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Keep up pressure to ensure reversal of usage-based billing

- Michael Ignatieff

The Liberal Party says it has always held its opposition to the CRTC's decision to allow usage-based billing by internet service providers.

In a response voicing opposition of Canadian Radio-television Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) plans, Liberal Leader Michael Ignatieff recently stated the importance of coherent digital strategy for Canada. He is also urging the public to join in the campaign and keep up the pressure on the matter, even though the CRTC is being asked by the Government of Canada to reverse their decision on usage-based internet billing (UBB) - a decision that allows internet service providers to impose download limits and new fees.

"Our work is not yet done. We need to keep up the pressure until the CRTC's decision is reversed once and for all," Michael Ignatieff said. Commenting further on the matter the Liberal leader said:

"At the heart of our digital policy is a core Liberal value: we must make Canada more competitive and more innovative. That means

expanding high-speed internet access to every region of the country, fair and equitable wholesale access, and transparent pricing.

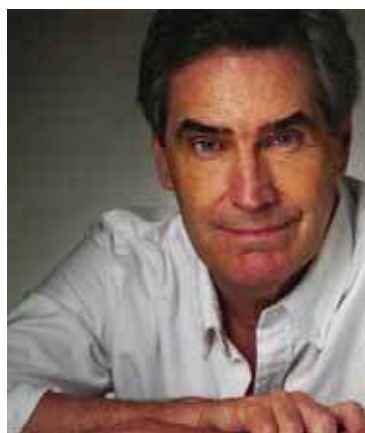
We must build a digital strategy for Canada that embraces the energy, entrepreneurial spirit, and innovative creativity of consumers, businesses and digital influencers like you.

We'll keep the pressure on the Conservatives in Parliament to make sure they follow through and reverse the CRTC's decision on usage-based billing. This victory is just a taste of what we can accomplish, if we continue this fight together.

I hope you'll join the Liberal Party's digital policy email list at <http://www.liberal.ca/ubb/>. Let's build a more open, more competitive future for Canada.

Thank you for being engaged."

OpenMedia.ca., the Vancouver-based volunteer organization that has been primarily carrying out a net based (twitter and facebook) campaign against metered Internet also warns supporters it is too early to let up the pressure.



In a press release issued recently, OpenMedia spokesperson Lindsey Pinto said, "We're not at the finish line yet." Among the questions still to be decided wrote Pinto: "Will usage-based-billing (UBB) be suspended until the CRTC finishes its review?" And: "Will the CRTC actually do a complete reversal in the end, or will they try to save face by doing a half-measured response (i.e. giving the indie ISPs a better deal on UBB, but not removing its imposition)?"

Critics say the billing change would hurt competitiveness in an industry that already has too few big players.

One million displaced by second wave of flooding in Sri Lanka East



Heavy rains in Sri Lanka's Eastern and North Central provinces have displaced almost a million people and caused widespread devastation. More people are affected in this second wave of flooding during the early days of February in eastern Sri Lanka - once again in less than a month, aid officials say.

"The same districts that were hit the last time - Ampara, Batticaloa, Trincomalee and Polonnaruwa - have been experiencing heavy rains," according to Pradeep Kodippili, assistant director of Sri Lanka Disaster Management Centre, the main government body overseeing relief efforts.

Floods in mid-January displaced over 380,000 and affected over one million at their height, prompting the UN and its partners to launch a US\$51 million appeal in support of the government.

Worst affected during this second wave in the early days of February is Batticaloa District, said Tissa Abeyawickrema, head of the Sri Lankan Red Cross Society. The organization is deploying more personnel and seeking more assistance as the situation looked likely to deteriorate, he added.

Inside Monsoon

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Eastern Sri Lanka Floods ...



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Annual Members of the Corporation are admitted by resolution of the Board and consist of individuals who meet the eligibility requirements contained in the bylaws and who pay an annual membership fee of \$20. Membership is for one year, and those individuals whose completed application is received before March 29, 2011 will be eligible to vote at the next Annual Meeting to be held on June 28, 2011, at 7 p.m. at The Scarborough Hospital, Birchmount campus, 3030 Birchmount Road.

All Annual Members who wish to vote at the AGM on June 28 must must apply before March 29.

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Please note that completed applications, with the registration fee, must be received by March 29, 2011. As a thank you for your support and participation, all Annual Members will receive two free parking passes and an invitation to a Members' Breakfast.

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Canada News

John Milloy, Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities

The Hon. John Milloy was first elected Member of Provincial Parliament for Kitchener Centre in 2003. He was re-elected in 2007 and appointed Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities on October 30, 2007.

John's political interest began at age 13 when he worked as a Queen's Park page and continued as he worked in political offices at both the provincial and federal level. From 1997 to 2002, John served as Legislative Assistant to Prime Minister Jean Chrétien.

In his first term as MPP, John held the position of Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and to the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. He also served as Chair of the Federal Interprovincial Municipal Relations Cabinet Committee. In November, 2007, he was appointed to the provincial government's anti-poverty committee. In June 2009, John was also appointed Minister of Research and Innovation which he held until August 2010.

John holds a BA (Honours) in History from Carleton University, a Master's degree from the London School of Economics and a doctorate in Modern



History from the University of Oxford where he was a Commonwealth Scholar.

John is past Director of Public Affairs for the Centre for International Governance Innovation in Kitchener-Waterloo. He has written on both international history and governance in the information age, and published a book titled "The North Atlantic Treaty Organization, 1948-1957: Community or Alliance".

John and his wife, physician Dr. Sara Pendergast, live in Kitchener's Stanley Park neighbourhood with their two sons.

Minister Sandra Pupatello

recently Congratulating Huawei Technologies Canada Co. Ltd. on the Expansion of their Markham Office and Ottawa R&D Centre

Minister Sandra Pupatello issued the following statement regarding the expansion of Huawei's operations in Ontario.

"Our government is proud to partner with Huawei, one of the world's leading telecommunications technology company, on their most recent expansion into Ontario. Setting up their Canadian headquarters in Markham and their R&D Centre of Excellence in Ottawa speaks to the confidence Huawei has in Ontario's skilled workforce and competitive business environment.

During Premier McGuinty latest trade mission to China, Huawei-Ontario announced a \$67 million in the expansion of the company's Ottawa R&D Centre to help consolidate the company's leadership in the global marketplace, and help create 164 new good jobs and support 56 existing jobs in the Ottawa region. That's good news for the Ottawa region. And that's good news for Ontario.

Huawei's expansion project not only supports the Open Ontario plan to create



new opportunities for jobs and growth, but also demonstrates that innovation begins here in Ontario, and that we are a world leader in R&D.

As a global technology company, Huawei serves 45 of the world's top 50 telecom operators. Huawei's communications products and solutions are used in over 100 countries to over two billion users worldwide - that's one third of the world's population."

Partnership between hospital and long-term care facilities and retirement homes helps ensure better care for patients

Sharon MacSween remembers lugging stacks of paperwork back and forth from hospital and retirement home when her elderly mother became ill.

"I quickly realized there was a gap in communication when a patient leaves hospital and returns to the retirement home," says Sharon, Manager of Administration and Financial Applications at The Scarborough Hospital. "We are always looking for ways to tighten the circle of care, and make transitions easier for patients and their caregivers. This was an opportunity to do that."

So Sharon began working on an electronic way for the hospital to communicate with nursing homes and retirement homes, ensuring the necessary – and accurate – information is shared. Today four area nursing homes and two retirement homes now have electronic access to hospital discharge summaries for their tenants and clients who provide consent. Currently, two other long-term care facilities are working with the hospital to gain access.

"Although we had this arrangement



for some nursing homes in the area, based on feedback from community partners, we realized that retirement homes could also benefit from access to electronic records," says Waheeda Rahman, Director of Diversity, Equity and Stakeholder Outreach at The Scarborough Hospital. "This initiative is particularly important because more than half of the Scarborough population speaks a primary language other than English and French. Sharing information amongst institutions and caregivers not only creates efficiencies in the healthcare system, but it also ensures excellent patient care."

"This system is so great and has made an incredible difference," says Birgitte

Robertson, Executive Director at Momiji Health Care Society, where 60 per cent of tenants do not speak English. "Our return-to-hospital rate has reduced and we now have a clearer picture of what is happening with our tenants. It is allowing us to provide better care."

Now Momiji doesn't have to rely on its tenants for information about follow-up appointments, recommendations made by hospital staff or changes to medications.

In one case, Momiji staff learned from the electronic record that an elderly tenant who suffers from dementia was not complying with medication orders. As a result, staff were able to check up with the tenant to ensure the proper medica-

tions were taken at the right times.

"She had a history of calling 911 and that has stopped and she is able to stay living with her spouse. Now we have the information we need and can adjust care accordingly," says Birgitte, adding she wished all hospitals had the same system. "This information really is making a major difference for our tenants. We are able to keep seniors at home longer and reduce the number of trips to the Emergency Department."

"By sharing information electronically, TSH is helping to ease the burden on families and we expect fewer appointments will be missed," says Francine McCatty, Applications Analyst at TSH. "Caregivers at long-term care facilities and retirement homes can view lab results, diagnostic imaging reports, health records transcribed reports? and any changes to medications."

Typically, the hospital has only sent this kind of information to a patient's family physician, says Sharon. But in long-term care facilities, it isn't always the family physician providing the day-to-day care.

Monsoon Journal

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around us
All lands home, all men kin.

"This is my greatest desire:

**without fail, One day you'll show yourself
to us, My father with locks twisted like the
flames of a lighted fire,**

**The place where you dance, in full night,
Over the high flames"**

**- Karaikal Ammaiyar,
Devotee of Lord Siva and poetess**

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"Source for Multi Ethnic Exposure"

from the publisher's desk

International Mother Language Day, 21 February

International Mother Language Day was proclaimed by United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO) General Conference in November 1999. The International Day has been observed every year since February 2000 to promote linguistic and cultural diversity and multilingualism.

UNESCO emphasizes that, "languages are the most powerful instruments of preserving and developing our tangible and intangible heritage. All moves to promote the dissemination of mother tongues will serve not only to encourage linguistic diversity and multilingual education but also to develop fuller awareness of linguistic and cultural traditions throughout the world and to inspire solidarity based on understanding, tolerance and dialogue."

UNESCO's website says "The world's nearly 6,000 languages are celebrated on International Mother Language Day, aimed at promoting linguistic diversity and multilingual education."

In situations where linguistic based civil strife has dominated the lives, preservation education in mother language face ethnicity related challenges in their own places of birth. Lack of learning facilities and natural disasters too are causing disruption of early childhood education are becoming a norm in vulnerable communities around the world.

International Mother Language Day enables limelight on these situations and events are planned and carried out on improving the conditions in many communities. They could be as little as the launch of a small multi language section in local library; or address the plight of children globally, facing difficulties to access their mother language based aspect in every moment of their childhood - schooling years.

Delivery of Mother Languages through internet in many more places as possible getting promoted is an ideal way to mark the day. Every program in multi ethnic countries priding themselves as beacon of multicultural-

ism and diversity, utilized to the fullest available opportunities is also another way to realize this goal of language preservation along with rest of the world on Feb 21.

International Mother Language Day originated as the international recognition of Language Movement Day, which has been commemorated in Bangladesh since 1952, when a number of University of Dhaka students were killed by the Pakistani police and army in Dhaka during Bengali Language Movement protests on the imposition of Urdu language in the then East Pakistan.

In Bangladesh this year, 150th birth anniversary of Nobel Laureate - Bengali Poet Rabindranath Tagore is being observed on a grand scale on Feb 21st. Bengali is the National language of Bangladesh and it is the second most spoken language in India. As a nation born out of the 20th century (1951-1952) Bengali Language Movement, Bangladesh takes pride in the observation of UNESCO declared

Mother Language Day on Feb 21st.

Last year among other events worldwide, the village of Kovacica in the Republic of Serbia where national minorities of Slovaks, Romanians, Roma, Hungarians, Ruthenians and Croats live alongside Serbs celebrated the day with roundtables and discussions. On February 21, 2010 one lesson in every school in Serbia was dedicated to mother languages.

In this background and in an increasingly inter-connected globalized world, International Mother Language becomes an important day of observation and celebration. It is the duty of those striving for the betterment of humanity and reaps the fruits of diversity - contribute towards alleviating the mother language based educational difficulties faced by children, especially in their places of birth itself.

The Monsoon Journal joins in the marking of the International Mother Language Day, on 21 February.

Flood Relief fund raised by Medical Institute for Tamils (MIFT) reaches Batticaloa, Sri Lanka East

Nongovernmental organizations (NGO) handling flood relief in Batticaloa have confirmed of getting remittance being sent by MIFT in the past several days.

A media release from MIFT states emergency relief is being sent to the following organizations:

1. Federation of Young Men's Hindu Association, Batticaloa.
2. Interreligious Organization for Peace, Batticaloa.
3. Annai Saratha Children Trust, Trincomalee.
4. Dharshan Ambalavanar directed

relief work in Batticaloa.

Several initiatives were taken by MIFT for the flood relief, beginning with hosting a drop off event on Jan 19th at Karaikudi Chettinad Restaurant in Toronto.

Some of the photos taken at the event can be seen here:





Canada News

Canadian Tamils’ Chamber of Commerce to mark 20th year with several special events

Canadian Tamils’ Chamber of Commerce (CTCC) hosted its 1st quarterly meeting on Jan 8th at Embassy Banquet Hall and unveiled its programs for the term along with some seminar presentations. President in his speech said that this is Chamber’s 20th year and there will be many programs planned for celebrations to mark the 20th anniversary. Some of the photos taken at the event can be seen here:



Presenter, Ms Sandra Tam; Manager of the Markham Small Business Centre receives flowers



Treasurer, Kalyani Nathan introduces guest presenter Ms Sandra Tam



Charter President of CTCC, Kingsley Ariaratnam thanks Nadaraja Paskaran for his motivational presentation



CTCC President Mike Ahilan and Secretary Santha Panchalingam gives vote of thanks

Universal song of Tamil poet Vaali ~ Love is just one – named divinity

Written by the genius of Poet Vaali decades before “Valentine’s day” became universal phenomenon later in the millennia

Song written by Poet Vaali, for the 1966 blockbuster Nadodi starring Makkal Thilagam M.G.R – M.G. Ramachandran speaks of a true spirit of the world, for the betterment of humanity everywhere:

A translation of the Tamil lyrics
One Language all over the World
Language spoken in loving hearts..
Language spoken without sound..
Language of sphere-less divine....
A bird in varied colors
One lyric many ragas
Nights alike seasons differ
Delight same for the many souls
Separated by sea and sky
Swirling wind too lack love’s swiftness
Souls may be separated into two
But love is just one – named divinity
One sky – one and only moonlight
Years those gone by millions
Impart love, reciting poetry and delving arts
The united in millions
Mass in the millions spoke it yet
Love sprouts swiftly
Be globe trotting, still



Poet Vaali

Google, skype, BB, text plus unite love
One language all over the world..
Language spoken by hearts in love..
Language spoken without sound..
Language of sphereless divine....
– By Kavignar Vaali
– The evergreen lyricist
(translated by K. Thirukumaran)

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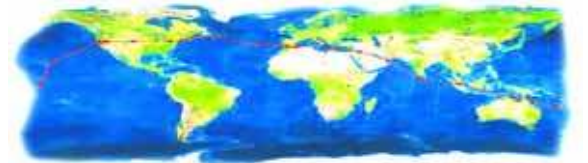
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A round the world



Ancient temple stitched back together in Tamil Nadu, Southern India

A 1,250-year-old temple has been saved from collapse using "granite stitching" in southern India, writes Sivaramakrishnan Parameswaran, Producer, BBC Tamil Service:

The Kailasanathar Temple in the town of Uthiramerur is more than 1,250 years old, according to studies of its inscriptions.

Uthiramerur town, which is one of the oldest settlements in the state of Tamil Nadu, was highly developed according to inscriptions found in the town, which describes a society which held elections and had a government.

The temple dedicated to the god Shiva was built during the reign of Pallava King Dantivarman with additions made by later rulers.

"The centuries-old monument is made up of a brick super-structure and a granite substructure," explains Dr Sathyamurthy of the REACH Foundation and the prime mover behind this restoration and an archaeologist with four decades' experience.

Cracks of more than three feet in width had developed in the intricately constructed temple dome made of brick and lime plaster, which is around 80ft high.

"It was about to collapse completely and there were so many conservation problems because of the growth of thick vegetation on the Vimana or dome of the temple," Dr Sathyamurthy told the BBC Tamil Service.

While the upper part of the temple was in bad shape, the basement and plinth had other serious issues with cracks at more than 20 places in the granite stones according to the archaeologist.

Faced with serious technical problems the REACH team turned for advice to the Indian Institute of Technology, Madras (IIT-M) a premier engineering institute in India.

"The conservation team was faced with a problem as to whether the stone plinth can bear the weight of the entire super structure," Dr MS Mathews of the civil engineering department at IIT-M and a consultant to the Archaeological Survey of India, told the BBC.

When the monument was examined it was found that a few stones in the sub-structure were dislodged from their original position, and there were several cracks in the plinth due to stress, strain and shock says Anu Padma, who was involved in the conservation project



Inscriptions suggest the Kailasanathar temple is more than 1,250 years old



The conservation team wanted to provide an aesthetically pleasing appearance

as a research scholar.

"In Uthiramerur the options were limited. If the broken stones are to be removed and replaced, the restoration process would have become very complicated and could have further damaged the temple dome," Dr Mathews said.

Funding for the conservation project was another huge issue since governmental support for such projects were almost nil, according to the Conserver Heritage movement.

Conservationists also point out that while numerous monuments exist in India, the government preserves only 5% of them.

So the team at IIT-M decided that "granite stitching" would be the most simple, least invasive and the necessary method to restore the temple to its original glory, Dr

Mathews said.

The site observation and inspection showed that the cracks in the granite stones were "non-progressive" and laboratory tests were conducted to assess the load-bearing capacity of stitched granite beams in comparison with the solid, uncracked

granite beams.

"Test results proved that the stitching would bear the desired load," Ms Anu Padma said.

In the stone stitching technique, the cracks in the plinth are strengthened with stainless steel rods and an epoxy-based chemical anchor without disturbing the original structure.

Holes are drilled on both sides of a crack in a roughly 45 degree angle. They are then cleaned and the chemical anchor filled in, Ms Anu Padma further explains.

Stainless steel rods are then inserted and finished with rock powder to cover the conservation work and provide an aesthetically pleasing appearance.

"The inserted rod starts at one side of the crack and ends at the other side of the crack, holding both sides together. This is actually like stitching seen in cloth," she said.

According to Dr Mathews, the technique itself is very simple and not very expensive. But he says that when dealing with ancient monuments, it is important that care is taken over the materials used.

"High-grade stainless steel rods with a high percentage of chromium were used so that they didn't corrode for at least another five hundred years," he says.

Both Dr Sathyamurthy and Dr Mathews say that in India there are many temples and monuments in danger of total collapse or partial collapse and that these are causes for concern.

Dr Mathews says that further research in the laboratory in stone stitching and other reversible interventions is needed. This could allow the technique to be used to conserve other monuments in future.

With the basement safely secured, the team started conserving the super-structure, including the huge dome using a newly created lime plaster based on the old formula.

The conservation team now says that a weight of around 30,000 tonnes can safely rest on the basement and the plinth of granite rocks.

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A round the world

Food security and livelihoods hit in flood-affected Sri Lanka East

MANAMPITIYA,
(IRIN) - Food security and livelihoods have been severely hit in Sri Lanka, specialists say, after heavy rains caused widespread flooding and drove hundreds of thousands from their homes, left 43 people dead, and damaged or destroyed close to 30,000 homes.

According to the UN, agricultural production is the main source of livelihood in the affected area and this season's rice harvest has been badly damaged, leading to increased food insecurity.

The World Food Programme (WFP) estimates about 500,000 residents are food-insecure.

In the worst affected districts of Ampara, Batticaloa, and Trincomalee in Eastern Province, heavy rains between 8 and 12 January left more than 101,171 hectares of paddy fields damaged, of which more than 81,000ha suffered moderate to severe damage, initial estimates suggest.

The UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) estimates a loss of about 450,000 tons or US\$120 million.

"The potential loss has been calculated to be in the region of 15.5 percent," Calvin Piggott, FAO's senior northern recovery coordinator in Sri Lanka, told IRIN.

The flooding, some of the worst in 100 years, came just two months before fields were to be harvested for the Maha - the principal growing season in the island nation. More than 607,000ha are cultivated during this time, with over one-fifth of that in the four districts hit by the floods.

In some towns such as Manampitiya, along the border between Polonnaruwa and Batticaloa districts, hundreds of hectares were affected.

Here, water hyacinth - regarded as the world's worst water weed - was washed into the fields with the flood



A farmer holds a destroyed paddy plant – Pic: Amantha Perera/IRIN

waters, covering 81ha of paddy land in one stretch, Manhina Banda, the government agriculture officer for the area, said.

"You can't do anything but wait for the weed to die. Taking it out will be a colossal expenditure," he said.

Elsewhere, when the paddy was under water for two to three days, the harvest was either destroyed or will be woefully low.

"The paddy can look fine, but if it was under water for over a day there will be no harvest," farmer Sarath Weerasinghe from Kirimitiya, an interior village in the Polonnaruwa district, explained.

Weerasinghe is typical of many small-time paddy cultivators in Sri Lanka who depend on rice as their primary source of income. He cultivated 1.2ha, spending around \$600 per 0.4ha, and hoped to make about \$1,000 per 0.4ha from the harvest.

Weerasinghe financed the cultivation from a small loan obtained from a local businessman. He has no insurance and

no way of recouping his losses unless he receives direct assistance.

But rice farmers are not the only ones reeling; other small crops have suffered losses, though estimates have yet to be finalized.

"There will be multiple effects felt right across the country," Seenithamby Manoharan, a senior rural development specialist with the World Bank Sri Lanka office, told IRIN, warning that in addition to the losses suffered by farmers, there were likely to be price rises when the harvest fell short of expectations.

Since the rains began at the end of 2010, the Economic Centre in central Dambulla, the country's main bulk vegetable distribution centre, has recorded price increases of more than 80 percent, the UN said.

Another area of heavy losses is likely to be livestock. In Verugal, a village in the Trincomalee District with 12,000

people, the loss of livestock was over 10,000, Ponnambalam Thaneveran, the divisional secretary for the village, said. So far no figures have been established for the total loss of livestock due to the flooding.

The FAO is conducting a detailed study of the flood damage, Piggott said, with initial assistance likely to begin in the next three weeks targeting the most vulnerable.

The government has held talks with the World Bank on how to assist the famers, but so far there has been no concrete assistance targeting the destroyed crops or livestock. In most areas, local officials were gathering information last week to be sent to government authorities in the capital Colombo.

"Something has to be done fast, some of these people have lost their only means of income," Thaneveran said.

On 20 January, the UN and its partners launched a \$51 million appeal to assist more than one million people over the next six months. Of this, \$22 million is designated for food security, agriculture and livelihoods.

The appeal is expected to be revised within the next month to reflect needs as the situation changes and assessments are made available.

Batticaloa crop losses: Will 're-learning' from natural disasters ever stop?

by Lareef Zubair

Drawing on our studies of weather, climate, disasters and contributing to water management in Sri Lanka operationally for the last decade in Sri Lanka, there are some lessons and resources - unfortunately, in Sri Lanka, as in other places, we just keep seem to be relearning them after every disaster whether it be the 1978 Cyclone and Floods, the 2001-2 drought, the 2003 Floods and Landslides, the 2004 Tsunami and now this.

LESSONS:

1. As several commentators have pointed out, priority should be given to the regions that are most affected:
2. Regions with minorities should not be neglected as happened in the Eastern Coast during the 2004 Tsunami and the 1978 Cyclone in Batticaloa - Eastern Sri Lanka.
3. The past history of floods and the lessons learned should be implemented - this includes better governance, zoning, and flood risk warning. All too often there are "lessons learned" after each disaster - which are repeated.
4. The International Agencies that collect aid are not able to help develop local capacity to deal with floods and the local agencies have not upgraded



their capacity in the last three decades.

5. There is a perverse set of incentives at work with the Disaster Industry - the more disasters there are, the more funding they get.

(Lareef Zubair is an Associate Research Scientist, Climate Adaptation at The International Research Institute for Climate and Society at Columbia University, NY, NY)

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The Scarborough Hospital



New geriatric clinic at The Scarborough Hospital provides comprehensive care for seniors

Patient 1: A 78-year-old woman arrives at the hospital by ambulance at 10 a.m. While making tea this morning, she fell on the kitchen floor. She couldn't get up and was found two hours later.

Patient 2: An 82-year-old man woke up this morning and didn't recognize his wife. He was fine the night before. He becomes agitated and falls. His wife calls 911 and he is brought to the emergency department.

Patient 3: A family physician and nurse practitioner see a 75-year-old patient for his regular quarterly office visit. They notice he has bruises, has lost 10 pounds and is not as well-groomed as usual. His wife died recently and his

primary healthcare provider or an Emergency Department physician.

"We want to help seniors stay at home and healthy. The reality is that seniors, once admitted to hospital, have longer stays. And that means a longer recovery," explains Debbie.

The clinic – which is expected to see about 2,000 patients annually – opened in January and is part of the Central East Local Health Integration Network's Aging at Home strategy, aimed at providing tailored healthcare services that meet the needs of seniors so they can remain in the comfort of their home while avoiding unnecessary visits to the hospital and ultimately reduce Emergency



The Scarborough Hospital's Nurse Practitioner Debbie Driver assesses a patient in the new GAIN clinic at the General campus, which opened in mid-January

adult children are involved in his life but very busy.

These are the kinds of patients who will now benefit from the new Geriatric Assessment and Intervention Network (GAIN) clinic located at The Scarborough Hospital, General campus that provides a comprehensive assessment for frail seniors.

"We don't only look at the patient's primary complaint or concern, we look at the entire picture. We want to help seniors live independently, with dignity and safely," explains Debbie Driver, Nurse Practitioner, GAIN geriatric clinic. "This is a one-stop shop. Our patients meet with an inter-professional geriatric team – a specialized geriatric nurse, a pharmacist, social worker, physiotherapist – that works collaboratively to assess the patient."

Patients must be referred by their

Department wait times.

For Debbie, the clinic is an exciting opportunity to help seniors stay well longer, identify health concerns earlier and prevent people from unnecessarily entering nursing homes.

"With the right supports in place, not everyone needs to go to a nursing home. GAIN's team approach allows us to identify and assist with multiple complex health issues," says Debbie. "Many seniors are unaware of the resources that are available in the community and we can assist them with connecting to the right resources."

The clinic accepts referrals for patients generally 75+, who live at home or a retirement residence and have multiple complex medical, functional and psychosocial problems, multiple or frequent falls and have experienced recent functional decline.

Hospital's PICC procedure a first for the GTA

The Scarborough Hospital can claim another first in the GTA with the only 'bedside nurse driven ultrasound guided PICC insertion team with the Sherlock Tip Location System (TLS).'

Peripherally inserted central catheters (PICCs) are long, thin, flexible catheters inserted into one of the large veins in the upper arm then threaded into a central vein, where the speed of blood flow washes away medications that would normally damage smaller veins.

than 50 PICCs have been inserted successfully by nurses at the bedside.

The key is the Sherlock (TLS) sensor which sits on a patient's chest and picks up the specialized magnetic stylet as the PICC moves through the vein.

"We know the direction in which the PICC is going," explains Audrey Oudkerk, PICC nurse. After insertion, an x-ray confirms if the PICC has been successfully placed in the central vein.

PICCs come in single, dual and triple



IV Nurse Shaowei Zhang inserts a triple lumen PICC using the Sherlock Tip Location System (TLS) to guide the line to the patient's main vein

PICCs deliver intravenous therapy for a prolonged period or may be used for blood collection in patients with limited access.

"The goal of vascular access is to preserve veins. By inserting a central line in the early stage of treatment, we preserve the patient's peripheral veins," explains Gwen Walters, Clinical Resource Leader for Vascular Access. "This is particularly important for patients requiring long term venous access including critical care patients and those requiring chemotherapy and long term antibiotics."

Previously, the IV team inserted PICCs by palpation. Ninety per cent of critical care patients and 65 per cent of the general population would have been referred to Diagnostic Imaging (DI) for PICC insertion due to limitations at the bedside. Since November 2010, when an ultrasound with TLS navigating system was acquired at each TSH campus, more

lumens. TSH's IV Team celebrated another landmark and surpassed expectations by inserting triple lumen PICCs in the critical care population, a procedure that is traditionally referred to DI.

Many critical care patients are ventilated and/or isolated, and must be accompanied to DI by RTs and RNs, removing crucial resources from the ICU. Bedside insertion saves time and resources.

"The IV team is excited because this is a high-tech practice bringing a new standard of practice to our patients," Gwen adds. "We're one of the few hospitals in the GTA that still has a dedicated IV Team, providing 24/7 coverage at the General Campus and eight-hour coverage at the Birchmount Campus."

Currently, there are two trained PICC nurse inserters. The goal for 2011 is to train two additional IV Team RNs for PICC insertion.

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spend most of your time. That may be in your kitchen, in the living room near the television, in your car or in the kid's room. You are more inclined to drink water if it's in front of you.

2. Your AM drink.

You are naturally thirsty in the morning so, make it a point to drink a few glasses when you wake up. Set a time to do it either before or after you brush your teeth and this way you'll never forget.

3. It doesn't have to boring.

Add a few lemon or cucumber slices, apple cider vinegar or ginger to dress up your water. Herbal teas are great too! Enjoy them hot or cold, fruity, minty or tangy!



The answer is WATER! Drinking water is the single most important way to improve the quality of your life. Consuming 8 to 10 cups a day prevents dehydration and helps maintain a healthy and happy body. Dehydration is caused by several factors including sweating through exercise, vomiting, excessive intake of coffee, tea and sodas, diabetes, diarrhea, burns and skin irritations.

We know we should drink it. It's good for us. It has many benefits and so on. The trouble is how to drink 8-10 cups of water a day? It's just too difficult and there are so many excuses. "I have to run to the bathroom every 10 minutes." "I always forget." "It just doesn't taste good." "I need my caffeine boost in the afternoon for a pick me up."

Let's forget the excuses and take the plunge! Here are a few simple tips on how to make water part of your day.

1. Keep it close.

Keep water bottles in areas that you

4. Bring on the Blackberry.

For most people, their Blackberry is important as an organ in their body, so why not make even better use of it? Set a reminder in your berry to drink a glass of water every hour or before or after every meal.

5. The dynamic duo.

When drinking your morning or afternoon coffee or tea, drink a cup or two of water before or after. This way you can enjoy your java, guilt free and bank a few extra glasses of water.

6. It's free.

When you go to a restaurant take advantage of the one free item on the menu, WATER! It won't cost you anything, it's good for you, it doesn't have any calories, it doesn't cause hangovers and it's ALWAYS on the menu! So, nix the sugary sodas, calorie rich juices and enjoy nature's great creation.

7. Ride with it.

Like most of us, we do spend a lot of time in our car, either driving to and

much water you drink in a day. Start with setting a goal to drink five glasses a

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from work, the gym, dropping the kids off to school or running errands. Keeping a case of water bottles in the car is one of the best ways to reach your daily water intake. Set a goal to finish a bottle to each destination. For example, down one bottle on the way to work, another on the way back, one to the gym and another from the grocery store.

8. Log it.

Keep a "water" log or put up a whiteboard in the kitchen or office to track how

day then slowly progress to eight to ten cups a day. Setting small, realistic goals will make it easier and keep you motivated to reach your long term goal!

9. Mind magic.

Water makes you beautiful! It adds that fabulous shine to your hair, prevents those nasty wrinkles under your eyes, keeps your nails strong, and retains the elasticity and youthfulness of your skin. Who doesn't want a piece of that? Staying young, healthy and vibrant is important to all of us at any age, so remind yourself every time you look in the mirror how absolutely wonderful you will look if you continue to take the liquid pill. Your mind is a powerful being, if you truly believe in it, you can make anything happen!

10. Fight the hunger attacks!

It's 3:00 in the afternoon – time for the munchies! Brownies, chips, cookies, coffee, pretzels are so tempting at this time, not to mention so difficult to avoid. Why not fight the munchies attack with a bottle of water? Most of the time, it's not that you're even that hungry, you're actually just dehydrated. So, down a bottle of water and go back to your desk and give yourself a pat on the back for saving yourself a few hundred empty calories!

Make water your friend – use these tips to reach your ultimate goal of 8-10 cups per day and remember to drink more on hot, humid days and during any physical activity. Stay hydrated, healthy and happy!

By Ayktah Grover

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A round the world

Sri Lanka North-West, Mannar diocese offers proposal for genuine and lasting Tamil-Sinhalese reconciliation

Bishop Rayappu Joseph and two priests from his diocese submit a report to Sri Lanka the Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Commission (LLRC), calling for complete transparency on what happened between 2002 and 2009 as a step towards finding an effective and lasting solution to the ethnic conflict, reports Melani Manel Perera on AsiaNews.it:

Colombo (AsiaNews) – The report that Mgr Rayappu Joseph, bishop of Mannar, Fr Victor Sosai, vicar general, and Fr Xavier Croos recently submitted to the Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Commission (LLRC) begins by recognising “the importance of learning lessons from our history in order to move forward as well as prevent further conflict and violence”. In their submission, the representatives of the diocese speak on behalf of the Tamil community of Mannar, one of the most affected by the war that ended in 2009.

In their report to the LLRC, a commission set up by President Mahinda Rajapaksa to investigate events that occurred between 2002 and 2009, the three religious leaders said that the commission provided an opportunity for all Sri Lankans to take a step towards reconciliation.

For genuine and lasting reconciliation, “it is crucial to address roots of the conflict and war, primarily issues affect-



Bishop Rayappu Joseph at the LLRC

ing Tamils such as recognition of their political reality, language, land, education and political power sharing,” the report said.

“We also believe that it is crucial for any serious effort towards reconciliation to go back into our history beyond February 2002, as roots of the conflict and reasons for the war that caused so much pain, destruction and polarization dates much further. In fact, the LTTE, other armed Tamil groups and the war are not the cause, but only results of the

conflict. Although LTTE and other Tamil armed groups have caused much suffering, their actions were prompted by the failure of successive governments to respond favourably to Tamil’s efforts to resolve their problems through peaceful and political means. While acknowledging the part played by LTTE and other armed groups in the suffering of the people, we wish to point out that the state military and their secret agents are feared more by the people and are held responsible for much of their woes,” the

clergymen said.

The bishop reiterated that Tamils are part of Sri Lanka, even though they have their own distinct cultural, linguistic and religious identity. The government must acknowledge this reality, and recognise that the bases for power-sharing and minority rights must be enshrined in the constitution.

The report notes that no one has been “convicted for numerous crimes such as extrajudicial killings, disappearances, torture, arbitrary detention, rape and sexual abuse. It is our belief that this culture of impunity, over the years, [has] led to more and more crimes against Tamil civilians during the course of the conflict. Measures such as forgiveness, amnesty are only possible when there is genuine acceptance and repentance of wrongs done and the truth is acknowledged.”

The report ends by reiterating that reconciliation is possible if three key elements are met. First, there must be the acknowledgement of what actually occurred during the conflict, particularly in the closing stages of the war. Secondly, a political solution to the ethnic conflict must be obtained in a participatory manner and within a specified timeframe to ensure good governance and the rule of law. Thirdly, the immediate concerns of the people who were affected and suffered because of the war must be addressed.

Displaced Lankan Tamils live in poor conditions, says Chennai based Attorney

Scoffing at the Indian and Sri Lankan governments’ claims of ethnic Tamils leading a decent life after the end of the Eelam War (2009) in the island nation, a Chennai-based lawyer who visited Lanka recently has said that the condition of Tamils there remains the same as it was immediately after the war, a report by India’s Express News Service said.

Speaking to reporters on Jan 22nd in Chennai, Attorney E Angayarkanni said, “We visited several places in the north and the lives of people who were living in camps or were relocated to other places remains the same despite the government’s claim that they have been well looked after.” The lawyer, who had travelled with a friend, had been detained recently by the Lankan army near the Omanthai checkpoint despite having the ministry of defence’s valid permits, and had only been released after the India government’s intervention.

She had also visited Parvathi Ammal,



the late LTTE leader V Prabhakaran’s mother, and said though this had been an unforgettable moment, she had been overcome by anguish for not being able to do much when the entire Tamil race in Sri Lanka was slowly disappearing.

Sri Lankan industrialist Mano Selvanathan honoured by President of India

Mano Selvanathan, who received this year’s Pravasi Bharatiya Samman, is one of Sri Lanka’s leading industrialists.

As an industry leader and one with extensive business interest in Sri Lanka and India, Mr. Selvanathan has been instrumental in introducing Indian business to the island nation.

Apart from chairing Sri Lanka’s largest chamber of commerce, he was Founder-Chairman of the Indo-Lanka Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Mr. Selvanathan pursues a strong interest in philanthropy. His family trust contributes to a number of charitable causes in education, healthcare and care for the elderly. He is also recognised for his social work with the overseas Indian community.

Photo caption: President Pratibha



Patil presents the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Award 2011 to Sri Lankan industrialist Mano Selvanathan at the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas in New Delhi on Sunday, Jan 9, 2011

[TheHindu.com]

A round the world



‘Not everyone may realize that Americans have a long relationship with the people of Jaffna, Northern Sri Lanka’

By Patricia Butenis

Vanakkam. Good afternoon to all of you, and thank you for coming to the opening of the American Corner in Jaffna. I am delighted to be here today for this important event, which expands the American partnership with the people of Jaffna.

I would like to give a special welcome to Northern Provincial Governor, Major General Chandrasiri, and Jaffna Government Agent, Ms. Imelda Sukumar. I would also like to thank Sughirtharaj, Director of the Jaffna Social Action Center, for his tremendous support in establishing the American Corner.

Not everyone may realize that Americans have a long relationship with the people of Jaffna. American missionaries arrived here in 1813, almost two hundred years ago. They taught English and learned Tamil, founded the first printing press in Jaffna, started the first Tamil language newspaper anywhere, and established Sri Lanka's first medical school.

Last June, during my first trip to Jaffna, I visited a cemetery in Uduvil where several Americans lie in rest. There I learned that former Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, one of the



Ambassador Patricia A. Butenis

United States' most renowned diplomats, visited the gravesite of his great-grandmother Harriet Winslow, founder of Uduvil Girls School — whose choir sang earlier in the ceremony. This was the first girls' boarding school in all of Asia.

The opening of the American Corner today is a symbol of our sustained commitment to the people of Jaffna. And, with its opening, we add another American "first" to the list — the American Corner is the first facility in Jaffna to have an operating ADSL internet connection.

An American Corner is much more than a small library where people can read books, magazines, or current news-



Ambassador Butenis opens the American Corner Jaffna with Mr. Jeff Anderson, Public Affairs Officer, U.S. Embassy Colombo and Mr. Sughirtharaj, Director, Jaffna Social Action Center. (State Dept.)

papers. The American Corner is a place that will connect Jaffna with the rest of Sri Lanka, and with the world. Through digital video conferences, the Jaffna public can now interact with American scholars or business leaders in New York, Los Angeles, or Washington D.C. Of equal importance, you can also connect with a network of universities throughout Sri Lanka and with our American Corners in Kandy, Oluvil, and Colombo, as we are doing today. We will engage young people via the internet, web casts, and programming to develop their communication and

leadership skills. Our online databases, English language library collection, regularly scheduled book clubs and film screenings will provide educational and cultural resources to both children and adults. We hope and expect that the American Corner will quickly become a vibrant community center, and provide a space for dialogue between Sri Lankans and Americans.

The American Corner is only one of the ways we are engaging with the people of Jaffna. The U.S. Agency for International Development created 20,000 full-time jobs in the North and East through an innovative series of partnerships with private companies. We have also given many small grants to youth organizations for projects such as training translators, promoting the performing arts, and addressing domestic violence. I even gave the Jaffna Public Library some books from my own collection of detective stories and mysteries.

The Jaffna Social Action Center is an ideal partner organization, with a deep commitment to community-level support and youth-based initiatives. We look forward to working closely with JSAC to provide cultural and educational resources to the entire Jaffna community.

Thank you all again for coming to the opening today. I look forward to following the activities at the Jaffna American Corner as it continues the strong tradition of American engagement here in Jaffna.

(Full Text of speech by US Ambassador to Sri Lanka, Ms. Patricia Butenis at the opening of American Corner in Jaffna on January 24, 2011)

Significant humanitarian needs exist from flooding in Sri Lanka East as well as from former conflict areas in North, UN says

Senior United Nations relief official Catherine Bragg on Jan 21st stressed the world body's continued commitment to helping Sri Lanka tackle its growing humanitarian needs, as she wrapped up her three-day visit to the South Asian nation.

"We need to continue our humanitarian work and are committed to remaining here and providing humanitarian assistance to all those in need, wherever they are," said Ms. Bragg, who serves as Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator.

"It's my observation that there are significant and immediate humanitarian needs resulting from the recent flooding in the east, as well as the ongoing needs in the former conflict areas of the north," she stated.

During her visit, the UN official travelled to the north, where she spoke

with people who have recently returned home since being released from Government-run camps set up in 2009 at the end of the decades-long conflict between the Government and Tamil rebels.

"Most of the returnees currently have limited access to basic services such as shelter, water and sanitation and health care. These communities remain extremely vulnerable and have critical humanitarian needs that we must address immediately."

In her meetings with government ministers, Ms. Bragg reaffirmed the commitment of the UN and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to remaining in Sri Lanka to help the Government, especially in rebuilding the north.

Ms. Bragg also visited the worst flood-affected areas in the east of the country and launched a flash appeal to



raise \$51 million in emergency funds for the one million people who are now in need of assistance.

The flooding — which reached an almost 100 year high — has driven more than 360,000 people from their homes, killed 43 people, and totally destroyed some 6,000 homes. People are now returning to their homes, but 10,000

people still remain displaced in temporary relocation centres.

Ms. Bragg had noted during her visit that the floods are "an enormous and tragic setback" for a community that is slowly rebuilding their lives following the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami and recovering from the decades-long conflict.



A round the world

Bishop Thomas Savundara Nayagam urges Sri Lanka military to bring an end to “wave of terror” in Jaffna

Bishop Thomas Savundaranayagam of Jaffna has appealed to top military in Sri Lanka's restive north to bring an end to what he described as a “wave of terror”, a report by Union of Catholic Asian News (UCAN) said on Jan 25th.

The report further stated:

At a meeting held in Jaffna secretariat with major general Hathurusinghe, the Jaffna security forces commander, government officials, military commanders, police and clergy of different religions, the prelate said: “Violence has become rife at this stage. I kindly request your immediate action. People are numbed by uncertainty and fear.”

It is alleged that government forces are failing to take action against increasing murders, abductions and robberies in the north. Unidentified armed groups roam the region and reports suggest violence prevails. The peninsula is under a military blanket with an estimated 50,000 state troops guarding the area.

In response to the bishop, Hathurusinghe pledged that his forces would give full cooperation to bring the situation under control. He had decided to increase patrols and military checkpoints, with 24 hour patrolling.

“We will take all possible measures to prevent unauthorized persons carrying arms and ammunition other than security forces and the police,” he promised.

Hathurusinghe also promised that no security personnel were involved in anti-social activities though some organized groups were trying to tarnish the image of the security forces and the police. If someone was caught in such activities, he said, he would not hesitate to give the maximum punishment to them.

Meanwhile, two students from Mannar Seminary, one an ex-seminarian, have been released recently from their abductors with the intervention of Father Anthony Victor Sosai, the vicar general of Mannar.

Schoolchildren light candles and pay tributes to Mahatma Gandhi on Jan 29th, 2011 - the eve of his death anniversary at Gandhi Museum in Patna, Bihar.
Photo: PTI



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Arts and Forms



Nattuvanar in modern times

The nattuvanars of yore had rigorous and formal training not only in nattuvangam but in singing and playing on mridangam also. We are fortunate that we still have such professionals like Adyar Lakshmanan, C V Chandrasekhar, the Dhananjayans, Kalyana-sundaram, who are bravely holding the flags of the old-time nattuvanar high but they are only a few. The classic Mahabharata Chudamani was discovered and delivered to the world by the late U V Swaminatha Iyer. In her Introduction to the book brought out by the Mahamahopadhyaya Dr. U V Swaminatha Iyer Nool Nilayam, Chennai, Rukmini Devi says, while recommending it for reading by all students of music and dance: "Music is Dance and Dance is Music". Learning the mridangam helps in reciting the drum syllables. Unfortunately, in an age of specialization in which we live, the nattuvanar, instead of being 3-in-1, has allowed his role to be trifurcated. Those who can sing, recite the sollukkattu and keep the tala counts are becoming rare. They are a vanishing tribe and can be included in the list of endangered species!

Singing for a dance recital is different from that in a regular music concert. The nattuvanar should be looking at the dancer and not at his notes in order to be in tune with the stayibhava. Even nritta has a bhava aspect. In modern times, you will see some nattuvanars looking at their notes even for reciting jatis. It is like looking at multiplication tables or using a pocket calculator to find out the product of 7 and 16 instead of doing it mentally. The singer-nattuvanar interface with dancer is symbiotic. It is very crucial for the success of a programme as each influences the other, especially in sancharis. The same is true of the interaction between the dancer and the mridangist also.

The traditional nattuvanar was a choreographer too. There is a wrong idea that choreography means a dance arrangement only for modern themes. Even the margam of a formal dance programme calls for choreographic skills in relation to not only dance movements but aharya, lighting, etc. Unfortunately the nattuvanar is nowhere in the picture nowadays in relation to these matters. It is the dancer who is the choreographer and he is just an accompanist. There are, of course, a few exceptions, as mentioned earlier.

Qualities of a dance guru

The nattuvanar is a guru. Silappadikaram calls him 'adalasiriyar' (teacher of dance). Sangeeta Ratnakara of Sarangadeva has a section describing the qualities of an ideal guru. Rangaramanuja Iyengar's book on this treatise says: "Tamil classics like 'Silappadikaram' and 'Jeevakachintamani' describe in enthralling verse the



versatility attained by Madhavi and Gandharva Datta through their training under great teachers. Sarangadeva, doubtless, realized, as well as Illango (sic) and Tirutakatevar (sic), the contribution of a dedicated teacher in unfolding the potentialities of a student".

"The magnetic glow of an awakened personality, absolute mastery of technique integrating the body and soul of the dance art, a live sense of rhythm and tempo in all their subtleties, expertise in conducting the dance ensemble, acquaintance with the individuality of musical instruments, a sound knowledge of tradition acquired from seasoned veterans, capacity to improvise song hits and rhythmic sequences, flair for new creation in style, resourcefulness in handling situations, imparting instruction in dance and music and establishing with students a profound rapport flourishing on perfect identification and devotion to ideals, and lastly, an intuitive perception of the strength and weakness of a student – these made a good teacher." (emphasis added.)

Institutional vs individual trainers

Total integrated training in music and dance is perhaps more easily attained in modern times in institutions than in the homes of individual gurus. No doubt, in the past, an individual nattuvanar could successfully do it because often he had other members of the family specializing in singing, playing on the mridangam, etc. They could supplement his teaching. In general, this is not the situation now. Kalakshetra is a good example for successful institutional training. According to a website, the

intent of the institute is to create a consummate performer, one who is an adept dancer, and has a thorough understanding of the theoretical, literary and musical basis of the traditional margam. Therefore, language, music and theory are subjects that support the main subject of study. Each dance student must study vocal music or an instrument as a subsidiary subject. Dance students are encouraged to also study mridangam in order to strengthen their understanding of tala or rhythm. Tamil, Telugu and Sanskrit, the languages most commonly found in the poetry of Carnatic music are part of the syllabus.

Recent Trends

There are, however, certain recent trends that are welcome. One is that more and more well-educated men and women are taking Bharatanatyam. It is common to see graduates and post-graduates in subjects like electronics, microbiology, etc., but learning and practicing dance as a profession. As a result, they are open to experimentation in such areas as fusion, something which traditional nattuvanars of a conservative bent of mind may not approve. The old-time guru never danced. So he could concentrate on nattuvangam. But now the modern-day guru dances either solo or in a group. So, of necessity, he or she has to engage others to sing and recite jatis.

Another welcome development is women learning and teaching nattuvangam. In fact the field was all along restricted to males so much so there is no equivalent word in Tamil to refer to the female nattuvanar. K J Sarasa of the Vazhuvur school became the first woman-nattuvanar in the 20th century.

She has trained literally hundreds of students and seen the arangetram of many of them. But she does not dance. Although she wanted to learn dancing she was dissuaded from doing so by Vazhuvur who advised her to learn and concentrate on nattuvangam instead. Kamala Rani taught nattuvangam in Kalakshetra. She wrote a book on the subject. There are dancers who have started their own schools of dancing. The syllabuses and approaches of their classes may differ and but rarely do they cover the entire gamut of the art form in all its departments as it was in the past. Such dancer-teachers cannot teach music themselves and they do not take the help of musicians either for supplementing the training. It is, of course, possible that there are exceptions.

In the distant past, performances were few and mostly in temples and durbars of kings. It was possible for the guru to be present to conduct the programme. Now it is physically impossible because of the number of disciples each guru has and their programmes are widely distributed geographically. The jet-setting modern dancer thinks of minimizing costs even for performances within the country. Tape or cassette recorder comes in handy. It takes the place of the nattuvanar. Even where there is live orchestra, the dancer prefers to have a singer and a jati reciter in the place of guru besides a couple of instrumentalists to save costs. A further development is the use of CDs and Internet for teaching the art form. The nattuvanar of the 21st century is in the process of becoming a nettuvanar. How far this is good and desirable is a subject for discussion by all those interested in the healthy development of Bharatanatyam, or, for that matter, any art. This has already happened on a substantial scale in the field of Carnatic music with NRI students reportedly being taught over the telephone from India by vidwans. While certainly students should take advantage of technological devices they should constantly ask themselves as to whether they will be fully baked or half baked at the end of training.

By: Malarvilly Janagan

– Artistic Director

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HONDA

[illegible]

MDRT Agent Sritharan Thuraiajah regained Top Gun Award at Liland's Gala

LiLand Insurance hosted the Annual Awards Gala on Saturday, Jan 8th, 2011. Awards Gala Welcome Speech was delivered by Roland J. Chan Junior with an introduction of the main guests. He thanked everyone for attending LiLand's Annual Award's Gala.

He introduced the special guests in attendance, from Industrial Alliance: Industrial Alliance's VP of Sales, Paul Grimes and his lovely wife Denise, Industrial Alliance's Director of Sales, Robert Carter, his wife Anne and daughter Lily, Sharyn Scheltema and her husband Fritz and of course Charlene Graham, from Assumption Life Mr. Sheldon Smollan and his wife Julie.

He also thanked the members of the Filipino and Tamil Media present.

Lastly, put your hands together for the spouses and partners of our LiLand agents who know all to well the sacrifices made in order to be successful in our industry. Tonight isn't just a celebration for LiLand's finest, it's also a celebration of what we've accomplished collectively over the year, reflect and gear up for 2011, quoted Roland Chan in his speech.

Some of the achievements of LiLand were mentioned by Roland Chan in his speech:

- a) Has been the #1 agency in Canada for all of Industrial-Alliance since 1996 a record 15 years running.
- b) That in our short history since 1993 we have amassed over 40,000 policy holders.
- c) That we have over \$40 million in assets under management.
- d) LiLand was much more than what these numbers reflect.
- e) LiLand sold nearly 4000 policies. Up a handful since last year.
- f) LiLand settled a few million dollars in premium.
- g) Quality of business improved dramatically.

h) LiLand have the most talented sales force in the country, I've got some numbers, and a message that you all can relate to.

i) 48 claims. That's the unfortunate number of LiLand's clients, YOUR CLIENTS that passed away in 2010.

j) \$3.3 Million dollars. That's the total amount of death benefit checks written to the families of LiLand's clients that had lost loved ones.

k) It is quite an impressive to say that we settled more than a few million dollars in premium. Perhaps, an even greater statistic is that we paid out even more in death benefits.

l) In 2010 6 clients faced life threatening illnesses and we paid out nearly \$200,000 to help support them in their greatest time of need.

m) Since Liland began selling Critical Illness, all-in-all we've paid out \$1.6 million dollars in claims.

n) Now here is the number I'm most proud of it. Get ready for it. Since 1995 (Benoit and Andreanne were unable to go back further due to limitations in their system)... 350 families benefited from \$16 million dollars in death benefit cheques.

o) Imagine the countless lives and generations you have effected in our communities.

Below is the full text of the conclusion of his speech:

So in conclusion I'd like everyone for everyone to raise their glasses so I might make a toast to our LiLand agents.

Not only are you Canada's finest sales force, but remember, when people ask you what it is you do, and why you get up in the morning... Absolutely say that you're a financial advisor, you provide financial security. But you're also caretakers. You're custodians of a legacy that is LiLand Insurance a company that puts millions of dollars into the lives of people who need it the most, WHEN they need it the most.

Congratulations and let's continue to make history in 2011.

In all seriousness we have a lot of goals in 2011. Namely, we recently collaborated with IA on a project that will hopefully assist in easing our administrative processes and improve our efficiency dramatically.

We've set some goals for our savings and retirement areas of practice which we feel we've underserved. Our plan is to hit \$100 million dollars in assets under management and really focus on the retirement years of our clients.

Have fun tonight gang. We have a lot in store for you entertainment wise and there are two fabulous charities we're raising money for Eugene and Jun will talk to you about.

Please don't drink and drive and have a wonderful night.

Some of photos taken at the event can be seen here.

The following are the Award Winners:

- **Top Gun:** Sritharan Thuraiajah
- **Top Gun Runner-up:** Venia Gabison
- **Top Rookie:** Farlene Soong
- **Top Rookie - Runner Up:** Amos Ram
- **Top RRSP Sales:** Andre Dellino
- **Runner up RRSP Sales:** Nanette Britanico
- **10 years in service:** Arceli Ordonia
Dennis Balingit



photos taken at the event



Special Feature

First Visit to Puloly Children's Village - By a British Lady

Some of the pictures taken at a recent visit to Puloly Children's Village by a British Lady




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Special Feature

South Asian Autism Awareness Centre - Awakening Tomorrow

“Sometimes I think cancer is more preferable to autism because at least with cancer there is a lot more support”. These are the burdened words of Gowri Kobikrishna, a dedicated mother who has a child with autism. Gowri articulates the frustrations of many who care for individuals with autism. The lack of awareness surrounding the disorder coupled with minimal social and governmental support has left families impacted by autism feeling isolated, frustrated, and at times helpless. Though research has been conducted in the area of autism for nearly half a century, a comprehensive understating of the disorder eludes researches and health professionals. Currently, autism is described as a life-long neuro-developmental condition that affects an individual's ability to communicate, socially interact, and causes repetitive/stereotypical behavior. Though many children diagnosed with autism present difficulties in these areas, the range of challenges varies from child to child; abilities range from children who are non-verbal and cannot grip a pencil to those who are highly verbal or extremely gifted in a particular area of interest (art, music, math, etc). This unique range of challenges faced by these youth is the main reason why there is not a single course of treatment for autism. One general treatment will not be effective on children who have varying abilities and difficulties.

Being a South Asian and a parent/caregiver to an individual with autism presents additional challenges to an already demanding and stressful occupation. The greatest of these challenges is lacking the necessary language skills to communicate with a wide array of agencies and healthcare professionals. How can a parent attain the best treatment for their child if they cannot fully comprehend the information presented to them by healthcare professionals? Or how can a parent be confident in their abilities to care for their child with



autism when they cannot communicate their concerns, desires, and questions clearly and effectively? Additionally, autism, and mental health in general, are not widely acknowledged issues within the South Asian community. Rather, there are crippling cultural stigmas associated with autism that look to blame parents and that use religion to justify the circumstances of families impacted by autism. These stigmas along with a lack of awareness surrounding autism in the South Asian community has created a culture of enclosure where personal struggles are not acknowledged and par-

ents and caregivers are left to endure in silence.

Amidst these exceptional challenges the first organization to significantly alleviate Gowri's concerns is the South Asian Autism Awareness Centre (SAAAC), a non-profit organization that provides unique services geared towards individuals with autism in the South Asian community. “It is more comfortable here”, says Gowri, “I can share my experience with other parents that are facing similar challenges and I know that they understand me.” Initiated in 2008, SAAAC was created to provide services

that encouraged development in children with autism. The centre seeks to offer both standard therapies, such as speech therapy and applied behavioural analysis (ABA), in addition to unique methods such as dance and music therapy. Also, we look to help parents and caregivers navigate the mental health system and help them connect with the vast number of services, resources, and information surrounding autism. SAAAC believes such a culturally sensitive approach to autism will not only help parents and caregivers get access to meaningful and comprehensible support for their children, but we also believe SAAAC's approach can ultimately eliminate the culture of enclosure that pervades the South Asian community when it comes to issues regarding autism.

Currently, SAAAC is serving 20 children and families with 40 on the waitlist. The organization looks to 2011-2012 as a year to increase the children and families we serve, along with hiring additional healthcare and social service professionals. SAAAC is organizing a number of fundraising initiatives to make such ambitious goals a reality. The first fundraising event will be SAAAC's Radiant Night: 2nd Annual Gala Dinner Dance, which will be held at the Platinum Convention Centre. It will be a night of celebration, hope, and with the valued presence and support of the South Asian community, it will also be a night that creates positive change for members of the South Asian community affected by autism.

SAAAC is taking a new approach within the South Asian community by embracing rather than shunning mental health issues. “We need these families to come out, speak with each other and be aware of the resources that are available to them”, says Geetha Moorthy founder and director of SAAAC, “there are too many taboos surrounding mental health in our culture and we cannot continue to pretend these things will go away or get better without intervention”. South Asian culture speaks in many tongues, believes in multiple creeds but all share one common belief: that the burden of one is lighter carried on the backs of many. Challenges faced by mental health issues such as autism are no small burden and can only be carried with the continued support of our entire community.

Written by: Kingston Yogendran and Rohan George

For more information regarding the South Asian Autism Awareness Centre, please visit us at www.saaac.org. You may also contact us by e-mail at Info@saaac.org or by phone at 416.824.8847.

A Testimonial

Fund raising event to provide services to individuals living in and around Toronto area in the South Asian community affected by Autism

Dear friends,

With the funds generated from last year's fund raising event, my son is get-

ting help from the South Asian Autism Awareness Centre.

Except for a few professional therapists, majority are college and university students who are volunteers at the centre. They observe and document the therapists programs and then work with the appropriate child accordingly.

God bless these volunteers and their parents. It's great to see their dedication and their passion towards helping the children as each child is unique and have to work differently.

This year too I am approaching my

friends for their generous help towards this fund raising event for 2011.

I have the raffle tickets and a book will cost only \$25.00 (5 tickets in a book) and you can also join the Dinner Dance to be held on March 5/2011 for the cost of \$50.00 (per person).

Any friends, who would like to be part of the corporate sponsorship, please www.saaac.org.

I look forward to hearing from you all very soon.

Thanks and God bless you.

Ronald (Ronnie) Solomons



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Business



Federal and Provincial Tax Changes for this Tax season

Sri Lankan Accountants Association had its Annual Dinner Dance on Saturday, December 04 at Woodbine Banquet hall. More than 300 members participated in this event. Some of the Event photos can be seen here. By Ari A. Ariaran, Certified General Accountant.

Let us look at the Federal changes first:

The taxable income thresholds in all four federal tax brackets were increased by 0.6 per cent in 2010 to mirror changes in the consumer-price index (CPI). Furthermore, all indexed non-refundable tax credits also increased by 0.6 per cent in 2010 in order to reflect the CPI adjustment.

The annual registered retirement-savings plan (RRSP) contribution ceiling was raised to \$22,000 in 2010, from \$21,000 in 2009. This ceiling is scheduled to rise to \$22,450 in 2011. After 2011, the annual maximum dollar limit will be indexed to the increase in the average wage.

Money-purchase plan registered pen-

sion plan (RPP) contribution limits increased in 2010 to \$22,450, from \$22,000 in 2009; after 2010, it will be raised based on the increase in the average wage. The maximum annual contribution limit for defined-benefit RPPs increased in 2010 to \$2,494 per year of service, up from \$2,444 in 2009; after 2010, it will be raised based on the increase in the average wage.

Beginning July 2010, CCTB national child benefit (NCB) supplement payments to Canadians rose to \$2,088 for the first child (from \$2,076), \$1,848 for the second child (from \$1,837) and \$1,758 for each subsequent child (from \$1,747). As a result, the maximum annual benefit under the combined CCTB and NCB supplement increased to \$3,436 (from \$3,416) for the first child; to \$3,196 (from \$3,177) for the second child; and \$3,200 (from \$3,180) for each subsequent child. The maximum indexed child disability benefit (CDB) supplement for parents in low- and modest-income families with children who have disabilities and a net

family income of less than \$40,970 (from \$40,726), increased to \$2,470 (from \$2,455) in 2010.

Now let us look at the Ontario changes:

The taxable income thresholds in all three Ontario provincial tax brackets were increased by 0.7 per cent in 2010, reflecting changes to Canada's consumer-price index (CPI) in Ontario. All indexed

two new separate, refundable property and sales tax credits in 2010, to replace the existing combined property tax and sales tax credits. The new Ontario Property Tax Credit (OPTC) is worth up to \$900 for individuals under the age of 65; and up to \$1,025 for senior citizens. This amount is phased out at two per cent of adjusted family net income above \$20,000 for single individuals, and above \$25,000 for families, including single parents. The Ontario Sales Tax Credit (OSTC) is worth up to \$260 for each adult and child. It is reduced by four per cent of adjusted family net income above \$20,000 for single individuals, and \$25,000 for families, including single parents. Both the OPTC and OSTC



non-refundable tax credits also increased by 0.7 per cent. The government reduced the rate in the lowest provincial tax bracket by one percentage point, from 6.05 per cent, to 5.05 per cent, effective January 1, 2010.

The government decreased the basic tax level at which provincial 20 per cent and 36 per cent surtaxes are imposed in 2010. The first-tier 20 per cent surtax is imposed on basic Ontario tax over \$4,006 in 2010, down from \$4,257 in 2009. The second-tier 36 per cent surtax level (for a total of 56 per cent) decreased to \$5,127 of basic tax in 2010, down from \$5,370 of basic tax in 2009.

The Ontario government adopted a harmonized sales tax (HST) on July 1, 2010. The HST is 13 per cent, combining the provincial retail sales tax of 8 per cent, with the federal goods and services tax (GST) of 5 per cent. A one-time Ontario Sales Tax Transition Benefit for qualified Ontario residents of up to \$300 for single individuals and \$1,000 for families, including single parent households, is available in three installment payments, during June 2010, December 2010, and June 2011. Benefit payments are reduced when a single person's adjusted net income exceeds \$80,000 and the adjusted net income of a family is in excess of \$160,000.

The Ontario government introduced

thresholds will be indexed annually in future to account for CPI increases due to inflation. It has been proposed that the OPTC will convert to a new Ontario Energy and Property Tax Credit, with payments beginning in 2011.

The Ontario government has proposed a new, refundable Ontario Children's Activity Tax Credit, effective January 1, 2010. Under the proposed credit, parents and guardians would be able to claim up to \$500 of eligible expenses per child and receive a refundable tax credit worth up to \$50 per child who is under 16. The credit would be worth up to \$100 for a child under 18 who has a disability.

The Ontario provincial government has paralleled certain measures announced by the federal government, including allowing a rollover of certain registered plan proceeds to a registered disability savings plan (RDSP); changes to the scholarship exemption and education tax credit; treatment of employee stock options; and various capital cost allowance (CCA) measures, among others.

If you want to know more about tax matters or clarify any of these above tax changes please contact Ari Ariaran, CGA at 647 893 8295.

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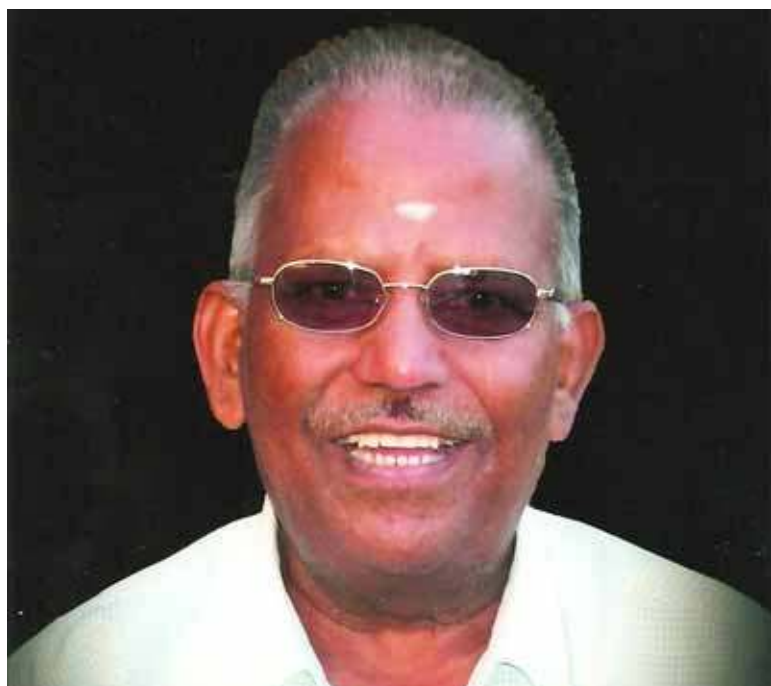


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A Tribute to MURUGAPPAR NAGALINGAM NADARAJAH

23 Feb 1937 – 15 July 2010



The late Murugappar Nagalingam Nadarajah, 73, who passed away on Thursday, 15 July, 2010 in Toronto, was a well known social worker and philanthropist. He loved humankind. He engaged himself in benefiting mankind through free social work and charitable help and donation. He was always ready to help anyone in need of help. In Toronto lots of seniors depended on him for visiting doctors or buying things or attending interviews etc. One could see him buying food parcels in restaurants and distributing them to seniors in the dusk hours. He touched the lives of so many relatives, friends, colleagues, clients, elders and acquaintances in his life's journey from Sri Lanka to Brunei and to Canada. The old and the young, the poor and the rich alike loved him. Wherever he lived in the globe, all people around him treated him as a kind hearted thorough gentleman and paid him high respect.

He renovated his house in Puloly, his home town, and converted into a "Home for the Seniors" and sent money monthly to operate it. He entrusted the supervision of the "charity home" to a doctor and paid him to. Further, he was providing monthly payments to those who were below poverty line in his village. Also, at the time of his demise he was in the process of building a factory for making artificial legs to supply amputees free of charge. It is heartbreaking to note that he passed away before completing the virtuous project.

The late Nadarajah was born in Puloly a village south of Point Pedro. He was the eldest among his six siblings. He had his primary education at Puttalai Vidyasalai and his secondary education at Velautham School in Point Pedro. He was a celebrated sportsman at school. He excelled in field events. He captained the school volleyball team, participated in

tournaments and succeeded in winning championed shield a number of times. Then he proceeded to India to follow a course in the famous Y.M.C.A. College of Physical Education, Madras and graduated in 1967 with a degree in Physical Education.

Having returned from India he joined Madduvil Maha Vidyalayam as a Physical Trained teacher. For some time he served both at Madduvil Maha Vidyalayam and Varany Maha Vidyalayam. From there he was transferred to Hartley College, one of the two most famous colleges in the Northern Province. While serving at Hartley College he moved to Brunei in 1967 where he worked as a teacher for twenty-three years. It was the golden period in his lifespan. While working in oil wealth Brunei, he helped his relatives to obtain jobs there.

The late Nadarajah met his wife Sakunthala while working in Brunei. He has three daughters whom he sent to India from Brunei for higher education. He moved to Canada with his family in 1990; he had been working as an insurance agent until his demise in July 2010.

The late Nadarajah is survived by his wife Sakunthala, daughters Selvi, Kavitha and Vanitha and grandchildren Krishon, Lakshman, Shaelyn and Nolan and sisters Kamalambikai, and Rasamalar and brother Navaratnarajah and several relatives and close friends. He was preceded in death by his siblings Parameswary, Rajaratnam and Tharmaseelan.

"The greatest use of life is to spend it for something that will outlast it"

William James.

(This tribute is written by Kathir Balasundaram, Retired Principal, Thellipalai Union College, Sri Lanka and currently residing in Markham, Canada)

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Sri Lanka: Stonewalling on Wartime Abuses, Civil Society and Media Face Threats, Intimidation - HRW

Jan 24, (New York) - The Sri Lankan government refuses to investigate alleged war crimes despite growing evidence of widespread atrocities during the civil war that ended in 2009, Human Rights Watch said today in its World Report 2011. The government has threatened and intimidated journalists, opposition politicians, and civil society activists, and has consolidated President Mahinda Rajapaksa's grip on power by extending executive power over previously independent government commissions, Human Rights Watch said.

The 649-page World Report 2011, the organization's 21st annual review of human rights practices around the globe, summarizes major human rights trends in more than 90 nations and territories worldwide. In Sri Lanka, the report says, the government rejected domestic and international calls for an independent international investigation into allegations of war crimes by government forces and the defeated rebel Tamil Tigers.

"Sri Lanka's aggressive rejection of accountability for war crimes is an affront to the victims' of the country's long civil war," said Elaine Pearson, deputy Asia director at Human

"Sri Lanka's aggressive rejection of accountability for war crimes is an affront to the victims' of the country's long civil war,"

- Elaine Pearson, deputy Asia director at Human Rights Watch.

Rights Watch. "The government undermines its claims of clean hands in the fighting with its repressive measures against the media and civil society."

The Sri Lankan government established a Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Commission (LLRC) in May 2010 to counter calls for accountability. However, the commission has severe shortcomings, including members who have not demonstrated impartiality or independence, the absence of a witness protection program for those who testify, and wide reliance on testimony from government officials and military personnel to the exclusion of outside participants.

In June, United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon established a three-member panel to advise him on possible accountability mechanisms for Sri Lanka. The Sri Lankan government immediately denounced the panel, and a senior government minister led protests outside the UN headquarters in Colombo. The government has not approved the panel's request to visit Sri Lanka.

"The government commission includes senior officials who publicly defended the government's conduct of the war," Pearson said. "How can a panel tainted from the beginning with such pro-government bias be reasonably expected to be independent and impartial. This panel should be seen for



Resettled internally displaced people listen during the government-appointed Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Commission's first session in Vavuniya on August 14 ~ courtesy: Reuters ~ via HRW.org

what it is: a cynical attempt to whitewash the truth."

The government has also sought to silence the media, civil society, and the political opposition. The media is extremely reluctant to publish articles critical of the Rajapaksa government, and many journalists who fled the country remain in exile. Shortly after the presidential elections in January 2010, the government raided the offices of opposition presidential candidate Gen. Sarath Fonseka. Fonseka was arrested and court-martialed on charges of fraud, and sentenced to 30 months in prison.

In 2010, after considerable international pressure, the government released most of the 280,000 ethnic Tamil civilians displaced by the war who were being held in military-controlled detention camps, euphemistically called "welfare centers." But many face serious livelihood, housing and security problems. Several thousand people suspected of involvement with the Tamil Tigers are in detention without charge, and are denied access to lawyers and the International Committee of the Red Cross.

In a clear signal that Rajapaksa had no intention of changing his governance style, the parliament in September passed the 18th Amendment to the Constitution, which effectively strips the police, judiciary, electoral commission, public service commission, and the National Human Rights Commission of their independence, Human Rights Watch said.

"There is no reason to believe that Sri Lanka will return to a rights-respecting government any time in the near future," Pearson said. "Until wartime abuses are prosecuted, minority

In a clear signal that Rajapaksa had no intention of changing his governance style, the parliament in September passed the 18th Amendment to the Constitution, which effectively strips the police, judiciary, electoral commission, public service commission, and the National Human Rights Commission of their independence,

- Human Rights Watch said.

grievances are addressed, and repression against the press and civil society ends, only the president and his family members in power have reason to feel secure in Sri Lanka."

SRI LANKA MILITARY EXTENDING ITS INFLUENCE OVER CIVILIAN AFFAIRS, THINGS ARE NOT LOOKING GOOD FOR DEMOCRATIC ACCOUNTABILITY

By Vijay K Nagaraj

The Sri Lankan military is getting a makeover. Now that the war with the Tamil Tigers is over it is time to wash off the stains and spruce up. Military personnel may be spotted painting public buildings or engaged in projects to beautify Colombo, with defence secretary Gotabhaya Rajapaksa personally overseeing the transformation and development of the city.

The military playing a role in postwar reconstruction is not altogether misplaced but there is more to it than meets the eye. The Sri Lankan military, accused of grave human rights violations especially during the final stages of the war, is transforming itself by taking over many aspects of civil administration and governance.

Army trucks may now be spotted around Colombo selling vegetables rather than unloading barricades. War on food inflation, Sri Lankan style, is to get the army to buy vegetables from farmers and sell them cheaply by absorbing transport and other costs – never mind the structural problems with agriculture and food markets, including procurement and pricing issues. Indeed, one opposition MP wondered if the solution might soon include getting the navy to go fishing.

Despite the end of the war, the country's administrative and diplomatic services are being militarised. A number of serving or former military commanders have received appointments in diverse state institutions and diplomatic missions, including as ambassadors. The governors of the war-torn northern and eastern provinces are, unsurprisingly, men of military pedigree – perhaps emulating India's strategy of appointing former generals as governors of disobedient provinces like Kashmir or Assam.

The Sri Lankan Urban Development Authority has been brought under the purview of the defence ministry. Which ministry is better equipped for urban governance and waging a war on urban poverty and squalor? Reports of forced evictions and demolitions of slums involving the military followed, as did allegations by human rights groups of disappearances of beggars (described as eyesores or even security threats by senior ministers).

The National Secretariat for Non-Government Organisations, responsible for registration and monitoring of NGOs, previously under the social services ministry, and later the internal affairs ministry, is also now under the watchful eyes of the defence ministry. The director-general of the NGO secretariat has, however, assured that no pressure would be put on NGOs; the secretariat would merely "monitor where they work, to whom they cater and who are involved with them".

Little wonder that NGOs working in the war-affected areas, for example, report being so closely regulated that initiatives involving work on war-related trauma or rights advocacy are routinely refused clearance. NGOs are apparently welcome to build toilets but not to misguide people into speaking about their rights.

The fast-expanding sphere of authority of the military establishment assumes another dimension when one considers another kind of convergence of power. In all, the four Rajapaksa brothers preside over the presidency, five key ministries (defence, finance and planning, economic development, ports and aviation, and highways) and the offices of the defence secretary and parliamentary speaker. With the two-term limit

on the presidency lifted last year, things are looking good for the Rajapaksas.

With significant curbs on freedom of expression continuing, civil society heavily policed, political power concentrated, and governance militarised, things are not looking so good for democratic accountability. Sri Lanka looks more like an at-war rather than a post-war country, with a ubiquitous military – accused of serious crimes – enjoying unprecedented power and reward, including a 100,000-rupee (£570) bonus for every soldier having a third child (given the Sinhalese domination of the military, a profoundly troubling move). A brutal military victory, as many warned, may well entrench militarisation and exclusion rather than democratisation and inclusion.

All too stressful? Tune into Ranaviru (war-hero) Real Star, a reality TV show reserved for military personnel. If you prefer a holiday, the Sri Lankan army will be pleased to pamper you with "luxurious comforts at very reasonable rates" at the new Thalsevana beach resort – the second army-owned and managed resort – in Kanakesanthurai on the Jaffna peninsula, long part of the Tamil homeland. According to some, the resort is in a "high security zone", so peace is assured – no annoying Tamils (they are all gone, somewhere) or dissident noises.

Forget war. In Sri Lanka it is peace that is really turning the military establishment on.

(Vijay J. Nagaraj is Research Director, International Council on Human Rights Policy ~ Views expressed in this article are those of the author only ~ This article first appeared on The Guardian.UK)



Opposite Editorials

India's global recognition

By Kanayalal Raina

There was a time in India when it was very easy to tell a person's background, both economic and social from one's external appearance. The educated elite could be told apart from those from the business who in turn were very differently turned out than their counterparts in smaller towns and as for those from rural India, well, they could be identified with obvious ease. Increasingly, it is not quite that simple anymore. The visible cultural divide between different classes seems to have narrowed, and it is increasingly difficult to tell where one come from on the basis of appearance alone.

This could easily be read as a sign of the expanding middle class, and in some ways it is exactly that. In purely economic terms, the Indian middle class is opening its doors to an ever increasing number of people. And yet, this seeming similarity hides a fundamental and deeply significant difference. This new breed of consumption-enabled Indians represents a new mindset- one that is miles away from the middle class that has dominated our consciousness for so long.

India can derive legitimate satisfaction in the enhanced interest in its growing strategic significance in Asia and the world, acknowledged by global powers. This acknowledgement came when four nuclear and UN Security Council veto-wielding powers came calling in a span of six weeks between November and December 2010. If British Prime Minister David Cameron's visit in July is added, it would be all the P-5 powers in a span of less than six months. Part of New Delhi's diplomatic traffic congestion was on account of accommodating unscheduled guests like China's Wen Jiabao. Now it is time for a balanced and objective stocktaking on the imperatives and implications of these visits.

India's recognition as a major strategic player in world affairs is primarily a fall-out of the power shift from the West to Asia, driven by Asia's phenomenal economic growth. India, therefore, is not alone in attracting global attention. China has been doing so for a much longer time and now fast growing countries like Vietnam are also in limelight. Since the



"declining" West needs to engage with the rising Asian economies, they are generous in conceding strategic value to the Asian countries, sometimes more than what countries like India really command.

India's additional advantage is that it is a democratic country. Mark US President Obama's assertions that India is not the "rising" but "risen" power, and an "indispensable" strategic partner of the US. This echoes elements of exaggeration, particularly when viewed in the context of the US traditional approach to India and still lingering challenges of India's economic performance and military modernisation. Tied to such flattering rhetoric is the demand, made by almost all the high-powered visitors to India, to open up its markets for the incoming goods and services, through lowering its tariff barriers and speeding up its economic reforms. Linked to the question of opening up of the Indian markets are also the issues of softening India's Nuclear Liability Bill and opening wide its defence imports which are considered as the two most lucrative sectors of India's market potential for the dwindling economies of the West as well as competing defence and nuclear exports of Russia. To what extent India will be able to accommodate such demands to nurse its strategic aspirations and yet protect its vital economic and foreign policy autonomy remains to be seen.

Even beyond and behind the exaggerated rhetoric, there is certainly a degree of sincerity in the international community's recognition of India's growing strategic significance. More so as a rising China dis-

turbs the existing global balance of power and stirs anxieties and uncertainties all around. If the US and Europe have to keep China away from pushing their dominating presence and influence out of Asia, they need to balance China. India, for its stability, size, capabilities and growth potential, is the obvious candidate to be explored in this respect. That is why the US invited India to join it in a leadership role in the Indian Ocean and Pacific regions. It asked India to "not only look East" but also "engage with the East" and be more active in Africa, where China is fast making deep inroads.

India is, of course, engaged with East Asia, but what the US wants is to prepare India to invest more of its economic, military and diplomatic resources in the East Asian countries to limit the growing Chinese assertiveness. To wards that end, the West now seems willing to lure India with the promise of technology transfers and greater global decision making role. The coming months and years will only show how much of these promises will be delivered and how fast. With an eye on China's growing influence in Central Asia, Russia has invited India to become a full member of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO).

Russian worries in relation to China also arise from the latter's creeping expansion, even through illegal migration and inter-marriages in its remote and scarcely populated Far-east region. One wonders if it is desirable for India and it is willing and prepared to be launched in this role of balancing China at this stage. Is an all-out

competition with China a viable and sustainable policy option for India at this juncture? Besides, India is also expected to follow the Western line on other issues of international concerns like Iran and nuclear non-proliferation.

Almost each of the visitors, from the US to France to the UK and Russia, tried to nudge India towards joining the Non-Proliferation Treaty. China is already signalling that it will



add to India's costs for being strategically promoted in Asia by the West.

A clear and most uncomfortable message from these visits for India is that the international community is a helpless and unreliable partner to blunt and moderate Pakistan's terror agenda. China and the US refused to hold the Pakistani state responsible for Pakistan's cross-border terrorism against India. Both of them seemed even interested in pushing India into talking to Pakistan on Pakistan's terms. China, in fact, will not hesitate in backing up the Pakistani position on Kashmir as indicated through its involvement in Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir and refusal to recognise the border with Kashmir as part of the Sino-Indian disputed border. The US and China naturally have their respective constraints and preferences towards Pakistan in refusing to understand India's concerns.

Pakistan is blackmailing the US in Afghanistan and keeping China anxious in Xinjiang. China also sees great strategic value in Pakistan in protecting its interests in South and Central Asia as well as the Indian Ocean. British Prime Minister David Cameron and Russian President Medvedev did sing a song to Indian ears on Pakistan; the former by openly warning Pakistan on the "export of terrorism to India", and the latter by asserting that India was within its rights to militarily retaliate against a state that sponsors terrorism. But neither the UK nor Russia is in a position to prevail over Pakistan to sober its unethical strategy against India. Should India then make a radical departure in its approach to Pakistan, and be prepared for sending an effective message to Islamabad and also to its proclaimed benefactors, that enough is enough.

In handling the high-power visits, India left no one in doubt that it was acutely conscious of its burgeoning market potential and will use this potential in the pursuance of its vital strategic interests. India neither needs to be lured by strategic promises nor be pressured by the undue demands of the international community. There are enough contradictions among the international community's new bidders for association and partnership with India so as to play upon them to its own advantage. This is easier said than done as the challenge will unfold in the coming decade.

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Special Feature



by Arun Senathirajah

Incomplete Experience

'it is the accumulation of your incomplete experience that get formed as 'guiltiness' and the guiltiness' transformed as the 'Karma' or 'Vithy' or 'Thali vithy'. 'Vithy' or the Verdict is one none other than what we sentenced to our self. You get an incarnation not necessarily in human form, may be in any live being to harvest the result of your 'Karma' or experience the 'Vithy' to complete your incomplete experience. "The 'guiltiness' is the basis for a birth" states Guruji Nalenthiran. The 'guiltiness' is submitted by the life being when it lived in the planet of earth whether it is a human being or another live being when it demised, to the cosmic energy. The extra-terrestrial energy using this in the same soul or 'Athma' or 'Jeevathma" and find a suitable tool i.e. the body and send back to its part of the space point (may be earth or another location in the universe) to complete the incomplete experiences. This is how every live being, or even a human being emerge in this world which has all the resources and relationships (created by the celestial power) to fulfill all the requirements to complete the unfinished business of those 'Jeethmas' previous birth. 'Jeevathma' is the same and a part of the cosmic energy. The ultimate purpose of the part of this cosmic energy – the Jeevathma has to be unified with the oneness - the cosmic energy. A human being has to get its consciousness only by tendering unlimited love towards the other live beings in the way its original source supplied resources and relationships to all live being without expecting anything in return. To achieve this loving all state, a human being has to have good and ever lasting relationships.

The Missing God

'Consciousness becoming conscious of itself is creation' states Sri Bhagavan. First of all it is important to realize yourself. Dr Erich Fromm states in his book 'The Art of Loving' 'love is the only satisfactory answer to the problem of human existence'. He emphasizes social conditions are responsible for the absence of general acceptance of love. To realize yourself first of all love the body (tool) given to you (Jeevathma). Then love your soul – Aathma. You have to understand that those who brought you this materialistic world are the Gods for you – that's your mother and father (they were selected by the cosmic power to be as your parents). These living gods are living with you or lived with you. They never live in those temples, churches, mosques or any other worshiping places which you are relentlessly searching for the missing god. Respect them and be grateful for their sufferings and hardships they took to bring you up as you today are.

Experiences and Scientific Acceptance

Amma Bhagavan's Oneness University website states: Currently there is understanding as to the laws which govern our physical universe as

Why Human Being Exists?



discovered by the space scientists. Similarly our inner lives are also governed by certain laws of the universe-cosmic energy. An understanding of these laws enables us to live harmoniously with ourselves, others, and with the natural world. It is possible that we come to understand these laws and also how to apply them in our lives in a way that can truly create heaven on Earth. The great sages and saints of all time have taught and applied these laws and shared them with humanity for millennia. Amma Bhagavan's teachings on Relationships, Awakening, Self-Realization, and God-Realization have been directly experienced by many people regardless of race or religion and these are in line with modern discoveries in science, and are scientific in temperament, appealing not only to the intuition of the seeker, but also to the rational intellect.

Fredrick Perls' Gestalt Therapy and the Incomplete Experiences

The founder of Gestalt (German word meaning – essence or shape of an entity's complete form) Therapy – German psychiatrist Fredrick Perls has declared, "Every individual, every plant, every animal has only one inborn goal – to actualize itself as it is." There is a deep trust in gestalt therapy in "the wisdom of the organism." Human beings possess an inborn capacity to meet their needs and thereby to grow. The task of therapy is to "fill in the holes in personality (created by the disowned or rejected aspects of oneself), to make the person whole again. By enabling persons to relive and finish the incomplete experiences that they carry from the past, the configurations or gestalts of these experiences are completed. In this way the energy that has been locked up in unfinished gestalts becomes available for use in self-awareness and

relationships. This process enables persons to move from being supported and controlled by others toward increased self-support and freedom to choose to relate to others in need-satisfying ways. Perls applied this therapy to the world life. Perls viewpoint fully supports the view of Guruji Nalenthiran. He expanded this to the reincarnation of humans and other live being as well.

'The Grand Design' and the Oneness

'The Grand Design' is a popular-science book written by physicists Stephen Hawking and Leonard Mlodinow and published in 2010. It argues that invoking God is not necessary to explain the origins of the universe, and that the Big Bang is a consequence of the laws of physics alone. In response to criticism, Hawking has said; "One can't prove that God doesn't exist, but science makes God unnecessary. He has clarified that he does not believe in a personal God. They wrote 'because there is a law such as gravity, the universe can and will create itself from nothing. Spontaneous creation is the reason there is something rather than nothing, why the universe exists, why we exist. It is not necessary to invoke God to light the blue touch paper and set the universe going. The authors explain, in a manner consistent with M-theory, that as the Earth is only one of several planets in our solar system, and as our Milky Way galaxy is only one of many galaxies, the same may apply to our universe itself: that is, our universe may be one of a huge number of universes. The book concludes with the statement that only some universes of the multiple universes (or multiverse) support life forms. We, of course, are located in one of those universes. The laws of nature that are required for life forms to

exist appear in some universes by pure chance, Hawking and Mlodinow explain. In physics and cosmology, the anthropic principle is the philosophical argument that observations of the physical Universe must be compatible with the conscious life that observes it. Some proponents of the argument reason that it explains why the Universe has the age and the fundamental physical constants necessary to accommodate conscious life. As a result, they believe that the fact that the Universe's fundamental constants are within the narrow range thought to allow life is not remarkable.

Stephen Hawking's Conscious Life and Oneness movement's Consciousness

Accommodation of conscious life and the immense cosmic energy are the very basic of the Oneness movement. What Stephen Hawking tries to explain of the 'the universe can and will create itself from nothing. Spontaneous creation is the reason there is something rather than nothing, why the universe exists, why we exist.' Guruji Nalenthiran also explains 'we don't need to worry about the gods, other than as an accommodated conscious life – it could be human life (Jeevathma) can develop its consciousness of where he/she comes from and to which he/she belongs. Endeavour effortlessly to merge back with the cosmic energy which accommodated the human life in the planet of earth to complete your incomplete experiences. Is that the omnipresent, omnipotent and omnipowerful Lord Siva, Lord Narayana or any other Gods or The Universe which Stephen Hawking and Leonard Mlodinow advocates in their 'The Grand Design' as the Spontaneous Creative Power of the universe.

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Opposite Editorials

‘Veedu Nokki’...Homeward Bound

After 28 Years, to Sri Lanka's North

By A. Jeyapalan

War in Northern Sri Lanka comes to an end. Commotions of emotional despair slowly fade in to the daily routine of the expatriates' lives, here in Australia.

Yearning...

My heart suddenly yearns for that humble little village Sandilipay in Northern Sri Lanka, where I grew up in to adulthood; the village that brings sweet memories of my teen days.

A simple yearning for the village, a notion with love, materialises in August 2010.

I was joined by five overseas born visitors from the United States and Singapore. They all were with some Sri Lankan ancestry but some had foreign names. We landed in Colombo and I was anxiously waiting for the onward journey. The long awaited trip to Jaffna. I already started feeling the dust of Jaffna under my bare feet that strolled and ran in young age.

Ministry of Defence in Colombo granted us permits to fly to Jaffna.

Compassion...

A rental car operator picks us from the hotel in Wellawatte and drives us to Ratmalana airport. The man was a well read Sinhalese and he started the conversation on the way to the local aerodrome. He asked if I was going to Jaffna after a long time. I nodded with a sense of excitement "yes, after 28 years". After a few minutes of pause, he glanced at me and I could see some moist in the corner of his eyes. He continued (in mixed Sinhala and English) "Sir, I just wondered how those innocent people endured this war. They were carrying their stuff on their heads running for cover and moving from place to place for this many years; I just don't know. I don't know if my people would have withstood this agony for so long. Sir, your people are very resilient. By God's grace, I wish they lead a peaceful life". The moist in his eyes was still there. A sweet send off for me to Jaffna.

Jaffna here we come...

The turbo propelled twin engine aircraft roared in to the horizon towards Northern Sri Lanka. I sat in that window side seat watching the clouds and the landscape pass beneath me. My mind went on a fast rewind to the past 28 years; the agitation, the riots, and the bloody war that ensued and the final carnage. All thoughts surfaced and vanished at the same speed. I was overwhelmed by the euphoria of setting foot on that soil that I yearned for.

Thoughts of my young innocent days caressed my heart.

The aircraft touches down at Palaly and slowly taxis towards the arrival building.

I stepped out of the aircraft in to the thick red dusty soil of Jaffna. The army and airforce personnel get busy handling the arrival of passengers.

My senses got busy feeling the idea of being in Jaffna; the smell of the dust, the noise of the colourful roosters and morning sun beaming through the towering Palmyra trees.

Scars of war...



We begin the next leg of our journey towards Jaffna town in an army bus. The bus crawls through the garrison village hopping up and down in and out of pot holes on an old gravel road. The bus keeps tossing from left to right cradling everyone slowly in to the reality of the three decade war.

My eyes gazed out of the bus window in to the vacated lands that bore all the scars of a senseless war. The houses stood here and there without roofs completely abandoned, resembling a forgotten generation.

The scene brought home an important unshakeable fact in to my heart. The abandoned homes are all taken over by one important entity of this existence; Nature. The bullet riddled walls are completely engulfed by the trees, creepers, weeds and shrubs.

All ideals, grievances, enmities will all succumb eventually to nature. Nature always has the final answer. Nature is the owner. We are only tenants on this planet.

Does that mean we just eat and survive until we depart? No.

Jaffna smiles...

Jaffna town bustles with noise of buses, three wheelers and vans. Small businesses and eateries are busy with people moving in and out buying stuff. Saris, and churithar dresses flutter in the wind at every textile shop inviting people to buy and dress up and be happy.

To add to the enthusiasm, the famous Nallur Kandasamy temple was having its annual festival. Pilgrims from all parts of Jaffna and the South streamed in to the streets of Nallur in bus loads. Small shops had sprouted in every nook and corner like mushrooms.

Jaffna was smiling again.

Agony of war...

We chatted for hours through the nights with my remaining cousins in Jaffna. The stories of the past thirty years filled the air. I just sat there still, listening and listening. Being caught up in the crossfire, continuous harassment from the warring factions, addiction to alcohol caused by undue stress of harassment and many more stories kept rolling one after the other. The long walk in 1995 from their homes to escape the fighting was heartbreaking. They had walked over dead bodies of old men and women who just dropped dead out of hunger and dehydration.

Staying alive has been the first struggle. Staying neutral between the state and the rebel was another struggle. They had to

face relentless terror day and night to be non-aligned and be at peace. Living daily to avoid recruitment and escape persecution would not have been a peaceful life. It is like dead man walking.

Man had wielded his power against his own kith and kin with his finger across a trigger.

How small the man had become?

The IDPs...

Stories eventually led to the IDPs who have returned back to their villages from Wannai. I was keen to see them.

While Jaffna springs back to life, there is pain behind the cajan fences in the villages.

Small clay huts under a stack of Palmyra leaves are the shelters for these families who have returned from Wannai. A tarpaulin given by UNHCR provides some cover from inclement weather. Some families who fled with children of five year old have returned now with grown up teenage girls.

They had no basic water and sanitation facilities. Preserving the girls' privacy is a struggle for the parents.

With the help of some generous individuals, a program was launched to build toilet facilities for these people who have nothing left in their hands after the war. This has brought some smile in the faces that saw no hope for many years.

I came across a set of documents, a list of war widows below fifty years of age who need a livelihood to look after their children. My heart sank when I saw the numbers. That list alone had seventy two registered widows who were below fifty years. They have no income and were depending on the little rations given by the state.

I walked up to a small hut where little children were playing. I met this young lady with three children. Her right leg had been operated after a shrapnel injury and the little boy had an injury in his neck. The boy has a twisted arm and he wouldn't walk straight. He stumbles and falls often. The lady's father, husband and the sister had perished in the war. Her name forms part of the list of seventy two war widows in that small hamlet. What could I do? I just took the little fellow and kept him on my lap for a while.

The innocent soul smiled with some temporary joy.

Fears...

I met many educated men from time to time during my stay. None of them talked

about the war. During one such visit, the gentleman slowly broke his silence on war and peace. His deeply buried fear surfaced in a low tone. He had seen peace come and go many a times. For him, peace is like an interval between two miseries.

He said if there is a slight outbreak of violence against the state again, that would be the end of the remaining story.

His eyes drooped as he muttered "that's what always worries me".

He continued, I pray that it should not happen again, we have had enough suffering, and we want to live in peace.

I was once seated in a function arranged for an elder's home in Jaffna. The gentleman who was seated next to me was a high school principal from the area.

We started a conversation as he enquired about me and my trip after twenty eight years to Jaffna. He was forthright with what he had to say about the future of Jaffna. He said the country had gone through immense turmoil with violence and it had lost some of the important human values.

He said what this land needs is education of human values and good men and women must come back to this land to teach values to the growing children.

Jaffna College...

Lastly I visited my school that always stayed in my heart. Jaffna College, one of the best institutions I have been through in my life. The gates were locked as it was a public holiday, so I stood at the gates for a few minutes as my eyes panned through the campus. The great banyan tree (Aaladi..) with Principal's bungalow in the background was an eye catching view. The banyan tree would tell many love stories it had watched in silence through its life. It still stands there selflessly giving shelter as generations pass through to further their lives.

A message...

Back in Australia, I was asked this question by many people. How is Jaffna?

My message was one for all.

People have gone through immense misery with three decades of war. They want to be left alone to live in peace. Any form of agitation again would bring again unbearable suffering. If one still has love for his mother land, he should take time and go to his village where he grew up. You should walk around and talk to people. Identify the needs and help in whatever way you can.

Grama Sevakas are the best source of information to render any help. He is the first contact for every villager for his or her needs.

Always remember that we who left for other shores have a responsibility to help those innocent souls. Most of them did not know how and why it all started for they were not even born then, but they have taken all the beating.

Show them that you care and you are there for peace and not to agitate.

Quotes:

"Service to others is the rent you pay for your room here on earth." - Muhammad Ali Peace-"If you wish to experience peace, provide peace for another."

Conflict-"Conflict is inevitable, but combat is optional."

Governance-"Generous grants, compassion, righteous rule and succour to the downtrodden are the hallmarks of good governance." [transCurrents.com]

Special Feature



By Antony Jeganathan

"Hunger"—I never really paid attention to this particular feeling I get every now and then – until my brother began to get involved in the Free the Children project known as "Halloween for Hunger". He wanted me to be the publicity coordinator for this project. Until then, other than the brief pangs of hunger I get while I am playing video games, walking home from school, or while travelling with my family, I never really experienced hunger as seen by the children portrayed on World Vision TV.

The very mention of the word hunger brings to our minds images of the starved emancipated bodies of children that come from third world countries. Some parts of the world that are cohabited by our fellow human beings undergo several natural and man-made situations that lead to starvation.

This paradigm however, does not extend to our fellow children that live right here in Canada! We seldom associate children growing up in advanced nations like US or Canada with hunger. As I get more and more involved I am becoming aware of true picture of Children and Hunger right here in Canada – and more locally, in affluent Markham. As the famous saying goes 'Charity begins at Home', With the support of the families participating in the

H.u.n.g.e.r

"Halloween for Hunger" program we began this enriching journey to understand the effects of hunger among children right here in Markham. Instead of just understanding, we wanted to do something about it.

The method we chose to address the issue was simple. Each family was given a specific area around where they live and asked to request a non-perishable food item instead of Candy as they went trick or treating on Halloween night. The response we received for this simple overture was overwhelming and heartwarming. This has inspired our families to continue this tradition. Our food drive alone has resulted in collecting over four hundred cans of non-perishable food items which was then donated to the Markham Food Bank.

The prevalence of hunger in "affluent" schools is certainly a reality. To understand this particular issue, I interviewed a Markham High School Principal Mrs. Kathleen Westmaas. She was able to share firsthand experience in relating to the children who experience hunger at school. We cannot imagine children in our schools going through the day with pangs of hunger. There are

many ways we can help combat this hidden problem in our society. The teachers at this High school have taken a couple of steps in rectifying the situation. Primarily, they have introduced a program known as the "Breakfast Club". This program provides a free breakfast to anyone interested. It is open to everyone in order to prevent isolation of the students. Secondly, Cafeteria coupons are distributed to students in need.

Did you know that even celebrities as famous as Mariah Carey, are advocates for hunger. They were able to relate to it in their own lives. In an interview she was quoted as saying that as a child she was quite poor. She was afraid that the other kids would make fun of her for not being able to afford food so she packed a piece of stale bread in her lunchbox. She used it as a "Token food" in order to avoid the fact that she was unable to afford a proper meal.

Some disturbing facts about the reality of hunger in the world have surfaced. For too long, we have lived in the dark regarding the truth about this ignored pandemic. Based on the last well known study conducted and published by Lynn McIntyre, Sarah K. Connor and James

Warren in the Canadian Association Medical Journal, titled Child Hunger in Canada: Results of the 1994 National Longitudinal Survey of Children and youth in the United States is quoted as having between 5.7% and 6.8% of children under 12 living in households with insufficient food. Canada though, fared much better with 1.2%. However this small statistic put in perspective the plight of the children that belong to certain groups – children brought up by single mothers, off-reserve Native Americans and children in families that rely on Social Assistance are most vulnerable to hunger.

This hunger puts these children at risk in many ways – some of them very violent. With other world nations quickly coming up in economic might, the demand for food is only going to go up.

Combine this with the loss of cultivable lands in many regions of the world to development and the use of food crop for fuel, the pricing pressure increases. All of these factors drive up the food prices we pay at stores. Marginalized children are going to be more vulnerable than ever. There are approximately 1.02 billion hungry people in the world as of 2009; the numbers are on the rise due to recession and the increasing cost of food. Let us make a difference, one step at time.



The Scarborough Hospital

Hospital launches forum on sensitive healthcare issues

The Scarborough Hospital introduces It's Time to Talk, a free speakers' series

Sometimes, issues important to our health and wellbeing are difficult to talk about. That's why The Scarborough Hospital has created It's Time to Talk, a free speakers' series where physicians, staff and allied healthcare workers offer expert advice to the community on how to have difficult conversations with loved ones.

The first of this series, "Tough Transitions: Aging, Families and Eldercare," will be held on Wednesday, February 9 from 7:00 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. in the General campus auditorium, 3050 Lawrence Avenue East.

available in the community, understand what a substitute decision maker is, plan a geriatric future and make eldercare plans for themselves or enhance their ability to talk to their family members about this subject. It will be moderated by Pauline Chan, CTV News Health Reporter, and will include guest speakers: Moji Adurogbangba, TSH Ethicist; Debbie Driver, RN(EC), TSH Nurse Practitioner; Scott Wisner, MSW and Carol Anne Stetina, MSW, TSH Social Workers; and Sandra Armstrong, RN, Interim Senior Manager for CE-CCAC. There will also be a brief Town Hall presentation and a Q&A session with the audience.

"This new speakers' series will effec-



Scott Wisner, MSW, TSH Social Worker, Debbie Driver, Nurse Practitioner, Event Moderator Pauline Chan, CTV News Health Reporter & Moji Adurogbangba, TSH Ethicist

The community is invited to attend this important event; it's free, including refreshments and parking, and every guest will receive a booklet filled with valuable information to take home.

"It can be difficult to speak to family members about their legal and healthcare options, and it can also be hard for an elderly person to come to terms with the special care they may need," says Debbie Driver, RN (EC) TSH Nurse Practitioner and pioneer of the first series. "At The Scarborough Hospital, we understand that within our diverse community, these conversations may be particularly challenging. Our speakers recognize and respect cultural values, and we can offer candid advice and support throughout their journey."

"Tough Transitions: Aging, Families and Eldercare" will help community members find resources and support

tively balance the expertise of our award-winning hospital and the healthcare needs of our community," says Stephen Smith, Vice Chair, TSH Board of Directors. "Our goal is to inform all stakeholders about their hospital, provide proactive information about how to maintain or improve their health and create a forum to allow our community to ask experts questions they may have."

Situated in the most diverse community in Canada, The Scarborough Hospital (TSH) delivers innovative, high-quality patient care at two hospital campuses and six satellite sites. The Scarborough Hospital is a regional centre for dialysis and is renowned for its sexual assault care centre and mental health programs. Affiliated with the University of Toronto, TSH is also a referral centre for vascular surgery, pacemakers and corneal implants.

Integrity
Compassion
Excellence
Respect
Accountability

“IT'S TIME TO
Talk”

**You Are Invited to Attend
Tough Transitions:
Aging, Families and Eldercare**

**Wednesday, February 9, 2011
7:00 p.m. – 9:30 p.m.
General campus, Auditorium
3050 Lawrence Avenue East**

Moderator: Pauline Chan, Health Reporter, CTV News
Guest Speakers: Moji Adurogbangba, TSH Ethicist; Debbie Driver, RN(EC), TSH Nurse Practitioner; Scott Wisner, MSW, and Carol Anne Stetina, MSW, TSH Social Workers

It's Time to Talk is a new, free community service offered by The Scarborough Hospital, where our physicians, staff and allied healthcare workers offer expert advice on how to have difficult conversations with your loved ones. The first in this speakers' series is "Tough Transitions: Aging, Families and Eldercare." Join moderator Pauline Chan and key members from The Scarborough Hospital team as they help you:

- Find resources available in the community
- Understand what a substitute decision maker is and why you must have one
- Plan your geriatric future
- Make eldercare plans

**PLEASE RSVP TODAY AT
416.431.8130 or epolgar@tsh.to**



Mubarak the World's Wealthiest Individual?

Hosni Mubarak's net worth is reportedly estimated at \$40 – \$70 billion, which puts him in the company of only Carlos Slim (\$54 billion) Bill Gates (\$53 billion) and Warren Buffett (\$47 billion), according to a report on goldalert.com, and it further says:

The President of Egypt, who has announced plans to not run for re-election in September, has been in power since 1981 but is currently facing a political upheaval and violent protests throughout the nation.

ABC News quoted experts as saying that the Mubarak family wealth was built largely from military contracts during his time as an Egyptian air force officer.

Amaney Jamal, a Princeton University professor, commented that "The business ventures from his military and government service accumu-



lated to his personal wealth...There was a lot of corruption in this regime and stifling of public resources for personal gain."

Jamal also noted that Mubarak's assets are likely in British and Swiss banks. "This is the pattern of other Middle Eastern dictators so their wealth will not be taken during a transition ... These leaders plan on this."

JOHN BODDY HOMES PRESENTS 'EAGLE GLEN'

John Boddy Homes has been voted 'Best Builder' in Ajax/Pickering for the fourteenth year in a row for this year's Readers' Choice Awards and has released its next phase at their 'Eagle Glen' community in Ajax. Located just minutes east of Toronto 'Eagle Glen' combines the closeness and convenience of city living with a suburban feel, and its prime location makes it a great place to call home. Classic two-storey homes are available, as well as side and back splits, semi detached and townhomes. Homes start at 1,700 square feet and range up to a spacious 3,534 square feet. John Boddy Homes offers traditional size lots with a minimum of 105 feet in depth and a great selection of extra deep lots, pie shaped lots, walk out basements and a select few backing onto 3.5 acres of mature trees. With such a broad range of house sizes and styles 'Eagle Glen' has the ideal home to suit every preference. From the unique exteriors and charming streetscapes to the elegant interiors, various John Boddy Homes include such impressive standard features as vaulted ceilings, double door entries, décor columns, mirrored sliding closet doors, ceramic kitchen backsplashes, double basin bathroom vanities with make-up counters and so much more. Their gourmet kitchens, welcoming great rooms with cozy gas fireplaces and elegant dining rooms with coffered ceilings are all spacious and comfortable, making them the perfect location to enjoy time together with family or entertaining friends. In addition, some models include such impressive extras as classic French doors, transom windows and custom octagonal skylights allowing light to travel throughout the home for a bright and spacious feel.

For their homeowner's convenience, most John Boddy Homes include main or second floor laundry rooms, laundry chutes, kitchen breakfast bars, private water closets, interior garage access, high efficiency furnaces and basement rough-ins for future bathrooms. Also, windows are vinyl clad wood which allows for interior custom colours with a maintenance free exterior. Other features include arched entryways, custom millwork, window mullions on all front and rear facades and decorative garage doors featuring appealing window lites. Custom landscaping packages and paved driveways are also included in all homes providing the renowned curb appeal that enhances the entire 'Eagle Glen' community.

Innovative floorplan designs combined with an extensive array of standard features included with every new home have become a corporate trademark of John Boddy Homes and 'Eagle Glen'. Not only does a John Boddy home offer such striking standard features, there are also a wealth of opportunities to upgrade, making their homes



Lynton Semi



Mayfair Semi - Model to View



The Stonegate



Wyndham Semi

as unique as each individual homeowner. The 'Eagle Glen' Sales Office features a Décor Centre that contains a wide range of upgrade items to select from in order to customize your home. Their high-tech electrical and décor consultants allow homebuyers to make upgrade selections on site, enabling them to conveniently personalize their home.

When you purchase a new home in 'Eagle Glen' there are no hidden closing costs. John Boddy Homes pays for education levies, development charges, water and hydro meter hookup fees, boulevard tree planting, landscape package and a paved driveway.

Currently John Boddy Homes is offering an incentive package of \$5,000 in free upgrades for single family homes, \$3,000 in free upgrades and 5 appliances for semi detached and townhomes. All new home buyers also receive one year of Roger's services for free! Included in this package are home phone with 150 long distance minutes and 2 calling features, personal TV with free rental of a standard definition box, a HD digital box, VIP package, free on demand programming, Canadian timeshifting channels as well as Rogers Hi-Speed internet service and all are installed for free.

The 'Eagle Glen' community offers many important neighbourhood amenities such as a brand new on-site public elementary school, places of worship, fully equipped parks and easy access to both Ajax and Go-Transit Services. Toronto is easily accessible from nearby Highways 401 and 407. Located just north of a host of shopping and recreation centres, 'Eagle Glen' allows residents all the amenities of the urban

lifestyle while providing the beauty and tranquility of the neighbouring countryside.

Since 1955, John Boddy has been involved in the construction of thousands of new homes throughout Ontario, and has earned a reputation as an accomplished builder of fine residential communities. Of significance are the award winning 1000-acre 'Bridlewood Community' developed during the 1960's and 1970's in Scarborough, the 'Forestbrook' Community' in Pickering developed in the 1980's, 'Willowcreek' in Peterborough, and 'Eagle Ridge on the Green' in Ajax developed in the 1990's and early 2000's.

The John Boddy Homes' team of experienced management, planners, designers, supervisors, marketing and sales personnel have distinguished themselves by creating innovative and unique designs in truly outstanding communities that meet the needs and desires of today's families.

With five fully furnished model homes and new semi-detached and townhome models a visit to 'Eagle Glen' is a must. Drop by the Sales Presentation Centre located on Stevensgate Drive, north of Rossland Road West, one half kilometre west of Westney Road three kilometres north of Hwy. 401. Sales office hours are Monday through Thursday 1:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.; Friday, Saturday, Sunday and Holidays 11:00 a.m. to 6:00p.m. Let their friendly knowledgeable staff help you determine which of the many home styles available is perfect for you and your family and get set to join the ever-growing 'Eagle Glen' family community. For more information, please call (905) 619-1777 or visit their website at www.johnboddyhomes.com.

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IN FREE
UPGRADES**



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HOMES
Eagle
Glen

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APPLIANCES**

LOCATED JUST MINUTES EAST OF TORONTO

FIVE FURNISHED MODELS

TOWNHOME MODEL TO VIEW!

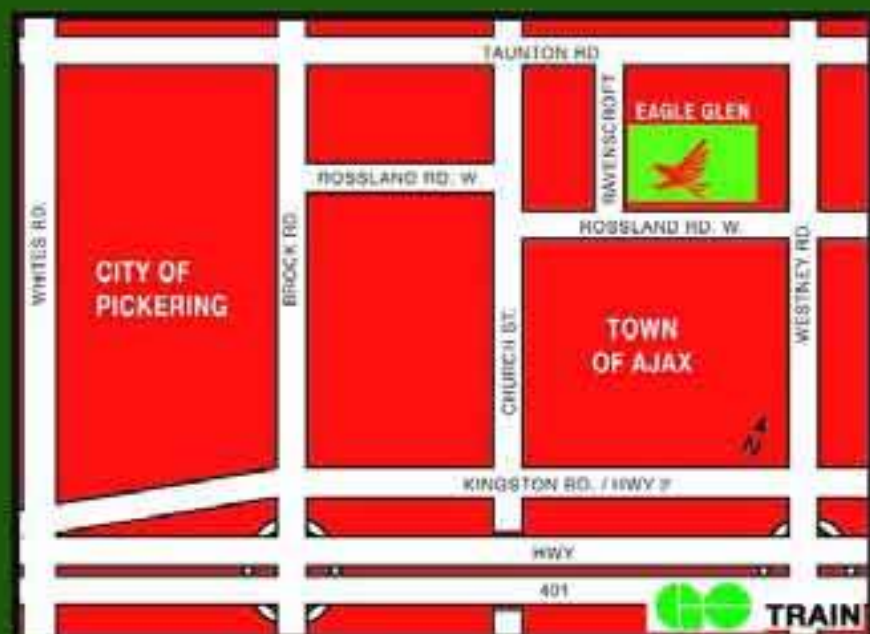


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Sales office on Rossland Road, 1/2 km west of Westney Road

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RANGING FROM 1850 SQ. FT. TO 3534 SQ. FT.

www.johnboddyhomes.com

The Scarborough Hospital



Toronto Sri Varasiththi Vinaayagar launches charity program: “Giving back to the Community”

“Giving back to the Community”, a charitable program was initiated by Sri Varasiththi Vinayagar Hindu Temple on the Holy day of Pongal.

Toronto Sri Varasiththi Vinaayagar Hindu Temple, one of the forerunners of many Religious, Cultural and Tamil language services in Ontario, added another feather to its cap, by organizing an event to donate funds for The Scarborough Grace Hospital on the auspicious Pongal day (14th January 2011).

The Pongal is the Thanks Giving Day for the Tamils around the world. The Hindu Religious organization located in Scarborough just north of 401 on Kennedy and Finch has initiated this holy day as “Giving back to the community”. The collection of this fund was initiated by the Chief Priest of the temple Sivasri Panchadchara Vijayakumara Kurukkal and the executive committee, on the advice of Mr. Sukumar Ganeshan, the administrative advisor of the temple.

In order to encourage the younger generation, to get involved in such noble ventures Master Vidyasagar Vijayakumaran collected donations from the devotees, who attended the Pongal celebrations. Along with his collection and temple contribution total of \$5,455.00 was donated to The Scarborough Grace

hospital.

The President of “The Scarborough Hospital Foundation” Mr. Michael Mazza referred to this event as an important milestone of all Tamil Saivaites and Varasiththi Vinaayagar temple in particular. Hon. Jim Karygiannis (M.P.) said that the social status of Tamils have been elevated by this magnificent action of the temple and praised the administration profusely. The representatives of Hon. Gerry Phillips (M.P.P.) and Councillor Mike Del Grande, were present at the occasion as well and commended this noble venture of the temple.

The Chief Priest announced that this “Giving the thanks back to the community” will take place three times a year, and the collected funds will be donated to other hospitals, in due course.

He also thanked the devotees, who donated generously to this fund at short notice and supported the temple in such charitable ventures. He believed that these donations will benefit the patients in the hospitals. Also he requested all Canadians to donate funds generously to this charitable venture, irrespective of race, religion and language. The event was well received and much-admired by all Canadians. Some of the photos taken at the event can be seen here.

Eight reasons to have an annual check-up

Having an annual exam is a ritual for many, but others feel a trip to the doctor's office is only necessary when something is wrong. But an annual check-up may help you stay healthy, longer.

Why go to the doctor when you feel healthy?

“An annual check-up can provide your physician with valuable information should you become ill,” says Dr. Irene Polidoulis, a family medicine physician with The Scarborough Hospital. “It can also help diagnose disease early and allow your physician to provide advice on disease prevention. Everyone, regardless of age, should have an annual check-up.”

Dr. Polidoulis explains why an annual check-up is valuable:

1. Regular check-ups allow your physician to build a health history and gather baseline health information that is invaluable should you become ill.

2. Diagnostic tests, like blood tests, and routine screenings can diagnose disease before you show symptoms. Early detection of disease can result in better health outcomes.

3. Studying your family's medical history and discussing lifestyle helps your doctor determine your risk factors and allows her to make recommendations about disease prevention.

4. An annual visit with your physician helps build a more comfortable doctor-patient relationship. When you feel comfortable with your physician, you are more likely to share pertinent health information.

5. An annual check-up isn't just about your physical well-being; it is also about your mental health. This appointment is a good opportunity to receive counselling or advice about issues like depression, stress or anxiety.

6. Are you struggling with your weight or want to quit smoking? Advice about these kinds of issues can be provided during your check-up.

7. If you've been healthy all year and haven't seen your doctor, the annual trip is a good time to ensure vaccinations are up to date.

8. Peace of mind. Any health worries you have may be alleviated with an annual check-up.





Recent Event

Adopt a Child

TCASD recent “Adopt a Child programme” introduced by the two Executive Members was well received by its members and other executive committee.

Adopt a Child programme was introduced on 2011 TCASD Pongal Day to support suffering children in our homeland by “TCASD sponsor a Child wing”

This special task is to be carried out

by TCASD youth. This will motivate and encourage our youth, to interact with needful children and give them a great opportunity, to understand the reality in our nation, and to appreciate their life styles here in Canada as well. TCASD will initially support two Tamil children from Sri Lanka with their education and basic needs. Qualifying child will receive support until they complete their higher

education or for a period of ten years. Currently, we are accepting application from the Tamil community; applications are accepted until February 28, 2011. Children under eight years given priority, other conditions may apply.

Funding for this project will be supported by TCASD Parents and Youths. The trust account is held in TD Canada Trust by three appointed trustees consists of one (1) senior, one (1) long standing member and one (1) executive committee member from TCASD.

Initial amount of \$200.00 was donated by two kind hearted parents to start

this project. We have received overwhelming support from our youths and children. Our youths showed great enthusiasm and looking forward to be connected with their younger brother and sister. We are kindly appealing to our Tamil community take this seriously to support our children in home land. The bank account will be published soon to make it convenient for anyone wishes to make contribution.

By: Kiruba Maniam and Vasantha Vaithilingam
Executive Members



Emcee's Thusany and Aparna



Mrs. Dickson presenting an Award to Mrs. Malathi Thayaparan



Robert Gruber participating in the rice pouring ceremony



Welcome Dance by Ishwarya Thayaparan



Megavi, Taneka and Gayathri performing



Councillor Dickerson with the Emcee of the evening Thusany and Aparna

Casey's Bar & Grill celebrates staff party

Casey's Bar & Grill located at Dundas & Jarvis celebrated its staff appreciation party on Sunday, Jan 9th at their location. Among the attendees hosted by owner Jude Francis included some of his clients and friends as well. There was an abundance of sumptuous food, beverages and gifts. Everyone enjoyed the music and dance throughout the evening. Some of the photos taken at the event can be seen here:



Sports



The Score on Cricket

By Tashvir Narine

As February nears, World Cup fever increases worldwide as the planet prepares for two of the most entertaining sports months witnessed every four years. Apart from the FIFA World Cup and summer Olympics, the ICC World Cup is as global of a sporting event that one can find, with all continents bearing a participating nation, the exception being South America only.

World Cup 2011 will be jointly held by three nations: India, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh. Warm up matches begin February 12th and the finals are scheduled for April 2nd in Mumbai. In actuality, the Bengalis will host the first match against India on a Saturday, February 19th in the newly renovated Sher-e-Bangla Cricket Stadium in the Mirpur district of Bangladesh.

Group A

Australia
Pakistan
New Zealand
Sri Lanka
Zimbabwe
Canada
Kenya

Group B

India
South Africa
England
West Indies
Bangladesh
Ireland
Netherlands

Fourteen teams have been divided into two groups where each team will play each group member once. Teams have been seeded going into the tournament and the Australia has been ranked number one with India placing the second seed. Even though Group A holds the top seed, it appears that Group B should include some more entertaining first round matches. We will take a closer look at some teams with greater interest to this newspaper.

India (2)

Captain: Mahendra Singh Dhoni

Key Batsmen: Sachin Tendulkar, Gautam Gambhir

Key Bowlers: Zaheer Khan, Harbhajan Singh

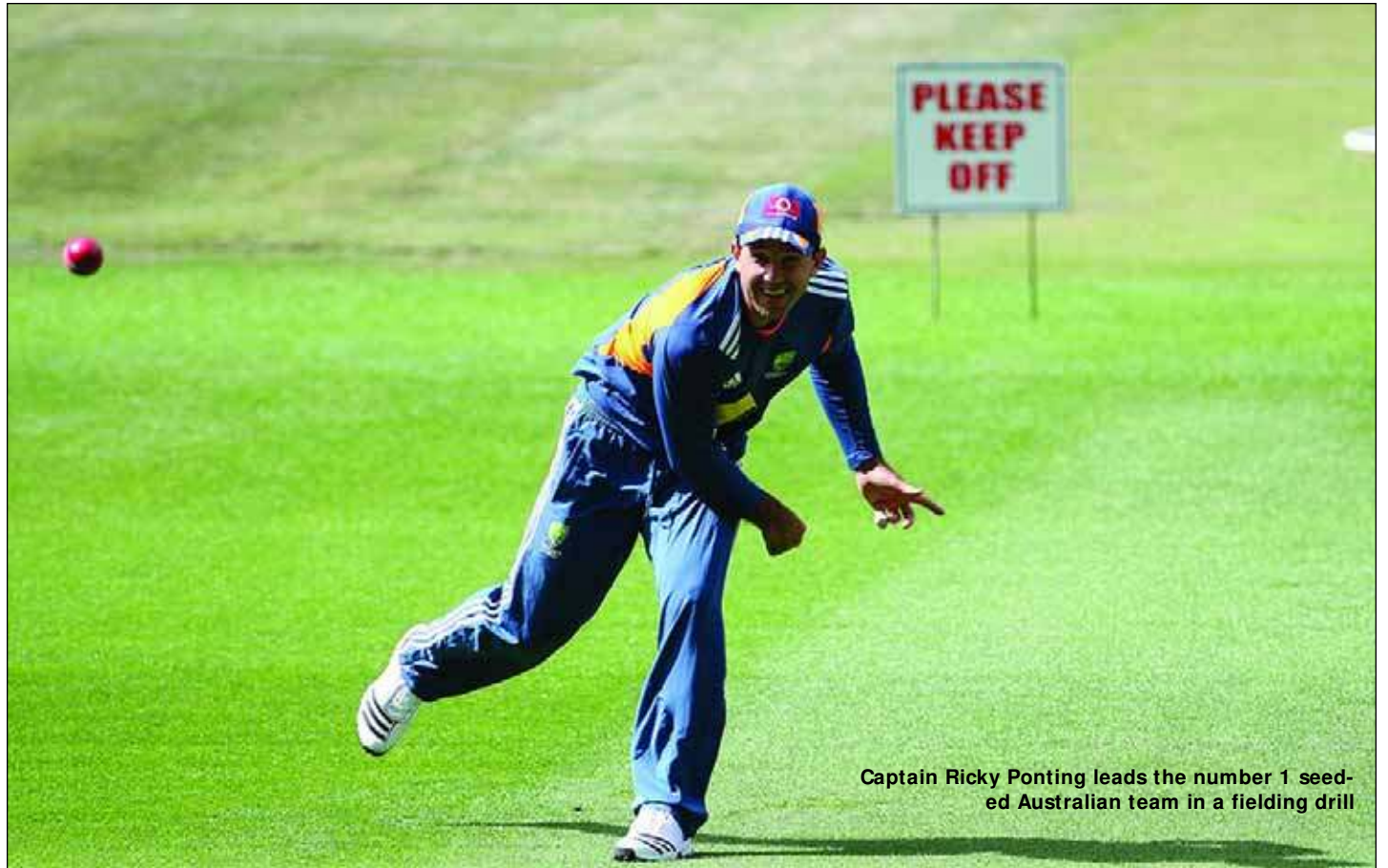
Top News: A strong batting attack has always been a staple of the Indian team, however in recent years, the bowling has been a stronger factor in recent years. This year's World Cup squad bowling will be mainly a slow bowling regime, as the team has picked more spinners. All rounder Yusuf Pathan will also be called upon for his timely bowling spells.

Prediction: Anything but a top two finish will be unacceptable for the semi-home team, however if the bowling holds up, the Indians will be tough to beat in the finals.

Pakistan (3)

Captain: not named yet (possible choices are Misbah-ul-Haq and Shahid Afridi)

Key Batsmen: Younis Khan, Shahid Afridi



Captain Ricky Ponting leads the number 1 seeded Australian team in a fielding drill



Opening bowler Zaheer Khan will lead India's bowling attack along with spinner Harbhajan Singh

Key Bowlers: Shoaib Akhtar, Abdul Razzaq

Top News: The hesitation in naming a World Cup team captain has been the latest of team controversy for the Pakistani team. Shoaib Malik has been left out of the squad which has also been a surprise to many followers.

Prediction: Even with the latest news, look out for the Pakistanis in the semis this World Cup if they can put the outside news away from their focus.

Sri Lanka (7)

Captain: Kumar Sangakkara

Key Batsmen: Mahela Jayawardene, Tilakaratne Dilshan



Spinner Muttiah Muralitharan looks for promising results in his final World Cup

Key Bowlers: Lasith Malinga, Muttiah Muralitharan

Top News: Muttiah Muralitharan will retire from international cricket after this World Cup so the Sri Lankan side will try to make this tournament a special one with a top spot finish. Former World Cup winners Sanath Jayasuriya and Chaminda Vaas have been left out of this squad.

Prediction: Expect the Sri Lankans to do well in the first round but exit quickly in the quarters, with possible matchups against Australia or Pakistan.

Canada (12)

Captain: Ashish Bagai



Top Indian batsman Sachin Tendulkar will display his supreme batting form in front of the home crowd

Key Batsmen: Rizwan Cheema, John Davison

Key Bowlers: Khurram Chohan, Henry Osinde

Top News: Team Canada leads a young team into the World Cup, with many top players pulled from the under 19 national squad. Many Pakistani-born players had a difficult time obtaining Indian visas, but these expect to be handled by February.

Prediction: Two wins or more will prove to be the biggest accomplishment in Canadian cricket history, however most experts will not include Team Canada's name in the knockout round.



Canada News

Community celebrates hospital's redevelopment

Health Minister Deb Matthews will cut the ribbon at the official opening!

After years of planning, construction and fundraising, the community of west Durham will celebrate the official opening of the redeveloped Rouge Valley Ajax and Pickering (RVAP) hospital campus.

Minister of Health and Long-Term Care Deb Matthews will be the featured guest speaker at the opening on Thursday, Feb. 17, at 9:30 a.m.

"This celebration is a result of vision and hard work long shared by our staff, our doctors, our auxiliary, our many volunteers and the community to expand and modernize our hospital. To see that vision finally come to fruition will mean a lot to this community. As west Durham continues to grow, so will our ability to provide quality care, close to home," says Jay Kaufman, chair of the Board of Directors of Rouge Valley Health System (RVHS).

"We look forward to thanking and acknowledging the many contributions of our community to this project, including: the ministry; the Central East Local Health Integration Network; the Regional Municipality of Durham; Ajax-Pickering MPP Joe Dickson, Pickering-Scarborough East MPP Wayne Arthurs and all political leaders at federal, provincial and municipal levels; Infrastructure Ontario; and our supporters of and donors to the RVHS



Minister Deb Matthews

breaking in 2007, the redevelopment has brought more than 140,000 square feet of new and renovated space, as well as new, state-of-the-art equipment to RVAP. The redevelopment has many expanded facilities and will have a magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) scanner, which the RVHS Foundation is currently fundraising for in the community.

Emergency department –

The new emergency department (ED) provides space for an anticipated 60,000 patient visits a year. Staff and physicians had previously been caring for more than 50,000 patients a year in a space originally built for 20,000. Other features of

More than 10 different clinics are located in this new space.

Laboratory –

Three times the size of the previous laboratory, this open-concept space features a waiting room for clinic patients; one phlebotomy room and office space for clerks; a specimen processing room, where specimens can be dropped off; a pneumatic tube system that can transport samples between the lab and emergency department (ED) and the operating room (OR); and the core lab. The core lab is comprised of hematology, chemistry and transfusion medicine. Histology/pathology is in one enclosed



The new unit features a larger space with improved patient care facilities and privacy, and easier access for patients. This more modern space features a new Holter monitoring system, and larger space for the various diagnostic tests offered in this facility.

Complex continuing care –

This unit provides increased space for patients who are transitioning from an acute care stay to post-acute care. This unit features large, spacious patient rooms; new patient safety equipment including ceiling lifts in each patient rooms, and adjustable height beds to help prevent patient falls. New equipment, including therapeutic hydraulic bathtubs, and in-house recreational therapy are also included. This unit was opened in the spring of 2010.

Harwood Bistro (cafeteria) –

This two-storey, 2,000 square foot, bright and airy space is set up in a shopping mall style. It features a design with 33-foot floor-to-ceiling windows and seating for 104. This space is expected to be a place where staff, physicians and volunteers, as well as patients and visitors, can come to refresh and re-energize. We will host the redevelopment opening in this newly completed area.

For more information on the redevelopment please visit: <http://www.rougevalley.ca/redevelopment>.

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

RVHS is an excellent acute care community hospital with many programs, including 24/7/365 emergency, cardiac care and mental health. 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 (224 general practitioners and 325 specialists), 1,000 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, Ajax, Pickering and Whitby.



Foundation, especially those involved in the Vital Links Campaign," Kaufman added.

The opening –

The event takes place at 9:30 a.m. on Thursday, Feb. 17, at RVAP, 580 Harwood Ave. South, Ajax, in the new Harwood Bistro, located on the ground level of the east wing. This cafeteria is also among the many new features of the redevelopment. The public and the media are very welcome to attend.

What's inside –

Since the project's initial ground-

the new ED include a state-of-the-art trauma room, and a decontamination room. The ED was opened in November of 2009 along with other parts of the hospital.

Ambulatory care unit –

The new, expanded ambulatory care unit (ACU) located on the ground floor, accommodates a number of different outpatient clinics, outpatient procedures, pre-admit visits, and medical day care. This new space features pre-registration for surgical procedures, and registration for the pre-operative assessment clinic.

space, with separate areas for receiving and grossing surgical specimens, a storage area, a processor room and a large working area for the technologists.

Diagnostic imaging –

This expanded space features more room for a number of different diagnostic imaging services including X-ray; CT scan; nuclear medicine; ultrasound; bone densitometry; angiography; and interventional radiology. Our new facility also features the first 256-image CT scanner at a community hospital in Canada.

Cardiac Diagnostics –

India, Canada M&A activities likely to be robust: DELOITTE

India and Canada are expected to see robust M&A activities in the coming months, especially with Indian entities scouting for opportunities in Canadian energy and life science sectors, according to Deloitte.

"The M&A scenario between India and Canada is currently active and there has been a spurt in

15 billion by 2015. For the year ended March 31, 2010, their trade was worth over USD 3 billion.

Roberge noted that Indian players are showing keen interest in Canada's oil & gas, clean technology and life sciences areas, among others.

Similarly, Canadian industry too is interested in the Indian market. "Companies from Canada are likely to focus on Indian players that are engaged in clean energy, agriculture and infrastructure sectors," he said.

India and China are also working on a Free Trade Agreement (FTA), which Roberge said is expected to be finalised in 18 to 20 months.

Deloitte's Director (India Services Group) Arvind Vijn pointed out that there are also a lot of similarities between the tax systems followed by the two countries. Such a scenario would also help the businesses of both nations, he added.

India's foreign direct investment in Canada stood at around 2.97 billion Canadian dollars, statistics from the Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada show.

The foundation is a non-profit think-tank on Canada's relations with Asia. [PTI]

Both countries have business relationships and their bilateral trade is expected to be around USD 15 billion by 2015.

- Christopher Roberge

Deloitte MD
(Canadian Tax Services)

activities in recent times. A robust trend is expected in the coming months," global consultancy Deloitte MD (Canadian Tax Services) Christopher Roberge told news agency - PTI.

Both countries have business relationships and their bilateral trade is expected to be around USD



CARLETON HELPS LAUNCH YEAR OF INDIA IN CANADA BY CELEBRATING MAJOR INVESTMENT

Carleton University marked the launch of the Year of India in Canada on Jan 24th by celebrating a major investment in its Canada-India Centre for Excellence in Science, Technology, Trade and Policy, according to a press release by the University.

The press release further states:

Thanks to the leadership of the High Commission of India in Ottawa, the Indian Council for Cultural Relations is establishing a Visiting Chair focused on India-related studies in partnership with Carleton University.

Carleton President Roseann O'Reilly Runte and High Commissioner S.M. Gavai signed a memorandum of understanding governing the Visiting Chair in the field of humanities and social sciences.

"We are most grateful to the Indian government," says Dr. Runte. "This generous contribution will make Carleton's centre a unique resource for the university, the community and our country."

The centre, to be located in the university's new River Building that is opening later this year, is bringing together key members of the academic, business and public policy communities in both countries to provide cutting-edge research, analysis, training and exchanges.

Carleton currently has 25 faculty members conducting India-related research, partnerships with seven Indian post-secondary institutions and many formal relationships with Indian businesses and organizations.

Last fall, the university hosted Canadian business leaders for roundtable discussions with two top India ministers and hosted other India government delegations.

High Commissioner Gavai formally launched the Year of India in Canada, which will include exhibitions of Indian art and culture, seminars on promoting trade and business, conferences on enhanced co-operation, food and film festivals and more.

The celebratory year was designated for 2011 by the Prime Minister of India, Dr. Manmohan Singh, and Prime Minister Stephen Harper during the latter's visit to India in November 2009.

"The aim is to showcase India's rich art and culture, as well as its rise as an economic power, thereby promoting closer people-to-people ties across a broad range of sectors, including business," says Mr. Gavai.

The celebrations will commence with a March 4 performance by Sarod maestro Ustad Amjad Ali Khan at the Museum of Civilization in Gatineau, Que.



Carleton
UNIVERSITY

"We invite all communities across Canada to partake in the events and festivities," says the High Commissioner.

Background:

Canada and India share a strong commitment to education, the environment, health and science. Both view technology as a means to solve problems and to advance economic development. Celebrating these common goals and the mutual desire to build trade partnerships and scientific and cultural links, Carleton University has established, in collaboration with the India High Commission and community members, the Canada-India Centre for Excellence in Science, Technology, Trade and Policy.

Details about Carleton's India connections are available at: <http://www.carleton.ca/india>.

Sri Lanka Religious leaders condemn attack on Chennai - Buddhist Maha Bodhi Temple



Representatives of all religions in Sri Lanka strongly condemn the recent attack on the Buddhist Maha Bodhi temple in Chennai, India, in which four Sri Lankan Buddhist

monks were injured, writes Melani Manel Perera, on PIME Missionaries news portal, Asianews.it:

During a press conference held on Jan 28th by members of the Inter Religious Alliance for National Unity, all participants indicated that "this is not the act of the LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam], or other guerrilla groups". The conference was hosted by Colombo's National Library Hall.

On the night of 24 January a group of about 10 people stormed the Maha Bodhi Society temple. Armed with sticks, vandals began to destroy the place, and wounded four monks who intervened to stop them.

Card. Malcolm Ranjith, the Archbishop of Colombo, has expressed his concern over the attack in saying: "The Catholic Church strongly opposes such acts like this."

For Acting Committee member, the venerable Nedagamuwe Vijitha Maithree Thero, this is "an act done by those who do not want peace, who do not see the beautiful brotherhood between the two religions. For this we need to act calmly and not give in to panic". Another

monaco, Ven. Dhammaransi Thero, declared: "We ask the governments of Sri Lanka and India to continue to be interested in the problem, and take the necessary measures to ensure full security and protection for all the pilgrims who visit the temple." Finally, the monk thanked the Indian government for the prompt action taken to protect pilgrims after the attack.

The Methodist pastor Fr Sarath Hettiarachchi stressed that Sri Lanka is a multiethnic, multi-religious and even multi-political country, where everyone should respect each other.

S.H. Mavulana present as the representative of Muslim community, wanted to specify that "all Muslims condemn this attack. For me, I want to encourage the faithful of all religions and ethnic groups not to move backwards. Act wisely, and go forward for national and religious harmony."

"Avoid all the suspicious opinions that have come to the surface recently - said the rev. E.K. Yasarathna, the Baptist Church of Colombo- lets try to live as a one family. Like sisters and brothers in one country".



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High Unemployment Slows World Economic Growth

By Lisa Schlein

A report by the U.N. Conference on Trade and Development says the recovery of the world economy is continuing to lose momentum and this will lead to weaker global economic growth.

The U.N. report forecasts moderate economic growth in 2011 and 2012 of between three and 3.5 percent. It says this is too low to recover from job loss triggered by the economic crisis.

UNCTAD economist in the Division on Globalization and Development Strategies, Alfredo Calcagno, says developed countries are expected to grow about two percent and this will be a drag on the world economy.

"Why developed economies are growing so slowly, well basically because of persistent high unemployment and low real wages compounded with too early withdrawal of fiscal stimulus," Calcagno states. "The report insists that one of the main problems at present, and especially in developed economies is that of employment. The jobs that have been destroyed during the crisis of 2008 and 2009, will take several years to be recovered."

The report finds the United States has been on the mend from its longest and deepest recession since World War II. Yet, it says the pace of recovery has been the weakest in the country's post-recession experience.

It notes the United States will grow by less than three percent, not enough to make much of a dent in unemployment rates. It predicts recovering jobs lost during the crisis would take at least another four years.

As bad as this is, UNCTAD Division of globalization and Development Strategies Director Heiner Flassbeck says the growth prospects for Europe and Japan are even dimmer.

He says the economic outlook is uncertain and risks of falling back into stagnation are great.

"The three big regions-Japan, Europe and the United States have not yet overcome the difficulties fully. And, given the fact that they are withdrawing their policy stimulus, there is indeed an enormous danger that the



An unemployed man collects cardboard waste to exchange for money along a residential area in Singapore 5 Jan 2011

recovery will stall in the course of this year," Flassbeck said. "And, then the question has to be asked, 'What are then the measures that we have at hand to restart the economy again if this is going to happen because the recovery is not sustainable, not self-sustaining?'"

Flassbeck says a few bright spots are to be found in Asia, mainly in China and India. But, even there, he says the

bright spots are dimming. He warns these countries will not be able to push the world economy out of a renewed slump. The report says growth in Latin America is projected to remain relatively strong at around four percent. It finds economic recovery has been solid in most of Africa, noting the rebound is expected to push through at about five percent in 2011 and 2012. [VOA News]

HINDU MINORITY IN KARACHI, PAKISTAN LIVES IN MOUNTING FEAR

KARACHI, 6 January 2011 (IRIN) In a private hospital in the port city of Karachi, a child has just been born. But rather than triggering joy among his family members, the birth has also led to bitter disputes.

The child's parents wish to give the baby boy a name which will not instantly identify him as Hindu. His maternal grandfather, Suresh Kapoor, 75, disagrees. "We must keep our traditions, our identity or we will be lost," he said. Other family elders support him but younger members argue safety is a key concern.

Hindus make up about 1.8 percent of Pakistan's predominantly Muslim population of 165 million, according to official figures. The largest number, about 95 percent, is concentrated in the southern province of Sindh. The Hindu population has declined over the years with more and more, according to media reports, opting to leave the country or become Muslim to avoid discrimination.

Discrimination against all minority communities has expanded rapidly, say observers. Early in November, Aasia Bibi, a young Christian mother of five, was sentenced to death by a court under controversial blasphemy laws. She became the first woman to be condemned to hang under the law. The case against her seemed to have been triggered by a minor dispute with other female farm labourers on the land she worked on, after they said she, as a non-Muslim, was 'impure' and could not fetch water from a well.

Human rights groups, including international rights watchdog Human Rights Watch, expressed shock and in an unusual move for a politician, the governor of the Punjab Province, Salman Taseer, went to visit Aasia in jail, expressed sympathy over her plight and criticized the blasphemy law.

In doing so, he may have written his own death sentence. Taseer was gunned down on 3 January in Islamabad by a police bodyguard who then turned himself in and said he had killed the governor as he had described the blasphemy law as a "black law".

"This is a terrible thing. Everyone should be free to practice their religion. The governor died for defending a poor Christian woman," Saleem Masih, 30, a Christian factory worker, told IRIN.

Concern has been expressed by human rights groups over increased violence against minorities. The secretary-general of the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, I.A. Rehman, said: "This is the result of increased incitement of hatred by extremists and militants."

Hindus, regarded by many hardline Muslims as especially undesirable infidels since their belief does not include the idea of a single God, have faced especially tough times.

"These days we Hindus live in fear and with a constant sense of insecurity," Amarnath Motumal, a Hindu community leader and lawyer, told IRIN. He said one reason for this was the kidnapping of Hindu girls, who were then married to Muslim men and converted to Islam.

"We have no problem of course when a girl aged over 18 chooses to marry a Muslim of her own free will and converts [Islamic laws in force in the country make it mandatory for a Hindu to convert in order to marry a Muslim]. But these kidnappings involve girls who are much younger, and courts have upheld 'marriages' of this nature," he said.

According to Motumal, 10-15 such abductions took place each month in the Lyari locality of Karachi alone. "Many more occur in rural areas of Sindh but not all families want to talk about them," he said.

In other places kidnappings take place for other reasons. From the southwestern province of Balochistan there have been reports of Hindus being abducted in increasing numbers. Ransom has been sought in some cases, according to media reports.

Motumal believes, however, that in Balochistan, Hindus are being "picked up" by security forces, because they are perceived as backing nationalists in the province who are waging a struggle for autonomy.

"These persons are labelled as Indian agents backing nationalists, even though they have lived in Balochistan for generations and have no links with India," Motumal said. (India is a Hindu majority country.)

Government ministers have accused neighbouring India, whose relations with Pakistan are tense, of fuelling unrest in Balochistan.



Lighting fireworks at a Hindu festival (file photo) by Maloy Patnaik/Flickr

There has also been a spate of kidnappings of Hindu children, usually for ransom. According to a survey by the Society for the Protection of the Rights of the Child (SPRC), a local NGO, 23 such abductions took place from between January 2008 and December 2010.

Salam Dharejo, SPRC's national manager for child labour, believes the fact Hindu communities usually combine resources to pay the money demanded and rescue children makes them vulnerable to such crime.

"The families of victims do not trust the police and are scared of the criminals as well," Dharejo said. He told IRIN the kidnappings, and the torture of some of the abducted children, had terrorized the Hindu community. "The Hindus feel helpless. Children are being kept away from even the doors of their homes and in the Hindu locality of Kandhkot town all Hindu children are being kept away from school," he said.

Ramesh Lala, a member of the National Assembly and a representative of Hindus, told IRIN: "This is the result of a worsening law and order situation in Sindh where

kidnappings are becoming more and more frequent. It is not just Hindus who suffer."

"Being a Hindu mother today is terrifying. I fear my 14-year-old daughter could be taken away, my husband victimized as he sometimes openly speaks out in favour of his religion, or my younger children kidnapped. The police ignore us when we complain, so criminals target us," said Asha Lal, 40. She said the growth of extremism and laws such as those on blasphemy "led to Hindus and other non-Muslims suffering".

In May 2008 a Hindu factory worker was killed on blasphemy charges while a year later, Hindus came under attack in the town of Umerkot following another charge of blasphemy.

Hindu temples have also come under attack, bringing angry protests from community leaders.

"All this violence against Hindus began in the 1980s, but lately it has been growing worse. We do not feel safe," Amarnath Motumal said. [IRIN News - a service of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs]



Spirituality

WORDS OF PEACE



Win the War

If life sometimes seems like a battlefield, don't worry about winning every battle, says Maharaji. Just be sure to win the war.

Maharaji travels the world to speak about an experience of peace within. "I talk about how fortunate we are that we have this life, this existence," he says. "In the course of talking about how fortunate we are, and how beautiful it is, I sometimes talk about battles and the war. People might wonder, 'Shouldn't it be plural—battles and wars?' No, because in this life, we will have many battles, but we only have one war."

The conflicts he's talking about, Maharaji says, are staged within us, not outside of us.

"All the things that happen in our lives—the good and the bad—are just battles," Maharaji explains. "What is the war? That's the interesting thing. That is where what I talk about takes a sharp turn away from the ordinary. Having felt peace in my life—not once, but every day that I am alive—that is winning the war."

In that context, life's battles are not so important, Maharaji advises. "You win some; you lose some. Just be very careful not to lose the war. The way I see it, there will be many battles. As human beings, as vulnerable as we are, we get so concerned with the battles that we forget about the war. If we lose a battle, we think we've lost everything. No—that's just one battle. As long as you haven't



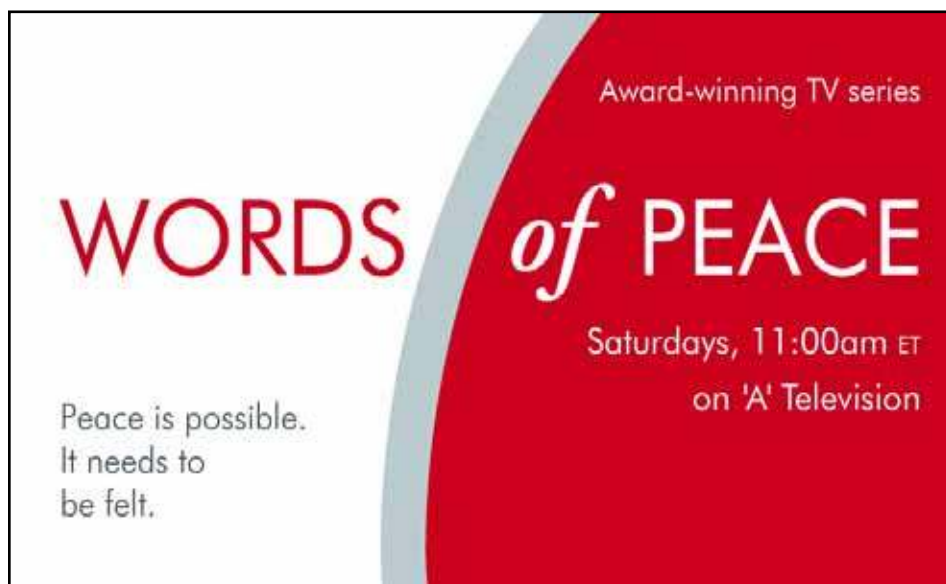
lost the war, you can fight as many battles as you want—but once you've lost the war, that's another story."

The concern people have about their battles is evident, Maharaji says.

"You have the battles of your relationships. People get upset with you; you get upset with people; you make up.

"Not that long ago, somebody pulled the plug on the economy, and people started jumping out of office buildings because they really thought that they were finished. They had lost the battle—and with that battle, they thought they had also lost the war. They could have lost that battle and won again, lost another one, and won again.

"Then there is another battle we lose every day, and that battle is that we



don't recognize the beauty inside of us. Ultimately, if we keep losing that battle and lose the war, we truly will have come empty-handed into this world and will leave empty-handed from this world. Having everything, we will have saved nothing. Having everything, we won't have savored anything. It's like having a house next to the purest water and dying of thirst. That truly would be a tragedy."

When it comes to the little battles we face every day, Maharaji says, there's no shortage of people in this world waiting to help. "They've got you so absorbed in trying to win the battles," he says, "that you have forgotten about the war. So when I come along and say, 'Forget about the battles, let's win the war,' everybody goes, 'What are you talking about? What war? I thought it was all just battles.' No. If you're in a battle, believe you me, there is a war.

"What if I said that knowing peace within and being able to feel it every day

is winning the war?" he asks. "Are you not interested to know what it truly means to be alive? It's about life. It's about right now—today.

"Those who want to know peace inside have to make a choice. Battles will come and go. Winning the war means to have found your home, and then, rightfully, to reside in it. It is not about lamenting the choices we made in the past. Do you want to be happy or sad? Do you want to be fulfilled or empty? Choose. We have this one life. Use it, cherish it, and be fulfilled in it. Win the war."

To learn more about Maharaji, visit:

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INDIA'S BUSINESS ELITE URGES GOVERNMENT TO STAMP OUT CORRUPTION

By Anjana Pasricha

A group of prominent Indians has called on their political leaders to address rising corruption and a governance deficit in the country. Graft has emerged as a key concern in India after several corruption scandals hit the headlines in recent months.

The 14 signatories to the "Open Letter to Our Leaders" include heads of some of India's top companies, such as Wipro Limited and the Godrej Group, bankers and judges.

They want corruption to be tackled on a war footing, saying its corrodes the fabric of the nation. The letter also expresses alarm at what it calls a widespread governance deficit in the government, business and institutions.

The spotlight has been on official graft after allegations that sale of

telecom spectrum in 2008 was mishandled, resulting in losses of billions of dollars of revenue, and that kickbacks were

about the impact that graft could have on the spectacular economic growth India has had in recent years.

"I think there is a widespread fear in the middle class and in the new industrialist business aristocracy that the progress that India has been making is not sustainable if there is not political reforms to accompany the process. The political system we have today is corrupt beyond belief and the rebellion is coming out against it from all over," said Jha.

The Congress-led government, whose credibility has been hit because of the allegations of corruption, has promised to punish those found guilty of graft.

The head of the ruling Congress Party, Sonia Gandhi, has called corruption a "disease spreading in our society," and says measures must be adopted to curb it.

It is widely accepted that graft, which ranges from petty bribes to bigger kickbacks, is a part of life in India.

The letter by corporate leaders - the first of its kind - wants the government to establish independent anti-corruption bodies so that investigative agencies are free of political interference.

The letter also calls on leaders to take steps to restore the self-confidence and self-belief of Indians in themselves, the state, business and public institutions.

Political analysts say the signatories to the letter have unimpeachable credentials and the concern they are voicing should be a wake-up call for the government to clean up the system.

[VOA News]



Activists of Communist Party of India Marxist CPI hold a cartoon placard ortraying Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh during a protest against the telecom corruption scandal, New Delhi 10 Dec. 2010. pic : Reuters/ via VOA

involved in contracts awarded for last year's Commonwealth Games. Independent political analyst in New Delhi, Prem Shankar Jha, says the letter reflects the growing concern

a wake-up call for the government to clean up the system.

The 14 signatories to the "Open Letter to Our Leaders" include heads of some of India's top companies, such as Wipro Limited and the Godrej Group, bankers and judges.



By Peter Fedynsky

The National Retail Federation wrapped up its 100th annual convention on January 12, 2011 in New York City. The association is the world's largest retail trade group with members in 45 countries, including 1.5 million companies in the United States.

More than 18,000 retail professionals from 500 companies worldwide packed this year's National Retail Convention, billed as the "Big Show", in New York.

And Ira Kalish, director of global economics at the Deloitte consulting firm, told delegates to expect slower

growth in the United States over the next decade, but increased business in China and such emerging markets as Vietnam, Indonesia, Turkey, Egypt, South Africa and Colombia. "In those countries, we will see a rapid rise in the middle class, and that has huge implications for global retailers and their suppliers," Kalish said. "And if governments fail to support the transition with appropriate policies, then we're likely to see economic crises, and that is one of the risks we face in the coming decade."

Tony Galli, managing director of VICS, an association

Retailers Look to Emerging Markets for Continued Growth



More than 18,000 retail professionals from 500 companies worldwide packed this year's National Retail Convention, billed as the "Big Show", in New York.

that seeks to increase supply efficiency in the retail industry, says a good sign of a growing economy is a second family car in high growth countries such as Brazil. "The same is true for the ability to entertain themselves - home entertainment - looking for vacation getaways, that sort of thing; all the spending that is associated with a more affluent family," he said.

A prime concern for retailers is the security of employees, inventory and investments. Jacques Behr, an executive with the French electronic payment company Ingenico, says emerging countries seeking stable economic growth must guarantee security.

"If you say security, it means that foreign investors are not eager to come so easily," Behr stated. "So it needs to be stabilized first, so that foreign investors can come to these countries and develop retail structures and retail networks."

Kalish says countries with younger demographics particularly in the Middle East, Africa and India, will likely draw retailers over the next decade. Behr agrees, adding that literacy levels and honest judicial systems are important elements of growth. He says the single most important factor in retail and payments is the intangible of trust; the feeling that neither the buyer nor the seller will be cheated in commerce.

[VOA News]



Spirituality

Health Is Wholeness

Right now, medical sciences are limited to just knowing the physical body. If anything happens beyond that, you think it's a miracle.

Fundamentally, the word health itself comes from the root word "whole". What we call, "feeling healthy," is that we have a sense of wholeness within us. If we are free of diseases medically, that is not health. If we feel like a complete human being in our body, mind and spirit, that is when we are really healthy. There are any number of people who are medically healthy, but not healthy in the real sense because they do not experience a sense of wellness within themselves.

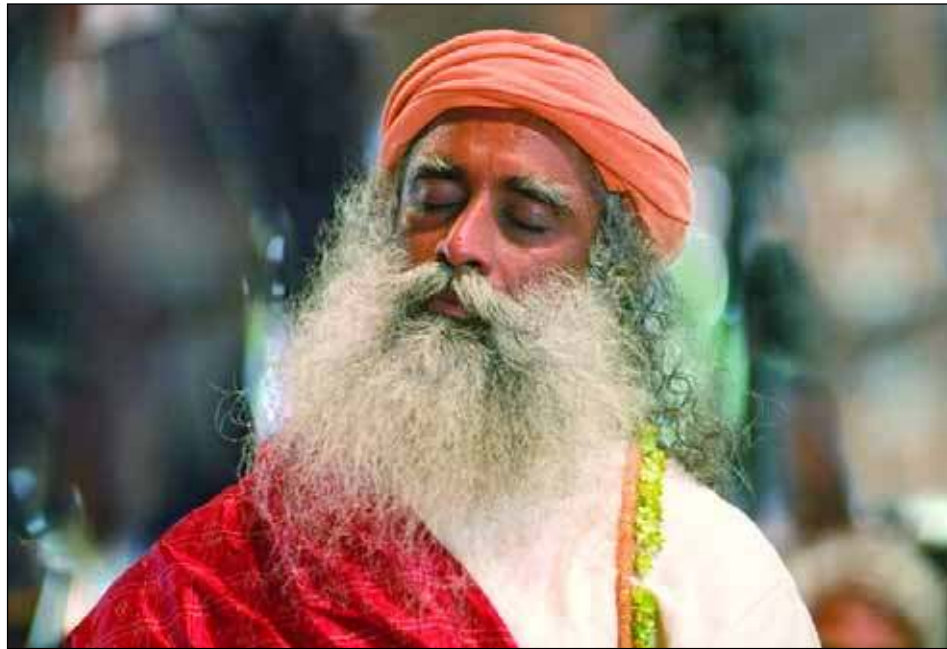
If one has to experience this sense of wholeness and oneness, it's important that one's body, mind, and above all, one's energy functions in a certain level of intensity within oneself. Now, physically, as per medical terms, one may be healthy, but the energies may be lethargic. One doesn't know why things don't happen in life the way they should, both inside and outside; this is simply because one is not taking care of the well-being of one's energy.

For every physical or psychological situation that you go through in life, there is an energy basis, which in turn has a chemical basis. In a way, modern allopathic medicines have become just chemistry. For every problem that arises in your body, you are just trying to take in some medicine, a chemical, and come to some kind of balance. If you use one chemical to bring down one aspect, or enhance another, there is also a side effect to this. For this side effect, there is an antidote; for the antidote there is another antidote; it's an endless chain.

Whatever is happening on the chemistry level in your body is only controlled by the way your energies function. Because a man has got excess acids within him, you instill some alkaline medicine into him. But why does he have excessive acids? Because of the way his mind, his body, and above all, his energy, functions.

So, in yoga, when we say health, we don't look at the body; we don't look at the mind; we only look at the way the energy is. If your energy body is in proper balance and full flow, your physical body and mental body will be in perfect health. There is no question about it. Keeping the energy body in full flow is not about doing any kind of healing or things like that. This is about going to the foundations of your energy system and activating it in a proper way, building a foundational yogic practice that establishes your energy in such a way that your body and mind are naturally fine.

When it comes to health, no human being gets to live in perfect conditions.



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.

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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



The pressures of life, the food that we eat, the air that we breathe, the water that we drink, all these can affect us in many ways. The more our activities are in the world, the more we are exposed to many things that can throw our chemistry off balance and create health problems. But if the energy in our system is properly cultivated and kept active, these things will not have an effect. The physical body and the mental body will be in perfect health; there is no question about it.

See, life functions in many ways. Let us say you don't know anything about electricity. You do not know what electricity is. This hall is dark. If I tell you to just press this button and the whole hall will be flooded with light, will you believe me? No. Now I just do it, and light

appears. You will call it a miracle, isn't it? Simply because you don't understand how electricity works. Similarly, life happens in many different ways. But you have limited yourself to just the physical, the logical – physical in experience, logical in thinking.

Right now, medical sciences are limited to just knowing the physical body. If anything happens beyond that, you think it's a miracle. I just call it another kind of science, that's all. It is another kind of science. This life energy in you created your whole body - these bones, this flesh, this heart, these kidneys and everything. Do you think it cannot create health? If your energies are kept in full flow and proper balance, it is capable of much more than just health.

Sadhguru J. Vasudev is a contempo-

organization with over 200 centers worldwide 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.

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IMF CLEARS SRI LANKA LOAN TRANCHE, URGES FX REFORMS



The International Monetary Fund on Feb 3rd approved Sri Lanka's sixth tranche of a \$2.6 billion loan as expected, but asked for more financial sector reforms after waiving off two main targets,

writes Shihar Aneez in a report by Reuters as follows:

The IMF cleared the loan of \$216.6 million despite Sri Lanka missing the global lender's budget deficit target for the second straight year in 2010, extending the total disbursement to \$1.5 billion.

It also waived end-December net domestic financing and net international reserves targets on Sri Lanka's request.

The IMF was broadly satisfied with the government's commitment on fiscal consolidation, but sought proper implementation.

"Improvements in fiscal performance are encouraging. The 2010 budget execution addressed past fiscal slippages and bolstered the credibility of fiscal policy," Naoyuki Shinohara, IMF deputy managing director and acting chair, said in a statement.

Sri Lanka missed the IMF budget deficit target of 6 percent last year after overshooting the deficit to 9.8 percent in 2009, but the government has already announced a number of reforms in its 2011 budget including a low and simplified tax structure.

"The 2011 budget is generally sound and reflects the

government's strong commitment to the program's goals," Shinohara said. "The proposed tax reforms and reforms of the Board of Investment's tax concession regime should result in a more efficient, transparent, and simpler tax system with a broader base. If implemented properly, these reforms should improve tax compliance and deliver durably higher revenue."

Since the loan approval in July 2009 coupled with the end of a 25-year war, Sri Lanka has been able to turn around its weak macro economic numbers including foreign exchange reserves, inflation, interest rates, and overall growth.

However, foreign direct investment has not picked up as expected despite a strong post-war economic performance, which analysts have attributed to risks involved with inconsistent investment policies.

Economists say the

government, despite gaining political stability, wants to implement IMF reforms in a gradual pace, given the political pressure involved with them.

The IMF said that growth had strengthened and inflation was in check despite price pressure from food and energy.

"Going forward, reforms should focus on further strengthening the financial system and expanding funding options for the private sector, including through a deeper corporate bond market and a revamped legal framework for pension funds, Shinohara said.

The loan was originally approved in July 2009 to boost Sri Lanka's weakened foreign reserves, which fell to an eight year low of \$1.27 billion in March that year. The global lender delayed in third tranche for nine months after Sri Lanka failed to adhere IMF's 2009 deficit target of 7 percent. Instead, the island nation deficit hit an eight-year high of 9.8 percent.

JOINT PLAN FOR ASSISTANCE NORTHERN PROVINCE 2011 BY GOVERNMENT OF SRI LANKA (GOSL) AND OFFICE OF THE UNITED NATIONS (UN) RESIDENT AND HUMANITARIAN COORDINATOR FOR SRI LANKA

"Joint plan of assistance launched to support northern recovery", according a statement by the partners (GoSL and UN) as follows:

Colombo / 01 February 2011: To support the people in the north to recover and rebuild their lives the Government of Sri Lanka, jointly with the United Nations and the broad humanitarian community including NGOs, launched a plan of assistance today.

The one-year program called the "Joint Plan for Assistance for Northern Province in 2011" (JPA) identifies priority activities and strategies to be undertaken during 2011. This plan has been developed in support to the overall national programme to help the people of the Northern Province to recover,

rebuild and return to a normal life in the coming years.

The JPA provides a framework for meeting immediate needs while linking interventions to the early - and medium-term recovery efforts including the priorities of building shelters and homes, supporting agriculture, food security and livelihood recovery. The plan also includes a wide-range of early recovery efforts such as improving health and nutrition, clearing mines to support continued resettlement, education initiatives, water and sanitation strategies and strengthening of civil administration and national protection mechanisms.

Speaking at the JPA launch, Minister of Economic Development, Basil Rajapaksa

said that the government is well aware of what needs to be done to support re-establishment of lives and livelihoods and invited the donor community to invest in the reconstruction and development of the Northern Province. "Through partnership with the UN and NGOs more investments will be made to move towards full development of the region to reach similar standards found in the rest of the country," he said.

The United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator, Neil Buhne said that "the ultimate aim is to ensure the long-term sustainable development of the Northern Province within the shortest timeframe possible." Noting that "the process of recovery, from humanitarian relief to economic development, would take several years," Mr. Buhne stressed the importance of strengthened partnership and planning to realize these objectives.

The recovery plan was developed through a consultative process led by the Government through the Presidential Task Force, involving technical Ministries, the Northern Provincial Government, Government Agents, the United Nations and its agencies, national and international Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and International Organizations (IOs).

The JPA outlines the considerable accomplishments made by the Government and its partners during 2009 and 2010 during which hundreds of thousands of displaced families returned to their homes and began to recover and rebuild their lives.

Regular monitoring will be carried out on the JPA, which aims to ensure that assistance targets the people and the institutions that most need it, that interventions continue to be consistent with the Government's plans, and with internationally established principles for such assistance.

For more information please contact:

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Tamil Nadu governing party calls for new pact with Sri Lanka and India over Katchatheevu island

The DMK had slammed the Sri Lankan government for denying its navy's role in a recent attack on Tamil Nadu fishermen and demanded that a new accord be signed to establish Tamil Nadu's rights once again at Katchatheevu, an islet ceded by India in 1974.

A resolution to this effect was passed on Feb 3 at the party's General Council meeting headed by Tamil Nadu Chief Minister and DMK president M. Karunanidhi.

"A fisherman, N. Jayakumar, was killed brutally by the Sri Lankan Navy recently. The General Council strongly condemns the Sri Lankan government for denying its navy's role in this attack," the council, the party's top decision making body said.

It said efforts should be taken (by the Centre) to "establish Tamil Nadu's rights once again in Katchatheevu". The islet was ceded by India to Sri Lanka in 1974 by way of an accord, making it a contentious issue since then.

Tamil Nadu fishermen have frequently charged the Sri Lankan navy with attacking them and killing many while fishing near Katchatheevu area, an allegation denied by Sri Lanka.

On the vexed issue of ethnic problem in neighbouring Sri Lanka, the general council resolved that the Centre should take efforts to ensure for devolution of powers to Tamils, as that alone would ensure co-existence (of the majority Sinhala and the minority Tamil communities).

Making a pitch for the controversial multi-crore Sethusamudram canal project, which has run into rough weather following opposition from Hindu groups and litigations, the council said the Centre should take efforts to complete it.

The project was flagged off in 2005 but later found opposition following a decision to dredge Ramasethu, believed to have been constructed by Lord Rama to cross to Sri Lanka.

In another resolution, the party reiterated its demand for regional autonomy and called for suitable amendments in the Constitution for this purpose. The DMK government had first passed a resolution in the Tamil Nadu Assembly in 1974 for regional autonomy.

The council also adopted a resolution for making Tamil one of the official languages of India. (PTI)

Human Rights Watch Urges India to Prevent Abuses

By Anjana Pasricha

The New York-based rights group, Human Rights Watch, has urged India to prevent human rights abuses which it says occur during counterterrorism efforts. The report warns that such abuses could be counterproductive in the fight against terror.

Report by Human Rights Watch on Feb 2 focuses on the aftermath of a spate of bombings in 2008 which killed more than 150 people in the cities of New Delhi, Jaipur and Ahmedabad.

HRW South Asia Director Meenakshi Ganguly says the pressure on police to identify the perpetrators of these terror strikes led to arbitrary arrest and human rights abuses at every stage of custody.

"We found, in this case, people were rounded up in large numbers," Ganguly said. "They were brought to police stations. Often they were tortured or held without being brought before a magistrate and some of them have said they were coerced to confess, and eventually many have retracted their confession."

The report says the majority of the victims were scores of Muslim men. A militant Islamic group called the Indian Mujahideen had claimed responsibility for the 2008 attacks. But the report says suspected Hindu extremists, blamed for another bomb attack, have also suffered abuse.

Ganguly warns that such abuses could undermine efforts the fight against terror by punishing innocent people, while the guilty remain free, and by undermining public faith in police investigation.

"Quite often, when the police use torture, the information they gather is false information," she added. "So the wrong people are identified as being perpetrators of these attacks.....people in India are no longer being able to trust the investigations because quite often torture is the only method used to coerce confessions."

The report has called on Indian authorities to investigate the case of nine Muslims being held for a bomb blast in 2006 in Malegoan in Maharashtra state. Further investigations have pointed the finger at Hindu extremists.

Indian authorities, in keeping with past practice, did not comment on the report.

Ganguly says there is support among Indian authorities for preventing rights abuses, but institutional changes are not happening.

"At the highest levels when we meet with the Indian government, there is commitment to zero tolerance for human rights violations," said Ganguly. "However, on the ground that is not translated into anything that is significant."

Security analysts say India still relies on old methods of policing designed by colonial rulers in which abuse was an institutional practice. Demands for police reforms have been made repeatedly, but successive governments have done little to initiate those reforms.

[VOA News]



Special Feature

Hard working students at Caribbean Medical Schools continue to turn out as doctors amidst challenges to meet increasing demand for health care workers

Medical schools in the Caribbean are a destination for thousands of American students and increasing number of Canadian students too. Demand for doctors is anticipated to remain high through the year 2020 while students and Medical schools in Caribbean continue to meet this need amidst challenges.

The New York Times recently published a detailed overview of the present day undercurrents in pursuing the medical profession via studying in Caribbean, especially in obtaining the crucial training in New York area hospitals.

Full text of the article by Anemona Hartcollis, courtesy of NYTimes.com is as follows:

For a generation, medical schools in the Caribbean have attracted thousands of American students to their tiny island havens by promising that during their third and fourth years, the students would get crucial training in United States hospitals, especially in New York State.

But in a fierce turf battle rooted in the growing pressures on the medical profession and academia, New York State's 16 medical schools are attacking their foreign competitors. They have begun an aggressive campaign to persuade the State Board of Regents to make it harder, if not impossible, for foreign schools to use New York hospitals as extensions of their own campuses.

The changes, if approved, could put at least some of the Caribbean schools in jeopardy, their deans said, because their small islands lack the hospitals to provide the hands-on training that a doctor needs to be licensed in the United States.

The dispute also has far-reaching implications for medical education and the licensing of physicians across the country. More than 42,000 students apply to medical schools in the United States every year, and only about 18,600 matriculate, leaving some of those who are rejected to look to foreign schools. Graduates of foreign medical schools in the Caribbean and elsewhere constitute more than a quarter of the residents in United States hospitals.

With experts predicting a shortage of 90,000 doctors in the United States by 2020, the defenders of these schools say that they fill a need because their graduates are more likely than their American-trained peers to go into primary and family care, rather than into higher-paying specialties like surgery.

New York has been particularly affected by the influx because it trains more medical students and residents — fledgling doctors who have just graduated from medical school — than any other state. The New York medical school deans say that they want to expand their own enrollment to fill the looming shortage, but that their ability to do so is impeded by competition with the Caribbean schools for clinical training slots in New York hospitals.

Their argument is one that has been lobbed at Caribbean schools for decades: that those schools turn out poorly trained students who undercut the quality of

training for their New York peers learning alongside them at the same hospitals.

And they complain that the biggest Caribbean schools, which are profit-making institutions, are essentially bribing New York hospitals by paying them millions of dollars to take their students. The American medical schools traditionally pay nothing, because hospitals like the prestige of being associated with universities.

"These are designed to be for-profit education mills to train students to pass the boards, which is all they need to get a license," said Dr. Michael J. Reichgott, a professor at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine in the Bronx.

Charles Modica, chancellor of St. George's University in Grenada, whose first class started studying in 1977, making it one of the oldest in the Caribbean, said the New York deans were simply afraid of competition.

"It's basically a situation where the New York State deans just can't hold their noses high enough up in the air, and I think it's disgraceful," said Mr. Modica, who founded St. George's after he was rejected from medical school and went on to law school. Most Americans had never heard of the school until 1983, when President Reagan sent troops into Grenada, partly, he said, to rescue St. George's American students from unrest.

The debate is so fraught that officials of Ross University, on the island of Dominica, were at first reluctant to talk about it, fearing students would be scared away from offshore schools.

"If the domestic schools felt we were taking opportunities away from their students, if they can specifically tell us what location we were taking them away from — that question was never answered," said Dr. Nancy Perri, Ross's chief academic officer.

The New York schools want the state to adopt the position of the American Medical Association, that "the core clinical curriculum of a foreign medical school should be provided by that school and that U.S. hospitals should not provide substitute core clinical experience."

Under their proposal, the foreign schools could send students to New York only for electives, in their fourth year, not for core training, in their third. Short of that, the domestic schools want to stop any more foreign schools from sending students to New York for long-term clinical training while the state studies how it approves the schools.

The foreign schools do not go through the same accreditation process as the United States schools. So the state has



its own process for approving foreign schools, but the New York schools contend it is not as thorough as the national accreditation process, and it should be.

The Regents are struggling to compare the academic and professional performance of students from the domestic and foreign schools. The Government Accountability Office, a federal agency, tried to do so in a report aimed at determining whether the foreign schools should continue to qualify for federal loans.

The report, issued in June, found that on average, foreign-trained students lagged behind their American-trained peers in passing the medical licensing exams. But over the last decade, they had narrowed the gap, especially in the clinical knowledge portion of the exams, which 75 percent of foreign-educated Americans passed on the first try in 2008, up from 57 percent in 1998. For students in American and Canadian schools, which are subject to the same accreditation process, the rate was 94 percent in 2008, about the same as 10 years earlier.

The report found few differences in the rates of disciplinary actions or malpractice payments between physicians educated abroad and in the United States.

A memorandum submitted to the Regents this month by Frank Muñoz, a deputy state education commissioner, suggested that the top Caribbean schools, like St. George's, American University of the Caribbean and Ross, have been successful at establishing their academic merit.

"There is evidence," Mr. Muñoz said, that the more mature Caribbean schools "admit students with very competitive backgrounds. It appears that many of these students were not granted admission to domestic schools because of the limited number of available seats."

The New York schools say they now send about 4,400 of their students to New York hospitals for clinical training in their third and fourth years, and would

need to expand that by 15 to 30 percent to help solve the doctor shortage.

Foreign schools send about 2,200 students, more than 90 percent of them from the Caribbean, according to the state. St. George's alone sends about 1,000 students, many through a 10-year, \$100 million contract with the New York City Health and Hospitals Corporation, which runs public hospitals. (A high-ranking St. George's official, who also sat on the board of the city hospitals corporation, was fined for a conflict of interest for his role in soliciting clinical training slots for the school.)

City hospital officials have defended the contract with St. George's as a way of getting students into hospitals in poor neighborhoods that have been shunned by New York schools. Once they have done their clinical training in those hospitals, the students often return as residents and then as full-fledged attending physicians, officials said.

But New York deans say the hospitals are taking too many students. "There are realistic limits to the number of students that can be placed in any one clinical environment and have a high-quality education take place," said Dr. Lawrence G. Smith, dean of the Hofstra North Shore-LIJ School of Medicine, which will accept its first class of 40 students next fall.

The issue, which was reported this month in the Chronicle of Higher Education, is so charged that the city's hospital trade group, the Greater New York Hospital Association, has declined to take a position. State officials say it is unclear just how many clinical trainees New York hospitals could reasonably accommodate, and they are surveying the hospitals to try to determine that.

Meanwhile, St. George's continues to turn out doctors like Janine Reinhardt, 27, who grew up in Massapequa, N.Y., had a 3.97 grade-point average as a biology major at Cornell, but scored 27 on the MCAT. She said she probably needed a score of 30 to get into an American school.

Dr. Reinhardt graduated from St. George's this year, and is now a resident in emergency medicine at Stony Brook University Medical Center, which was her first choice. She said her underdog status as a St. George's student had made her work harder.

"At St. George's, we're rejected from the U.S. schools and then we feel we have something to prove, as opposed to the sense of entitlement that some U.S. medical students might feel," Dr. Reinhardt said.

Poetry of the Arab Revolt



Solidarity demonstration in Toronto, Sat Jan 29th, 2011 pic: By Karim Rezk

Many activists have been quoting the poem "To the Tyrants of the World" by Tunisian poet Abul-Qasim al-Shabi (died 1934), throughout Tunisia and Egypt particularly these days. This poem was recently featured in the "Aid Watchers.com" blog - a project of New York University's Development Research Institute (DRI); - Ela Toghatai Al Alaam ("To the Tyrants of the World"):

To the Tyrants of the World

*Hey you, the unfair tyrants...
You the lovers of the darkness...
You the enemies of life...*

*You've made fun of innocent people's wounds;
and your palm covered with their blood*

*You kept walking while you were deforming the charm of existence
and growing seeds of sadness in their land*

*Wait, don't let the spring, the clearness of the sky
and the shine of the morning light fool you...*

*Because the darkness, the thunder rumble
and the blowing of the wind are coming toward you from the horizon*

*Beware because there is a fire underneath the ash
Who grows thorns will reap wounds*

*You've taken off heads of people and the flowers of hope; and watered
the cure of the sand with blood and tears until it was drunk*

*The blood's river will sweep you away
and you will be burned by the fiery storm.*

Philippines: Clan violence drags Mindanao down

Manila, Feb 3, Wilson Nandang, 35-year-old mayor of the remote southern Philippine town of Labangan on the island of Mindanao, is in hiding in Manila. He believes gunmen loyal to a political rival, whose family want to take over Nandang's agricultural municipality of 30,000 people, are after him.

Travelling in a sports utility vehicle with tinted windows and accompanied by bodyguards, he said his enemy is known to deploy assassins, the same ones who have killed at least five of his close political supporters and who burned down his home last year. His wife and 10 children have had to move to a safer area.

The feud, preceded by years of clan fighting ('rido'), has not only forced him to abandon local government work in the municipality but fuelled an explosion of social ills: Many children suffer from malnutrition; education, health facilities and other basic services are lacking.

"I fear for my life. I cannot work. I cannot govern," Nandang told IRIN in Manila. "My town needs urgent development, food for the people, medicines for health centres, but I cannot do anything because my hands are tied."

Nandang's plight is not uncommon: Clan wars and political feuds have been hampering development on the mineral-rich island, where a tribal warrior culture - coupled with the proliferation of unlicensed firearms in the hands of so-called private armies controlled by political warlords - has exacerbated a long-running Muslim insurgency which has claimed thousands of lives.

Pam Pagunsan, a communications specialist at the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), said 'rido' also leads to the temporary displacement of families, who are often difficult

to access because of the security situation.

"In 2010, UNICEF and the World Food Programme (WFP) conducted a joint nutrition and food security assessment, which concluded that areas affected by armed conflict had poor nutritional status and therefore faced higher risks of disease and death," she said.

Similarly, stunting among children under five, a measure of chronic malnutrition, is also extremely high at 41 percent, the Mindanao Humanitarian Action Plan for 2011 said.

"Areas with ongoing clan wars are typically harder to access," Pagunsan said, adding that humanitarian agencies had had to deal with certain powerful clans or groups just to be able to reach those affected.

Pombaen Kader, a social welfare official in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), said 'rido' and the insurgency had come to define the poor quality of life in the area.

he said official statistics showed ARMM trails behind the rest of the Philippines in achieving its Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The incidence of poverty is 62 percent, compared to the national average of 33 percent.

Only 40 percent of children complete primary school, against the national average of 75 percent, while under-five mortality is three times the national rate, according to UNICEF.

"It might be too simplistic to say 'rido' is the cause of all of this. It is much more complicated than that. But it certainly contributes to the problem," said AARM social welfare official Kader. 'Rido' has contributed to the region's instability, said Willy Torres, a conflict management expert



A father and his son look to the camera at the Notre Dame Dulawan evacuation centre in Datu Piang. More than 250,000 internally displaced people (IDPs) have yet to return home after prolonged fighting between government forces and the separatist Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) © David Swanson/IRIN

for think-tank The Asia Foundation. From 2000 to 2004, the NGO documented around 637 cases of 'rido' - an annual average of 127 cases. Thousands of people have reportedly lost their lives. In one case alone, he said, 11 clan members were wiped out, with 13 others wounded, and feuding families had spent tens of thousands of dollars on ammunition and other costs. "Rido sustains an exclusion-orientated political economy which only serves the interests of a few economic and political elites, thereby marginalizing the rest of the population from opportunities that can lead to improvements in their lives," Torres said.

[IRIN News]

Bangladesh: Growing interest in tobacco farming

DHAKA, 26 January, Large groups of farmers in Bangladesh are switching from rice cultivation to tobacco farming, creating concerns about possible food shortages, according to the government and anti-tobacco lobbyists.

"Last year, I sold [US\$1,969 worth of] tobacco, which is impossible if I grow food items," said Shofi Mia, a tobacco farmer in Gorpara village, Manikgong District, 70km northwest of the capital, Dhaka.

For years, farmers have lamented the low prices they get for their crops. Cut off from markets because of poor infrastructure, they say they have become increasingly vulnerable to price-gouging from middlemen.

Falling profits have been blamed for farmers' conversion to tobacco cultivation, according to Syed Mahbubul Alam, secretary of local NGO Bangladesh Anti-Tobacco Alliance (BATA). Tobacco companies are recruiting farmers with free seeds, fertilizers, insecticides and "whatever we need for cultivation", said farmer Mia from Gorpara.

Anti-tobacco activists said tobacco companies win over contractors with promises of profits which often do not materialize.

"Many farmers later understand that it is not [a] profitable business but they cannot leave it as they cannot repay the loans they have taken from the companies," said BATA's Alam.

Tobacco companies buy the crop, guaranteeing a steady demand and prices. "We do not have to be worried about the [sale] of the products as companies take this from our [farms]," said tobacco farmer Bablu Mia, from the same village. Tobacco has been cultivated in Bangladesh since the 1970s. Though researchers have little official data, they say tobacco cultivation

has significantly expanded in recent years, with one local study estimating the growth at 68 percent from 2007 to 2009, with the current trend pointing even higher.

"As some parts of the world...ban tobacco cultivation, Bangladesh might be an attractive destination of international tobacco companies," said Farida Akhter the executive director of Ubinig, a local NGO also fighting tobacco cultivation.

According to the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, the total land used for tobacco cultivation in 2007-2008 was almost 30,000 hectares (ha), which yielded 40,248 tons.

While steadily growing, such production uses only a fraction of the country's cultivable land (eight million ha), and is still minor compared to the 32 million tons of rice produced in the same year. But official figures may not accurately capture the growing interest in tobacco farming, Aminul Islam Sujon, project coordinator of local NGO Work for Better Bangladesh, warned.

"The original figure is five times higher than the government figure," he said.

Walking through Manikgong District, it was not hard to find recent converts. Habibur Rahman abandoned rice farming for tobacco two years ago, while it has been four years since Madar Mia made the switch. Activists and the government say the trend could worsen food insecurity and shortages, given limited cultivable land.

"If a large group of farmers [switch] to tobacco cultivation, it might affect food grain production in Bangladesh," C. Q. Mustaq Ahmed, secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture, told IRIN. "The country will face a severe food crisis in the near future, if tobacco cultivation cannot be stopped immediately,"

said Akhter, executive director of Ubinig.

"It is a simple equation. When farmers cultivate tobacco [December to March] this is the time for paddy and winter crop cultivation. So expanding tobacco cultivation... will certainly cause food insecurity problem[s]," she added.

"Arable land is on [the] decrease in Bangladesh. It will be a threat if the land is used for tobacco cultivation rather than the food cultivation," said BATA's Alam.

Bangladesh is losing 1 percent of arable land every year, in part due to erratic rains and land degradation, according to the UN World Food Programme.

The agency estimates 28 million people - 20 percent of the total population - are "ultra-poor" and face chronic food insecurity. Akhter said Ubinig has helped 1,000 farmers nationwide switch from tobacco cultivation back to rice cultivation by giving seeds and other technical assistance.

"The government can have a similar programme. But, first, it should formulate a law to prohibit tobacco cultivation on farmland," she said. "We are trying to discourage farmers from cultivating tobacco. We are not supplying the fertilizer at a subsidized price for tobacco cultivation," said the Agriculture Ministry's Ahmed. "If the situation becomes alarming, we will take measures," he added.

There is still time to stave off further encroachment, as some farmers are still immune to the lure of tobacco, said Ubinig's Akhter. "Ultimately, it [tobacco farming] is not profitable as when we grow paddy and other crops, we do not have to buy food from markets. Though tobacco farmers earn a lot, they have to spend a lot buying food," said rice farmer Boshir Ahmed.

[IRIN News]



Durham Tamil Association

Thai Pongal Celebration by Durham Tamil Association

On January 14, 2011 Friday, Durham Tamil Association (DTA) and members celebrated the Pongal festival at OPG auditorium at Pickering. Thai Pongal festival is an ancient celebration for the Tamils which signifies the beginning of the THAI month. The festival unifies Tamils across the globe who give thanks to all the farmers, Sun and the cattle for their contribution. It's a harvest festival signifying the dawn of prosperous days beginning on 14th January every year. It's one of the most important festivals of

the year for Tamils. About 120 parents, 60 kids, and dignitaries: Mark Holland MP, Joe Dickson MPP, for Ajax, Pickering, Renrick Ashby - Councillor, Town of Ajax, Don Terry - Director Ontario Power Generation, Roland Rutland - Director Bahai Community participated in the event. The traditional food "Pongal", sweets etc was served at the celebration. The kids' performances (dance, speech, music) etc was done very extra ordinarily to the highest standard showing what the cele-

bration is all about. Kids from 2 years to 7 years old showcased a fashion show with the Pongal theme showing what is Pongal is all about and how it's celebrated, with their traditional outfits. It was an extra ordinary performance by our little kids. To add, little kids recite the ancient poetry like "Aathichoodi" and "Thirukkural".

It's important for our young generation to educate and experience our culture and values from our ancestry.

We are very fortunate that we live in

a country that supports and allow practicing our culture and values. Our gratitude towards our community leaders who always attend and show their support. Durham Tamil Association is doing a tremendous work for the growth of our community and embracing all cultures while proudly displaying the Tamil culture. For membership information, please call 905.428.7007 or visit www.durhamtamils.com

Seen here are some pictures taken at the event.



DTA's cute kids showcasing PONGAL FASHI ON SHOW



DTA's kids who performed at THAI PONGAL VIZHA



DTA's VI OLIN RECI TAL @ PONGAL VIZHA



Guests at DTA's THAI PONGAL VIZHA



KUMMI DANCE by DTA's kids



PONGAL DRAMA by DTA's Youth KABI THAN RAVI CHANDRAN, JESI HAN RAVI CHANDRAN and KEERAN SI VANESAN

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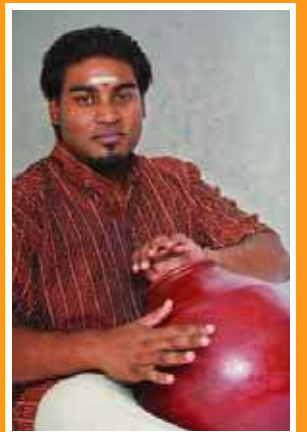
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Tribute to Our Grandmother

Mrs. Vallinayaki Velumailum

10 Oct 1927 – 29 Jan 2011



We can only remember fond memories of our grandmother, the way she laughed, and the way she always cared for others.

She was the strength of our family who always brought us together. She was a kind-hearted and caring person that always put others before herself, and was always there for us when we needed her. She always goes out of her way to make everyone feel special.

We are so fortunate to have a grandmother like her. There are no words to express how much she loved her grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Even through her pain she always took the time to see how we were.

Our grandmother will be deeply missed by not only her own family but by everyone that knew her. She was loved by all. She always saw the good in everyone. She has given us values and taught us traditions to live by, which we promise to never forget.

We are so proud to have been her grandchildren and grateful for the unforgettable memories and experiences we have shared with her. We know that she will watch over each one of us. Words alone cannot express the love that was felt for our grandmother.

She will live forever in our hearts. May her journey in samsara be eternally blissful.

Grandchildren &
Great-grandchildren.



Recent Event

Providence hosts Founding Partners' Breakfast

Providence Healthcare Foundation hosted a Founding Partners' Breakfast on Wednesday, January 12th, 2011 at Montcalm Conference Centre, Providence Hospital.

Welcome speeches were made by Peter Kilty Chair, Providence Healthcare Foundation Board of Directors and Sponsor and Introduction to Keynote Speaker by Jacqueline Tavares, VP, Business & Professional Services, RBC.

Paul Ferley, Assistant Chief Economist, RBC, RBC Royal Bank of Canada presented his Keynote Address followed by a Q&A Session.

Some of the quotes by other speakers are given below.

You are supporting a wonderful organization and getting access to a high calibre of speakers and the opportunity to

network with fellow Scarborough businesses. It really is a worthwhile investment, from both a business and a philanthropic perspective.

Lynne Wallace, Chair, Providence Community Partners Advisory Group

As an Advisory Group Member for Providence Community Partners, I feel it's important for Scarborough businesses to be aware of and have access to valuable programs and services in the community. Events such as this one are not only a great opportunity for you to get together and meet fellow businesses, but they're also a chance for us to share what Providence Healthcare can do for you and your employees.

Dr. Peter Nord, Vice President, Chief Medical Officer, and Chief of Staff at Providence Healthcare and Providence

Community Partners Advisory Group member.

The following is a list of services provided by Providence Healthcare to our 'Partners' through the Business Health Initiative (referenced by Dr. Peter Nord).

- > Dedicated Flu Shot clinic days at Providence Healthcare
- > Healthy Workplace Seminars
- > Fit testing at Providence Healthcare
- > Opportunity for employees to attend seminars in the Scotiabank Learning Centre on topics such as controlling diabetes, pain management strategies, coping with a loved one with dementia among many other topics...
- > Seminars on Regulatory Compliance with various bodies such as WSIB and MOL



Providence Community Partners

A Philanthropy Network for Businesses

- > Access to Providence Healthcare's Integrated Healing Arts Centre services such as Chiropractic Care and Massage Therapy
- > Access to Providence Healthcare Pain Care clinic



Jennifer Stewart, President, Providence Healthcare Foundation, with new 'Partner' Marion A'Hearn, Investment Advisor with BMO Nesbitt Burns, Private Client Division and guest Ray Abi, Branch Manager at BMO Bank of Montreal, Queen and Woodbine Branch.



Providence Community Partners Advisory Group Members Dr. Raffy Chouljian and Manny Sousa with new 'Partner' Nick Lawley, President of Paragon Travel.



Guests Jacqueline Tavares, Vice President, Business Services & Professionals, Commercial Financial Services and RBC and Ruston Martin, Account Manager at RBC.



Guest Bill Crook, Personal Banking Area Manager at BMO Bank of Montreal with Lynne Wallace, Chair of Providence Community Partners Advisory Group



Keynote Speaker Paul Ferley, Assistant Chief Economist at Royal Bank of Canada.



New 'Partner' Dr. Bai-Sen Cheng, with Providence Community Partners Advisory Group Member Dr. Raffy Chouljian.

Record attendance at Annual Pongal Dinner hosted by Canadian Tamils Congress

Around 1,000 members and guests attended the Fourth Annual Thai Pongal Dinner hosted by the Canadian Tamil Congress (CTC) on Saturday, January 22, 2011 at Le Parc Conference & Banquet Centre in Markham, Ontario, Canada.

The evening program featured arts, culture and achievements which highlighted Tamils' traditional "Thai Pongal" theme. Many dignitaries at all levels of Government were in attendance at the event including the Federal Liberal leader Michael Ignatieff.

Commenting about Annual Pongal Dinner Canadian Tamil Congress said, "It is an opportunity to meet many other enthusiastic community members and organizations while supporting the importance of recognizing Tamil Canadian initiatives and success across Canada." Five course meals was served to the guests along with sumptuous choice of four main courses, 'Steak, Chicken, Salmon and Vegetarian', followed by delightful desert of 'Tartuffe' to sum up the glittering dinner night.

Some of the photos taken at the event can be seen here.

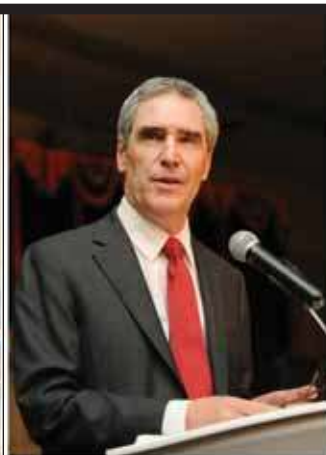
Photo Courtesy: Ninaivukal.com



Thai Pongal Theme Display



Markham Mayor Frank Scarpitti



Federal Liberal Leader Michael Ignatieff addressing



CTC President Prof. Sri Ranjan



Canadian National Anthem by Meleni Ratnam



Ontario Minister of Citizenship and Immigration Dr. Eric Hoskins



Hon. Gerry Phillips, MPP for Scarborough-Agincourt



Members of CTC & guests.



Members of CTC & guests.



President of CTC Prof. Sri Ranjan with Federal Liberal Leader Michael Ignatieff and other members of CTC and guests.



Members of CTC & guests.

See Page 51...



Cultural Program



Lawyer Barbara Jackman receiving 'Friend of the Community Award' from Uma Suthan of CTC



Lawyer Meleni David of CTC making a cheque presentation to Guy Laporte of Canadian Cancer Society



Manjula Selvarajah of CTC making a cheque presentation to Prof. Francis Cody of University of Toronto for Annual Tamil Studies Conference.



Former York Region Police Chief Armand LeBarge receiving Leaders for Change Award from Dr. Meera Selvakone of CTC.



Members of CTC and guests



Former York Region Police Chief Armand LeBarge with his team and members of CTC

CTC Media release about the Annual Thai Pongal event as follows:

The Canadian Tamil Congress celebrated Thai Pongal with 1,000 guests during its Fourth Annual Thai Pongal Dinner on January 22nd, 2011 at Le Parc Conference and Banquet Centre in Markham, Ontario. The evening program featured Tamil Canadian arts, culture and outlined CTC's achievements in 2010. CTC was proud to be joined by leaders and political representatives from the federal, provincial and municipal levels of government. Established professionals of all stripes, leaders of industry, emerging artists, business owners, renowned writers, community builders and faith leaders were all in attendance.

The chief guest of the evening, leader of the Liberal Party of Canada and Member of Parliament for Etobicoke-Lakeshore, Hon. Michael Ignatieff enthusiastically addressed the crowd. Mr. Ignatieff received a standing ovation from the packed house of 1,000 guests as he approached the stage. Highlighting the contributions that Tamil Canadians have made to Canada, Mr. Ignatieff said he was happy to have taken part in our harvest festival. Mr. Ignatieff also congratulated Canadian Tamil Congress for the good work it is doing.

Several dignitaries also addressed the crowd including Mayor of the Town of Markham Frank Scarpitti, Ontario Minister of Citizenship and Immigration and MPP for St. Paul's Dr. Eric Hoskins, MPP for Beaches-East York Michael Prue and Leader of the Green Party of Ontario Mike Shreiner. Several important leaders of our community from the municipal, provincial and federal government, academics, members of the law enforcement were also in attendance Saturday evening.

CTC President Professor Sri Ranjan outlined the plight of Tamils in Sri Lanka and stressed that the underlying grievances of Tamils have been left unsolved. He highlighted the accomplishments of the Canadian Tamil Congress in 2010 and how it has contributed to Canadian society as a whole.

At the dinner, CTC showed its support towards organizations that have worked tirelessly for the betterment of Canadians. Mr. Guy Laporte, Director of Toronto Revenue Development for the Canadian Cancer Society accepted a cheque in the amount of \$36,000 on behalf of the Canadian Cancer Society. He thanked the Tamil community for their generous support in the fight against cancer. The amount represented the money raised by the community over the year as part of its Tamil Canadians Against Cancer campaign.

Dr. Francis P. Cody, Assistant Professor at the University of Toronto, received a round of applause as he elegantly addressed the crowd in Tamil. Dr. Cody accepted a cheque from CTC in support of the Tamil Studies Conference 2011. The Tamil Studies Conference is the largest of its kind in North America, with over 70 Tamil studies scholars, artists, writers and activists from around the world covering the Tamil language, literature and the arts.

CTC also awarded Kalaikal Creative Arts, an arts organization that strives to preserve and sustain Tamil identity through the Arts while promoting and investing in the development of contemporary Tamil arts in the Canadian context.

A lot of the work that the Canadian Tamil Congress does year long is not possible without the support of volunteers, committed members and individuals in the community who lend a helping hand. There are also exemplary individuals who contribute to the growth and success of this community and country. This year, the Canadian Tamil Congress decided to introduce two awards to honour such individuals.

The Leaders for Change award honours the unique contribution of an individual who through his or her exceptional vision, perseverance and commitment has redefined or strengthened the need for change in our society. This recipient of this award was Mr.

Armand LaBarge, Former York Regional Police Chief. Through 37 years of service in the York Regional Police Services, Chief LaBarge has been acknowledged for his compassion, outstanding commitment and contribution to our community. CTC recognized his dedication to leadership, his vision for change, but above all, his desire to enhance the lives of others.

As part of our ongoing commitment to volunteerism and promoting community involvement, CTC honoured the contribution of Ms. Barbara Jackman, the recipient of the Service Excellence award. Ms. Jackman, a graduate of the University of Toronto Law School, has advocated for immigrants and refugees in Canada for over thirty years. CTC has worked very closely with Ms. Jackman and her associates and took this opportunity to recognize her for the tremendous work they have done for refugee claimants and for promoting fundamental Canadian values.

The event would not have been complete without the captivating performances of the students of Niruthya Kalanjali Academy of Fine Arts. The girls dazzled the audience with a unique mix of classical and contemporary movements to showcase a fusion of Eastern and Western forms of dances. The entertainment for the night was enhanced with the sweet and melodious voice of Ms. Magish Baheerathan, the 8 year old winner of TVI's Superstar Junior contest which was sponsored by 7S Group which was also the Platinum sponsor for CTC Dinner 2011.

The Canadian Tamil Congress would like to thank its volunteers, members and friends for your generous support. Your contributions have strengthened the voice of Tamil Canadians both in Canada and beyond our borders. Thank you for making the Fourth Annual Thai Pongal Dinner 2011 an enormous success! We look forward to your continued support.

CHOOSING THE RIGHT CAREER IS A **KEY** TO SUCCESS



Campus Director Mr. Rainer Moeller working at his office

Finding the right career is an important consideration for most new immigrants when they are in the process of settling in Canada.

Most of the new comers complain that finding a reasonable employment utilizing skills they possessed at the time of migration and brought into Canada is a daunting task. In the meantime businesses in Greater Toronto are always on the look for skilled people for employment. Most of these businesses pay thousands of dollars to head hunters or agencies to find the right fit for their company.

Rainer Moeller of Citi College in Toronto says lack of communication skills is one of the key necessities that are affecting new comers find

the right employment in Toronto. Without proper communication skills even someone with excellent technical / work skills will not be able to land in their dream jobs, he further said.

Mr. Moeller made these observations during a recent visit of Monsoon Journal to his offices at Citi College in Toronto. He says Citi College takes this important necessity and program delivery methods are geared towards addressing it

to ensure a rewarding career path for new comers.

Citi College, a private career college has helped new comers over the past 19 years to find their right career choice in Toronto. Monsoon Journal spoke to Mr. Rainer Moeller, Campus Director as well as Thesa Theiventhiran, Director of studies at Citi College.

Mr. Theiventhiran has over 20 years of Career development and delivery experience in Toronto.

Key to finding the right job depends on finding their skills gap, according to Mr. Theiventhiran. Finding the skills gap could be done in a simple way by putting your resume right

next the job posting one is inspired by and start noting down the additional skills needed to realize the ideal job. Once the skills needs are identified, take that to a career expert or career counselor for direction, Mr. Theiventhiran recommends.



Training in progress



Mr. Rainer Moeller, Campus Director and Thesa Theiventhiran, Director of Studies at the reception

There are number of Employment Ontario centers (**visit: www.ontario.ca**) available to help new

comers or for anyone who need personal advice you may call either **Rainer or Thesa** at **416-441-2900** for a free advice session.



Classroom



Special Feature

By L.C. Arulpragasam

The months of November and December of 1957 were marked by torrential rains in the Batticaloa District leading to the biggest flood of the 20th century - till the floods just now of January 2011. I was at that time (1957) Assistant Government Agent of the Batticaloa District. Around December 20th 1957 (just before the flood), the Commissioner of Agrarian Services, Mr. M. S. Perera, rang me to say that the Ministry of Agriculture was asking for my appointment to the post of Deputy Commissioner of Agrarian Services in

hour through the station. We made it to Colombo in time for me to work on December 24 and 25th on the needed administrative regulations under the Paddy Lands Act. Late that (Christmas) night I heard the Government Agent of Batticaloa (my boss) calling on the radio for the evacuation of Kalmunai.

Although this may not have made sense to anyone else, I realized that this was based on the fear of a possible breach of the Inginiyagala (Gal Oya) dam. If this were to happen, at least one million people in the densely populated Kalmunai area could be swept out to sea.

The Batticaloa, Eastern Sri Lanka floods of 1957-1958: A personal account



Floods in Eastern Sri Lanka - Jan 2011 – pic: perambara.org

charge of the Paddy Lands Act. He wanted me to assume duties immediately.

It was finally agreed that I should come down to Colombo to work over Christmas Eve and Christmas day (24th and 25th of December) in order to draw up the administrative regulations under the Paddy Lands Act. I was thereafter to assume duties formally on December 27th. Since this was too good an offer to lose, I consented, although it was going to be personally very difficult for me and my family to move at such short notice.

We were on the train going out of Batticaloa on the night of December 23rd 1957. (We did not know at that time that it would be the last train that could get out of the district.). We hardly made it through Polonnaruwa Station where the Guard, holding a lantern over his head, had to wade waist-deep in water in front of the train, guiding it at two miles per

Unfortunately, the Government Agent was new, having assumed duties only one month previously. So there was no official in the district to cope with a crisis of this magnitude.

It was now midnight on Christmas day. I am a Christian and we were staying with a Christian family in Colombo. Unfortunately, I had a throat infection with a slight fever while my wife was also sick. The next day (December 26th already dawning) was our wedding anniversary and I was to take up duties in Colombo on the following day, December 27th. Meanwhile, all road and railway links to Batticaloa had been impassable for the last three days. I was in a quandary: I was still legally Assistant Government Agent of the Batticaloa District although I was in Colombo under official instructions to assume duties in Colombo on the next

day, December 27th.

It was supposed to be impossible to reach Batticaloa. Even if I set out immediately, I could not hope to arrive there (if at all) before December 27th the date on which I was supposed to start work in Colombo. Thus the rational thing to do was to remain in Colombo and assume the duties of my new post (a promotion for me) on the next day (December 27th). Being blessed (or cursed?) by an absurd sense of duty, I felt that it was my moral duty to get back to Batticaloa, even if it meant disobeying official orders.

The question now was how to get

there. By chance, I had seen one of the Divisional Revenue Officers (DROs) of the Batticaloa District in Colombo that day. I knew that he was in Colombo without authorized leave, away from his post at this time of crisis. While normally I would have had to take disciplinary action against him, I now seized upon the opportunity to force him to take me back to Batticaloa in his car.

But first I had to decide what route I should take, since I knew that the road to Batticaloa had been impassable for over one week. So I rang the Automobile Association (AAA) and enquired about the road to Badulla which runs through the hill country. The AAA officer replied that it was impassable due to landslides and wash-aways. I then enquired about the road going south to Hambantota, from where I could possibly make my way northwards into Batticaloa. At this point, the officer interrupted me saying: "I thought you were trying to go to Badulla (in the hills); but now you are asking about going south to Hambantota. Where are you trying to go?" "To Batticaloa" I replied, not without some embarrassment.

The officer guffawed with laughter saying: "All the roads to Batticaloa have been impassable for the past week and there is no way that you can get there!" I was so embarrassed and annoyed that I replied: "I shall get there... and I shall let you know!" and banged down the phone. I decided to take the high road through the hill country despite the odds.

Having decided this, I managed to trace my way to the DRO's house in a suburb of Colombo. It was past midnight on Christmas day and he had had more than one too many and was fast asleep on a sofa. His wife balked at the danger of his travelling to Batticaloa and refused to let him go. But I pointed out that the only way for him to avoid dismissal was

to get back to his post with me. So I bundled him into the back seat of his car (where he immediately fell asleep again) and I set out driving to Batticaloa. I decided to take the hill country road through Badulla.

Once I got into the hills, I was stopped by landslides obstructing my path at every turn. With each deviation I encountered more landslides, with the same result. By around 5.30 a.m., completely exhausted and completely lost, I stopped at a small waterfall to freshen up. Fortunately the DRO woke up and recognized the place, having worked in this area before. He was thus able to show me another route through which we reached a major causeway over which the Gal Oya River was flowing at full speed. Cars were packed on both banks of the river for almost half a mile. They had been waiting more than four days for the river to subside. It was very risky to cross the river in this condition. In fact four passengers in a car had plunged to their death the previous year in trying to do so.

I could not, however, (like all the other cars lined up) accept that the river could not be crossed. But I needed to know whether the river was rising or falling. Fortunately I had experience of rivers like this since I had done many river trips by canoe in our schooldays. So I planted a few sticks on the bank to mark the water level. If the water level fell, it could be expected to continue falling, making it safer to wait longer before crossing. On the other hand, if the water level were rising, then I had to cross immediately or give up the idea of crossing altogether.

After two hours (during which I slept) my sticks showed me that the river level was rising, probably due to heavy rains upstream. Under these circumstances, I decided to cross straight away, despite the protests of my colleague and the advice of the crowd. To cut a long story short, we did manage to get across the river amid cheers from the crowds on both banks! The other cars would have had to wait for at least another five days before they could cross.

So we were able to continue our journey by car. However, it was not long before we were halted by massive mara trees that had fallen across the road. Their trunks alone were about eight feet wide (lying horizontally across the road) while their roots jutted up in the air for another eight feet. We could not sidestep the trees by going off the road because the ditches on either side of the road were full of water over five feet deep. So we had to abandon the car, creep under the trunks of the fallen trees, and walk. Thereafter, we got a mini van which took us some distance till we came across more massive trees obstructing our path.

We abandoned the van and continued further on foot. Then we commandeered a couple of bicycles since my colleague had only to identify himself to get anything he wanted!

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Special Feature



Thereafter more trees again: so more walking. Then we commandeered a tractor which took us a few miles, followed by more trees across the road and more bicycles, until we finally reached my DRO colleague's headquarters in the western part of the Batticaloa district. After lunch, he got me a bicycle and someone to accompany me. So I cycled to the Unnichchai Colonization Scheme, deeper into the Batticaloa District, where I was well known.

The Colonization Officer was very fond of me and begged of me not to go on because no one knew whether Batticaloa was still there or whether it was completely inundated— in which case I could possibly be swept out to sea! Since it was about 6 p.m. and already getting dark, he persuaded me to wait till morning, when he promised to get me a boat and someone to accompany me. At 5.30 next morning, we set out going as far as the road could take us. Meanwhile a small crowd had gathered since it was known that the AGA was trying to return to Batticaloa from this point that morning. But my heart sank when I saw what was before me. Apart from the heavy rains, two dams (of Unnichchai and Rugam Tanks) had breached, unleashing a wall of water which had gouged open the main road to Batticaloa, kicking up a wave of water over ten feet high across the road which I was trying to follow, with water beyond as far as eye could see.

My instincts and knowledge of water told me that it would be suicidal to try to cross here. (In retrospect, I realize that I was foolishly trying to follow the course of the road to Batticaloa, whereas the flood waters had covered everything, making the road completely irrelevant). The Colonization Officer (CO), who was worried for my safety, started crying, scaring me even further! He then called for volunteers from the crowd to accompany me. Although many of them had received land from me as AGA, there was not a single volunteer – for which the CO berated them all as ungrateful wretches! Fortunately for me, I chickened out at this time and requested an inflated tube to wear around my waist in case I capsized. We had to go back a few miles in order to get the tube.

This move saved my life that day. Although the swollen lagoon water was moving rapidly there, I realized that it was more navigable from this point. The problem was that there was no land in sight (normally one could see Batticaloa in the distance from this place) or any sign that Batticaloa was still there – in which case we would be swept out to sea! Anyway I decided that I would cross the lagoon starting from here – a decision which almost certainly saved my life.

As soon as I announced this intention, two men immediately volunteered to come with me. They were fishermen who knew that whereas my first plan was suicidal, my present plan was feasible. They dismantled the outriggers from two canoes, then joined the two canoes together with three planks across, so as

to create a stable twin-hulled craft. We set out with the CO intoning prayers while the crowd cheered us on.

To get us some idea of direction, I tried to follow the course of the road to Batticaloa. We could sometimes make this out by the tips of coconut trees which (we knew) skirted the road. Sometimes we would hear unearthly howling like people dying of pain. They proved to be from dogs marooned on roof ridges with six days of hunger in their belly. After rowing for some hours (aided by the flowing current of water) we reached what we thought was highland adjoining Batticaloa town. We left the boats and started walking – only to find that we were surrounded by water again. So we had to return to the boats and row farther towards where we thought Batticaloa to be. Again we left the boats and started walking.

We could now see the outskirts of the town but we encountered water once more. At this point we started swimming from tree to tree until we reached high ground and entered Batticaloa town. When the people saw me wading in (in four feet of water) they started cheering and shouting "The AGA has come, the AGA has come". It was late afternoon on December 27th (the day on which I should have started duties in Colombo) when I finally reached Batticaloa. I had taken a little more than one and a half days to get there. I say this with some pride since a combined army-navy amphibious team sent to relieve Batticaloa took seven days to do so!

The first problem was to get to my own home. It was a very old British upstairs bungalow with thick brick walls (about 1.5 feet thick) with very high ceilings (at least 13 feet high) and a long verandah around three sides of the house, both upstairs and downstairs. It was built on the bank of the lagoon and the garden and floor level were now at least 15 feet under water. I could not approach it from the lagoon side lest I be carried away by the current. So I had to approach it from the higher ground at the back of the bungalow. This involved swimming from higher ground across the PWD yard (which lay behind my house) to reach my back boundary wall which although over 10 ft high, had been topped by the flood waters.

Feeling (melodramatically) like Tarzan, I had to dive into my own backyard and swim directly into my up-stair verandah! While doing so, I came upon a large fish which seemed injured or dazed. So I trod water, grabbed the fish by its tail and threw it into my upstairs verandah. I had it fried for dinner that night. Standing on my upstairs verandah (at more or less water-level) I could see the lagoon engorged with flood waters rushing past me like a torrent, carrying all before it. Trees, fences and bits of houses whizzed past me. There were animals too: bloated carcasses of cattle, buffaloes, goats, dogs and even a couple of deer.

Getting sleep at night was also a problem. Since a rise of the waters by



Floods in Eastern Sri Lanka - Jan 2011 – pic: perambara.org

even two feet would flood me out of my upstairs bedroom, I had to be constantly vigilant. Meanwhile our piano which was floating in the living room downstairs was thumping on the 13 ft high ceiling of that room (which was the floor of my upstairs bedroom) playing "tunes" made by the lapping waters.

Meanwhile, conditions in the town were chaotic. The people were demoralized because communications had broken down and food supplies were short. Although the Government Agent was in town, he was new, knew nothing of the district, and was marooned in his house. Almost all the district governmental heads (health, public works, irrigation and agriculture) were out of the district for the Christmas holidays and no civic organization or leadership was evident. Hence my return proved to be a rallying point both for the government services as well as for the people. I immediately started several measures to cope with the situation.

First, because food hoarding had already started, I took over food supplies from the traders and ensured a ration to every household. Second, I ensured the burial of dead bodies, mainly animals. Third, I ensured the decontamination of wells and drinking water supplies. Fourth, as the flood waters began to recede, I undertook the emergency repair of roads and infrastructure. Fortunately, the PWD Engineer returned with the army-navy amphibious team and took over his functions. Fifth, I organized the farmers to stack layer upon layer of sandbags to save whatever water was left in the irrigation reservoirs.

But the biggest problem was the most immediate. The water level in the lagoon kept on rising, fed by the continuing rains and the collapse of the two reservoirs upstream. Although the lagoon mouth was wide open and discharging masses of water into the sea, the rate of discharge was not enough to prevent a dangerous rise in lagoon levels due to the greater incoming floods. Quite fortuitously, I had a historical key in my hand to

solve this problem.

About a year earlier while fishing in the sea with the turn of tides at midnight, I was told by a fisherman that in his grandfather's time, the white men's ships used to come into the lagoon through another mouth much farther south. Because my father had served as a medical officer in this district when I was a boy, I was able to identify this place as the so-called "Dutch Bar" (just south of Batticaloa, across the Kalladi Bridge). I summoned as many workers/volunteers as I could (about 25 men turned up) to open another outlet to the sea.

With a free flow of arrack (from supplies requisitioned by me!) our volunteers worked through the night to cut open another outlet to the sea near the old "Dutch Bar". This was an experience in itself: for the little trickle of water through the new outlet increased to a flood: and then with a roar the sand bar burst, releasing volumes of water into the sea. By this lucky chain of events, I was able to dramatically bring down the water level within a few days, thus saving the town from devastation.

Looking back, I marvel at the number of coincidences that made this possible: that I was AGA in the district at this time, that I met a fisherman at midnight who spoke about his grandfather's time, that I happened to visit Batticaloa as a boy and knew where the "Dutch Bar" was, and that now (as AGA) I was able to realize its significance for saving the town of Batticaloa. The problems of relief and rehabilitation were great. We had no communication with Colombo or any instructions from headquarters. Hence, I had to start work (with the approval of the Government Agent, Mr. Douglas Misso) to restore needed rehabilitation and development work.

With the help of volunteers, we sandbagged entire stretches of the damaged reservoirs so that they could retain at least some water for the next cultivation. Most paddy fields had been silted with mud while most field ridges and channels

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Special Feature

had been destroyed. I authorized the farmers to de-silt their fields and channels, rehabilitate their fields and reconstruct their irrigation channels, promising to pay them at usual government rates.

I did this without obtaining any authority from the Ministry, thus risking a personal surcharge for these costs later on. It was marvelous to see this flood-stricken district humming with activity with the farmers working to put their fields back into shape before the next cultivation season. Apart from rehabilitating their fields, we were in effect funding relief works which would provide them with food and employment until their next crop.

Meanwhile, I had to face the problem that I had defied official orders in coming back to Batticaloa on the day on which I should have assumed duties in Colombo – for which I could have been reprimanded or (theoretically) sacked. So it was a great relief when about three weeks later I received a telegram from the Secretary to the Treasury and Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Finance, Mr. S. F. Amerasinghe, who was the head of the Ceylon Civil Service to which I belonged. It had been sent from Colombo by plane to Gal Oya and from there by boat to Batticaloa, reaching me about three weeks after it was sent.

It said: "Your transfer to Colombo postponed. Remain in Batticaloa, repeat: remain in Batticaloa as Assistant Government Agent". It had obviously been written on the wrong assumption that I had been in Batticaloa all the time, forgetting that I had been officially ordered to work in Colombo on December 24th and 25th. So I just laughed and put the telegram away.

The biggest problem now was that the Maha paddy crop (the main crop for the year) which had been planted one month previously had been entirely washed away. Although I got the farmers to de-silt their fields and channels for the second Yala season crop, I found that their seed paddy for this crop (a three-month variety) had been destroyed by the rising floods.

Thus, while their first crop had failed, their second crop could not be sown, which would result in widespread famine for at least one year. I suddenly realized, however, that although we had lost one and a half months of the main (4 ½ month) season, we could still pull off a three-month crop during the balance of this season - if only we could find adequate quantities of three month seed paddy, since their shorter term would enable harvesting at the usual time. In order to obtain a supply of such seed, I opened up emergency "roads" to the north (to the Polonnaruwa district), to the south (to the Hambantota district) and to the west (to the Badulla district).

I then commissioned our DROs to go out and buy as much seed paddy as they could from the adjoining districts with money supplied freely from the Kachcheri vault. By this means we man-

aged to re-sow almost the entire extent of Maha paddy lands despite the earlier loss of the entire crop. The problem was that we had done this by using government funds without obtaining any approval at all.

Fortunately these problems were solved in short order. After about one month, a helicopter was able to land in Batticaloa with the Minister of Agriculture Mr. C.P. de Silva, accompanied by the leader of the Opposition, Dr. N.M. Perera. They came to visit our flood-torn district with promises of relief. The Minister read out a small proclamation authorizing the de-silting and reconstruction of channels, de-silting of paddy fields, etc. at government-approved rates of subsidy.

I smiled with relief because he was giving retroactive authorization for something we had already done more than a month ago without approval. However, when the Leader of the Opposition visited the field, he was surprised to see lush paddy growing in all the fields instead of the devastation he had expected. After he found out how we had accomplished this, he was lavish in his praise of our initiative (which he later recorded in Parliament) in bringing about this reversal of fortune in our flood-torn district. However, he did berate the Government for allowing the initiative of one district to deplete the seed paddy reserves of others!

It took me some months to settle accounts for all the monies that I had disbursed from government funds. Some of this was made up of loans which farmers had to pay back. But most of them were in the form of subsidies which I had given out at approved rates, which were subsequently blessed by ministerial sanction. By this time I had been working non-stop for almost four months with intermittent fever, continuing to take shots of streptopenicillin under the doctor's orders.

Meanwhile my family (and all our furniture) had been moved to Colombo on the basis of my officially ordered transfer there. So after a period of four months, when the flood situation and its consequences had been brought under control, I asked my boss (the Government Agent) to fix the date for my assumption of duties in Colombo with the Secretary to the Treasury/Ministry of Finance who had ordered my transfer. The reply from the latter was terse. I was to be told that there had been a flood in Batticaloa and that in any case I was too junior for this post; hence my transfer was cancelled!

I was in a state of physical, mental and nervous exhaustion and in a highly emotional state. Distraught, I asked for an appointment with the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Finance (who was head of the Civil Service) and went to Colombo to see him. He was curt and offhand, saying: "I suppose you have come to see me about your transfer. I am sorry the transfer cannot take place because there has been a flood in Batticaloa" - and then he added gratuitously "besides, you are too junior for

this post".

On hearing this, I was ready to explode. I had never asked for the post and, in fact, had not even known of its existence. But he had appointed me to it four months previously! (The post was that of Deputy Commissioner of Agrarian Services in the Ministry of Agriculture, in Colombo). Besides, if I was too junior for the post now, how come he appointed me to this post four months earlier when I was even more junior for it? Now he was telling me (who had gone through the flood) that there had been a flood in Batticaloa!

Being in a highly overwrought state I burst out: "You are telling me that there was a flood in Batticaloa? Do you know that I had moved to Colombo on your instructions and had already started work in my new post at the express request of the Government? Meanwhile, my family too had moved to Colombo on the basis of your instructions?". Taken aback, he then asked: "If you were in Colombo then how could you have been in Batticaloa?" To which I replied; "I went back". He then interrupted: "But how you could have gone back when there was this big flood". I replied: "I just went back". To which he again asked: "But how could you have gone back?" I asked: "Do you really want to know?" He nodded. So I told him: "I went by car, I walked, I went in a van, I walked, I went by tractor, I walked, I went by bicycle, I walked. Then I went by boat and then I swam and reached Batticaloa!"

He was so taken aback that he asked: "You really did that?" "Yes". I replied. By this time both interested and curious, he questioned me more about it and then asked: "If faced with the same choice, would you do it again? Do you regret that you did it?" To which I replied: "Yes, I would do it again. As for regrets, I have no regret that I did it. My only regret is that I belong to a service where you can do this to me – and this is easily remedied because you can have my resignation." Now it was his turn to get agitated, saying: "Young man, don't get excited. Calm down, sit down. I agree to your transfer. When can you take up duties in Colombo?" And so my problem was solved - by my emotional outburst - and I was able to take up my new post! However those four months of working with fever took their toll on my body.

I developed pleurisy in both my lungs. After barely three months in my new job, I had to be sent on two months' leave in order to recover. Even to this day (at age 83 years) the patch in my lung shows up in x-rays!

When news of my transfer to Colombo was received in Batticaloa, the Members of Parliament from the district came to see me in my bungalow in Batticaloa. I was so sick by this time that I was lying on a mat on the floor, since even my furniture had been moved to Colombo. I remember that the MPs brought me copies of some thirty telegrams addressed to the Prime Minister from all the Members of Parliament as well as

from the Chairmen of all the Village Councils in the district protesting my transfer and requesting that I be kept on in Batticaloa.

They brought these to me partly to show their appreciation of my services but partly because they thought that they were doing me a favor, being convinced (due to my work for the district) that I wanted to stay on in Batticaloa! I had to plead with them to please withdraw these telegrams (but it was too late to do so) asking: "Can't you understand that I want to go?" They were really amazed and even hurt that I wanted to leave the district of my own volition!

**It is now more than
50 years since I left
the Batticaloa District.
Since then I have
been working abroad
for over 40 years. I
write this now
because the district is
again facing devasta-
tion by a similar
massive flood.**

Fortunately there are more resources to cope with its consequences than were available at that time - but the issues are likely to be the same.

The Gal Oya Dam may be in danger – in which case Ampara, Karativu and Kalmunai would need to be evacuated. In order to save Batticaloa, the Dutch Bar will have to be kept open – if this has not already been done. Reservoirs that may have been breached need to be sand-bagged to prevent further loss of water. All needed relief and emergency measures will have to be undertaken. In this respect, the presence of the army and their helicopters are a boon. After the floods recede, the longer-haul tasks of relief and rehabilitation will have to begin. I wish them all success. [transCurrents.com]

Footnotes

1) My DRO colleague was well known in this area since he had previously been DRO in charge of this Division in the Badulla District and was treated with great respect. So he was able to "commandeer" any vehicle we needed!

2) The seed paddy for the next crop is usually stored on the paddy field in bins covered on all sides by straw. With the long inundation by the flood waters, the seed had not only germinated but also had rotted.

Opposite Editorials



Household Debt Management and the Canadian Economy

Arun Senathirajah

ACIB, MBA (Banking Mgmt)

Mark Carney Bank of Canada Governor has issued a warning about the troubling levels of debt that households have piled up amid near-record-low borrowing costs. Debt-to-income ratio in the United States, while still high, has fallen back to pre-crisis levels, but in Canada it keeps rising. 'Households cannot continue to borrow at a faster rate than their incomes are growing indefinitely,' said Sal Guatieri, a senior economist at BMO Nesbitt Burns Inc. in Toronto. "At some point, that ratio has to stabilize, or the economy and financial system would be at risk. That's the problem the Americans, and the British, got into." 'During this recession, it doesn't seem that Canadians changed their habits, which is shocking,' Laurie Campbell, executive director of the Toronto-based credit counseling agency Credit Canada, said in an interview. "In the U.S., they certainly did start to put their wallets away, they started to become more cautious and conscious of the financial decisions they've been making. In Canada, we're still going down this very scary path of incurring debt and of not understanding that there is a breaking point."

Credit Card Regulation an Insult on Customers

'It is estimated that about 70 per cent of Canadian households pay off their entire credit-card balance each month, there is growing concern about rising defaults because of the recession' according to the Canadian Bankers Association. That has left about 30% of the households are prone to be defaulted and the very high interest rate paying users and contributing to high profit making of the credit card companies. David Descoteaux an economic journalist states 'the most hated player is Banker he bets, big each turn, whatever his cards. He doesn't care. He knows that his friend Government will bail him out if he loses everything.' Matching to this statement and in contrast to highly expected regulations on credit card companies Finance Minister Jim Flaherty was only interested in a "summary box" regulation, cheating the consumers by not relieving them from the crippling high interest rates and fees by the credit card companies. He announced on May 21 2009 Ottawa will require a "summary box" on all credit-card contracts and applications clearly outlining information about interest rates, minimum payments, annual fees and other applicable

costs, including penalty charges for bounced cheques. The regulations made are really going to help the credit card companies to charge their high interest rates and fees easily without any objections from the helpless users abandoned by the government, because they are now been educated by these regulations what is to be expected from the credit card companies and not to be surprised. Glenn Thibeault, the NDP's consumer protection critic, has said the "weak" regulations suggest that Flaherty favours his "bank buddies on Bay Street" over ordinary Canadians. "What consumers need now is not an information campaign, what they need now is relief – relief from the crippling high interest rates and fees that continue to send working families into more debt," he said earlier this month. Liberal Senator Pierrette Ringuette has called the budget measures "an insult." Critics have suggested Flaherty is failing Canadians by not introducing an outright cap on interest rates and fees.

Costs Burden of Mortgages, Loans and Lines of Credit

Earlier in 2010, banks tightened for buyers to take on loans they can't afford. In addition, the Canadian Bankers Association says its members are working to ensure that potential borrowers would be able to make future payments if interest rates rose. The average Canadian has a debt of \$25,000, excluding mortgage loans, according to credit agency TransUnion. The central bank noted during the first week of December 2010, that the amount of both mortgages and credit card loans that were in arrears in the second quarter of 2010 was well above the level before the financial crisis. The business groups representing Canada's retailers and small- and medium-sized enterprises issued warning that higher debit fees will follow if Visa Canada and MasterCard enter the debit market to compete against the non-profit association Interac. Credit-card companies, plan to enter the market by the fall. Currently, Interac dominates the debit market with low transactions fees set on a cents per transaction basis rather than on a percentage of the value. It has applied to the Competition Bureau to become a profit-driven operation in anticipation of Visa and MasterCard entering the market.

Payday Loans Targeted to Exploit Low-Income People and Trap them in Debt-Cycle

People who resort to payday lending are typically low-income people with few



assets, as these are people who are least able to secure normal, lower-interest-rate forms of credit. Since the payday lending operations charge high interest-rates, and do nothing to encourage savings or asset accumulation, they have the effect of depleting the assets of low-income communities. Critics blame payday lenders for exploiting people's financial hardship for profit. Lenders target the young and the poor in low-income communities. Borrowers may not understand that the high interest rates are likely to trap them in a "debt-cycle," where they have to repeatedly renew the loan and pay associated fees every two weeks until they can finally save enough to pay off the principal and get out of debt. Payday lending unfairly disadvantages the poor, compared to the middle class who pay at most 25% or so on their credit cards. APR (Annual percentage rates) for these loans are either not displayed at all or not displayed prominently enough in the advertisements targeting poor people. In some cases the APR has been 390% but the EAR (Effective Annual Rate) has been to 3,685%. Further aggressive collection practices are followed to recover the over dues. In many cases, the borrower has written a post-dated check had ended up with criminal prosecution, for check fraud.

Household Income and Consumer Spending

Low interest rates have enticed Canadians to borrow more than they could afford to otherwise, and many are now stretched. The average debt per household, including mortgage and credit card debt, hit a high this year of \$96,100, as the debt-to-income ratio climbed to a record 146 per cent. The Bank Canada has stated that households bear ultimate responsibility for ensuring that they will be able to service that debt in the future, "It is also essential that financial institutions actively monitor the risk surrounding households' ability to service their debt over time, taking into account the macroeconomic outlook." PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP has recently released a survey of households with an annual income above \$100,000 that found that 64 per cent of respondents plan to cut their debt load in the next 12 months, even though most said they think that they could responsibly take on more debt. "Canadians, while they believe they've got continued good access to credit through their banking relationships, actually plan to lower their debt over the coming year," said John MacKinlay of PricewaterhouseCoopers. "In particular, they're considering deferring large-ticket items." With the benchmark

interest rate expected to stay at 1 per cent until well into 2011, though, the central bank's language suggested policy makers are still hoping moral suasion will succeed in cajoling borrowers, and lenders, into more cautious behaviour. Regulators also should monitor the banks and credit cards issuing companies from customers are not charged exorbitant rates. The Bank of Canada has kept borrowing rates low for longer than many economists had expected, offering a steady stream of fuel to the housing market and consumer spending. But in the process, Canadian debt levels have risen to troubling heights.

Possibility for Subprime Mortgage Crisis in Canada

There is a fear now in the economic circles that of a possibility of looming a subprime mortgage crisis in Canada. Several bankers have agreed to support federal moves to cool the mortgage market, including cutting the maximum term of mortgages or increasing the minimum down payment. Several tightening changes have been made on getting mortgages. In February, 2010, Finance Minister Jim Flaherty announced measures designed to make it harder for mortgage borrowers to get in over their head. The rules require borrowers to qualify for a five-year fixed-rate mortgage even if they choose a lower-rate variable mortgage. Previously, home buyers had only to qualify for the higher of either a three-year fixed-rate or variable-rate mortgage. When refinancing, homeowners may now withdraw only 90 per cent of the value of the property, down from 95 per cent. And for purchase of homes that the owner is not going to occupy, the minimum down payment rose to 20 per cent from 5 per cent for insured mortgages, a move designed to rein in speculative buying. Highlighting the type of ripple effect that helped turn the U.S. subprime mortgage crisis into a financial system meltdown and a global economic slump, the central bank said a decline in borrowers' creditworthiness would "prompt a tightening of credit conditions that could trigger a mutually reinforcing deterioration of economic activity and financial stability."

Impact on Canadian Economy

Western economies now face the threat of social unrests due to sovereign debt crisis and the austerity measures taken to tackle the crisis on the advice of the IMF (International Monetary Fund) and the ECB (European Central Bank). Now the Canadian rulers got the fever and fear whether this might have contagious impact on Canadian economy. **Contd next page**

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Tribute

Peace Blossom Jejarajamalar Pooranampillai

The vigil kept by two daughters for almost 2 weeks finally ended on the 6th of January this year. A mother's great heart beat no more. That mother was Mrs. Pooranampillai whose life, faithfully lived for her Lord, we are celebrating today with thanksgiving.

My association with Auntie Peace began in 1975 when her son, Jeyakumar, married our only sister, Vilogini, who passed away in 1993. From that time onwards, our family became close to the Pooranampillais. I learnt immeasurable lessons and realised what a consummate giver she was, whose deep level of caring and compassion for others was valued by everyone who knew her. My sister used to tell us often, how fortunate she was to have such loving in-laws and we too wouldn't have wished for more. In Jeyakumar, her son, we gained a brother who was honest, dependable and caring. Auntie Peace's engaging personality, sin-

cere care for others blessed her with countless friendships.

Together Auntie Peace and Uncle Pooranam shaped a family that will ever benefit from the values and gentleness they infused into the pattern of their daily living. She was blessed with 59 years of happiness with her husband. She as a wife gave tremendous moral support to her husband. For her, family was the first priority. Her sisters, Regina Coomaraswamy and Primrose Casinader, predeceased her. She provided Primrose and her family with a home when they needed it most.

On a personal level, I remain grateful for what she has been to my own family. For my wife Cherry, Auntie Peace was the last link with her parents who knew her at the time of their youth. She was also a close friend of Cherry's aunt.

I treasure all the letters and cards she and Uncle Pooranam have written,



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and the telephone conversations, specially the last one, a month before her pass-

ing. She was truly interested in the welfare of my family, and we count ourselves blessed for her being in our lives. I was amazed at what loving daughters she had who gave their time, care and love specially in the days when she really needed it. In this she had the ready support of their spouses and children.

I close my reflections with the following quote:

'The grace and wisdom of the Lord shone on her, filling her life, commending her spirit, guiding her in word and deed where-in she lived a blessed life that others pray to emulate.'

This tribute has been sent by Dharman Kulatungam, brother of Peace's late daughter in law, Vilogini. He is a former Vice Principal of Jaffna College, Sri Lanka. He is now resident in Canada.

Peace Pooranampillai - 'The veritable better half'

By Jesudason Atputharajah

Peace Pooranampillai, the spouse of the late K. Pooranampillai passed away recently in Kent, U.K. She was an asset to her husband and helped him to blossom as an educational administrator of a higher order. It is said that there is a woman behind every successful man and Madam Peace had all the qualities of excellence of such a remarkable woman. She was a very kind lady who used her influence to help the poor and the needy. She cared for the kids in the college hostel near her home and sent specially prepared meals for boys who had come to the hostel from far away places like Batticaloa and the highlands.

Madam Peace was also an asset to the church which she attended regularly. She enriched the music by making use of her talents with the violin. She helped the pastor in organizing prayer meetings and she never had any inhibitions in

attending such meetings at poor homes. Point-Pedro is a poor parish that didn't have many affluent members in the congregation and her interest in relieving the distress of the poor and the lowly is remarkable. Her husband had some rough ends which she was able to smoothen with her good influence. KP's vindictive nature brought him a number of enemies at every stage of his career but her softening influence enabled him to overcome it.

The late Mrs. P was a very hospitable lady. Whoever came to visit her was well entertained and made to feel homely and happy. As a principal's wife, she helped the students in her own inimitable ways. The hostel students used to have a sing-song session every Sunday evenings and she is the one who led the singing and treated them with her 'date sweets'. Her benevolent frame of mind made the boys to long for such delightful Sunday



Mrs. K. Pooranampillai

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evenings. Whenever there were school parties, Peace volunteered to make eats; besides she also graced the occasions with her sweet presence.

The kindly lady had the ability to arrange marriages. She helped many a members of the staff to find suitable partners. She was also useful in the community by enabling successful marriage alliances. Social service was second nature to her.

The Tamil writer and sage, Valluvar in his definition of an ideal woman says 'that kaathu, that kondan peeni, Chot kaathu, soorvilal Penn'. The right woman has the ability to safeguard herself, serve her partner, careful in her utterances and never found wanting in swiftness'. The late Peace Pooranampillai had all these attributes in sufficient measures. Now that she is no more, she leaves a fragrance of sweetness and grace in the minds of all those who knew her.

Contd from previous page

The banking sector remains relatively strong at the expense of charging high interests, fees, and commissions from its customers. The government's and Financial system's worry now is deepened debt-ridden borrowers. Overall risk level has now has been elevated to new high. Carney and other policy makers have been ringing alarm bells about too many households becoming too stretched for comfort for much of the past year. As the recovery slows at home and abroad, Canadian growth will depend on consumer spending while exports languish. At the same time, low borrowing costs are still making big purchases too tempting for people who will have trouble paying off their debts when interest rates start rising again. A shock to economic conditions could be transmitted to the broader financial system through deterioration in the credit quality of loans to

households. Equally troubling, the central bank said that with housing affordability on the decline and households "increasingly stretched" financially, "the probability of a negative shock to property prices has risen as well." Canadians' unprecedented debt-to-income ratio – currently about 146% is the main domestic risk. To drive home the point, policy makers conducted a "stress test" to project the effects of a jump in unemployment, a scenario they view as more likely given the bleaker prospects for the Canadian and global economic recoveries. The test found that if the economy were to deteriorate so much that the jobless rate rose to 11 per cent, the share of households devoting at least 40 per cent of their income to servicing debts would climb from 6.5 per cent to 7.8 per cent, and the proportion of household loans that are in arrears for three months or more would more than double, rising from 0.6 per cent to 1.4 per cent. Bank of Canada governor Mark

Carney has voiced concern about consumer debt and the ability of borrowers to meet their payments once interest rates begin rising again.

Reversal on Keynesian View

Canada's shining bank regulatory system cannot be counted on to shield the country from an impending economic buffeting, renowned U. S economist Paul Krugman said on Aug. 16, 2010. 'Canada cannot be complacent in the face of disturbingly bleak global conditions, because Canadians spend too much relative to their household incomes and the country's housing bubble has yet to burst.' "Canada is by no means insulated," he said. During 2008 crisis Canadian industry suddenly became much more cost effective. "Canada is an example of the virtues of a relatively traditional approach to regulation," Mr. Krugman said. "Canada is also in a position to pursue a relatively independent monetary and fiscal policy, even though it sits

next door to a much, much larger economy that's in trouble." The risk is that if consumers act relatively quickly to reduce their debt load that could cause fresh headaches in some parts of the economy illustrating the conundrum that policy makers face as they balance the economic benefits of consumer spending with the risks. For instance, the survey found that 64 per cent of people would be willing to delay buying a new car to pay down their debts, which could mean new pain for an already battered automotive sector. When the financial crisis erupted, Ottawa put pressure on the banks to keep up the flow of credit (encouraged lending to increase consumer spending) to support the economy. The government which took up Keynesian view on the increasing of consumer spending in 2008 has now changed the tunes to curtail consumer spending by tightening the borrowings via banking institutions.

Special Feature



Valentine's Day Strengthens Relations

RELATIONS - 7

February is the month of love. This month fills up the hearts of not only the human being but also of the birds and animals with love as maximum of the love making has been observed among all living beings in this month. A question arises why the living beings become so sensual and sexual in this month. Its answer is hidden in the nature of this month. You know well that November, December and January are usually the coldest months of a year. Snow and cold winds add fuel to the fire and these months give nothing but chilling cold weather and shivering. Some people say they become sexually more active in these months as they get heat of their partner's body which inspires them to have sex. But, the human nature is that you enjoy your partner the maximum when the climatic conditions, room temperature and environment are most comfortable for you.

After January 14th, when the sun changes its path from southern hemisphere to northern hemisphere, the weather also starts getting warmer. Everyone feels a cozy touch of the changing weather. This is the time when the birds and animals start mating and engage themselves in reproduction.

Lovers relate the month of February with St. Valentine. They celebrate Valentine's Day world over on 14th February. Saint Valentine's Day, commonly known as Valentine's Day, is an annual commemoration of St. Valentine which is held on February 14 every year to celebrate love and affection between intimate companions. The day is named after one or more early Christian martyrs named Valentine and was established by Pope Gelasius I in 500 AD. It is traditionally a day on which lovers express their love for each other by presenting flowers, offering confectionery, and sending greeting cards. The day first became associated with romantic love in the High Middle Ages, when the tradition of courtly love flourished. Modern Valentine's Day symbols include the heart-shaped outline, doves, and the figure of the winged Cupid.

A few noteworthy Christian martyrs in early ages were named Valentine. The Valentines honored on February 14 are the Valentines of Rome and Valentine of Terni. Valentine of Rome was a priest in Rome and was martyred about AD 269. Valentine of Terni became bishop of Interamna about AD 197 and is said to have been martyred during the persecution under Emperor Aurelian. The Catholic Encyclopedia also refers a third saint named Valentine who was mentioned in early martyrologies under date of February 14.

St Valentine was said to have been persecuted as a Christian and interrogated by Roman Emperor Claudius II in person. Claudius was impressed by Valentine and asked to get him converted to Roman paganism in order to save his life. Valentine refused and tried to convert Claudius to Christianity instead. Because

of this, he was executed. Before his execution, he is said to have performed a miracle by healing the blind daughter of his jailer.

Claudius released orders that young men should remain single. The Emperor probably did this to grow his army, believing that married men do not make good soldiers. The priest Valentine secretly kept performing marriage ceremonies for young men. When Claudius found out about this, he arrested Valentine and threw him in jail.

February has long been a month of romance. St. Valentine's Day, as we know it today, contains acceptance of both Christian and ancient Roman tradition. On the evening before Valentine was to be executed, he would have written the first "valentine" card himself, addressed to a young girl variously identified as his beloved, as the jailer's daughter whom he had befriended and healed. It was a note that read "From your Valentine." Before his death, it is alleged that he wrote her a letter, which he signed "From your Valentine," an expression that is still in use today. It's no surprise that by the Middle Ages, Valentine was one of the most popular saints in England and France.

In ancient Rome, February was the official beginning of spring and was considered a time for purification. Houses were cleansed by sweeping them out and then sprinkling salt and wheat. February 15, was a fertility festival dedicated to Faunus, the Roman god of agriculture, as well as to the Roman founders Romulus and Remus.

To begin the festival, an order of Roman priests, would gather at the sacred cave where the infants Romulus and Remus, the founders of Rome, were believed to have been cared for by a she-wolf or lupa. The priests would then sacrifice a goat, for fertility, and a dog, for purification.

The boys then sliced the goat's hide into strips, dipped them in the sacrificial blood and took to the streets, gently slapping both women and fields of crops with the goat hide strips. Roman women welcomed being touched with the hides as it was believed the strips would make them more fertile. Later in the day, all the young women in the city would place their names in a big urn. The city's bachelors would then each choose a name out of the urn and become paired for the year with his chosen woman. These matches often ended in marriage.

Pope Gelasius declared February 14 St. Valentine's Day around 498 A.D. Later, during the Middle Ages, it was commonly believed in France and England that February 14 was the beginning of birds' mating season, which added to the idea that the middle of February Valentine's Day should be a day for romance.

In Britain, Valentine's Day began to be celebrated around the seventeenth century. By the middle of the eighteenth century, it was common for friends and lovers to exchange small tokens of affection or hand-written notes. By the end of the century, printed cards began to replace written letters. Americans probably began exchanging hand-made valentines in the early 1700s. In the 1840s, Esther Howland began to sell

the first mass-produced valentines in America.

According to the Greeting Card Association, an estimated one billion valentine cards are sent each year, making Valentine's Day the second largest card-sending holiday of the year. (An estimated 2.6 billion cards are sent for Christmas.) It is interesting to be noted that approximately 85 percent of all valentines are purchased by women. In addition to the United States, Valentine's Day is celebrated in Canada, Mexico, the United Kingdom, France, Australia, India and some other countries.

This was all about the history of the Valentine's Day. What are you going to do this Valentine's Day? Are you going to give your valentine a gift, a card or something very different and special. OK. I am not going to ask you about this but surely I am concerned with those who do not have their valentine yet.

May I help you to find one for you? But, be serious. I do not do it to get you a friend, but a life partner. Are you looking for your life partner, see me.

- Prof. Saran Ghai

A Work Shop is being held on Sunday, 20th February, 2011 from 2 to 4 PM. Subject of the workshop is - "What precautions must we observe before typing into matrimonial relationship." Register yourself to participate the workshop.



By Prof. Saran Ghai

If you or anyone you know is in the marriageable age 18 plus, and needs help in finding a suitable life partner, contact me. Similarly, if you or anyone known to you is of older age, I mean within approx 45-65 years age group, is alone and is looking for a suitable life partner should contact me. I would like to say to the older age people living alone, "Why should you live alone when there is someone who is still waiting for you and is ready to say, "I love you", I care about you. Will you marry me?"

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V. N. Navaratnam: A personal tribute to the former Sri Lanka parliamentarian for Chavakachcheri

By Prof. Rajiva Wijesinha

On January 29th, it will be twenty years since the death of V.N. Navaratnam, Member of Parliament for Chavakachcheri for many years (1956-1983). Though he was of course much older than me, I think I can claim to have known him well, for he was a particular friend of my father, and associated with him with affection whilst he was Secretary General of Parliament.

Their friendship was an epitome of an aspect of this country that has long been overshadowed by less pleasant ones, for they had met at the Brodie Hostel of the University of Ceylon. Mr. Navaratnam alluded fondly to those days when he spoke on the vote of condolence on the Hon. George Rajapakse, who had also lived in that hostel nearly 70 years ago.

Mr. Navaratnam was a member of the Federal Party when I first got to know him properly, at a meeting of the Inter-Parliamentary Union in Paris in September 1971. I was on my way to university in England, having left Ceylon as it then was in June, to take my Advanced Levels in Madras, since they could not be taken in Colombo at that period. I had then travelled straight on, to take advantage of the stopovers permitted on ordinary tickets in those days. After exploring Greece and Italy and a couple of other countries, I was exhausted by the time I reached Paris, and Tissa Wijeyeratne, our ambassador at the time, who was supposed to put me up, did not help.

It was a relief therefore to associate again with civilized Sri Lankans, who realized I was just seventeen and should not be expected to shack up with a young lady picked up on the Left Bank. Though my father was not present himself, I was treated with great kindness by the delegation, and in particular by Mr. Navaratnam, who gave up an excursion to the champagne country around Rheims so that I could use his invitation.

Seven years later, I joined a similar delegation in Berlin, which was when my father was able to save Mr. Navaratnam when he collapsed suddenly with heart failure. He was then on the IPU Executive Council, and highly respected internationally – which was perhaps an advantage to the TULF in its efforts to highlight the ethnic problems in Sri Lanka, problems which the then government proceeded to exacerbate, with a corresponding increase in sympathy for Mr. Navaratnam's position.

He however was, like the others in



the TULF, sidelined when President Jayewardene's principal response to the attacks on Tamils in July 1983 was to introduce legislation which, acceptable though it might have been in any other context, inevitably drove the TULF out of Parliament after the suffering their fellow Tamils had undergone. Mr. Navaratnam, not in the best of health, gave up politics then and settled in Canada – thus escaping the fate of his senior colleagues who returned to Parliament in 1989 and were shot by the Tigers. Mr. Navaratnam himself died relatively peacefully in Canada in 1991, having never come back.

But the family did not forget the association, and when Mrs. Navaratnam was finally able to return to Sri Lanka a few years back, and stay with us before going on to Jaffna, she very kindly gave me the watch which I still wear. Those sadly were the days when the Tigers were in the ascendant. In her husband's time, moderate Tamil politicians agitated through Parliamentary means against political measures they wanted changed. Though there had been violence too against Tamils, it had been sporadic, and was dealt with firmly, if not always in time. But with the repeated attacks on Tamils of 1977 and 1981 and 1983, which seemed to have government support not only before but also after they occurred, things got worse. Even before they left Parliament, the influence of the older Tamil politicians had waned, as they were overtaken by youngsters who made a fetish of brutality. The collegiate decency of Mr. Navaratnam, and his associates such as Mr. Amirthalingam and Mr. Sivasithamparam, gave way to unbridled violence, which seemed to have triumphed in the first few years of the 21st century.

In the interim however there had been yet another reminder of the ties that bind our communities close. My father, in Canada, as Ombudsman now rather than part of Parliament, met again Mr. Navaratnam's son, whom he

had helped to get into Britain at a time when the British were less free with visas to people in difficulties than they are now. The young man remembered the fact with gratitude, just as I now recall with gratitude and affection the kindness his father showed me in 1971, at a time when differences of opinion had not been transformed through the intransigence of a few into bitter and corrosive hatred.

At a time when the former TULF is still struggling to find a role for itself, some members unsure how far cooperation should go, others perhaps hankering after the polarization the Tigers so successfully achieved through killing moderate Tamils, its members would do well to think back to Parliamentarians such as Mr. Navaratnam. Though he argued passionately for his people, and though his attitudes hardened with the hardening of government approaches in the early eighties, his commitment to democratic pluralism endured. I write this in his memory then, to make it clear that, as Yasmine Gooneratne remarked in 'Big Match, 1983', some lines were never cut.

[Prof. Rajiva Rajiva Wijesinha, MA, DPhil (Oxon) is a Sri Lankan writer in English, he was most recently Senior Professor of Languages at the University of Sabaragamuwa, Sri Lanka and presently a Member of Sri Lanka parliament via the National List].

Jyoti Basu remembered on his first death anniversary

Jyoti Basu was remembered on his first death anniversary on Jan 17th, 2011, with former Lok Sabha speaker Somnath Chatterjee paying tribute saying that the late CPI(M) patriarch's absence was deeply felt when politics in West Bengal had turned bloody.

"The spurt in political violence and hostility are occurring daily in the State. If Jyoti babu was alive today, this situation would not have developed," Mr. Chatterjee said after visiting Indira Bhavan where Mr. Basu had lived.

Mr. Chatterjee recounted the days when an ailing Basu, three years before his death, had invited Trinamool Congress chief Mamata Banerjee to discuss burning issues, particularly after the Nandigram violence.

"It was at Mr. Basu's instance that the opposition leader came to his residence for discussing serious political

issues.

At this juncture, Jyoti Basu's absence is deeply felt," Mr. Chatterjee, who has been expelled from CPI(M) for 'anti-party activities', said after garlanding Mr. Basu's portrait.

CPI(M) sources said that approval had been received for the land applied for setting up of a 'Jyoti Basu Centre for Social Studies and Research' at Rajarhat renamed Jyoti Basunagar on the outskirts of the metropolis.

The party has appealed for donations for constructing the proposed Centre which would have a full-fledged library, an auditorium, a seminar hall primarily to provide documentation about Mr. Basu's lifelong work for communism and contribution to the mass movement.

[PTI]



Special Feature



Women and Canadian Elections

by Rathika Sitsabaiesan

The origins of Canada show many discriminatory practices with the right to vote. After Confederation in 1867, Canada was a country with four provinces that was to be represented by 181 members of Parliament. At this time, only a very small minority of the population were granted the right to vote based on property ownership, religious and ethnic background.

"The First World War brought the greatest changes to the federal franchise. In 1915, the right to vote by mail was granted to military electors in active service. In 1917, Parliament passed the Wartime Elections Act and the Military Voters Act. The right to vote was extended to all British subjects, male or female, who were active or retired members of the Canadian Forces, including Indians (as defined by the Indian Act) and persons under 21. Some 2,000 military nurses, the "Bluebirds," became the first Canadian women to use this right. Civilian men who were not landowners, but who had a son or grandson in the Canadian Forces, were also temporarily granted the franchise, as were women with a close relative serving, then or previously, in the Canadian Forces" (Elections Canada, "The Evolution of the Federal Franchise").

After the First World War, the suffrage movement continued to grow strength and made great advances, and in 1918 the federal franchise was extended to all women over the age of 21. Following this, the first federal election in which women participated as candidates was in the 1921 general election. This election had four women who ran for office and Agnes Campbell MacPhail (1890-1954) became the first woman to be elected to the House of Commons. Between 1921 and 2006, 3402 women candidates stood in the 39 general elections and won on 426 occasions, this is not including data from by-elections

(Heard, A., 2010).

Currently from the Parliament of Canada's website, there are 67 women in the House of Commons which is representative of 21.97% of the total seats available. Of these seats, Ontario and Quebec have the highest representation by women; both with 21 female Members of Parliament. When looking at percentage however, Quebec is the leader in gender parity in elected federal representatives because the 21 seats they have represent 28.38% of their total seats whereas in Ontario it represents only 19.81% of Ontario's total seats. Following Quebec and Ontario is British Columbia with 9 representatives who are women accounting for 25.71% of their total seats in the House of Commons.

Looking back at the candidate election rates for women in Canada's General Elections, the Parliament of Canada's website gives us that from 1968-1980 the range of successfully elected women MPs range from 2.77% to 7.04%. Whereas there has been growth in the success rate from 1984-2008 this shows women being elected to office at rates ranging from 11.13% - 16.84%.

Over the last three federal elections the success rates for women candidates has stayed fairly steady around 16%. In the 2008 general election, of the total 445 candidates 69 were elected to office (15.50%). The Liberal Party had the highest number of women candidates as 113 of their candidates were women. The Liberal Party had 19 of their 113 candidates succeed, the New Democratic Party had 12 of their 104 candidates see victory, and the Conservative Party saw 23 of their 63 candidates elected.

In the 2006 federal election, 64 of the total 380 candidates were elected to the House of Commons (16.84%). During this election the New Democratic Party had the highest number of women candidates as 108 of their candidates were women. This election saw 12 of the 108



New Democratic candidates win, followed by 21 of the 79 Liberal Party candidate and 14 of the 38 Conservative Party candidates.

In all election from 1984 – 2006 the New Democratic Party has continuously had the highest number of women candidates amongst all of the Parties in the country. During the 1979 and 1980 elections, the Marxist-Leninist Party had the highest. But, going back to the 1963 general election, it is the New Democratic Party that has shown a sustained commitment to having women candidates (Parliament of Canada website).

2011 being an election year for the Province of Ontario, and potentially a

year that will have a general election as well, it is important to recognize some of the contributions that women have made to the political landscape in Canada. Furthermore, it is important to realize that though women are 51% of the population in Canada, we hold roughly 17% of the seats for elected representatives in the House of Commons.

Rathika Sitsabaiesan, BComm, MIR is the Federal NDP Candidate for Scarborough-Rouge River and she can be reached at 647-800-2029 or join her in facebook at: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Rathika-Sitsabaiesan/193830102694?ref=ts> or follow her on Twitter: @RathikaS



How death is told to a person? Early in the morning phone rings and the conversation starts casually and the death is announced after the second or third line. It depends on the person’s relationship to the deceased .Further it depends on the closeness of the person to the deceased. Also it depends on the state of the body and mind of the person receiving the message.

I was informed of a death. The news was taken from a website, cut and pasted and was sent by email in two lines. Is she the one? This question arose in my mind as I read it.

Yes, she is the one. The village and surname are the same .Hence she is the one. She is no more, but she is the one. Nowadays, when you read news in any media you have to be prepared for unexpected shocks. In any part of the news, there will be death strewn casually. Sometimes I feel like avoiding them .But they are the ones which connect me to past memories.

This news did not cause any shock to me. But I could not bypass it. I was forced to donate a few tears to the paper tissue. We all have become immune to deaths and treat them as news and numbers, because of the present circumstances.

She was the loving grand daughter of my expired Grandma. Eldest of five sisters. She was the eldest of twin girls, born to an angry father and an obedient mother, to her husband. Her father used to frequently say that she is like a boy .She worked like a bull. She was liked by every one in the village. She will be doing something, always. Her past time was work, work and nothing but work. She was a foolish girl, who hated studies.

It is usual to admire one, after their death. This is not because we admire them or praise them after death. It is only after their death, that we realize how they were helpful and beneficial to us.

I still remember the cone ice cream she bought me, when I went to watch the sports meet at the village grounds. Even now I could feel the coldness of the rose color ice cream, flowing down my hand. Those days money was given to us, when we went to temple festivals or sports meet and football games. The money was never in notes, only a five rupee coin. One popsicle was five rupees then. We have to end our dreams of eating not more than that, with that popsicle. We usually buy it as soon as we reach the place and finish it in a hurry and watch others relishing it, with a hungry look.

At that moment, how you will feel, when some one buys you an ice cream, instead of a popsicle. She used to do such happy shocking acts frequently. Like a responsible adult she used to give me money and told me to buy cone ice creams. I never asked the question “How about you?” .I got the money and went looking for the ice cream vendor.

I now feel that I should have asked that question. Now no point in repenting over it. Instead of watching the game or the car festival in progress, we were eagerly looking for her, to get a cone ice cream.

She was in the habit of taking their cattle to the grazing grounds near the forest. We used to accompany her since we didn’t have any. She had a pet cow named

Lakshmi. She used to speak to that cow always. Lakshmi allowed others to milk her, only when “she “is by the side. My periyamma (mom’s eldest sister) also had cows .So during the weekends my sister, older brother and me went with her with our cows. When I am not paying attention to my studies and playing around ,my mom used to say that I am fit for only to be a shepherd. But on Saturdays when I wanted to accompany her, my mom wouldn’t allow me. “She“ is the one to plead for me and got permission from my mother. Whenever I am in trouble and got beaten by a stick, there were two people who came to my rescue, one is my sister and the other one is

A Woman

(Short Story -2, by T. Agilan in Tamil)
English version by Thuraiyooran

“she”.

To go with the cattle was like playing a game for me. I never cared for them. I was interested in the fields, the calves running around, small canals with running water, grasslands, butterflies, grasshoppers and more than that the “ no school ‘ freedom. She knew the nook and corners of the area. She knew where the wild berries were. While walking on the bunds of the fields, she will be talking to the frogs lying in shallow waters. When I am on the run, she used to grab my hand and stop me from treading into spots, where snakes used to hide.

When telling secrets to others, you get a kind of pleasure, which is difficult to describe in words. The trees there were her friends. She used to climb them easily. When returning home with the cows, she used to climb a Jamun plum tree and grab a few branches quickly and gets down before the owner Murugesu Teacher, comes chasing her. I used to demand for the biggest fruit from the bunch. No doubt she is being called as a boy because of her skill in climbing trees. My grand mother used to yell at her by saying “you are climbing trees like boys”. She never cared for anything .If she feels like climbing a tree, without any hesitation, she will be up on any tree big or small. She used to enjoy watching us, eating those wild berries, she plucked for us.

One day while the cows were grazing, we went wandering in the fields. When we returned we saw two cows fighting fiercely with their horns. One of them was bleeding .This was the first time I saw a cow fight. I have heard people talking that these cows won’t stop the fight until one is killed. If anyone tries to stop them, they will attack that person. But that day she was determined to stop them from fighting .She took a long stick and started beating them and then placed the stick in between their locked horns and separated them after much struggle. We, out of fear ran and hid behind a tree and watched her struggling with those cows. She came back like Jansi Rani (former Queen of India) returning victoriously from a battle. I went home and told her mother about her bravery, which ended up in her being beaten by her mother for a dangerous act, which may have coasted her life.

Next day she did not come out of her house. I thought she must have been mad

with me for reporting the incident. I went to their house and found her seated inside a room. I was surprised to see this .Then my aunty told me that she is on the onset of puberty. She grinned at me and I made sure that she never had any ill will towards me.

These puberty ceremonies are enjoyable events for us. We used to have lots of sweets, cookies and photo shoots. She gave me lots of sweets and cookies stealthily the day previous to her ceremony. We never cared for the ceremony, other than eating and posing for photographs.

I had fallen out with her many times and stopped talking to her. But she came

pened and left home. After learning to ride the bicycle well, I used to take her as a pillion rider and fell down purposely to take revenge. She never got angry and got up smiling.

After some time I met her very rarely .One day when I went to meet her, she was chatting with her friends in a small hut next to their house. I also joined in their chatting. A popsicle vendor was passing by and I stopped him and bought popsicle for all. Later I asked him for an ice-cream. Suddenly she started laughing. I asked her the reason for that laughter and she said “nothing”. I was reminded of the past when she bought ice-cream for me.



the next day and made peace with me by talking and consoling me. I used to be adamant in speaking to her, but she never took anything serious. We used to have our own circle of friends and stuck to them. But she was friendly with everyone and was liked by every one young and old. She was foolish and outspoken.

After sometime I started writing poems and wrote one for her.

“Plucking a flower caused
Pain in your mind
Who gave you the courage
To cut the trees down“

She was not the same person after the ceremony. She had changed a lot. Her speech was more clearer and to the point. She approached all matters with caution. Even though she loved guns, she never forgot the flowers .Whenever she came home on leave, she used to make garlands for grandma. She stopped talking to us a lot .We were also busy with our work .One day she told me “You have also grown tall “.

I learnt cycling the hard way, by falling down many times. Now I have learnt to ride a motor-cycle. I can remember well how I learnt to ride a bicycle. First you learn to push it and then put your legs under the crossbar and learn to ride, while someone is holding it behind. She taught me to ride the bicycle. I used to shout at her,”please hold the bicycle, hold it properly”.

“Don’t worry you look in front and keep going, I am holding “she used to say.

After riding some distance easily, when I looked back she won’t be there. She will be coming running when I fall down .I used to hold her hair and shout at her for not holding the bicycle. But she grinned apologetically .I left the bicycle on that spot and walked home .She brought it home and after explaining to my mom as to what hap-

pened and left home. After learning to ride the bicycle well, I used to take her as a pillion rider and fell down purposely to take revenge. She never got angry and got up smiling.

Now I am earning so I bought popsicle for all of them. More than the money the satisfaction you get is more gratifying. I felt that the ice-cream she bought for me then was more tastier than one you get from the cafes and restaurants.

One day she told me that she is going to get married. It was a shock to me because, even though she was carrying a gun, she was under the control of her strict father. But she always thought that even though her father was strict, he was very affectionate. There was always an eerie calmness in their house. May be because all of them were girls and their father had control on all of them. She told me that she is going to get married, without the knowledge of her father. I asked her whether it is a love marriage. After a short pause she said “yes”.

“Good, you have taken a good decision. When is the wedding? “

“I am waiting for Soba to get married“
“Why?”

“You know we are twins. So I would like her to get married before me “.

This showed how she loved others more than herself.

After some months Soba got married to someone and went to a foreign country. I also move out of my place. One day I asked my Periyamma about her marriage. She told me next August.

But in June, I got this email from my friend – Captain Eelaverny alias Sabaratnam Barathy of Thondaiman Town, Kilinochchi attained martyrdom in the last battle. .

(In the First story published in last month’s issue of Monsoon Journal (Jan 2011) the initial of Agilan was erroneously written as ‘S’ instead of “T” by me. The error is regretted.)

News from Waterloo



Battle for CA\$H - University of Waterloo comes third

By: Kelly Millar

Three students from the School of Accounting and Finance came third in this year's edition of Battle for CA\$H.

The Institute of Chartered Accountants of Ontario (ICAO) held its annual competition on Jan. 8. The competition provides teams of university students considering a career as a Chartered Accountant (CA) the opportunity to compete, have fun, and earn some cash prizes.

To win, each group took part in a friendly competition focusing on the use of accounting skills such as teamwork, leadership, organizational ability and time management.

"The most challenging aspect of the competition was absorbing large amounts of information and learning how to act on it shortly," explains Tarini Chandak (1B AFM). "We were given a lot of rules and market data to work with and we had a short time to create our



strategy. Also, we needed to have excellent communication to discuss what had resulted from negotiations from other teams and what changes we had to make to our strategy to address these decisions."

The Waterloo team represented by Mateen Imran (1B AFM), Tarini Chandak (1B AFM), and Archana Chittella (1B AFM) competed against 42 other teams mostly made up of upper-year university students, placing third overall; splitting a cash prize of \$750.

Community connection strengths

Elizabeth Witmer's profile

(Waterloo, ON) – Elizabeth Witmer, MPP for Kitchener-Waterloo, hosted her annual New Year's Open House on Sunday, January 9, 2011, at Golf's Steak House in Kitchener. The event was an opportunity for constituents to drop by and share their thoughts with Elizabeth on a variety of issues.

"I like to invite every resident of Kitchener-Waterloo to my annual New Year's Open House," said Witmer. "The Open House provides a wonderful opportunity for people to get to meet their MPP and share their thoughts on the issues which are most important to them and their families."

Witmer briefed a report on the year

that passed and the issues facing the province in 2011 such as the HST, energy bills, eco-fees, health and long term care, education and the economy.

"It's extremely important for elected officials to have an open and ongoing dialogue with their constituents. I cherish this opportunity to hear from my constituents and look forward to meeting them at the Open House," said Witmer.

Tamil Cultural Association of Waterloo region was represented by its Secretary Mr. Dennis Loyola, Director Public affairs Mr. Sivakumar Somasundram and senior members Prof. Ariyaratnam and Prof. Pala Kannappan and families.



Mrs. Ariyarani, Dharini, Dennis and Ramya

The BlackBerry that grew around the world

Mike Lazaridis is all about making great ideas happen

(Waterloo, Ont.) In 1984, while Mike Lazaridis was a fourth-year Waterloo electrical and computer engineering student, he founded his own company, Research In Motion. Today RIM is one of the fastest-growing businesses in the world, according to Fortune and Canadian Business magazines.

The BlackBerry, now a household name, has changed the way communication happens for millions around the world, including the president of the United States.

RIM is best known for the BlackBerry, the world's first complete

and secure end-to-end wireless solution for email and corporate data delivery. The BlackBerry, now a household name, has changed the way communication happens for millions around the world, including the president of the United States, who is an avid BlackBerry user.

Barack Obama made news for using a BlackBerry during his 2008 presidential campaign and for insisting on bringing it with him to the White House after becoming president. He is the first president of the United States to use mobile email.

The Queen of England is also a fan of the BlackBerry. On a recent visit to the City of Waterloo the Queen was presented not only with flowers, but with a new white BlackBerry Bold 9700 smartphone from Lazaridis himself.

To help make other great ideas happen, Lazaridis, co-CEO of RIM and chancellor of the University of Waterloo from 2003 to 2009, and his wife Ophelia, a member of the university's board of governors, have donated more than \$100 million towards the university's Institute for Quantum Computing.

"We are excited to add support to what is becoming the epicentre of quantum research and experimentation," Lazaridis says. "Our investment in fundamental research at the Institute of Quantum Computing will help researchers tackle some of today's most challenging problems and seed some of tomorrow's biggest innovations."



RIM founder Mike Lazaridis celebrates his Waterloo engineering roots at a 50th anniversary celebration on campus



Mrs. Ramya, Witmer and Dennis Loyola



Mrs. Dharini Sivakumar

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OBITUARY NOTICE



MRS. VALLINAYAKI VELUMAILUM

10 Oct 1927 – 29 Jan 2011

Mrs. Vallinayaki born in Madduvil North and lived in Vallipuram & Chundikuli, Jaffna and Toronto, passed away peacefully in Toronto, Canada on Saturday morning, January 29th, 2011.

Vallinayaki is the daughter of late Mr. Arumugam & Mrs. Sellammah Arumugam and wife of Kanapathipillai Velumailum; retired Insurance Organiser of Sri Lanka.

Sister of Vallipuranathar, Kumarasamy, Annapillai, late Vishaladchi & Theivanaipillai.

Mother of Sathianathan (New Jersey), Loganathan, Sivanathan, Kuhanathan (Seattle, WA), Ranganathan, Jakanathan, Sathiadevi (Sri Lanka), Chandradevi, Vasanthadevi (UK) and Vijayarani (UK).

Mother In-law of Punitharani, Geetha, JayaGowri, Chandravathani (Bubby), Vasantharuby, Maheswaran, Paramalingam, Jeyachandran and late Mr. Balendran

Grand Mother of Sasikala Sathiyanesan, Sanjutha Ketan, Samitha Ahilan, Arjuna, Shiyam, Krishni, Lavan, Archanaa, Kesavan, Neha, Abhilash, Ashwin, Janani, Meera, Dinoshan, Sangeetha, Shalini and Bharathy

Great-Grand Mother of Prashana, Trishana, Radha, Veena, Maya, Harini and Yuvan.

The viewing will be held at Highland Funeral Home,

3280 Sheppard Ave East, (Warden & Sheppard) on Friday February 4th between 5:00 P.M.- 9:00 P.M. and Saturday February 5th between 5:00 P.M.- 9:00 P.M.

Final rituals and cremation ceremony will be held at Bowmanville Crematorium, 1200 Haines Street on Sunday February 6th, between 9:00 A.M. – 11:00 A.M.

For additional information, please contact:

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