Madonna or Selena Gomez are called trendy for wearing pottus, we are called out for being at best 'exotic', at worst 'foreign', not 'integrated', or 'assimilated' into the majority white culture when wearing the same. And we do it to ourselves too.



By allowing and praising the likes of Selena Gomez and Kylie Jenner when they appropriate South Asian culture, we give away part of what is rightfully ours. These things don't teach the general public about customs or traditions. They are occupations and distortions. Little 14-year-old teenagers on Instagram aren't Googling the significance of a "sticker" on Jenner's forehead. What exactly are we taking pride in? This Urban Outfitter blog post alone, which suggests that people should hop on the pottu trend, is reason enough for a wake-up call. And what do these celebrities do when the trend is over? They chuck away their pottus and move on to the next prop, from another culture and another people.

It's about time we got over feeling embarrassed about who we are, where we come from and the traditions that make up our culture. Don't be that person. It's time to take back our culture.



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Arangetram for Shamira Prabakaran



Bharathanatyam Arangetram of Shamira Prabakaran, Disciple of Naattiya Kalaimani, Bharathakala Viththakar Smt. Sujevi Nissankaraj (Director of Sai Niruthya Dance School) was held at the Chinese Cultural Centre of Greater Toronto on April 19th, 2014. The event started at 6 pm with the first dance item Pushpanjali. This was followed by eight more dances which were choreographed by Shamira's Guru. Shamira started learning Bharathanatyam under her Guru at age 5. Honourable MP. Rathika Sitsabaisesan was the Chief Guest of the event. Smt. Shanta Ponnudurai of Sruti Laya Fine Arts Academy, Roland Rutland and Dineshkumar Subramaniam graced the event as special guests. The theatre was filled with more than 400 audiences who applaud and cheered Shamira after each performance.

Some photos from the event can be seen here.



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Media Launch of the Family Violence Conference



On April 16th, 2014, The Impact of Family Violence Conference launched its upcoming initiative. Social Services Network, along with the Durham Regional Police Service, with support from University of Ontario Institute of Technology and Durham College, the York and Durham Children's Aid Society, Peel Regional Police, Toronto Police Service, York Regional Police, York and Durham District School board along with a dedicated group of professionals and front-line workers representing 25 diverse organizations launched leading this year's community led initiative to address domestic violence from a South Asian perspective.

Attendees included representatives from the Durham Regional Police Services, the Town of Whitby, Women's Multicultural Resource and Counselling Centre of Durham, Durham Tamil Association, Durham Children's Aid Society, as well as the Albanian Canadian Community Association. Media channels which covered the conference included Metroland, Durham Radio News, Tamil-ONE, Channel 12 and DRPS Corporate Communications.



Impact of Family Violence Conference: A South Asian Perspective



Presented by
Social Services Network

Date:

May 14 and 15, 2014

Keynote speakers:

Dr. Yasmin Jiwani , Professor, Communication Studies, Concordia University, Montreal, Quebec, Canada.
Aparna Bhattacharyya , Executive Director, Raksha, Atlanta, Georgia, USA.

Where:

University of Ontario Institute of Technology and Durham College shared campus 2000 Simcoe Street North, Oshawa, Ontario.

Registration fee:

\$100 Early bird fee (before April 15)
\$130 Regular registration

How to register:

www.socialservicesnetwork.org/FVC2014.aspx
fvc@socialservicesnetwork.org
1.855.254.6104

Partners and sponsors:





TEAM DTA's RAISED \$3,606.85 TO THE CANADIAN CANCER SOCIETY

It is Durham Tamil Association's tradition since 2012, we have been raising funds for Canadian Cancer Society's Daffodil Campaign. Our energetic TEAM DTA Youth tirelessly worked on April 4th 5th and 6th to raise funds for the Daffodil Campaign. The youth were at Pickering Town Center, Walmart, Sobeys, Beer Store, Loblaws, No Frills and Freshco requesting the residents for support. Our objective is to improve every year, and our dedicated proved it once again. We collected \$2,006.75 in 2012, \$2,141.25 in 2013 and \$3606.85 in 2014. During the Easter Parade that was held in Pickering on April 19th, the big cheque was given to Kendra Chopcian of Canadian Cancer Society by TEAM DTA President Josh Suresh and Treasurer Kumar Rasingam. MP Cornelu Chisu, MPP Tracy MacCharles, Mayor of Pickering Dave Ryan, Pickering Councillor Doug Dickerson, ICCAD Chair Person Mrs. Shashi Bhatia and personnel of Royal Canadian Legion were present to encourage the efforts of TEAM DTA Youth. Sincere thanks to President Mr. Josh Suresh, Vice President Mr. Kanga Sivanathan, Parent Volunteers - Mrs. Norin Francis, Mrs. Dujavanthi Shwetsweare, Mr. Swiss Johnson & their kids - little Antony & Mary, Mrs. Uma Vijayakumar, Mr. Muhunthan Annalingam, Mrs. Vathany Sriranjan, Mrs. Padmavathy Kumar, Secretary Mr. Mano Pancharatnam, Mr. Sivanesan Sithamparapillai, Mr. Raguvarnan Ehamparam, Mr. Muthalitharan Kanthavanam, Mr. Utha Manick, Mr. Thillairajah Nagalingam, and Mrs. Nalini Pariag who helped us with logistics.



Abbey Thomas Abishna Jayasundararajah Ali Shahbaz Anita Hasan Arabi Sriranjana Archana Thurairajah Ashley Kugaraj



Brianna Pariag Divij Kumar Ishan Sevak Jesihan Ravichandran Joshua Francis Keeran Svanesan Lavaniyah Kanthavanam



Maenusha Raguvarnan Mathush Muhunthan Melani Vijayakumar Neraja Thillairajah Rishi Suresh Saranya Suresh Shawne Nimalan



Vithushan Vijayakumar Dujavanthi Sebastian Mary Shwetsweare Anthony Shwetsweare Shwetsweare Johnson Uma Suresh



Durham Tamil Association – Women Achiever of 2014



DTA's Uma Suresh with Hedvig Alexander



DTA's Uma Suresh with Esther Enyolu, ED of WMRCC

The Dancing Damsels Inc., a registered non-profit dance promotions company, celebrated the Women Achiever Award Ceremony at the North York Memorial Community Hall. The event celebrated and recognized the social, economic and political success of women in our community. Canada's first Indo-Canadian female Senator Dr. Asha Seth inaugurated the event. The key note address on the theme "Inspiring Change" was given by Mrs. Hedvig Christine Alexander, who has changed the lives of many women in Afghanistan and Africa. Mrs. Esther Enyolu, Executive Director of WMRC-Durham and Mrs. Shashi Bhatia, Chair Person of ICCAD were invited as guest speakers for the event.

Mrs. Uma Suresh, Program and Membership Coordinator of Durham Tamil Association was chosen to be awarded by Mrs. Mary Ashok, President of Dancing Damsels and her selection committee. Mary Ashok appreciated Uma for her inspirational, dedicated and extraordinary commitment to the community of Durham. Her ongoing commitment to make a significant difference in the lives of youth in Durham was appreciated in this event. Uma Suresh received the award from Jo-Ann Savoie, President at Ontario Women in Law Enforcement, who appreciated her exceptional contribution to Durham. It was a proud and prestigious moment for many members of Durham Tamil Association who were witnessing the event.



DTA's Uma Suresh was honored with Women Achiever 2014 Award by Jo-Ann Savoie - President of Ontario Women in Law Enforcement.

In her speech, Uma Suresh mentioned "Remember that when you leave this earth, you can take nothing that you received-But only what you have given : a full heart, enriched by honest service, love, sacrifice and courage"

Durham Tamil Association was invited by Bangladesh Community Service to take part in their New Year Celebration "Baishaki" that was held in Pickering Nuclear Center on April 12th. TEAM DTA Youth helped the organizers in many ways. The evening was filled with music, dance and cultural performances along with delicious, traditional food of Bangladesh. ->



Bangladeshi New Year Festival Baishaki by BCS



TEAM DTA's big cheque for \$3606.85 was given to Canadian Cancer Society during the Easter Parade in Pickering



2014 Academic Competition

The 2014 Tamil Cultural and Academic Society of Durham Academic Competitions in Drawing, English, Math and Tamil were held on Sunday April 6, 2014 at the tutoring offices of IQ Brainers, 1801 Harwood Avenue North in Ajax.

As announced in the opening introduction by Tom Thiru, The President of TCASD, one of the primary focuses of this organization is to provide the Durham

youth and young children opportunities to excel in academic endeavours. This competition truly reflected the vision, focus and objectives of the organization and was well attended in the more than 40 competitions that were written.

Competitions in Tamil, English, Drawing and Tamil, ranging in Grades from Junior Kindergarten to Grade 10 were written and were supervised by

TCASD Durham youth. The results will be announced in May.

Congratulations to all TCASD members who participated in the Competition 2014, and keep up the good work in always taking up opportunities to challenge one's academic excellence. Please see the pictures from the event.



Easter Bunny comes to Pickering, OPG

Tamil Cultural and Academic Society of Durham celebrated the Easter weekend at OPG, 1675 Montgomery Park Road, South, Pickering, in full festive spirit. Dozens of Pickering, Ajax, Whitby and Oshawa children and parents came together on Saturday for a fun-filled afternoon.

The children applied their creative skills in drawing beautiful Easter eggs while parents gathered alongside for good old-fashioned family togetherness.

Once the beautiful drawings had been displayed, then followed the long awaited Easter Egg Hunt. It was an exciting moment for the young ones who filled the Centre with laughter and enjoyment. The winners of the Easter Egg Hunt were Aran Hiritharan, Magilini Hiritharan, Sharuya Prathapan, Sharuya Prathapan, and Manusa Muralitharan. Congratulations for their perseverance and adventurous spirit.

Many thanks go to our own Durham youth Arts

and craft leaders, Abira, Lavanya and Iswarya for their meticulous planning of creative art opportunities every two weeks, and running this highly popular program.

The afternoon ended with lots of cake, short eats, drinks and treats. The children of the Tamil Cultural and Academic centre went home exhilarated with their treasures and gifts. Please see the pictures from the event.





Tamil Cultural Association of Waterloo celebrates its 25th Anniversary

In the mid 1980s a small group of Tamils decided to make a difference, in the face of great odds, in a small South western Town of Kitchener-Waterloo. Their mission started with the love for their Sri Lankan & Indian Culture, heritage and dedication to pass the language onto the next generation. The founding members surmounted immense difficulties, found

common ground in helping preserve and celebrate the Tamil Culture.

This year, the cultural association, on the occasion of our 25th anniversary to celebrate the growth of the association as well as remembering the legacy. A Tamil language school has been established with the support of Waterloo Region District School Board. A

cultural bridge has been established between the students of University of Waterloo and the association. The president, Mrs. Rajivi Nadarajah and Secretary Mr. Sivakumar Somasundram welcomed the guests at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Kitchener. Greeting from Governor General Hon. David Johnston was read. Cultural programs and dinner followed.





Diversity Awards Gala presented by the Tamil community

Waterloo-Wellington Region's first Diversity Awards Gala was held on the 26th of April at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Kitchener. A large number of guests from the region and Toronto area attended the event. The president of the Tamil Cultural Association of Waterloo region graced the occasion. "It is a great privilege for me to work alongside the diverse cultural associations in the region in presenting the

first Diversity Awards Gala. We are celebrating the value of diverse cultures at the awards gala today and Honourees join a distinguished group of individuals who have made meaningful contributions to society at large, as well as to their organization. You will also be mesmerized and entertained by cultural programs from the various organizations she said.

A total of five awards were presented. The win-

ners were Youth award – Nidhi Juthani, Business – Prakash Venkataraman, Volunteer - Shu Huei Lee (Sue Lee), Narine Dat Sookram and Zainab Ramahi. Cultural programs from the Tamil, German, Chinese, Latin, African and Mennonite community were showcased. Dinner and cake cutting ceremony followed. The secretary, Sivakumar Somasundram thanked all sponsors and performers.



K1 Awards – Community of Champion



Dancers from EL SOMBRERO AZUL, Danzas y Culturas, representing the K-W Latin Community



City of Kitchener Councillor, Dan Glenn Graham presenting an award



TCAWR Secretary Siva Kumar, President Rajivi Nadarajah and Kitchener-Waterloo MPP Cathrine Fife.

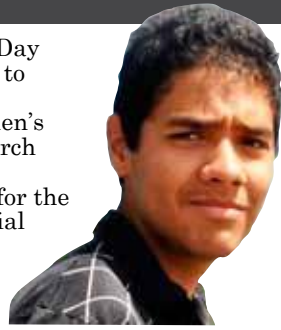


Dancers from the Tamil community performing a Peacock dance



United Nations events in Durham Region

United Nations Day Events Staged to Commemorate the International Women's Day and Week, March 8-14, and the UN International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination March 21.



Writer Fernando Lopez

"A Voices in the Community Assembly," organized by students and staff at Pickering High School in partnership with the Baha'i communities of Durham Region, was the first event staged. According to Student Emcees, and Panel Discussion Moderators, Saadia Naim, Trevor Hume, Moderators, Hamza Naim, and Chester Madrazo, the Assembly was staged to:

1. "Commemorate, and to reflect on the progress made towards gender equality, as well as to honour the contributions which women have made locally, nationally and internationally."

2. "Keep alive, at a direct school and community level, the call of the General Assembly of the United Nations, made in 1996, for the international community to increase its efforts to eliminate all forms of racial discrimination."

Assembly guest panelists were: Mary Collins, Associate Dean at Durham College, School of Skilled Trades, Apprenticeships, & Renewable Technology. Acting Sergeant, Keith Richards, who is in charge of Recruiting and Staffing for the Durham Region Police Service, and Kim Downs, a local business woman, and social justice advocate.

The second event staged to commemorate the two United Nations Day events was: the "Peace and Community Harmony Concert,"

- Towards a Global Society.

Staged at the Forest Brook Community Church in Ajax, the evening of the March 21, the Concert was a community partnership initiative between the Baha'i communities of Durham Region, and Mr. Kevin Armstrong, the Senior Pastor at the Forest Brook Community Church in Ajax.

The Concert, which was attended by 220 people; featured over a 100 performers including, singers, dancers and musicians, children, pre-youth, youth and adults representing the diverse cultures, ethnicities, religious organizations, and social service groups, that have contributed significantly, as do all groups and organizations, to the social, cultural and economic growth, of the Town of Ajax, and in neighboring municipalities, that make the Durham Region such a vibrant and unique community. Six PCH Concerts have been staged at the FBCC since March of 2012.

The evening also featured a Diversity Equity Forum, that consisted of social service, religious, arts organizations, schools and a municipality, setting up displays to promote their mission statements, services, and diversity, human rights and equity initiatives. Both events were deliverables of the "Peace and Community Harmony Project," that was started in 2002. Musicians, singers and dancers, performing were the: Drum Artz "Samba Kids"- steel pan drum, and drum artists; the "French Belles" the French Horn Section, of the Pickering Community Concert Band; the FBCC Youth Band. Singers: the Young Singers Choral Choir; "1nes" Multi Media Youth Empowerment Project, from the Nancy Campbell CVI in Stratford; the "Femtones," acapella singers from Pickering High school; Christina Nieto, from the FBCC; Mitchell Daniels and Haifa Behbahani. Dancers: the McGrath Highland Dancers; Isha Prasad, Bharatanatyam dancer, and dancers from the Academic and Fine Arts of Durham.

The Musical Performing Arts Concert, started befittingly, on a spiritual note, with "Prayers for Peace." Readers were:



The McGrath Highland Dancers

Assistant Priest, Pandit Youdishtir Lall, from the Sankat Hanuman Mandir and Cultural Centre in Ajax, Yalda Baghaei, from the Baha'i community of Ajax, and Karen Heilman, from the Forest Brook Community Church.

Concert Emcees, and the "Performing Arts Stars" of the March 2014 Peace and Community Harmony were.

Haifa Behbahani: Concert Emcee and Singer

Kassra Baghaei Young Singers: Durham Regions Choral Ambassadors.

"1nes" Multi Media Youth Empowerment Project, from the Nancy Campbell Collegiate Vocational Institute in Stratford.

Drum Artz "Samba Kids," - represented by: Joshua Sobers and



The French Belles Quartet. The French Horn Section of the Pickering Community Orchestra.

Jordan Myers.

Fine Arts Academy of Durham Region - Dancers.

The McGrath Highland Dancers.

Mitchell Daniels - Singer

Isha Prasad - Bharatha Natyam

Dancer.

The French Belles Quartet. The French Horn Section of the Pickering Community Orchestra.

Raveena Rajasingham: Concert Guest Speaker.

Director, Community Development Council Durham.



"1nes" Multi Media Youth Empowerment Project, from the Nancy Campbell Collegiate Vocational Institute in Stratford.



Fine Arts Academy of Durham Region - Dancers

Quotes: Kim Downs:

Mother and community social advocate. "I was impressed with the program booklet for the Concert, that detailed; the history of the two UN Day events; the 12 year history of the Peace and Community Harmony Project and resulting Concert series; the pages devoted to bios and pictures of all performers, and the fact that organizers have staged 74 Multicultural Concerts, all themed on creating awareness for different social justice issues, and that the Concerts have attracted an audience of over 65,000 people. Every year the Peace and Community Harmony Concerts brings together talented people from across Durham Region, and in neighboring GTA communities. This year was no exception. All performers were moving, and each in their own way, made a statement that diversity is embraced in Durham Region."

Kevin Armstrong:

Executive Pastor at the Forest Brook Community Church, and Concert co/organizer, states that: "the Church welcomes everybody and anyone, because the facility space is meant for everybody in the community to use." He added that: "we at FBCC believe that part of our mission is to love others. Christ has loved us. This means being helpful servants to our neighbors."

Pastor Armstrong added: "we are committed to doing our part to help build the larger community and bring neighbors of different backgrounds together so we can get to know one another better." Pastor Armstrong further commented that: "he is happy to see so many people of different Faith groups at the Concerts. He is always amazed at the level of talent that the participants bring to the event. They are amazing!"

Raqsana Rijayathasan, and Shajahi Rajasingham, are both students at the Academic Fine Arts of Durham.

Raqsana:

"society should look beyond gender because the human race comes from the whole family. Women and girls should have the same freedom as men and boys."

Shajahi:

"just because it is International Women's Day, does not mean that you only appreciate women on that day. Women should be appreciated every day."

Anna Lynne Murphy:

Founder, and Artistic Director, Young Singers: "thank you to Concert organizers! The Concert provided us with a wonderful opportunity for Young singers to share their musical message of "One World in Harmony!" Choristers were proud to sing aboriginal music from Canada, Africa and Australia as well as performing music composed for the empowerment

of women. The Concert showcased the talent of so many musician, dancers and singers - that sent a powerful message of hope, as we celebrate and embrace the diversity in our community and ultimately throughout the world!



Raveena Rajasingham: Concert Guest Speaker. Director, Community Development Council Durham

Dinesh Kumar:

Director, Rouge Valley Health System Foundation. "An inspiring and uplifting event. It is really satisfying to see children, youth and adults from different cultural, ethnic and religious backgrounds, all working together in harmony, for the common good, and using the performing arts to create



FBCC Executive Pastor, Kevin Armstrong, with children and youth Concert Performers.

awareness for these two important United Nations Day events."

Laura Lee:

Co-ordinator, "1nes" Project: "nine students from the NCCI in Stratford participated in the Peace and Community Harmony Concert. The group uses dramatic dance, video and music to convey powerful messages. A member



Raqsana Rijayathasan and Shajahi Rajasingham

of the "1nes" Project, Julia Frith said: "it is important to bring together different cultures, nationalities, and religious groups to events like this, so we can experience the beauty of diversity. NCCI students commented how each of the performing artists and groups contributed something unique and positive."

Laura Lee added: "Ajax has really set the standard for an exciting, inspiring and inclusive event. If every child, pre-youth and youth could experience a program like this, we would have a better chance of living in Peace and Community Harmony."

Fernando Lopez is a second year student of Journalism at the School of Communications, Media and Design of Centennial College in Toronto.



Mitchell Daniels - Singer



Isha Prasad Bharatha Natyam Dancer



How much are builder promises worth when signing new condominium agreements?

BY: Mark Weisleder,
Real Estate Lawyer, Author, Speaker

Condominium buyers have launched a class action lawsuit against Emerald City Developments for a building at 70 Forest Manor Drive in north Toronto. The suit has been launched because the building does not have direct access to the Sheppard/Don Mills subway station and some buyers bought a unit based on the belief that it would be.

The courts will have to decide whether this was an actual promise and if so whether buyers are entitled to a reduced price for their units.

Here are the issues:

One of the items in the 2008 purchase and sale agreement says that the building's features include a "Lower lobby

with direct access to the subway station." This was also apparently promoted in marketing materials at the time.

When owners started moving into their units this January, the building did not have direct access to the subway from the lower lobby. Owners must leave the building to get to the subway which is nearby. One buyer said that having direct access was important to him for safety reasons for his daughter to travel to the University of Toronto.

The original contract also contained the usual developer's clause that says the builder can change plans and specifications of the building at its sole discretion, or as required by any government. This is as long as it is not a material change, including any changes advertised in any sales brochure.



In law, a material change is one that would cause someone to change their mind and not buy a property. If the developer makes a material change, they are obligated to give buyers 10 days to cancel the contract, even if the change occurs years after the original contract was signed. The builder appears to be taking the position that since it will be relatively few steps from the building to access the subway, this was not a material change and does not merit any reduction in the price paid.

I spoke with Toronto lawyer and condominium expert Harry Herskowitz, who reminded me that in the recent case involving the Trump condominium building, one of the arguments that was raised by the owners who wanted out of the deal was that it was promised by the developer that the Trump building would connect to the underground PATH system in Toronto. Didn't happen. The buyers said that this was a material change which should permit them to cancel their deals. In the decision of Judge J.R. Mackinnon, dated April 25, 2013, he stated that even though he was troubled by the failure to complete the PATH system, he said that it was not a material change, primarily because expert evidence was introduced by the builder that since most of the buyers in the Trump building were investors, the failure to have the connection to the

PATH would not have been material to them. This judgement was confirmed at the Court of Appeal on February 24, 2014.

In my opinion, the ability to go downtown to work without a raincoat, by having direct access to a subway, would be an important consideration for most buyers. We will have to wait and see how this case turns out.

When you buy a pre-construction condominium, you have 10 days to change your mind. Use the time to go to a lawyer to review your agreement so you understand what all the clauses really mean. You must also be aware that you may not receive exactly what was promised, as the builder can still make changes to your square footage, the layout of your unit and the finishings, as long as these are not material, and you cannot complain. This is why it is important to check the reputation of the builder.

Go to other buildings they have completed and ask the owners the following questions:

Did they build what was promised?


Did they finish on time?

Did they correct any deficiencies in a timely manner?


Do proper research before you buy and you should not be disappointed later.

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This British singer, actress, songwriter and blues diva has been performing in the Divine Presence of Bhagawan Baba over the past 16 years. Her first performance in Prashanthi Nilayam was at the time of Baba's 70th birthday. With a musical career spanning more than 46 years and with over 61 albums to her credit, Sister Dana combines her music with radio, theatre, film and sports to reach out to others.

Sister Dana has rendered 14 albums of Devotional songs, most of them about our dear Sai. Such albums include Planet Love, Mata Mata, Eternally Yours, One World Love, Love the Love, Sing Out, Dream On, One to One, Mirrors of Love, Inner View, Universal Bhajans, In The Garden of Heavenly Peace, Songs of Love and Sacred Space.

Date: May 18, 2014 Sunday 4.30 p.m. to 7.30 p.m.
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Regional News

WHITBY MOURNS THE LOSS OF A GREAT LEADER



Jim Flaherty

(December 30, 1949 – April 10, 2014)

We mourn the passing of Jim Flaherty, MP for Whitby-Oshawa.

"It is so very sad. We have lost a great man who was a true leader and great Canadian. My deepest condolences go out to Jim's family. He gave so much to our country and the world. We will be forever grateful," said Mayor Pat Perkins.

Jim served as MPP for Whitby-Ajax from 1995 to 2005, and as

MP for Whitby-Oshawa from 2006 to 2014. Throughout his political career, Jim demonstrated a dedication to his constituents and to his country.

Jim's unwavering support for sporting and cultural programs, life skills, research and educational opportunities for people of all ages and abilities was instrumental in the development of several community

facilities, not the least of which is the Abilities Centre in Whitby.

A visible presence in the community, he often participated in many community events including the Brooklin Spring Fair and Santa Clause parades, as well as hosting an annual Canada Day celebration at Iroquois Park Sports Centre.

Jim will be truly missed by our entire community.

Whitby Residents Can Confirm and Update Voter Information Online

Town of Whitby residents can now find out online whether their electoral information is correct for the October 27, 2014, municipal and school board elections by visiting www.voterlookup.ca.

Voterlookup.ca is an online enumeration service developed by the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC) that helps gather and maintain information that will be used in the preparation of the final Voters' Lists across municipalities in Ontario.

Whitby residents can also change or update their



school support for electoral purposes and add names of voters to their property address.

To confirm that information is accurately recorded for the upcoming election, residents will need to supply:

- Name and date of birth of each voter; and
- Town or City, property address or assessment roll number, included on their latest Property Assessment Notice.

For more information on Enumeration and the 2014 Municipal Election,

please visit www.whitby.ca/vote2014.

Whitby Property Tax Bills Now Available Through EPOST™

Whitby residents can now sign up to Canada Post's free epost service to receive property tax statements from the Town of Whitby.

The Town of Whitby has teamed with epost, the free digital mailbox from Canada Post that makes it easy to receive, manage and store bills and other important documents online. The service offers a centralized location with just one login and one password. With bank-grade security, epost is safe and secure.

"I encourage residents to try this free service that can make it easier for them to manage their accounts and keep track of property tax payments while being environmentally friendly," said Robert Petrie, CAO. "It's just another way we are responding to the needs of residents by providing options that take advantage of new and safe technologies."

"epost provides a secure and convenient solution to the changing needs of all Canadians," said Kerry Munro, Group President, Digital Delivery Network at Canada Post. "Whitby residents can manage their tax statements in the same place they do their other bills and statements with anywhere access from their smartphones, tablets or computers."

To join the more than 9 million Canadians who have registered for epost, visit www.epost.ca and create a username and password. Those with existing epost accounts can proceed to Log In to their account. Add your Whitby property tax statements by selecting 'Add a new bill or statement' and searching for Town of Whitby.

For more information,

please visit www.whitby.ca/epost, email tax@whitby.ca or call 905.430.4304.



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TOWN OF WHITBY CLERK ELECTED CANADA'S REPRESENTATIVE ON THE INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF MUNICIPAL CLERKS

Mayor Perkins and Members of Council are pleased to advise that Debi A. Wilcox, Town Clerk, has won the Region 10 Director election for the International Institute of Municipal Clerks (IIMC). As the Director of Region 10, Ms. Wilcox will represent members from Canada - Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba, New Brunswick, Newfoundland, NWT, Nova Scotia, Nunavut Territory, Ontario, Prince Edward Island, Quebec, Saskatchewan and Yukon. Ms. Wilcox will be sworn in at the IIMC May 2014 conference and serve a 3 year term.

The International Institute of Municipal Clerks is a professional, non-profit association of over 9,500 members that promotes life-long learning, skill development and public service and fosters a spirit of mutual assistance and goodwill among Municipal Clerks around the globe. Ms. Wilcox will be part of a 26 member Board of Directors that governs IIMC. Ms. Wilcox holds a Masters of Public Administration, an Executive Masters in Municipal Management and a Diploma in Public Administration. She will bring extensive municipal experience to this role.

"Ms. Wilcox is a very qualified and



Debi A. Wilcox

experienced Municipal Clerk who continues to implement changes which improve efficiency and transparency to the overall governance of Council," says Mayor Perkins. "She displays a calm acuity that is beneficial in such a fast paced environment. Her skills in management, communications and team building are a great asset to our community and will be a great asset for IIMC. We are very proud that she will be representing the Town of Whitby in this prestigious role."

For more information, please call 905.430.4315 or email clerk@whitby.ca.

Indian Elections



Special Feature

In India, Women, Youth Turnout in Large Numbers to Vote

By Anjana Pasricha

Women and young voters are turning up in large numbers to vote across India, pushing up polling percentages and possibly giving this election one of the biggest voter turnouts ever.

When Ranjana Kumari, a well-known women's activist, went to vote in her village in Uttar Pradesh state recently, she noticed a difference. "I saw groups of women walking to the polling booth, with all very beautiful saris and very happy mood," she explained. "This was not the scene earlier also because of the violence and the threat of being intimidated.

"Now with Election Commission taking care of the violence, they have a lot of police personnel posted, so women are also going in large numbers to go and vote," she added.

Election Commission data testifies

In some areas there is a cultural tradition that women do not come out to vote, we have worked with the community there and men there and made sure cultural barriers are broken," said Rout.

The results were evident: in several states across the country, more women than men turned out to vote. Ranjana Kumari said this reflects the deep desire among women to improve their lives in a country where many people are still poor.

"There is across the country rising aspirations of women, not only in terms of education for their children and better livelihood, but also political aspiration," Kumari said. "They are understanding the value and worth of their vote, they are also looking at the future of the family and their children." However, many observers say the greater political engagement is not just a sign of vibrant



Women line up to cast their votes outside a polling station during the seventh phase of India's general election at Howrah district in the eastern Indian state of West Bengal, April 30, 2014-pic: Reuters-via VOA News

to what Kumari witnessed. Propelled by women and young people, so far 110 million more voters have turned up at polling booths compared to the 2009 general election. In the 438 out of 543 parliamentary districts that have gone to the polls in the phased election, the polling percentage has topped 66 percent -- higher than in any previous election.

The Election Commission attributes the brisk polling to a huge voter awareness program (known as Systematic Voters Education and Electoral Participation) it has implemented. Director General at the Commission, Akshaya Rout, who supervises the campaign, said they focused on removing what he calls the "youth disconnect" and the gender gap. "We have engaged about I think more than 9000 campus ambassadors in all universities and big colleges, so that everyone is enrolled and everyone comes out to vote. We have women specific campaigns, we have got into "live" situations.

democracy, but also the result of an extremely polarized election campaign.

The opposition Hindu nationalist party's prime ministerial candidate, Narendra Modi, is leading a no-holds-barred campaign to gain power. While he is projecting development as his main plank, there is heated, often angry debate among his supporters and detractors about allegations that he is divisive. The ruling Congress Party, which is fighting to ward off defeat, calls Modi a threat to the country's secular future.

Sociologist Dipankar Gupta said the higher voter turnout is a sign that these are charged times. "This polarization has led to very strong feelings on both sides for the status quo or against the status quo. There is this great degree of passionate involvement on the sides of the voters who want to see their point of view carried. It's not a laid back campaign at all, every party, every nook and cranny, there is a lot of excitement, and commotion.

BJP promises early political settlement for the Sri Lankan Tamil problem

Congress Party failed to give enough pressure to the Sri Lankan Government in the Tamil issue, says BJP President Rajnath Singh

By Siva Sivapragasam

The Sri Lankan Tamil issue is being raised in the Indian Election campaign by the BJP promising an early settlement of the problem with power devolution.

Recent opinion polls surveys are predicting a victory for the BJP at the polls.

At a meeting held in Tiruchi in support of Vaiko, the leader of the Tamil MDMK Party, BJP President Rajnath Singh accused the Congress-led UPA government of failing to give strong pressure to the Sri Lankan Government to find a solution to the Tamil problem.

He said that there was no progress in devolution of powers as per the 13th Amendment in Sri Lanka. "The UPA lacked the diplomatic skills to handle such sensitive issues," he said and added that "when the BJP comes to power it would strive for early devolution of powers and a political settlement".

India's BJP Prime Ministerial candidate Narendra Modi has also issued a veiled threat to Sri Lanka during speeches made over the past few days at election rallies in Tamil Nadu indicating he will be tough with Sri Lanka if he wins the ongoing Indian elections.

Modi has said that with Tamils living all over the world, including Malaysia, Sri Lanka and Fiji, it should be a priority



of the Indian government to take care of their well being and he promised to do so if a BJP-led Government assumes power after the elections.

The Press Trust of India quoted Modi as saying at an election rally in Chennai that a strong and determined government was the need of the hour as small countries like Sri Lanka, Pakistan and Bangladesh were lowering the powerful image of India and this threat has to be met strongly.

BJP has already entered into a six party alliance with minor Tamil parties and is keeping its options open with the two main parties - the DMK and the AIADMK.

Meanwhile latest opinion polls surveys suggest that BJP is the front-runner in the election race and will emerge as the party with the largest number of seats and will be eligible to form India's next Government with Narendra Modi as Prime Minister.

When things are not quite settled, when there are issues to be resolved, when there is a chance that your vote might make a difference, that is when people come out to vote," Gupta stated.

There is no doubt that voter enthusiasm is at a new high. Political observers say this is the first election in which it became fashionable to vote, not just among the young, but also the urban, middle class, notorious for its voter apathy in the past. The proof: hundreds of selfies and photos with ink-marked fingers posted on Facebook and Tweets after each round of voting. Sociologist Gupta traces the higher political awareness to an anti-corruption party - the Aam Aadmi Party - that made its debut in local elections in Delhi in December. While the party is not getting massive support on the national stage, Gupta said it helped draw out thousands of voters with its message that ordinary people can help change the system. "That energized a lot of young people, and even older people to come out and vote. It broke that stigma of voting. It

is this liberation of sorts that has carried through to this election. Voting is again kind of an "in" thing to do," Gupta said.

Among those who had not voted in previous elections, but made sure they turned out this year is Raghav Gupta, a resident of Gurgaon near Delhi. The boom years of India's growth were a great period for senior professionals like him, offering them opportunities for good career growth. But Gupta said that took a hit in recent years due to bad governance and corruption. "The feeling of, if you work hard you do well in your career changed to saying that not just working hard for your career but also making sure you select right people for the government is important, and so this time it was very important to go and out and vote for the right person."

Whatever the motivation for voters, for the Election Commission, the large turnout is a cause for satisfaction. They hope by the time the last votes are cast on May 12, India will have witnessed a record turnout. - VOA News



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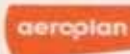
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